



MAKING WAVES

The Fortnightly e-News Brief of the National Maritime Foundation

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China Focuses on its Maritime Silk Road

-John C. K. Daly

China's fabled overland Silk Road had a nautical counterpart, the Maritime Silk Road (MSR), which originated during the Han Dynasty (202 BC-220 AD).

Beginning in Guangzhou, the MSR eventually spanned the Indian Ocean before turning northwards to countries situated around the Persian Gulf. Chinese exports consisted primarily of silk, china and tea, with imported merchandise including spices, flowers and grasses. Up until the Tang Dynasty Anshi rebellions, which broke out in 755 AD, the MSR was viewed as a secondary alternative to the terrestrial Silk Road, but as nomadic turmoil increasingly enveloped Central Asia, trade along the Maritime Silk Road boomed as those on its overland counterpart steadily declined. The MSR flourished until the Ming and Qing Dynasties banned maritime trade, contributing to massive decline in its use.

As the overland Silk Road is slowly being revived in the form of modern Eurasian railroads and roads, so is the MSR, as espoused by Chinese President Xi Jinping during a 04 Oct. 2013 speech to the Indonesian Parliament, where he advocated the construction of a new "Maritime Silk Road of the 21st century." Lest anyone miss the point, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang repeated the message at the 16th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-China Summit in Brunei six days later.

The MSR is the nautical counterpart of the "Silk Road Economic Belt," which Xi proposed during a Sept. 7, 2013 speech at Kazakhstan's Nazarbayev University. After noting that nations along the Silk Road have a 3 billion population and a market that is "unparalleled" both in scale and potential, Xi remarked that the countries in the economic zone should endeavor to improve traffic connectivity so as to open strategic regional thoroughfares from the Pacific to the Baltic by developing a transportation network that interconnects Eastern, Central, Western and Southern Asia.

As envisaged, the MSR would go transit the Malacca Strait to India, Kenya and then north around the Horn of Africa, entering the Red Sea and using the Suez Canal to enter the Mediterranean before meeting the land-based Silk Road in Venice via the Adriatic. In Jan. Xi pitched the MSR to a senior delegation from the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

Two months ago, a report in the China Securities Journal provided concrete details of the proposed MSR, noting that a “priority” of the Indian Ocean-based initiative was “port construction” and free trade zones, along with “infrastructure construction of countries along the route, including ports of Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh,” with China hoping to “coordinate customs, quality supervision, e-commerce and other agencies to facilitate the scheme.”

The MSR will build on current Chinese Indian Ocean port initiatives. China is already involved in port projects in Gwadar, Pakistan; Hambantota, Sri Lanka and Chittagong in Bangladesh.

And China is providing funding for aspects of the MSR. Speaking last Oct. in Brunei Premier Li announced the establishment of the China-ASEAN Maritime Cooperation Fund with \$484 million allocated by China for sponsoring ASEAN maritime cooperation projects. On May 19 the city government of Fuzhou, capital of East China’s Fujian province, signed an agreement with the China Africa Development Fund (CAD Fund) and the Fujian branch of the China Development Bank jointly to establish a \$1.6 billion fund support MSR projects.

The MSR initiative, which will deepen Chinese economic and maritime links with both Southeast Asia and Indian Ocean Region (IOR) countries, is perceived as assuaging regional anxieties about China’s growing military and naval presence amid a number of disputes. China maintains that its MSR investment in regional Indian Ocean maritime infrastructure is solely economic, maintaining that the initiative will bring economic benefits to host countries. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hua Chunying stated that China’s Silk Road proposals are designed to “integrate all the existing cooperation, especially that in the field of connectivity with neighboring and regional countries and enabling everyone to share development opportunities.”

A number of China’s maritime neighbors are not so sure of Beijing’s benign intentions. Beneath the carefully crafted rhetoric is the fact that China has contested claims to large areas in the South China Sea, embroiling it in territorial disputes with several south-east Asian countries. While on June 20 Premier Li said that China is committed to settling maritime disputes through dialogues and negotiations, on the basis of respecting historical facts and international law and pledging to build a “sea of peace” with other countries, China’s disputes with the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei over the Spratly islands’ 750 islands, islets, atolls and cays remains unresolved.

Other maritime disputes include China occupying some of the Paracel Islands also claimed by Vietnam and Taiwan, while both China and Taiwan both continue to

reject Japan's claims to the uninhabited islands of Senkaku-shoto (Diaoyu Tai) and Japan's unilaterally declared equidistance line in the East China Sea.

China's rising naval policy predates the current administration as Xi's predecessor, Hu Jintao, emphasized the concept of Beijing's "maritime destiny," placing it at the center of China's 21st century strategic thinking, overseeing a dramatic expansion of the PLA Navy. Hu's naval assertions unsettled China's neighbors, from Japan to India through the ten ASEAN member state, increasing maritime tensions in Asian waters.

India is the pivotal state for the MSR's implementation, torn as it is between working together with China on maritime issues even as one of its long-standing foreign policy goals remains of limiting Beijing's influence in the Indian Ocean. While India and China have no unresolved maritime disputes, Chinese companies have been barred from participation in India's maritime infrastructure projects due to security concerns and China has yet to resolve questions regarding the sovereignty of India's Arunachal Pradesh, most of which is claimed by Beijing.

Despite Indian concerns China can be expected to promote the MSR concept, receiving a warm reception from a number of IOR countries, particularly the small island states who are constrained due to lack of expertise and finances. But for the MSR to succeed China must dispel its policy of intimidation of smaller countries with which China has territorial and maritime disputes, which creates suspicion of Chinese intentions, causing those countries to look to the United States for support. Unless China addresses its maritime disputes with Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia, Southeast Asia may prove well an intractable obstacle to Chinese efforts to develop a Maritime Silk Road to India, Africa and into Europe.

Source: [Silk Road Reporters](#), 17th July, 2014

US Boosts Naval Diplomacy in NE Asia

- Zachary Keck

The U.S. Navy kicked off a week of naval diplomacy in Northeast Asia on Wednesday. According to the South Korean-based *Yonhap News Agency*, the U.S. and South Korean navies began a five-day joint exercise in Seoul's south western seas on Wednesday. According to the report, the drill will involve "two South Korean Navy Aegis ships as well as the aircraft carrier USS *George Washington*, two American cruisers and one U.S. Aegis ship."

It actually appears that two U.S. Aegis destroyers are participating in the exercises, however. Besides the carrier itself and its air wing, the *George Washington* Carrier

Strike Group (GWCSG)—which arrived in Busan on Thursday—consists of the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruisers USS *Antietam* (CG 54) and USS *Shiloh* (CG 67) and the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS *Stethem* (DDG 63). However, a photo posted on the U.S. Forces Korea website suggests that the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS *Kidd* (DDG 100) has also been on site for the drills.

In any case, the joint exercise itself appears to be comprised of at least three separate drills. The first one is taking place between U.S. and Republic of Korea (ROK) marines in South Korea's East Sea (the Sea of Japan). The other two are naval drills. The first of these is taking place near the southern port of Mokpo and will be led by the USS *George Washington*. The second naval drill is taking place in waters north of Jeju Island where South Korea is constructing a major new naval base that some observers believe is aimed at hedging against China's rising naval power.

Naturally, North Korea has expressed its strident opposition to the joint naval drills in general, and the USS *George Washington*'s arrival in South Korean waters in particular. As my colleague Ankit reported earlier this month, in an effort to thwart the then-forthcoming exercise, North Korea's National Defense Commission (NDC), the highest military body in the country, called for a cessation to "all hostile military activities" on the Korean Peninsula. This offer was conditioned on South Korea agreeing to a reduction in military hostilities on the Peninsula, including disallowing U.S. military hardware in South Korea. Unsurprisingly, Seoul rejected the proposal, stating it lacked sincerity.

Indeed, if anything, South Korean President Park Geun-hye seems to be hardening her stance on North Korea. As the U.S.-ROK naval exercise got underway on Wednesday, Park met with Defense Minister Han Min-Koo and top South Korean military commanders. "If there is any provocation [from North Korea]," she said, "I expect you to retaliate strongly in the initial stages." Park added: "The gravity of the situation does not allow for the least bit of carelessness in maintaining our defense posture."

The joint U.S.-ROK exercises are not the only naval diplomacy the U.S. and South Korea will be undertaking over the next week. According to *Yonhap*, on July 21 the two countries will join Japan for a trilateral search and rescue exercise in waters south of Jeju Island. The report indicated that the ships from the GWCSG, as well as two South Korean ships and one Japanese ship, will participate in the two-day trilateral exercise. All three nations will also be sending aircraft to the exercise.

The trilateral exercise will be the first between South Korea and Japan since the latter reinterpreted its constitution to allow for collective self-defense.

Source: [Diplomat](#), 17th July, 2014

China and Russia Strive for Naval Supremacy

- Bill Powell and Owen Matthews

Few in China knew the truth two years ago, when, with great public fanfare, then President Hu Jintao travelled to a naval base in the North eastern city of Dalian to mark a signal moment in the rise of Chinese power: the unveiling of the Liaoning, the first aircraft carrier commissioned by Beijing's Navy. More than a decade earlier, a penniless government in Ukraine had sold the ageing carrier the last built by the Soviet Union at a cut rate price to what it thought was a Chinese company pledging to re-launch the carrier and turn it into a floating casino. When it was towed out of the port of Nikolayevsk in 2001, everyone thought it was headed for the gambling haven of Macau. In fact, it was destined for modernisation so it could become not only the symbol of China's ambition to dominate the seas around it, but to project power thousands of miles from its coast lines.

Sitting in Moscow, Vladimir Putin knew the truth, and it had to chafe: here was yet another tangible symbol of the decline of what had been the second most powerful navy on earth that of the former Soviet Union. In due course, he was determined to reverse that decline. And so he has most recently by taking control of what was left of the Ukrainian navy at the port of Sevastopol. China and Russia the two biggest strategic rivals of the United States have made it plain to anyone paying attention that they plan to challenge what has been, for two decades since the Cold War's end the American monopoly on sea power. For Beijing, the Liaoning may have been the most visible symbol of its maritime resurgence, but spending on the Navy (known in China as the PLAN the People's Liberation Army's Navy) has steadily surged. Beijing's been banging out three submarines a year there are 28 nuclear submarines now active, and a total of 51 active submarines overall. The PLAN has commissioned 80 surface ships since 2000, compared with approximately 48 vessels commissioned in the 1990s. By 2020, Beijing plans to have three aircraft carrier-led battle groups, meaning that two domestically produced aircraft carriers are under production.

The increased naval hardware by itself doesn't capture China's ambitions. Its rhetoric, and its increasingly aggressive presence in the East and South China Seas, makes it plain for all to see and hear. Chinese leaders now routinely refer to blue national soil the oceans that extend off its coast line which they demarcate far beyond the 200 nautical miles that are its exclusive economic zone under the UN's Law of the Sea Treaty.

Beijing has even issued a controversial map known as the nine dash line which purports to show China's waters lapping up against the Philippines and Vietnam, China, writes Toshi Yoshihara and James Holmes, of the US Naval War College, is on the brink of commanding the seas with Chinese characteristics.

To date, those Chinese characteristics mainly consist of an increased capacity to drive the US away from Beijing's waters what military wonks call anti access/area denial, or A2/AD. The strategy aims to create a buffer zone on the sea and in the air to prevent an enemy's approach. The lynchpin of the strategy are the more modern submarine fleet, but also the deployment of fast attack vessels which carry lethal anti-ship missiles, the combination of which, by many accounts, is keeping US navy war planners up at night. According to Christian Le Miere, an analyst at the International Institute for Security Studies in London, China has deployed between 65 and 85 of these vessels so far, suggesting that the strategy behind their use is to deploy rapidly, perhaps in small flotillas, to harry larger vessels with difficult to intercept missiles. China's continuing naval build up reflects several geopolitical goals, all of which are fairly transparent. As Robert Kaplan writes in his book *Asia's Cauldron: The South China Sea and the End of a Stable Pacific* gives Beijing what defence analyst Li Mingjiang calls a strategic hinterland that stretches over a thousand miles one that would act as a restraining factor for the US Navy's Seventh Fleet in the Pacific and Indian oceans.

Another motivation, of course, is energy: the South China Sea is replete with oil and gas reserves, for which Beijing has a voracious appetite. It is now the world's largest importer of hydrocarbons, and will be as long as they are burned to produce energy. The fundamental tensions that Beijing's maritime ambitions bring are now on full display well within Vietnam's exclusive economic zone, where the Chinese National Offshore Oil Company is drilling for oil from a massive rig it just deployed there over Hanoi's furious but thus far fruitless objections.

What's the difference between an oil-rig and a naval base or an aircraft carrier? Very little, politically, in the eyes of China, says Dean Cheng, defence analyst at Washington's Heritage Foundation. Beijing is extending its reach, daring Vietnam (or anyone else) to do something about it, now confident in its ability to project sufficient naval force to defend what it sees as its interests, if necessary. To date, in extending its economic interest in the South and East China Seas, China hasn't always relied on its Navy per se, as the current clash with Hanoi illustrates.

In 2012 Chinese fishing vessels travelled to the Scarborough Shoal, a disputed set of tiny outcrops 200km West of Subic Bay (once, during the cold War, one of the major US Naval bases in the Pacific. They were caught fishing illegally for giant clams and sharks, and were detained by the Philippine coast guard. Beijing reacted furiously sending its own coast guard ships to defend the fishermen and dispatching PLAN warships to linger menacingly on the horizon.

A tense, ten-week standoff ensued, until Manilla blinked. Beijing today occupies the Scarborough Shoal, and Chinese officials have openly boasted about using the Scarborough Model as a way of intimidating other regional neighbours. Indeed, China has dispatched fishing vessels near the disputed Senkaku Islands (known to the Chinese as the Diaoyu Islands), the flash point of Beijing's dangerous standoff

with Japan, the only power in east Asia with a military that can stand up to China's. As Ely Ratner, deputy director of Asia Pacific Security studies at the Centre for American Progress in Washington has written, these disputes have not been knee-jerk, one-off events. They are Beijing flexing its muscles, thanks in large measure to an increasingly capable and sophisticated PLAN. It is hard not to believe there will be more to come

Russia's naval ambitions are, in their own way, linked closely to China's rise: after all, Beijing's relentless economic growth sent soaring global prices for almost all the commodities Russia has been naturally endowed with, from oil to gas to timber to iron ore. That has stuffed the coffers of Russian state-owned companies and enabled Moscow to again begin to fund its military, after nearly two decades of post-Cold War decline. President Vladimir Putin has pledged a staggering \$700 billion to boost Russia's military over the next two decades and much of that is to go to old-fashioned naval hardware. On the Kremlin's shopping list is a fleet of half a dozen Admiral Grigorovich-class frigates and as many aircraft carriers, eight Yasen-class attack submarines and a new generation of ballistic missile submarines also known as boomers designed specifically to carry out massive nuclear attacks on the US. These Borei-class boats carry 16 nuclear-tipped Bulava missiles, each with 10 independent warheads capable of post-launch manoeuvre that can thwart evolving Western ballistic-missile defence shields, according to US Navy Lieutenant Commander Tom Spahn. He calls Russia's newest boats and missiles alarmingly sophisticated. Russia's navy, indeed, has become an important symbol of a resurgent Russia. Putin's popularity plummeted early in his reign with the loss of the Kursk, an Oscar-2 class attack sub that went down with all 118 hands after a faulty torpedo burned up in its tube in August 2000.

Now, for reasons symbolic as well as practical, Putin is determined to reverse the decline of Russian naval power. Russia has 110,000 kilometres of coastline the third longest after Canada and the US and over 80% of the supplies to Russia's Far East go by ship, mostly via the Indian Ocean. A third of Russia's nuclear arsenal more than 600 warheads are carried on the Navy's missile submarines. And, of course, it makes for great television. Putin loves the navy. There's nothing more impressive than a battleship or submarine with its crew paraded in dress uniforms, says Semyon Vlasov, a former consultant to the Duma's Defence Committee, who created a patriotic television show for the Russian military called Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star).

There is also the symbolism of being able to project power around the world. Every Great Russian ruler has made their mark on the high seas. Peter the Great announced that Russia was a European power by creating a Navy on the Baltic, says St Petersburg-based historian Andrei Grinev. Catherine the Great showed Russia was a world power by defeating the Ottoman [Turkish] navy at Cesme in 1770, and colonising Alaska. Putin is acutely aware of the historical resonance, and is determined to follow his predecessors globetrotting tradition. He's revived the Russian naval station at Tartus in Syria, the only Russian military facility outside the

former Soviet Union. Established in 1971, the Material-Technical Support Point is, in reality, a tiny sliver of land less than half a kilometre long and is equipped with two 100-metre long floating piers, none of them big enough to accommodate even the smallest of Russia's frigates.

In January 2013 Russia evacuated its last personnel from Tartus, leaving Syrian contractors in charge of a single Amur-class floating workshop. Tartus exists mostly so that Russian officials can talk about it, says one Western diplomat formerly stationed in Damascus, who visited the port in 2010. A planned visit in 2009 by the Russia's only aircraft carrier, the Admiral Kuznetsov, was cancelled after seven of her eight turbines failed and a fire broke out on board. The carrier has only managed four deployments since she was commissioned in 1991. Still, Russian Defence Minister, Sergei Shoigu, has great plans for Tartus, and in February called for the creation of a network of Russian naval bases in Vietnam, Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, the Seychelles, and Singapore. Naturally, Russia is interested in having re-supply and maintenance bases for our navy in several states, confirmed Russian deputy foreign minister, Anatoly Antonov in March. We are engaged in talks on the issue. Russia, Admiral Eduard Baltin, former commander of Russia's Black Sea Fleet, told Russian Reporter, is returning to the stage in its power and international relations which it, regrettably, lost at the end of last century. No one loves the weak.

Putin is also deploying his navy to push Russia's economic interests. Technology is making the rich mineral resources under the Arctic seabed accessible for the first time and Moscow insists that large swathes of the undersea territory are geologically contiguous to Northern Russia, giving it the right of possession under international law. The question is being adjudicated by the UN but in the meantime the Northern Fleet Admiral Andrei Korablev announced last week that Russia would re-open a military base in the Novosibirsk Islands abandoned 20 years ago and reinforce it with 10 warships and four nuclear-powered icebreakers. The navy will also install military infrastructure on almost all of the islands and archipelagos of the Arctic Ocean to create what Korablev calls a unified system of monitoring air, surface and subsurface conditions. His fleet will also be sent to patrol Franz Josef Land, Severnaya Zemlya, the Novosibirsk archipelago and Wrangel Island to back up the Kremlin's claim to the world's largest untapped oil reserves control over which is now contested by Russia, the US, Denmark, Norway, Canada and, more recently, China.

Of the two, it is China's naval build up that, for now, most concentrates minds in the US Pentagon. As Ratner of the Centre for American Progress in Washington says, Beijing's far-reaching claims amount to an expansionist strategy with profound implications for US power and regional security. At the end of the Cold War, the US had 15 carrier battle groups, compared to 11 today. How much longer Washington's spending on sea power can be limited depends in part on what both Beijing and Moscow do.

And right now, the signals are in one direction. Last December, a PLAN warship attached to the Liaoning's battle group peeled off and sailed straight at the USS Cowpens, a guided missile cruiser shadowing the aircraft carrier. Washington to be sure remains the dominant naval power globally. But the gap is once again closing quickly.

Source: [Newsweek](#), 20th July, 2014

Geologically Justified Maritime Boundary

- Md. Khalequzzaman

The UN's Permanent Court of Arbitration (UN PCA) based in Hague, the Netherlands, recently delivered its judgment on delimitation of maritime boundary between India and Bangladesh. The verdict is not reversible or appealable. However, since the issuance of the verdict, both the international and domestic news and press media have been discussing and publishing the merit and demerits of the outcome. While the government of Bangladesh claims that they have "won" the sea battle with both Myanmar and India, many others disagree. The purpose of this article is to illustrate the geologic link between the land and ocean, and what factors should have been highlighted by both parties in settling this issue to avoid future conflicts between India and Bangladesh.

The Himalayan Mountains, Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna River Basins, Bengal Delta, Swatch of no Ground, and the Bengal Fan are all connected by geological processes that affect each other in a way that does not conform to political boundaries. Yet in managing the natural resources in a region that are bisected by political boundary requires some understanding of the processes that govern their existence and ecological balance. The sediments eroded in the Himalayas are carried by numerous rivers and deposited in the floodplains and coastal plain to form the Bengal Delta, of which both Bangladesh and *Pashchimbanga* are parts. More than half of one billion tons of annually transported sediments are carried by tides, waves, and ocean currents to the Bay of Bengal through the submarine canyon called "the Swatch of no Ground", which in turn form the world's largest submarine fan called the Bengal Fan. The majority of the sediments that feed the Swatch of no Ground flow through the rivers in Bangladesh, namely, the Ganges and its distributaries, Brahmaputra, and the Meghna. In fact, the Swatch of no Ground is a drowned river valley—most likely of the Passur River or the Meghna River – that existed during the last Ice Age about 12,000 years B.P. In this regard, the Swatch of no Ground is the most prominent geologic feature that separates the origin and the pathways of the sediments that form the country Bangladesh and parts of Indian states that lie to the western side of the Swatch of no Ground.

The submarine landforms are connected to the land through geologic processes, including upliftment of mountains, erosion of sediments, transport of sediments by rivers, deposition of sediments both on land and ocean floor. Consequently, the delimitation of maritime boundaries needs to take that land-ocean connection in making decisions.

As per the news report, the UN PCA took into account the concept of land-ocean connections in their verdict by extending the delimitation line from Hariabhang and Raimangal estuary in a southerly direction, following the “silt line.” However, they did not draw the entire boundary following this principle of “silt line”. It is not clear if Bangladesh placed any documentation in support of this argument, or if even they pleaded for such settlement. Bangladesh certainly has a legitimate right on the sediments that are carried by the rivers that flow through it. Several geological studies have established the nexus between riverine sediments and the formation of huge (over 3,000,000 km²) submarine Bengal Fan. As per the UN PCA’s judgment, most of the Swatch of no Ground along with the Bengal Fan belongs to India. This can be considered as a colossal loss on Bangladesh’s part. In addition, the maritime boundaries among Myanmar, Bangladesh, and India have left Bangladesh as a sea-locked country.

On the other hand, if Bangladesh decides to build a cross dam across the head of the Swatch of no Ground in an attempt to reclaim coastal land by blocking the riverine sediments then it will have the potential to deprive the Bengal Fan of the sediments, which may leave India unhappy. Moreover, the prevailing easterly coastal current along the shoreline in Bangladesh will likely carry ocean pollution from Bangladesh’s continental shelf to that of Indian side across the Swatch of no Ground. All of these potential disputes could be avoided by drawing the maritime boundary between India and Bangladesh following the existing natural boundary that separates these two countries, namely the Swatch of no Ground. Although the maritime boundary is not drawn based on natural and geologic feature, namely the Swatch of no Ground, but in the future this may lead to conflicts between these two neighbors. Humans cannot defy the nature, but can minimise conflicts by living in harmony with the nature. The sooner we bow to the force and power of the nature, the better it will be for the humanity, as well as for the environment.

Source: [BD News](#), 21st July, 2014

RIMPAC and the Politics of Maritime Engagement

-Abhijit Singh

Almost three weeks ago, the world’s largest naval exercise got underway in the Pacific. RIMPAC, or the Rim of the Pacific exercise, is a U.S. Pacific fleet organized and administered biannual naval drill held off Hawaii, which brings together maritime

forces of many Pacific nations. This year, 49 ships and six submarines from 23 nations are taking part in exercises that will last for duration of over four weeks, spread over two separate sea and harbor exercise programs.

Unsurprisingly, it is China's participation in the exercises that has attracted the most attention. Even though it is the first time the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLA-N) has been invited to the exercises, the scale of its participation is considerable. With four of its premier maritime assets taking part in the exercises, including the destroyer *Haikou* and hospital ship *Ark Peace*, China is reportedly fielding the second largest contingent – a presence that belies the subdued image of a first time invitee. Needless to say, maritime observers have been surprised by the development, not least because the PLA-N is popularly perceived as the U.S. Navy's chief adversary in the Pacific.

Curiously, the invitation to China to participate in the RIMPAC comes in the midst of deepening tensions in the Pacific littorals. In recent weeks, the PLA-N's aggressive posturing in the South China Sea and the East Sea has led to confrontations with Japan, the Philippines and Vietnam. Many of these nations are close allies of the U.S. and are said to have opposed the plan to invite China. That the U.S. still managed to have its way says something about the priority it attached to securing Chinese participation at the exercise.

In an interesting way, the RIMPAC is an apt illustration of how international geopolitics animates all military engagement. In 1971, when the first edition of the RIMPAC was held, it was limited to America's closest allies. Over the next decade or so, the core group comprising Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the U.K. was expanded to include other allied and friendly nations. In all these years, the RIMPAC represented a pro-Western, anti-communist grouping that seemed to counter Russian and Chinese military ambitions in East Asia. Lately, an ideological shift has occurred with the U.S. embarking on a new type of multidirectional engagement by proposing a full-scale maritime cooperation with China.

Washington possibly has dual motivations in inviting China to the RIMPAC: one, to bring down tensions in the Asia-Pacific by making its primary geopolitical rival a key partner in a collaborative plan for maritime security in the region. Two, to create confidence in China that America is not seeking to isolate and contain Chinese influence in maritime zones it considers as being "core interests." U.S. analysts point out that inviting the PLA-N to the RIMPAC is a prudent and practical way of integrating China in the existing geopolitical order. This is rooted in the belief that maritime cooperation will serve to invest China in the Asia-Pacific's security by creating a "new model of military-to-military relations." The aim, they aver, is to deepen practical cooperation in areas of common interest and manage competition.

The Chinese – at least outwardly – appear to echo American sentiments. As a PRC defence ministry official recently observed, the RIMPAC was "an important mission

of military diplomacy” and a means to strengthen “friendly relations with countries of the South Pacific through public diplomacy.” In reality, though, China’s reasons for taking part in the RIMPAC appear to have a more nuanced geo-political rationale: the projection of a powerful but benign image. For Beijing, an appearance at the RIMPAC amounts to a Western recognition of China’s rising military power and growing international role. Being treated as an equal partner in international affairs, it realizes, is inherently advantageous – especially when China is increasingly being looked at as a potential adversary by other surrounding nations.

It is not as though Beijing has any illusions about being part of a popularity contest in the Pacific. If anything, its participation in the RIMPAC underscores a keen understanding of the geopolitics underlying military maritime exchanges these days. China realizes that maritime realpolitik is a high-stakes competitive game, where a navy must be innovative in outsmarting opponents that challenge core national interests. An effective way of achieving strategic goals is to mix cooperative diplomacy with aggressive posturing. By posing as a potential partner to an opponent’s chief patron one can create a counter-narrative that blurs the strategic picture. This, in turn, erodes the adversary’s military will for sustained defence and leads to a de-facto acceptance of one’s own strategic strength: exactly what the PLA-N appears to be attempting in the Pacific. The constant Chinese refrain of the importance of a “friendly environment that is conducive to ensuring both peace and prosperity,” is thus more likely diplomatic code for “creating favourable conditions for Chinese power projection.” Since shaping perceptions is critical in managing international relations, Chinese policymakers reckon it is better to project maritime power as benign and potentially useful, than portray it as an instrument of deterrence and retribution.

This does not detract from the fact that participation in the RIMPAC is in itself an enormously beneficial proposition for the PLA-N. As China’s regional military profile grows, there is greater all-round expectation that it will, in the future, play a more important role in peacekeeping, anti-piracy patrols, counter-proliferation searches, search-and-rescue efforts, and other international operations. Participation in multilateral exercises creates a perception that China is preparing to rise to international expectations. But beyond appearances, the coordinated exercises at RIMPAC are useful for the experience and exposure of cooperative maritime operations the PLA-N seeks for its cadres. China desires strategic recognition in the Pacific, and cooperative security is a useful cover for developing operational capacities that will give the PLA-N a larger regional profile. The functional interaction at RIMPAC is valuable as it helps the PLA-N validate many of its operational procedures and drills, giving it the confidence to conduct operations in the distant-seas.

Also interesting, from a geo-political perspective, is India’s participation in the RIMPAC. The Indian navy has been part of earlier editions of the exercise, but this is the first time it has sent an operational asset. The INS *Sahyadri*’s presence in the

RIMPAC is, in a way, “symbolic” as it locates New Delhi within the strategic environs of the Pacific. While India has, for some time, been trying to energize the maritime dimension of its Look-East policy, naval exchanges haven’t moved beyond port calls and bilateral exercises. The chance to participate in the largest multilateral exercise in the Pacific has provided New Delhi with a good opportunity to signal a clear desire to be part of the Asia-Pacific’s strategic dynamic.

India’s presence at RIMPAC is also a reflection of its growing defence relationship with the U.S. and Southeast Asia. India imports more American defence equipment than any other country and its dependence on U.S. manufactured weapons and sensors has increased considerably in recent years. Equally, India’s aid and assistance to Southeast Asian countries has grown steadily. While India’s presence reaffirms its relationship with the U.S. and ASEAN, it also allows for the development of operational congruence with China. New Delhi has been wary of limiting its eastern outreach to nations perceived to be part of a U.S.-alliance, and is seeking an active maritime engagement with Beijing. It realizes, however, that the nautical exchanges must be confined to the Pacific, and not the Indian Ocean where a growing Chinese footprint poses a strong strategic threat.

India’s presence at the RIMPAC also subtly reiterates the importance of the Indo-Pacific as an arc of economic and security interest. It validates the notion that the Pacific is strategically linked to the Indian Ocean, and that maritime security in one theatre is intimately related to the other.

To be sure, *Sahyadri’s* presence at the RIMPAC isn’t evidence of India moving towards a strategic alignment with the U.S. The Indian navy’s recent exercises with the PLA-N in April this year, and the ongoing INDRA-14 exercises with the Russian navy in the Sea of Japan show India’s maritime environment is shaped by its own strategic imperatives, in pursuit of enlightened self-interest. As if to counterbalance the emerging pro-U.S. narrative at RIMPAC, therefore, the Indian navy has sent the *Sahyadri’s* sister-ship INS *Shivalik* for the exercises with the Russian navy.

While no maritime exercise can, by itself, alter the strategic balance in region, it does highlight the geopolitical shifts that bear on future security scenarios. The RIMPAC is good example of how nations – as players on a global stage – compete with each other, even when playing on the same side. Alongside the overt cooperation to achieve common goals, each uses delicate tactics to outdo other teammates and optimize individual gains.

Geopolitics, in that sense, is inseparable from military strategy: dialectic or cooperative, it undergirds all forms of military engagement.

Source: [Diplomat](#), 22nd July, 2014

Why a U.S. Coast Guard?

In 2013 the Chinese government merged four maritime safety, security and law enforcement agencies to form the China Coast Guard. Just one year later, neighbouring South Korea moved to dismantle its 60-year-old Coast Guard. That two rising Asian maritime powers have so recently come to opposite conclusions regarding how best to organize their maritime safety and security forces is remarkable. It gives new meaning to strategy discussions as the U.S. Coast Guard's new senior leadership team takes command and the service prepares to celebrate its 224th birthday on August 4th.

Until recently, Japan, China and South Korea all had large, integrated coast guards. Each has played a role in preserving the nation's sovereignty while avoiding the more provocative effect of introducing navies into volatile situations. As nationalist tempers flare in the East China and South China Seas, many welcome the disputing parties' decision to rely so far primarily on coast guards to patrol disputed waters.

The Korea Coast Guard (KCG) was established in 1953. Its missions largely paralleled those of the U.S. Coast Guard, including search and rescue, maritime security and safety, marine environmental protection and response, and maritime law enforcement. By 2014, it had developed into a mature force comprising nearly 300 ships, 23 aircraft and over 10,000 personnel. However, citing the KCG's "virtual failure" in rescuing the 476 passengers and crew of the capsized ferry Sewol, South Korean President Park Geun-hye announced on May 18, 2014, that she was dismantling the service. The accompanying explanation for the president's loss of confidence pointed to KCG deficiencies on both the prevention and response sides.

President Park's decision to break up the KCG came just one year after China took the opposite approach. At the March 2013 National Peoples' Congress, China announced it was combining elements of its maritime patrol forces into a China Coast Guard (CCG) under the State Oceanic Administration. A PRC spokesman explained that the move was made because the nation's five separate maritime services were inadequate to fulfil China's law enforcement needs, protect its sovereignty, and safeguard its maritime rights and interests. Ironically, China's decision to integrate its maritime forces appears to have been influenced in part by a 2007 study that touted South Korea's success in unifying its maritime agencies into a single, powerful national coast guard.

No one suggests that the U.S. is about to dismember its Coast Guard. Indeed, history has demonstrated that the nation is more likely to add new components and new missions to the service first launched in 1790 with the building of 10 cutters to form a "Revenue Marine."

On December 23, 2013, Jeh Johnson was sworn in as Secretary of Homeland Security, succeeding Janet Napolitano. Among the first decisions facing the new secretary was the leadership transition for the Coast Guard. Admiral Robert J. Papp

Jr., who took command in 2010, was coming to the end of his four-year tenure. Papp's predecessor, Admiral Thad Allen, had presided over a period of dramatic reorganization. Allen shepherded the Coast Guard through its migration from the Department of Transportation to the newly established Department of Homeland Security and steered the service through a period that saw its marine safety program subjected to harsh criticism by Congress and the maritime community.

Upon taking command in 2010, Admiral Papp's principal strategic theme was to "steady the service." In response to a disturbing uptick in operational mishaps involving the service's aircraft, cutters, small boats and diving operations, Papp placed heavy emphasis on rebuilding the service's operational and leadership proficiency.

Admiral Paul F. Zukunft was selected to relieve Admiral Papp and took command on May 30, 2014. Admiral Zukunft and his newly-assembled leadership team reflect the service's integrated, multimission character. Zukunft is a cutter man and former Commander of Coast Guard Pacific Area, who earned national acclaim for his leadership as federal on-scene coordinator for the Deepwater Horizon–Macondo disaster, the nation's first declared Spill of National Significance.

The new Vice Commandant, Vice Admiral Peter Neffenger, is a marine safety expert with a government-wide reputation for strategic acumen. The Deputy Commandant for Operations, Vice Admiral Chuck Michel, is a cutter man, attorney and former Deputy Commander of Coast Guard Atlantic Area, who is perhaps best known for his command of Joint Interagency Task Force South. The Deputy Commandant for Mission Support, Vice Admiral Tom Ostebo, is a career aviator and former Assistant Commandant for Engineering and Logistics who, as Commander of the Seventeenth Coast Guard District, presided over some of the service's most demanding operational and logistics challenges during the district's annual Arctic Shield operations.

All four members of the team are consummate interagency players who are equally comfortable in command-and-control or cooperate-and-coordinate operating cells. Each is also an avid consumer of the intelligence, research and analysis necessary for sound decision-making.

Any search for a service's identity begins with its missions. In the Homeland Security Act of 2002, Congress specified the Coast Guard's 11 missions: ports, waterways, and coastal security; drug interdiction; aids to navigation; search and rescue; conservation of living marine resources; marine safety; defence readiness; migrant interdiction; marine environmental protection; ice operations, and other law enforcement operations.

Although activity metrics are, by themselves, inadequate measures of performance, they nevertheless provide context for an assessment of the Coast Guard's value. In FY 2013, a year when budget cuts and the sequester forced the service to reduce its

operations by 25 percent, the Coast Guard still: responded to over 17,000 mariners in distress and saved more than 3,200 lives, interdicted nearly 2,000 migrants attempting to illegally enter the nation by sea, removed over 275,000 pounds of illegal drugs bound toward the U.S., conducted over 5,000 fisheries boardings and detected 184 incursions of foreign-flag fishing vessels into America's exclusive economic zone, conducted over 8,000 security boardings in and around U.S ports, completed more than 10,000 waterside facility safety and security reviews, inspected over 11,000 U.S. and foreign-flag vessels, processed some 60,000 mariner license and credential applications, investigated 5,000 marine casualties, responded to more than 11,000 pollution incident reports, and maintained more than 49,000 navigation aids.

The Coast Guard's reach extends well beyond the U.S. "coast." Its forces have been deployed to both the poles, the Western Pacific, Mediterranean and Black Seas, Northern Arabian Gulf, Horn of Africa, and Gulf of Guinea. Additionally, Coast Guard officers serve in the Pentagon, with sister agencies, and in more than two dozen foreign nations. More than a century ago the Coast Guard faced—and survived—a threat to its multi mission identity when a commission appointed by President Taft concluded that single-function agencies were more efficient and economical than multi-function agencies. The commission recommended that the Coast Guard (then called the Revenue Cutter Service) be dismembered. Fortunately, the Secretary of the Treasury, Franklin MacVeagh, defended the service. President Taft adopted the commission's report, but MacVeagh's view ultimately prevailed, and Congress rejected the commission's recommendation. Taft's successor, President Wilson, later threw his support behind a counter-proposal to expand the Revenue Cutter Service by joining it with the Lifesaving Service to form the U.S. Coast Guard. Congress enacted the necessary legislation in 1915. In 1939, Congress added the U.S. Lighthouse Service and in 1942 the Navigation and Steamboat Inspection Service.

Today, the Coast Guard provides the nation with a unique combination of authorities, capabilities, capacities, and partnerships. It carries out homeland security and homeland defence missions. It is at all times one of the nation's five armed forces; but unlike the other four services, which are limited by posse comitatus laws, the Coast Guard is expressly charged with law enforcement authorities that provide a critical arrest-and-prosecute end game to crimes like piracy and seaborne trafficking.

Any 15-year-old assessment must of course be revalidated against today's performance metrics and criteria. At the same time, however, the assessment must also consider the breadth of America's maritime domain and the range of activities conducted there. With patrol responsibility for 95,000 miles of shoreline and, at 3.4 million square nautical miles, the largest exclusive economic zone in the world, efficiency requires that any given patrol vessel or aircraft be prepared to timely and competently respond to a wide assortment of threats.

The Coast Guard's ability to marshal its multi mission forces to meet national emergencies was convincingly demonstrated in the mass evacuation of lower Manhattan in 2001 after the 9/11 attack and its response four years later to Hurricane Katrina, during which 5,600 Coastguardsmen were dispatched to the Gulf Coast from across the nation. They saved over 24,000 Gulf residents from imminent danger and evacuated some 9,400 patients from local hospitals. That same surge capacity was on display in the response to the 2010 Deepwater Horizon-Macondo oil spill and the Haiti earthquake that same year. It will again prove its worth if the nation faces another threat to its maritime border security from a large-scale mass migration episode or a mass-effect weapon attack or pandemic. As Coastguardsmen prepare to celebrate the service's 224th birthday, the debate over whether the benefits of single-mission specialization trump those of multi mission integration is still ongoing, as it should be. One answer to that question can be found in a recent Coast Guard publication, which provided two examples of the value that an integrated service brings to the nation:

The Coast Guard is justly proud of its distinctive multi mission, "always ready" identity. But vigilance will be required of its leaders in the coming years. "Zero tolerance" once described the nation's approach to the use of illegal drugs. Today, it might accurately characterize the public's attitude toward government, whether in the U.S. or South Korea. The public has a low tolerance for any decision that does not produce the outcomes it expects.

Whether it's the intelligence community's "failure of imagination" before the 9/11 attacks or its over-stimulated imagination regarding Iraq's WMD program, FEMA's response to Hurricane Katrina, the Minerals Management Service's oversight of Deepwater Horizon or the Veterans Administration's failure to timely provide critical health care services, the public and its elected representatives demand that agencies deliver successful outcomes, not merely make best efforts under the existing budgetary, legal and political constraints

Source: [Maritime Executive](#), 21st July, 2014



Centre Takes Steps to Strengthen Coastal Security

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh said the central government is taking all necessary steps to strengthen coastal security. "The government is taking all necessary steps like setting up new coastal police stations and adding more fleet to the force to strengthen the Coast Guard," he said while replying to supplementary in the Rajya Sabha.

He also said the National Maritime Authority will be set up soon to improve the country's coastal security. "The second phase of the Coastal Security Scheme will be completed by 2016," the minister added. In a separate reply, Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijju said the first phase of the Coastal Security Scheme was completed in March 2011 and the Indian Navy has been designated as the authority responsible for overall maritime security. The scheme is aimed at improving the coastal security in the wake of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks. Besides, Rijju said the Coast Guard have set up nine additional stations, including at Karwar and Ratnagiri.

Source: [Zee](#), 16th July, 2014

U.S. Welcomes China's Moving Oil Rig from Disputed South China Sea

The United States on Wednesday welcomed China's removal of an oil rig from disputed waters in the South China Sea. U.S. State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said, "We welcome China's announcement that it is moving its oil rig from its location near the Paracels to an area closer to Hainan Island."

Psaki was referring to the China-controlled Paracel Islands, which are claimed by Vietnam and Taiwan. China moved an oil rig to near the islands and began exploring for oil in May. The rig became the focus of a fraught standoff between Beijing and Hanoi, with boats from both sides colliding frequently over the course of two months and assaulting each other with water cannons. Psaki said the row "highlighted the need for claimants to clarify their claims in accordance with international law to reach a shared understanding on appropriate behaviour and activities in disputed areas." She reiterated a call for a "voluntary freeze on provocative unilateral actions" to support implementation of the 2002 code of conduct for the South China Sea between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The oil rig was previously scheduled to explore the waters until Aug. 15, China said. Psaki did not speculate on the reason for its removal.

Source: [Global Post](#), 17th July, 2014

China's SOA Director Meets with U.S. Chief of Naval Operations

Liu Cigui, director of the State Oceanic Administration (SOA) of China, met with Adm. Jonathan Greenert, chief of Naval Operations of the U.S., and his party in Beijing on July 16, 2014. The two sides held friendly talks on further deepening the cooperation in marine field. Chen Lianzeng, deputy director of the SOA, Han Xiaohu, assistant to chief of staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), and responsible persons of relevant departments of the SOA and the PLAN attended the meeting.

Liu Cigui expressed his welcome to the visit of Greenert and his party and briefly introduced SOA's main responsibilities and its reorganization. Cigui said that since the establishment of the diplomatic relations between China and the U.S. in 1979, friendly exchanges and cooperation between the two countries have been deepened and fruitful results have been achieved in various fields including the marine field. He introduced that the reorganized SOA has strengthened its responsibilities including marine comprehensive management and maritime law enforcement, and hoped that the two sides can continue to deepen communication, exchange and cooperation in marine field. Greenert said that the U.S. side attaches great importance to the relations with the Chinese side and stressed that the U.S. Navy hopes to establish a good relationship with the SOA so as to further strengthen various types of cooperation in the marine field and make joint efforts to safeguard maritime peace, stability and security.

Source: [China Mail](#), 17th July, 2014

Coast Guard Official Commended for Bravery

An Indian Coast Guard official has been commended by the International Maritime Organisation for displaying exceptional bravery while carrying out firefighting operations on board a merchant vessel and avoiding a pollution incident in the process. This is the first time that an Indian mariner has received bravery commendation from the United Nations subsidiary. "Uttam Adhikari Mahavir Singh has been commended by the International Maritime Organisation for display of exceptional bravery at sea while assisting in the firefighting operations on board merchant vessel Mol Comfort, thus avoiding a pollution incident," a Coast Guard release said.

In the operations, Singh also evacuated an injured crew member from a Shipping Corporation of India vessel 'Tug Urja' which was towing Mol Comfort without any regard to his personal wellbeing. He also rescued two fellow crew members who were thrown into the sea by violent waves from the inflatable boat of ICGS Samudra

Prahri, which was engaged in the firefighting operation. On June 17, merchant vessel Mol Comfort, en route from Singapore to Jeddah, was experiencing flooding onboard due to a crack in her hull. "The ship broke in two parts and both parts were reported to be adrift. ICG took over the operation in deep Arabian Sea at about 900 km away from Indian coast with several of its ships and aircraft," the release said.

The Coast Guard has saved 6402 lives and conducted 3687 ship and air sorties for search and rescue operations since its inception in 1978.

Source: [Business Standard](#), 18th July, 2014

End of Public Sector Hold over Defence Sector

Defence Minister Arun Jaitley ended public sector monopoly over aircraft assembly and signalled that the Indian Navy will operate three battle carrier groups in waters beyond the Indian Ocean Region — such as in the South China Sea — supported by large auxiliary ships built in India.

The first meeting of the Defence Acquisitions Council (DAC) after the new government took over approved procurement programmes worth Rs 21,000 crore, with Jaitley also indicating that he hoped to end the tardiness in buying military equipment that the armed forces have complained of. "There are many projects in the pipeline. We have tried to expedite quite a few of them today," Jaitley said.

Two of the programmes — for light transport aircraft and for fleet support ships — are designed to attract private sector firms into defence production. "This (the light transport aircraft) project is going to be a significant project in which the private sector will be (the) sole player and it will lead to capacity-building," Jaitley said after the DAC meet.

The IAF requires 56 light transport aircraft to replace its outdated Avros. Because it is a non-lethal platform, the selected foreign original equipment manufacturer (OEM) and its Indian partner agency (an Indian private firm) would also be allowed to sell the aircraft commercially for civilian uses, assuring it of orders beyond the limited requirement of the armed forces. The selected entity would have to establish a production facility with an adjacent airfield.

The programme was first approved by former defence minister A.K. Antony in May last year. But he froze it in December after his then cabinet colleague Praful Patel objected to the exclusion of the public sector Hindustan Aeronautics' (HAL), which had monopoly over licence production of aircraft for the air force. The IAF would initially enter into a contract of around Rs 13,000 crore. As of now, three Indian companies — Reliance, the Tata group and Mahindra — are known to have established aviation subsidiaries. In his budget last week, Jaitley, who is also finance minister, had lifted the FDI cap in defence from 26 per cent to 49 per cent.

The DAC also decided that the navy's requirement for fleet support vessels would be met in the "buy Indian" category of the defence procurement rules, meaning that they would be domestically made. The five combat support vessels would be procured for Rs 9,000 crore. Fleet support or auxiliary vessels are required to feed carrier battle-groups operating in "blue waters", meaning in seas beyond the neighbourhood.

The perspective plan of the navy says the vessels — each displacing 40,000 tonnes (the INS Vikramaditya carrier displaces 44,000 tonnes) — will transfer personnel, food, FOL (fuel, oil and lubricants) to three carrier battle groups it would operate in eight to 10 years. The navy currently has two carriers — the INS Vikramaditya and the INS Viraat. (A third, the Vikrant, is being built at the Cochin Shipyard). Such a plan is a scaled-down version of the US's expeditionary fleet-pattern navy.

The only yard that can build such large ships is currently in Cochin. But private sector companies such as Larsen & Toubro, ABG and Pipavav would be invited to participate in the programme with the government deciding that the tenders would be given only to Indian companies.

The DAC also approved procurement from public-sector companies. Among this, the largest is Rs 7,000 crore, to buy 32 Dhruv helicopters from HAL for the coast guard and the navy. The cost also includes the development programme. Naval helicopters require foldable rotor blades because of constricted spaces on warships.

Other procurements approved include Rs 900 crore worth of search and rescue equipment for the army, navy and the air force; five fast patrol vessels for the navy for Rs 360 crore to be built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers, Calcutta, and five offshore patrol vessels (Rs 2,000 crore) from Goa Shipyard for the coast guard.

Source: [Telegraph](#), 20th July, 2014

Telangana Allots 2,900 acres to Navy

Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has agreed to allot 2,900 acres of forest land to the Indian Navy for setting up a VLF station.

The land will be allotted to the Eastern Naval Command, Visakhapatnam, in Dammagudem Reserve Forest at Pudur village, Vikarabad in Ranga Reddy district near Hyderabad, said a statement from the chief minister's office. The announcement came as the ENC commander, Vice Admiral Satish Soni, met the Chief Minister. Rao agreed to extend all necessary cooperation to hand over the land. The navy will pay Rs.115.06 crores towards compensatory afforestation and net present value of the land in due course, it added.

Source: [TOI](#), 21st July, 2014

China Gets Ready for Maritime Cooperation with Maldives

China is willing to help Maldives in training its naval personnel and strengthen cooperation in maritime affairs, Beijing's envoy to the country, Wang Fukang, has said.

Maldives, a cluster of hundreds of habited and inhabited island close to India's southern coast, lies in a strategic part of the ocean through which hundreds of cargo ships from the east and west pass through every year. President Xi Jinping last year mooted the idea of the maritime silk route to which passes through the region to expand east-west trade.

Wang told the official news agency Xinhua that the current Maldivian government – under President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom, was trying to diversify its single economic structure and is committed to attract more foreign investments, including those coming from China. Maritime cooperation with Maldives is one area that Beijing is looking at other than cooperating in tourism and developing infrastructure. "The third area is maritime cooperation. Wang said that China is willing to train maritime personnel, discuss and sign memorandums of understanding in the area of maritime cooperation, strengthening cooperation in fisheries, marine research, protection of ecology and environment as well as climate change," the Xinhua report quoted Wang as saying.

The Indian government has traditionally been close to Male's various governments and has had commercial and military ties. China is seen to be increasingly involved with countries in the region including Sri Lanka where it has invested in massive projects including ports and airports.

According to the report, then Maldivian government organised the first "Maldives Investment Forum" in Singapore in April, promoting five mega- projects, including the special economic zones, expansion of Ibrahim Nasir International Airport, Hulhumale' Phase II development, expansion of Male Harbor and oil exploration.

Currently, the Maldivian government is formulating a Special Economic Zone Bill which aims to provide more incentives to foreign investors in terms of tax breaks, relaxed financial requirements and preferential land use.

China clearly seeks to enter into the sectors. "Since 2010, China has remained the largest source of tourist arrivals in the Maldives. In 2013 alone, more than 330,000 Chinese tourists visited Maldives. In the future, both sides could encourage more Chinese tourists to visit Maldives. Maldives could attract potential Chinese companies to invest in the tourism sector of the country," Wang said

Source: [HT](#), 22nd July, 2014

Malabar Exercise All Set to Begin in Pacific

After seven years, the Indo-US bilateral Malabar Exercise between the two navies beginning Thursday in the north-west Pacific will take a multilateral dimension with Japanese participation.

In 2007, the exercise was held in the Bay of Bengal involving Japan, Singapore and Australia, along with the US and India. It triggered angry protests from Beijing with whom New Delhi was trying to normalise its military relations. Subsequently, the then defence minister A K Antony decided that India will not participate in any exercise that will convey a sense of military alliance with the US against a third nation.

In the dying months of the UPA government, however, there was a change in the policy as the Defence Ministry agreed to take part in multilateral exercises with the US if it does not happen near the Indian coastline. As a result, Japan was invited for the 18th edition of the Malabar Exercise in January.

The three-day long harbour phase of the exercise will begin on Thursday as Indian ships from the Eastern Fleet entered Port Sasebo in southern Japan. It will be followed by the sea phase between July 27 and 30, involving USS George Washington, a nuclear powered aircraft carrier that lies at the core of Carrier Strike Group Five of the US Navy. Other American warships in the exercise are USS Shiloh, USS John S McCain and USS Columbus, a nuclear powered attack submarine (SSN). The Indian contingent comprises of INS Shivalik, INS Ranvijay and fleet tanker INS Shakti, said an official. Japan will field two guided missile destroyers, including Ashigara. The US and Japan will be having P3C Orion maritime surveillance aircraft.

The Shin Mywa US-2 amphibious aircraft, which India is considering to buy from Japan, will also be fielded in the exercise, providing an opportunity to the naval commanders to have firsthand experience to check its utility during operations. The three Indian ships left the shore by the end of June and reached Vladivostok around July 12 to participate in Indra series of bilateral exercise with Russia.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) reiterated Prime Minister Narendra Modi's keen interest in Japan. MEA spokesperson Syed Akbaruddin said that the Prime Minister conveyed to his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe that his first port of call for a bilateral visit outside the subcontinent would be Japan, which has shown interest in creating an "arc of democracy" in the Indian Ocean region.

Source: [Deccan Herald](#), 23rd July, 2014

India, China under Pressure to develop Naval Arsenals

The battle for energy resources in South China Sea and Indian Ocean is persuading India and China to develop their naval arsenals that have a prominent nuclear dimension.

Focused on preserving its “strategic autonomy,” India is validating its nuclear deterrent, riding on some of the recent technological advancements of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the premier body, which is steering the effort to establish an atomic deterrent.

The gap in India’s capacity to launch a retaliatory second strike, following a nuclear attack, is set to be bridged with the integration of a Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM) on the hull of the domestically developed Arihant nuclear submarine, which is set to undergo sea trials. “During the trial phase, the Arihant will test-fire the fully developed BO-5 missile as part of the sea trials,” said Avinash Chander, the head of DRDO, refereeing to the SLBM, which can strike from a moveable platform at a maximum distance of 2,000 km.

As India builds its deterrent, China has fully developed its fourth-generation nuclear powered submarines, capable of targeting sea-going or land-based objects with torpedoes and missiles, the *People’s Daily* reported. The Chinese seem to be responding with calibrated assertion, following the Pivot to Asia of the United States, which entails beefing up America’s military profile in the Asia-Pacific, including the energy rich, South China Sea.

Analysts say that the competition for energy and other resources in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, which should not spill over into open conflict, has emerged as a major factor in the establishment of stable deterrents.

In May, China deployed 80 ships, including seven warships, to protect its oil rig in the South China Sea, in an area that was hotly contested by Vietnam. On its part, naval sources said the Indian Navy aspires to broaden its footprint along the Indian Ocean, in an area that includes the resource rich East African coastline, and stretches as far as Antarctica.

Source: [Hindu](#), 23rd July, 2014

India Orders More Dhruv Helicopters

Hindustan Aeronautics has received approval to manufacture 32 Dhruv Mk III advanced light helicopters, to be divided equally between the Indian Navy and the country’s Coast Guard.

Approved by the Indian government's Defence Acquisition Council, the deal is worth around \$1.19 billion, also including spare parts, maintenance and in-service support.

The Indian Navy already operates eight Dhruv rotorcrafts, while the Coast Guard has four, and the first navy squadron to be used for search and rescue and armed patrol tasks was commissioned last November. Hindustan Aeronautics has delivered almost 150 Dhruv helicopters to India's armed services and paramilitary forces since 2002, the majority flown by its air force and army.

Source: [Flight Global](#), 23rd July, 2014

Malabar Exercise Not Aimed at Containing China: Pentagon

The annual India-US bilateral Malabar naval exercise which kicked off in the Asia Pacific region is not aimed at containing China, the Pentagon has said. "It has absolutely no relations anything to do with China. If anything it is strengthening the US naval presence in the Pacific Ocean region...and maritime partnership with our allies," a Pentagon official told reporters. "It is totally a routine exercise with no relations to China," the official said. The wargames this year has Japan as a special invitee. China had in the past raised objections over Japan's participation in the drills held mainly between US and India. The last exercise involving Japan was held in 2009. The official said the participating countries are working with specific training exercises such as communication, search and rescue, helicopter cross deck evolutions and anti-submarine warfare. Over 7,000 American defence personnel are participating in the exercise and also includes nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS George Washington, Ticonderoga-class destroyer USS Shiloh, Arleigh Burke-class destroyer John S McCain and nuclear submarine USS Columbus. It also includes P-3 Orion aircraft and MH-60R helicopters. India has sent its three warships—INS Ranvijay and Shivalik along with fleet support tanker ship INS Shakti. Responding to a question on Japanese participation, the official said it strengthens the partnership with them. "It also promotes India's growing navy as they expand beyond their own areas of influence, in the Pacific Ocean and not just their own home area of the Indian Ocean," she said. India and US have held 17 editions of the Malabar-series war games since 1992 and had involved Japan, Australia and Singapore in 2007 in the Pacific Ocean after which the Chinese government raised objections. India had stopped involving others but last year after the visit of Indian Prime Minister to Japan and the reciprocal visit by the Japanese Prime Minister, India agreed to have Japan in these drills. The three Indian warships taking part in the war games earlier held exercises with the Russian Navy in Vladivostok last week.

Source: [Mint](#), 24th July, 2014

NATO Warship Visits Dar-es-Salaam

NATO's counter-piracy Operation Ocean Shield warship ITS Mimbelli has concluded a port visit to Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, designed to deepen ongoing co-operation with the Tanzanian Navy in an effort to eradicate piracy off the coast of eastern Africa, protect maritime trade and ensure safe navigation in the Indian Ocean.

The Italian ship's boarding teams performed maritime co-operation activities with the Tanzanian Navy, sharing experiences and knowledge on counter-piracy procedures, maritime interdiction operations, force protection capabilities, firefighting and damage control procedures.

During the port visit, ITS Mimbelli's Commanding Officer, Captain Davide Berna, met with the Acting Commander Tanzanian Navy, Brigadier General H. Majumba to discuss enhanced co-operation and training opportunities between NATO and Tanzanian naval forces. "We are grateful for the support received from the Tanzanian authorities, here represented by the Navy, in our common effort to curb piracy at sea," said Berna.

Mimbelli's crew also visited Mbagala, a suburb of Dar-es-Salaam, to provide medical and humanitarian assistance to local charity associations. The visit to Dar-es-Salaam proved to be beneficial in improving co-operation between NATO naval forces and the Tanzanian Navy, while enhancing regional security.

Source: [Defence Web](#), 24th July, 2014

India Expands Defence Wing in China

India has expanded the strength of its defence attaches in China by adding Navy and Air Force officials in addition to a senior officer from the Army to step up engagement between the armed forces of the two sides.

Captain Sushant Dam of the Indian Navy and Group Captain Ashish Srivastava of the Air Force took charge at the mission. They will be in addition to Col. Iqbal Samyal from the Army who is the Defence Attache at the Indian mission here.

The addition of the attaches from the Navy and Air Force is only on the Indian side as Chinese Embassy in India already has an expanded defence wing, Indian officials here said. The Chinese mission in New Delhi has more than double the size of personnel in all its wings compared to the Indian Embassy here which is gradually bolstering its strength as the relations expanded in the last few years with close engagement between the two countries.

Both sides now have enhanced military cooperation and initiated confidence building measures to improve the defence cooperation, a senior Indian diplomat said.

Source: [Economic Times](#), 25th July, 2014

India Asks Russia to Upgrade Two Submarines

India has asked Russia to upgrade two its submarines, director-general of the Rubin Central Maritime Design Bureau Igor Vilnit said. "The Indian governments filed a request to the Russian Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation to extend the life of two Russian Kilo Class submarines (Type 877EKM)," he said.

Specialists of the Zvyozdochka ship repair centre and the Rubin design bureau are expected to leave for India to inspect the first submarine. "We're optimistic about military-technical cooperation with the new Indian government," Vilnit said.

Russia and India develop military-technical cooperation since the mid 1960's. In the mid 1990's Russia and India signed an interstate agreement on military-technical cooperation. The ten submarines were supplied to India's Navy from 1986 to 2000.

Source: [India and Russia Report](#), 25th July, 2014

China Announces Live Fire Drills in the East China Sea

China announced that it will conduct a series of live fire training drills in the contested waters of the East China Sea, where it is locked in a bitter maritime dispute with Japan. The five-day exercise from July 29-August 2 comes even as air traffic at various Chinese airports went haywire due to the ongoing air-exercises, the Maritime Safety Administration said. It warned ships to stay away from the region and asked authorities to ensure safety during the training, which is scheduled to last from midnight to 6 pm each day, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Chinese and Japanese navies and military planes aggressively patrol the disputed islands called 'Diaoyu' by China and 'Senkakus' by Japan. Both sides are beefing up their military strengths by holding regular drills. Meanwhile, China's aviation regulator issued an orange alert today for massive flight delays in eastern and central China, saying the traffic capacity of some routes may drop as much as 65 per cent.

The air-exercises were going on for several days. In an earlier statement, it said that "rainstorms, routine military exercises and other comprehensive factors" were behind widespread flight delays and cancellations. In Shanghai, the air traffic's busy hours will last best part of the day reducing air traffic capacity by 65 per cent. During the same period, the civil flight handling capacity in airspace above the Zhengzhou area will drop by 60 per cent, according to CAAC. During busy hours, flights will be unable to land at airports in the cities of Linyi, Xuzhou, Lianyungang, Huai'an, Yancheng, Changzhou, Yangzhou and Nantong, while flights departing for

airports in Nanchang, Ganzhou, Jiujiang, Yichun, Jinggangshan, Jingdezhen, Wuyishan and Wenzhou will not be allowed to take off. At least 14 flights operated by six airline companies in Shanghai were cancelled as of noon today. The CAAC also banned applications for business jet flights, additional flights and charters at the affected airport.

Source: [Zee](#), 26th July, 2014

China's Aircraft Carrier Puts Naval Ambitions on Show

At a northern quayside China's first aircraft carrier dwarfs nearby vessels, its take-off ramp rising higher than the top deck of the cruise ship at the next berth, symbolising the country's naval ambitions. Dalian, where the Liaoning was refitted and undergoes regular maintenance, looks out over the Bohai strait, gateway to the Yellow Sea, and beyond it, Japan and the Pacific Ocean. Beijing proclaims that China's rise is entirely peaceful and it has no interest in hegemony, but analysts say its goal is to surpass the naval capability of Japan's Self-Defence Forces and ultimately rival the US Navy, masters of the Pacific. That will require a number of aircraft carrier battle groups, developed over decades and costing billions of dollars. The 1,000-foot Liaoning -- a Soviet-era vessel Beijing bought from Ukraine -- was commissioned in September 2012, and officers have acknowledged that it is not yet ready for combat, with naval fighter pilots taking years to train. But it is only the first Chinese vessel of its type. Analysts say future carriers will be entirely Chinese-made and ultimately nuclear-powered, vastly extending their range.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is already the world's largest standing military, and when Chinese President Xi Jinping went on board the Liaoning last year he spoke of building "a powerful people's navy". Xi has made a point of visiting several military bases since taking office and has said that "being able to fight and win battles is the essence of strengthening the military".

Beijing recognises the "symbolic significance of carrier power in generating global standing", said James Hardy and Lee Willett of the British military publisher Jane's. In the medium to long term, they said, China will need "an expanding presence around the world" to secure its interests in resources, markets and shipping routes. "A widespread naval presence thus will be required."

Earlier this year reports in state-run media quoted Wang Min, the Communist Party chief of Liaoning province, as saying a second vessel was already under construction in Dalian and two more were in the pipeline. The PLA clouds its activities in secrecy, and the military zones at the tip of the Lushunkou peninsula in the city -- known as Port Arthur during its time as a Russian, then Japanese colony -- are forbidden to outsiders. Rick Fisher, senior analyst at the International

Assessment and Strategy Center, said two rival shipyards produced modules for the next carrier last year, one a "slice" of hull and the other a bow.

Source: [Business Standard](#), 26th July, 2014

Vizag Braces for its Biggest Fleet Review in 2016

The Eastern Naval Command (ENC) will, for the first time, host the International Fleet Review 2016. Warships from over 60 maritime nations will be invited to participate in the event. This would be the second time that the Indian Navy will be hosting the International Fleet Review after the one held in Mumbai in 2001.

Top sources in the Indian Navy at Eastern Naval Command said that the event is being hosted to build better relationship with the other nations. President Pranab Mukherjee, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other Indian dignitaries, along with the naval heads of the participating nations, are expected to attend the fleet review.

People can also witness the extravaganza which would include a fly-past at the Beach Road, among other events. "The Presidential Fleet Review held at Visakhapatnam in 2006 can be considered as a trailer when compared to the International Fleet Review to be held in 2016," a senior naval officer said.

In the International Fleet Review 2001 held in Mumbai, more than 60 ships from over 22 nations including USA, UK, Japan and Australia participated. Naval officials are expecting the participation of more maritime nations during the latest international fleet review to be held in 2016 in the Bay of Bengal. Though the preparations are in the preliminary stages, senior officials said that international seminars on maritime issues, sports, band concerts and other events will be held for the maritime nations participating in the event.

Source: [Indian Express](#), 26th July, 2014

Extra Care Delays Nuclear Submarine's Sea Trials

The Indian Navy is being extra-careful with India's first indigenously built nuclear powered submarine INS Arihant, which is now at the naval base in Vizag.

The nuclear sub is likely to go to sea trials by this year end and is expected to be commissioned by 2017. The sea trials and the commissioning of the submarine, capable of carrying nuclear missiles, has already been delayed by more than two years.

As per the original schedule, the nuclear submarine, which was ceremonially launched on July 26, 2009, was supposed to go for sea trials in 2010 and formally be

inducted into the Indian Navy by 2011. In August 2012, the then Indian Navy Chief Admiral Nirmal Verma was quoted saying that the nuclear sub would go for sea trials 'very soon' and was expected to be commissioned within 18 months.

But, till date the submarine is not 'ready' for sea trials for unknown reasons. "The nuclear submarine is undergoing all the standard testing procedures of all its capabilities, since it's the first of its kind built by India proper care is being taken," said a top official of the Eastern Naval Command.

INS Arihant is part of the Indian Navy's secretive Advanced Technology Vessel project. With INS Arihant's induction into the Navy, India will join the league of five nations with the ability to design, build, and operate its own nuclear submarines.

Source: [Deccan Chronicle](#), 26th July, 2014

Naval Exercises lead up to High-Level US-India Visits

In the lead up to this week Indo-US Strategic Dialogue, for which US Secretary of State, John Kerry, will be coming to Delhi, the Indo-US defence engagement is even more intense than usual. An American nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, USS George Washington, will link up for the final phase of Exercise Malabar in the Western Pacific. This is a sophisticated, weeklong naval exercise involving the US and Indian navies and the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF), as Japan's pacifist constitution refers to what is actually one of Asia's most powerful navies. The 18th Malabar exercise, which began last Thursday, is an annual highlight of the US-India naval engagement that was first held in 1992. Since then, it has grown in sophistication, scope and training value. The participation of other regional powers, such as Japan this year, has made Malabar into a statement of India's strategic intent in the Asia-Pacific.

Meanwhile, since July 1, another Indian warship - the frigate, INS Sahyadri - has been participating in a month-long, multinational exercise off Hawaii, organised by the US Pacific Command (PACOM). The Rim of the Pacific 2014 (RIMPAC 2014) as the high-profile exercise is called, features 22 navies, including those of the US, China, France and the UK. India is participating for the first time.

Like the inclusion of Japan in Malabar, India's participation in RIMPAC 2014 signals a more assertive Indian approach to the Asia-Pacific. For years, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government dithered over participating in RIMPAC, worrying that Beijing would see this as unfriendly. Even after China's navy decided to participate in RIMPAC 2014, former Defence Minister, A K Antony, trod cautiously. The UPA's caution stemmed partly from 2007, when the participation of 25 warships from India, the US, Japan, Australia and Singapore in Exercise Malabar elicited heated protests from the Left Front and the apparent ire of China.

When the US PACOM commander, Admiral Robert Locklear, visited New Delhi last year to urge, among other things, India's participation in RIMPAC 2014, Antony rebuffed a meeting request. Locklear only got to meet the defence secretary and the air force chief. In the "Yudh Abhyas" exercise each year, the two armies train together for "counter-terrorism" missions that are similar to what could someday be a live mission along the India-Pakistan border. The two countries also train jointly for amphibious operations in Exercise Shatrujeet.

The two air forces train together extensively in the "Cope India" and "Cope Thunder" exercises. The IAF participated in 2008 in the highly regarded American "Red Flag" exercise, which is reputed to provide the world's most realistic combat training. The IAF was to participate again in Red Flag 2013, but the exercise was cancelled due to cuts in the US defence budget. Senior Indian military officers say that US-India exercises like Malabar allow both navies to jointly develop operational doctrines for platforms like the Boeing P8I maritime aircraft, which both are just inducting into service.

The on-going military exercises will be followed by high-level political exchanges, with US Secretary of State John Kerry arriving this week for the fourth US-India Strategic Dialogue, an annual feature of the relationship since 2010. In early August, Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel will visit India. In September, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi travels to the US for the United Nations General Assembly annual meeting, he is likely to have his first meeting with US President Barack Obama.

Source: [Business Standard](#), 28th July, 2014

China Pushes Soft Power with Hospital Ship at RIMPAC

On a Chinese hospital ship off Hawaii, crew members demonstrate traditional massage techniques to U.S. sailors. The mood is one of collegiality, even after China opted out of Japan-led humanitarian drills at the world's largest international naval exercise.

There are no guns in sight as Senior Capt. Sun Tao stands on the deck of the Peace Ark, which is taking part in the five- week-long Rim of the Pacific Exercise, known as RIMPAC. Inside the ship, sailors tuck into fatty pork and steamed buns, watching President Xi Jinping on state television, while others give out Chinese massages.

The Peace Ark, at about 580 feet, is the friendly face of China's expanding military power in the Pacific, helping treat thousands after Typhoon Haiyan devastated parts of the Philippines in November 2013. In another bid to soften its public image, the army turned to dancing robots, served up Big Macs and showed that amphibious vehicles can indeed do donuts at its latest open day in Beijing on July 22.

Even so, China's decision to avoid the Japan-led RIMPAC disaster-relief drills reflects remaining tensions with its neighbours over territory as Xi pledges to restore China to naval prominence in the region. China fanned concerns about its intentions by sending a surveillance vessel to waters off Hawaii even as it participated in the 22-nation RIMPAC exercise for the first time, sending the second-largest fleet.

"China's participation is motivated by fame, friendship and fear," said Ristian Atriandi Supriyanto, an associate research fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore. "The hospital ship shows China wants to present the benign image that its naval modernization is actually beneficial to the region. The spy ship shows there is still a trust deficit between the two sides."

RIMPAC offers China and the U.S. a non-confrontational way to learn more about each other's capabilities compared with more tense encounters, including a near-collision with a U.S. cruiser in December. While China's four People's Liberation Army Navy ships have been welcomed they've been kept out of core war games, and the exercise is led by the U.S. along with allies Australia, Canada and Japan. China and Japan are sparring over uninhabited islets in the East China Sea, over which China declared an air defence identification zone last November.

Commissioned in 2008, the Peace Ark has visited 16 countries and provided medical services to Chinese navy escort fleets in the Gulf of Aden. On its way back from Hawaii, the ship will stop in Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea, Sun said. "The Peace Ark is one of the most notable it's sent to RIMPAC, because the Peace Ark was deployed in the past to build China's image of its growing military might for peace and humanitarian purposes," said Jian Zhang, a senior lecturer at the Canberra-based Australian Defence Force Academy of the University of New South Wales. "It wants to show it can play a positive and constructive role in international security cooperation."

Even so, while China initially indicated interest in participating in some of the "scenario-driven" humanitarian events, it limited the scope of its participation to military medicine exchanges and training, Lt. Lenaya Rotklein, a public affairs officer for RIMPAC, said by email. The Peace Ark did take part in a medical orientation and military medicine symposium with more than 120 international medical officials. The Peace Ark has worked closely with U.S. hospital ship USNS Mercy and even requested the U.S. ship attend the exercise for the first time, Capt. Paul Spedero of the amphibious assault vessel USS Peleliu, which is at RIMPAC alongside the Mercy, said in an interview on the bridge of his ship. The U.S. is restricted by law on the types of contacts it can have with the Chinese, Spedero said.

When Haiyan hit the Philippines, the U.S. sent the Japan-based aircraft carrier USS George Washington as well as two amphibious ships carrying around 900 marines from Okinawa. China sent the Peace Ark, which ferried the sick and injured from shore using its sole helicopter. The visit was the first time the navy engaged in

overseas humanitarian medical aid, according to the Ministry of Defence. “I felt that the people of the Philippines — ordinary people, government officials, or the military — welcomed our services,” Sun said about his experience there. “Through this medical service, they can deepen their understanding of the Chinese navy and its thinking.”

While it will focus on humanitarian work, the ship’s triage area can handle wartime casualties, according to Du Xin, a lieutenant commander on the ship. China and the Philippines are embroiled in a territorial dispute over resource-rich shoals in the South China Sea. The Philippines has accused China of building artificial islands in the area and harassing its coast guard and fishing boats.

As it presses its territorial claims, China is building longer-range naval and air capacity. Its first aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, was commissioned in 2012 and has conducted sea trials. The country is holding military exercises in the South China Sea until Aug. 1 and a drill in the East China Sea until Aug. 2. “In between the extremes of humanitarian uses for its navy and cold-war style espionage, may be found capacities that show China is no laggard in what Chinese President and commander-in- chief, Xi Jinping requires of the country’s armed forces — the ability to fight and win wars,” Rosita Dellios, an associate professor of international relations at Bond University on Australia’s Gold Coast, said in an email.

For now, China is stressing the humanitarian work of its navy. On board the Peace Ark, Commander Fu Bensheng received a traditional cupping massage in the Traditional Chinese Medicine ward. The ship carries a slogan from Chairman Mao Zedong that “being humble helps you become a good person, and being arrogant does the opposite.”

Source: [Japan Times](#), 28th July, 2014

Pipavav with Saab Australia’s Help Wins Indian Defence Contract

Pipavav is declared ‘qualified’ by the Indian Navy as a Combat Management System (CMS) to modernize or replace up to 100 fighting ships over the next ten years. Saab will embed key technical staff at the Pipavav development facility in Delhi to continue the technology transfer in October.

Pipavav and Saab had signed a Technical Partnership Agreement (TPA) in August 2012 to continue an ongoing co-operation between the two and covers details about the format for further co-operation and relevant projects.

Saab Australia will supply Pipavav with its technologically advanced 9LV CMS core and work with Pipavav to customize it for the Indian Navy. “Saab Australia has been supporting Pipavav in capability demonstrations to the Indian Navy over the past 12 months to assist Pipavav gain qualified vendor status as a CMS provider,” Saab’s

general manager International Defence Wayne Agutter said. “Pipavav recently received a letter from the Indian Navy informing them that they were now ‘qualified’,” he said.

Source: [Defence World](#), 28th July, 2014

US Stealth Destroyers, Littoral Combat Ships Headed to Pacific

The Navy will send new stealth destroyers, littoral combat ships and an amphibious ready group to the Pacific, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus said, reiterating the U.S. commitment to its military “pivot” to the region. “The rebalance to the Pacific is real,” Mabus told sailors gathered at Yokosuka’s Fleet Theatre for an all-hands call.

President Barack Obama announced plans for the Pacific pivot as the interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan were winding down. But conflicts in Syria, Ukraine and Gaza have since heated up, raising questions about the best use of forces amid dwindling military budgets. Obama reassured Pacific allies of his support during a recent visit against a backdrop of Chinese expansionism and North Korean threats. “We are sending our newest and most modern platforms to the Pacific,” Mabus said. “What the Navy and Marine Corps give is presence ... to reassure allies, deter potential adversaries and be ready for whatever comes over the horizon.”

The first of three new stealth destroyers — the \$3.3 billion USS Zumwalt — is under construction, and two more ships in its class will follow. Mabus told the sailors, “We don’t know exactly where we are going to put them,” he said, but added, “at least some of these will come to the Pacific.”

Mabus arrived in Japan fresh from a visit last Thursday to the USS Independence, the second littoral combat ship to be commissioned, while it participated in exercises off Hawaii. The ships, designed to operate in shallow waters, can be configured for a range of missions such as mine clearing, anti-submarine warfare and surface combat. Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel said in February that the Navy would not contract for any more than 32 littoral combat ships, 20 less than the Navy planned for. The LCS has come under criticism in recent years for its lighter armament and lower survivability standard than some of the larger ships currently in the fleet. However, Mabus told the sailors: “The LCS is going to be one of the most crucial ships we have.”

Four of the ships will deploy to Singapore, he said, noting that the ships can travel “way faster than 40 knots” and access more places in the Pacific than other vessels. The \$800 million cost for each of the first experimental versions of the LCS has dropped drastically to about \$350 million each, he said. “We can afford these, and we can buy a lot of them,” he said. The next LCS to deploy to Singapore will be the USS Fort Worth, which is the same type of vessel as the Freedom. It’s expected to

deploy later this year for 16 months after it completes operational tests, The Associated Press reported. Mabus said also that the Navy will send an additional amphibious ready group to the Pacific.

There is already one such group in Japan comprised of thousands of sailors and Marines based on Okinawa and at Sasebo. The Navy also plans to add 1,000 more sailors to its ranks of cyber warriors in the next few years, he said. "It is the warfare of the future," Mabus said, noting that Russia has conducted cyber attacks in Georgia, Crimea and Ukraine.

Source: [Star and Stripes](#), 28th July, 2014

CARAT Naval Exercises kick off in Singapore

The 20th Annual Exercise Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) Singapore commenced with an opening ceremony at Changi Naval Base, says US Navy Task Force 73 Public Affairs. In its 20th year, CARAT Singapore is part of a series of bilateral naval exercises between the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps and the armed forces of nine partner nations in South and Southeast Asia. Vice Adm. Robert Thomas, commander, U.S. 7th Fleet, [pictured here] delivered remarks before several hundred participating U.S. Navy Sailors and members of the Republic of Singapore navy. Thomas noted that CARAT Singapore stood out as the premier navy engagement since the exercise series began in 1995.

"Nearly twenty years later, thousands of CARAT Singapore alumni have risen through the ranks of the RSN and the U.S. Seventh Fleet, strengthening our military to military relationship and contributing to regional security and stability in ways that benefit the entire region's maritime nations," said Thomas. Continuing through Aug. 8, CARAT Singapore 2014 consists of 11 days of shore-based exchanges and a highly complex at-sea phase. During the shore phase, personnel will conduct engineering, aviation, culinary and sports exchanges on the Changi Naval Base waterfront. U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps and RSN boarding teams will conduct maritime security training at the Singapore Police Coast Guard Brani Base.

During the five-day sea phase, guided-missile destroyers USS Wayne E. Meyer (DDG 108) and USS Halsey (DDG 97) with embarked helicopters, the fleet replenishment oiler USNS Rappahannock (T-AO 204), a P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft and a fast attack submarine will train with an RSN task group composed of Formidable-class frigates, Victory-class corvettes, Fearless-class patrol vessels, an F-50 Fokker maritime patrol aircraft and an S-70B helicopter. "CARAT Singapore brings together some of our most capable forces to train with our RSN partners," said Rear Adm. Charlie Williams, commander, Task Force 73 and 7th Fleet's executive agent for Theatre Security Cooperation in South and Southeast

Asia. "Not only do we have two destroyers and, for the first time, a P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, but Destroyer Squadron Seven is leading the CARAT Task Group for the second consecutive year while forward deployed to Southeast Asia," Williams said during a press conference with international media.

Source: [Marine Link](#), 30th July, 2014

More Catamarans in the Persian Gulf

In the Persian Gulf the Oman Navy has bought two HSSV catamaran (twin hull) high speed transports from the Australian firm (Austal) that pioneered the design. Austal has been selling similar vessels to the U.S. Navy for over a decade. The HSSV is a 72 meter (234 feet) long ship that can carry 320 tons of cargo and up to 250 passengers. Top speed is 63 kilometres an hour and the vessel is operated by a crew of 69. Oman had already been using another version of this vessel as commercial ferries and the navy was impressed with their performance. The Omani Navy was also familiar with the American experience with this type of ship.

Meanwhile, five years after ordering production to start, the U.S. Navy received the first of ten Joint High Speed Vessels (JHSV) transports in 2013. These 103 meter (320 feet) long, \$160 million ships are refined versions of the earlier HSV 2 ship developed for the U.S. Army. The army already had leased two of these HSVs and the navy another. Good performance of these led to the JHSV. The manufacturing of the JHSVs is being done by an Australian firm in the U.S. All ten should be in service by 2017. The army and the navy are seeing a more urgent need for these ships, which can quickly move troops, supplies, and equipment around locally.

All this began in 2001 when the U.S. Navy began leasing a high speed (60 kilometres an hour) catamaran, the Westpac Express, from an Australian firm, to move U.S. Marine Corps equipment around the Pacific. In this it was very successful, and this has served to prove the ability of such a catamaran design to serve in a military role.

This led to a new class (HSV or High Speed Vessel) of transport ships. In 2003, the navy leased an improved design, to further test the concept. The USS Swift (HSV 2) was a twin hulled catamaran, designed and built in Australia. Based on that very successful experience with the Westpac Express, many modifications were made and the Swift was built in ten months. The design was modified so the HSV 2 could perform both transport and mine sweeping missions. The HSV is actually a small ship, 103 meters long and displaces 1,600 tons. It can carry up to 600 tons of cargo and has airline style seating for 300 troops, although up to 600 can be carried for short periods. The cargo can include vehicles of up to 70 tons each, including M-1 tanks. Vehicles are driven on and off. There is a trade off between tonnage carried and speed and range. The twin hull design is also slowed down quite a bit in rough

seas. This is not the kind of ship you can use much in the North Atlantic or North Pacific.

There is also a helicopter pad and space for two UH-60 or CH-46 class choppers. The basic crew is only 41, but there are crew quarters for 51 and the galley can feed up to 150. The important aspect of the HSV is speed. The Swift maintained a speed of 83 kilometres an hour for four hours during sea trials. The ship can cruise at 63 kilometres an hour for 2,000 kilometres, or 7,200 kilometres at 36 kilometres an hour before it has to be refuelled. The HSV has four water-jets, making it very manoeuvrable. The Swift is going to be used mainly as a mine warfare support ship but additional HSVs will serve as high speed transports. Weapons can include manned 25mm automatic cannon and remote controlled 12.7mm machine-gun or 40m grenade launchers.

The HSSV is optimized for the calmer waters of the Persian Gulf and the shorter distances over which the Omani Navy will be operating it, compared to what the U.S. Navy required for the Western Pacific. Oman has a long coastline (over 2,000 kilometres) and most Omanis live near the coast. So the HSSV is an effective way to get troops, relief supplies or whatever around.

Source: [Strategy Page](#), 30th July, 2014

Pilots Awarded Wings in Southern Naval Command

In a first of its kind, three pilots were awarded 'wings' on successful completion of the basic Dornier Conversion Course during an impressive ceremonial parade at INS Garuda, the Naval Air Station, Kochi.

The ceremony thus witnessed the transition of the young officers into pilots of Indian Navy's formidable maritime reconnaissance arm, a Navy press release said here today.

Rear Admiral K.Ravikiran, Admiral Superintendent of the Yard, NSRY (Kochi) reviewed the parade and awarded the 'wings' to passing out officers. Departing from the usual practice of being trained by the Indian Air Force, the passing out officers were trained at INAS 550, a premier Air Squadron of INS Garuda, the release said.

During the 26-week course, the officers were introduced to various aspects of Dornier operations with an aim to enhance their proficiency in Multi Engine flying.

Source: [Business Standard](#), 30th July, 2014

Russian Jets Hold Exercises in Arctic

Crews of MiG-31 “Foxhound” supersonic interceptor aircraft held drills accompanying Tu-95 “Bear” strategic bombers in the Arctic, the press service of the Eastern Military District reported.

“Today, the crews of MiG-31 from the air base of the naval aviation of the Pacific Fleet located in Kamchatka have performed practical tasks providing air cover to Tu-95 strategic bombers in the Arctic zone,” the chief of the press service, Col. Alexander Gordeyev, said.

This year, the Eastern Military District has significantly increased the number of its training exercises in the Arctic. All flights are carried out in strict accordance with international regulations on the use of airspace without violating the borders of other states.

An icon of the Cold War, the Tupolev Tu-95 is still the core of Russia’s strategic aviation. It can carry up to six X-55 missiles and is employed to strike enemy targets at any time and under any weather condition.

Source: [Rianovosti](#), 30th July, 2014

First Hellfire Missile Firing for Australian Navy

The Royal Australian Navy’s newest maritime combat helicopter, the MH-60R Seahawk ‘Romeo’, has successfully fired its first ‘Hellfire’ missile in the United States. The AGM-114 Hellfire air-to-surface missile was fired by Navy’s 725 Squadron from aircraft currently deployed to the United States Navy’s Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Centre off the Florida coast.

Commander Australian Fleet, Rear Admiral Stuart Mayer, said the Seahawk Romeo’s cutting edge mission systems provided a formidable naval platform. “Navy’s next generation submarine hunter and anti-surface warfare helicopter will be the cornerstone of our working Navy’s aviation combat capability. The new aircraft’s multi-mission and multi-target precision strike capabilities will increase our versatility and potency as a high-end fighting force,” Mayer said. The head of the Helicopter and Guided Weapons Division in the Defence Materiel Organisation, Rear Admiral Tony Dalton, said the successful Hellfire missile firing was a major milestone in delivering Defence’s Project AIR 9000 Phase 8. “This \$3.2 billion acquisition program is providing Navy with a state-of-the-art, helicopter based war-fighting capability, our journey through production, acceptance and now testing of the aircraft’s major weapon systems has been steady, effective, ahead of schedule, and on budget. The Seahawk Romeo is a quantum leap over Navy’s current combat helicopter force—both in numbers and capability,” Dalton said.

Defence took delivery of the first two of 24 Seahawk Romeos in the United States in December 2013 at Lockheed Martin's Mission Systems Facility in Owego, New York. Two more aircraft were accepted in February 2014. All four aircraft are being operated by Navy's 725 Squadron alongside three US Navy Seahawk Romeo squadrons based out of the US Navy's Jacksonville air station in Florida. Ultimately, two Seahawk Romeo squadrons will be home based at Navy's Nowra, New South Wales, air station, with 725 Squadron conducting Seahawk Romeo training and 816 Squadron flying the Seahawk Romeo from Navy's ANZAC Class frigates and the new Hobart Class destroyers.

A further two MH-60R will be delivered in October 2014. Deliveries will continue during 2015 with the 24th and final aircraft being delivered in 2016. 725 Squadron personnel and their aircraft will be brought home to Australia at the end of 2014.

Source: [Maritime Executive](#), 31st July, 2014



India, Bangladesh Working on Operating Norms for Coastal Shipping

India and Bangladesh are working towards an agreement and setting up of standard operating procedures for undertaking coastal shipping between the ports of Bangladesh and the eastern ports of India. Once the operating procedures are put in place, Indo-Bangladesh bilateral trade through coastal shipping is likely to take off from October, official sources said.

At a meeting last month the two countries had agreed to conform to Indian standards of River Sea Vessels (RSV)-4 for the vessels operating on the coastal routes between the two countries. India has agreed to assist Bangladesh through Indian Register of Shipping (IRS) for classification of Bangladesh vessels.

Both the countries have also agreed to buy insurance cover for a limit of \$10 million from the respective domestic insurance companies, sources said. Discussion were being held through diplomatic channels to formalise coastal shipping arrangements between the two countries over the last two years and a trial run is expected to be undertaken by October this year, the said.

Coastal trade with Bangladesh had not been a success in the past but with the recent tweaking of standard for Indian coastal vessels, India had asked Bangladeshi counterparts to meet at least the Indian standard, if not International Association for Classification Societies (IACS).

There are about 20 vessels from Bangladesh that can adhere to the Indian standards and Indian Register of Shipping (IRS) will inspect the vessels to meet the standard protocol. Once IRS approves the vessels then insurance hurdle will get resolved, shipping industry sources said, adding, coastal trade with Bangladesh will bring huge savings to the industry.

The Chittagong port is 150 km off Agartala, the capital of Tripura, and more than 350 km away from Kolkata via Bangladesh, while the distance between Tripura and Kolkata is about 1,650 km through the rugged hilly terrain. Coastal shipping will help bridge the distance that hampers trading via land route.

Source: [Domain](#), 17th July, 2014

KoPT to Pick Bulk Cargo Handlers for Haldia Port through Bidding

Under pressure from the Union ministry of shipping for more than a year, the Kolkata Port Trust (KoPT) on Friday decided that it will select onshore bulk cargo handlers for Haldia port through bidding—a move that is likely to force other port authorities in India to follow suit. Aimed at weeding out entrenched monopolies, KoPT's decision

on Friday could be the beginning of a long-awaited reform in bulk cargo handling in 12 major ports across India, say experts. When Friday's decision is implemented, handling charges for bulk cargo at Haldia port are going to fall sharply. KoPT has decided that onshore bulk cargo handlers at Haldia port can charge only up to Rs.119.48 per tonne, whereas the leading handler Ripley and Co. Ltd charges at least Rs.150, according to its own spokesperson. Haldia port officials said Ripley typically charges Rs.250-300 per tonne. KoPT also decided that handlers will have to pay a minimum royalty of Rs.13 per tonne. Handlers will be selected on the basis of the revenue share offered to KoPT, and all those who match the best bid will be allowed to offer its services at the port. It is estimated that around 15 million tonnes (mt) of bulk cargo moved through Haldia in 2013-14. The move will immediately benefit importers and exporters of fertilizers and minerals such as iron ore and coal among others, which are referred to as bulk cargo. A similar step is expected to be taken for the so-called bagged and break bulk cargo (goods loaded/offloaded individually) as well, according to KoPT officials, who did not want to be named. KoPT chairman R.P.S. Kahlon couldn't immediately be contacted. He didn't answer calls made to his mobile phone. Container movement across Indian ports has been mechanized and operators are selected through bidding, while liquid cargo is handled by the port authorities themselves. In 2013-14, bulk cargo movement at the 12 major ports in India is conservatively estimated at 200mt, with iron ore and coal accounting for more than half of it. The private handlers of bulk and break bulk cargos are alleged to have made supernormal profits, exploiting their monopolistic control over the operation. "For the past 20 years we have complied with all regulations," said a spokesperson for Ripley. "We are not opposed to change, but there must be level-playing field—the same rules must apply to all ports, particularly Haldia's competitors such as Paradip and Visakhapatnam."

Source: [Mint](#), 18th July, 2014

China Merchants in Talks to Buy Stake in Australian Ports

China Merchants Group Ltd. is in talks to buy a large stake in four Australian container ports, the latest push by Asian investors to own infrastructure vital to regional trade networks, a person familiar with the situation said. China Merchants is seeking to buy a majority stake in Asciano Ltd. AIO's Patrick Terminals and Logistics business, which runs international container terminals in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth, the person said.

However, recent discussions with Asciano over a deal worth around 1.1 billion Australian dollars (US\$1.03 billion) have foundered because the Australian transport group is reluctant to sell more than a 49% stake and cede control of the business, the person said. Asciano is being advised by Goldman Sachs and J.P. Morgan on the process to sell the stake, which is code-named "Project Guinness," the person

said. While talks with China Merchants have taken place on and off for two years, Asciano recently signed a 60-day memorandum of understanding with the state-owned Chinese conglomerate to progress a deal, the person added.

An Asciano spokesperson didn't reply to a request to comment. China Merchants declined to comment. China Merchants, which owns property and banking businesses, has long viewed Australian export infrastructure as an attractive investment. In April, China Merchants was part of a consortium that successfully bid A\$1.75 billion for a 99-year lease on the Port of Newcastle in eastern Australia put up for sale by the New South Wales state government. The port exports coal produced by mining companies including Glencore, Peabody Energy Corp. and Rio Tinto.

China Merchants also has a ports joint venture with France's CMA CGM S.A., the world's third-largest shipping company. In May, CMA CGM lost out in bidding for the rights to build a new A\$ 1.6 billion container terminal in Melbourne. Patrick's ports business is valued at around A\$ 2.2 billion, the person said. The business generated earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization of A\$ 198 million in the fiscal year through June, 2013, or 19% of Asciano's profits as a whole.

Still, the ports operation is facing headwinds as Australian state governments seek to inject competition into the sector and bring down freight costs for local businesses. In 2008, the Port of Brisbane Corp. signed up Hong Kong-based ports operator Hutchison Whampoa Ltd. to build a third container terminal. A year later, Sydney Ports Corp. also signed a deal with Hutchison Whampoa to expand capacity at Port Botany. Another foreign investor— International Container Terminal Services Inc., based in the Philippines—won a contract in May as part of a consortium to build a third container terminal in Melbourne. These new terminals will all compete with Patrick's ports and could crimp profit margins, the person said.

Asciano previously put its ports business up for sale in 2009, as management tried to raise funds to repair its balance sheet. China Merchants' former chairman Fu Yuning publicly expressed interest in the port assets two years later.

In Australia, China Merchants also owns the country's second largest provider of wooden pallets, Loscam Ltd. It bought the business from private-equity firm Affinity Equity Partners in 2010.

Source: [Hellenic Shipping](#), 18th July, 2014

Arun Jaitley Gives India's Maritime Sector a Reason to Smile

For a decade, during the two successive five-year terms of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), India's maritime sector was largely neglected. Even the global financial crisis of 2008 and its catastrophic consequences on global shipping,

including that in India, did not push the government into action. It took Arun Jaitley, India's new finance minister, to change that.

On 10 July, presenting his government's first budget to Parliament after the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) cruised to power with a majority in the April-May elections, Jaitley brought back good times for the Indian maritime sector. No other budget in recent times has had so much to say about the sector. Jaitley's budget showered goodies on mainline shipping, coastal shipping, shipbuilding, seafarers, maritime training and port development, demonstrating that maritime is a priority for the new government led by Narendra Modi. Given India's vast coastline, stretching over 7,517km on the eastern and western coasts, the country's 10.47 million gross tonnage (GT) is nothing to rave about. India is ranked 18th among maritime nations by the cargo carrying capacity of its fleet. Indian ships carry only 9.1% of the country's seaborne trade, compared with about 40% in the 1980s. A skewed taxation structure has impeded the growth of national tonnage. Successive shipping ministers have failed to convince finance ministers about the need to do away with a plethora of taxes that hound Indian shipping because the finance ministry would always look at it from a revenue loss point of view.

But Jaitley needed no convincing. Having held the shipping portfolio for a while when the NDA government led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee ruled the country between 1999 and 2004, Jaitley is familiar with the sector. This explains Jaitley's decision to free Indian ship owners from the requirement of paying service tax when their ships are rented out to foreign entities for less than 30 days. So far, service tax has been levied on such transactions because it was based on the location of the service provider. But long-term charters exceeding 30 days were exempted from service tax. Indian ship owners have been losing business in a tough global scenario due to a provision in the "place of provision of services rules", which is now being amended, Jaitley said in his budget speech. Accordingly, ships hired for either short or long term will be covered by the general rule, which is the place of location of the service receiver. As a result, service tax will not be applicable to local fleet owners.

A bolder pronouncement for mainline shipping was the formulation of a policy for encouraging the growth of a so-called Indian-controlled tonnage. The scheme will allow local shipping companies the flexibility to directly register their ships in tax-friendly overseas jurisdictions while sitting in India, without opening subsidiaries there to create a new fleet category known as Indian-controlled tonnage. The plan is also aimed at reversing a trend of local fleet owners opening subsidiaries abroad such as Singapore to register and operate their ships, thereby resulting in a flight of ships which would otherwise have been registered under the Indian flag. Local laws do not allow an Indian shipping company to register ships outside the country.

The proposal involves giving a relaxation from this law to Indian ship owners so that the task of registering ships overseas becomes official and legal. It will also help

Indian shipping companies to raise cheap funds overseas without any of the attendant problems associated with Indian-registered ships. The Indian flag is not considered a friendly flag by international lenders for various reasons. Unlike the subsidiary route for registering ships overseas wherein only dividends can be repatriated to India, the Indian-controlled tonnage allows fleet-owners to receive full revenue from operating such foreign-registered ships and get equal treatment for moving goods on local routes as per the government's cargo support policy whereby only Indian-registered ships can be used. Such ships may also get the benefit of tonnage tax, a tax based on the cargo carrying capacity of ships as opposed to the traditional corporate tax. More than 90% of the global shipping fleet operates on tonnage tax, where the tax burden is just 1-2% of their income compared with the corporate tax rate of 33.9%.

The operation of the scheme, though, will be subject to certain conditions to help potential seafarers get training and employment. There will be a stipulation that the fleet owner will have to hire a certain number of Indian seafarers to run such ships, as well as mandatory training of Indian seafarers by the Indian-controlled tonnage. Cadets passing out of any of the 100-odd maritime training institutions in India have been struggling to find the mandatory on-board training (a pre-requisite to get their certificates to be able to sail on ships) as well as getting employment itself, particularly after the global recession wrecked the shipping industry. Jaitley also announced a reduction in taxes for the coastal shipping sector to encourage growth in transport of goods on local routes through coastal vessels. A project on the river Ganga called "Jal Marg Vikas" (National Waterways-I) will be developed between Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh and Haldia in West Bengal covering a distance of 1,620km to enable commercial navigation of at least 1,500 tonne-capacity vessels and help boost capacity for hauling goods along inland waterways. The project will be completed over a period of six years at an estimated cost of Rs.4200 crore.

Jaitley also said the government will unveil a comprehensive policy to promote the Indian shipbuilding industry in the fiscal that ends in March 2015. Acknowledging that development of ports was critical for boosting trade, the government will bid out 16 new port projects this year with a focus on port connectivity. The government will also provide Rs.11,635 crore for the first phase development of an outer harbour project at Union government-owned V.O. Chidambaranar port in Tamil Nadu. Special economic zones will be developed in Kandla port and Jawaharlal Nehru port, both owned by the Union government. Stakeholders in the maritime sector can take solace from the fact that the budgetary pronouncements are commitments given to Parliament, which the government will have to live up to, unlike mere statements from shipping ministers. The last time Indian shipping had a reason to cheer was when the UPA introduced tonnage tax for fleet-owners in 2004. But all the ground work on this had been done by the NDA government led by Vajpayee. And, when it was ready to be announced in the 2004 budget, NDA lost the elections and bowed out of office. The onus of announcing the tonnage tax thus fell on the UPA

government. Local fleet-owners are, however, subject to a dozen other taxes, which, they claim, have neutralized the advantages of tonnage tax.

Source: [Mint](#), 18th July, 2014

Goa Shipyard to Deliver First OPV by October 15

Goa Shipyard Limited will shortly begin constructing the fifth of the new class of Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV) for the Indian Coastguard.

Speaking at the keel-laying ceremony at Vasco on Tuesday, RAdm (Retd) Shekhar Mital, NM, CMD, GSL said that the shipyard was cruising through the ongoing construction of six state of the art patrol vessels for the Coast Guard. "We will launch three OPVs in succession from September to December this year. The first vessel will be ready for delivery as per schedule by October 15 and all six vessels will be delivered by Nov 17. This will further reinforce our unwavering commitment for timely delivery of ships". DIG M V Baadkar, commander of the Indian Coastguard, Goa presided over the ceremony.

Source: [TOI](#), 23rd July, 2014

Maritime Legal Issues Arising out of Trading to Ukraine/Crimea

Ship operators trading to Ukraine, and particularly to the ports in the newly annexed Crimea, now face a potential problem of falling foul of international/European law on the one hand and Ukrainian law on the other.

In March 2014, Ince & Co published a client alert entitled 'Shipping issues arising out of the Ukraine crisis'. This article revisits the issues facing owners when considering whether or not to accept orders to load or discharge cargo at ports located in Crimea. Where we refer to the 'Crimean Ports', this means the ports recently declared by Ukraine as closed, namely Kerch, Feodosia, Sevastopol, Yalta and Yevpatorya. This is not intended to suggest that Crimea is not part of Ukraine.

Russia's annexation of Crimea is not recognised by Ukraine, or by the majority of members of the United Nations, apart from Afghanistan, Cuba, Nicaragua, Syria, Russia and Venezuela. As a matter of international law, and notwithstanding the fact that Russia is in effective control, Crimea is part of Ukraine. Ukraine has now closed the Crimean Ports. As a matter of Ukrainian law, it is illegal for vessels to call there, although Russian-flagged vessels will no doubt continue to do so. That distinction may have importance, as we discuss below. Ukraine says it cannot guarantee the ports' safety. There is no universal concept of a free and open port and UNCLOS article 25.2 gives any nation the right to decide which of its ports are open to

international shipping. There are many examples of where this has been done, notably by Cyprus 40 years ago in relation to a similar annexation of North Cyprus by Turkey. Such an action is understandable. If the closing of ports were not possible, then a government could be exposed to the risk of claims against it where conditions demanded that access should be denied. There is nothing to suggest that the ports in question are physically unsafe, although if ships are sunk strategically to block the waterways (as we saw, albeit in a limited way, at the outset of the Ukraine crisis) then that could change very quickly.

Source: [Lawyer](#), 23rd July, 2014

Tuticorin all set to Sink Vizhinjam

The prospect of the proposed Rs 6000-crore Vizhinjam International Seaport becoming a viable entity looks bleak with the Union Budget allocating Rs 11,635-crore for the development of Outer Harbour project at Tuticorin port, a competing entity.

Once the Tuticorin port expansion is completed, nearly half of Kerala would be reduced to being the port's hinterland, making the Vizhinjam project unviable, maritime experts said. They fear that the fast-developing Tuticorin port, which has received huge financial incentives from successive Central Governments, may ultimately spoil Vizhinjam's chance to emerge as an international trans shipment hub. "Both Tuticorin and Vizhinjam ports are looking to cater to the same traffic. They are competing against each other," said Vishwas Udgirkar, Senior Director, Infrastructure, at Deloitte, a consultancy firm.

Atul Kulkarni, a maritime expert, told Express that Tuticorin has the first mover advantage vis-a-vis Vizhinjam. Five port operators including Essar, Adani and a consortium of Srei Infra and Spanish construction firm Obrascón have responded to the tender to develop the Vizhinjam port, but the project's journey has been marred by delays. The government has extended the date for submission of financial bids for the Vizhinjam port to August 20, Minister for Ports K Babu told Indian Express.

A.S. Suresh Babu, Managing Director & CEO, Vizhinjam International Seaport, said as far as he understands Tuticorin port was developed under a PPP (public private partnership) model. Vizhinjam, a green field project, has better draft vis-a-vis Tuticorin. Further, Vizhinjam has received EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) clearance, which is a cumbersome procedure taking 2-3 years. "We have procured 90 per cent of the land for the project, water supply is done and work is in progress for a 220 kV line," Suresh Babu told Indian Express.

Kulkarni said Vizhinjam has many strategic advantages including proximity to international shipping route. Vizhinjam is situated 20 km off the international shipping

route connecting Europe, Persian Gulf and Far East. It will have much deeper berths and an approach channel of up to 20 meters, capable of docking mega container ships. Trans shipment hub Colombo has a water depth of 16-18 meters. There is minimal littoral drift along Vizhinjam coast, hence maintenance dredging is not required. Experts said ports of Colombo, Dubai, Salalah, Port Klang and Singapore act as trans shipment hubs for almost 80 per cent of India-bound container cargo, earning \$350 million per annum.

Source: [Indian Express](#), 24th July, 2014

Indian Shipping Industry Awaits Maritime Labour Law Ratification

Much like mariners of yore waiting for monsoon winds to set sail, the Indian shipping industry awaits parliament's ratification of the International Maritime Labour Convention so as not to lose out on merchant traffic, according to industry leaders.

With India yet to ratify the International Labour Organization adopted (ILO) Maritime Labour Convention (MLC)-2006, that provides for rights and safety standards for one million sea farers worldwide, Indian seafarers face inspections at international ports causing time and cost delays, as also affecting their employability.

The Indian shipping industry hopes parliament would accord its ratification to the convention during its ongoing monsoon session. "When foreign flag vessels with Indian crew on board visit countries that have ratified MLC, they are exposed to stringent inspections," Captain Shiv Halbe, chairman of the Mumbai-based Maritime Association of Ship owners, Shipping Companies/Agents (MASSA), told reporters here.

The larger losses would spring from Indians being less preferred for hiring than seafarers from countries complying with MLC-2006, he said. "The non-ratification of MLC-2006 - which came into effect from Aug 20, 2013 - has also put Indian seafarers to great disadvantage as they are now not the primary choice of overseas shippers," Halbe added.

They contribute foreign exchange worth over \$1.2 billion per annum to the country's exchequer. Currently around 110,000 Indian seafarers work in various positions aboard around 3,500 cargo vessels across the globe, MASSA said. "Recruitment and placement services in India are now subjected to various stringent audits by the flag state of ships to which Indian seafarers are appointed. This reflects negatively on business development," said Ajay Achutan, director at the Maritime Training and Research Foundation.

Indian overseas trade is valued at \$1,000 billion, of which an estimated 1% is carried on Indian ships. MASSA has recently written to Shipping and Transport Minister Nitin

Gadkari on the matter and is hopeful that the new government will resolve the long pending issue. "The government wants job creation and we are creating jobs. Parliament should not lose time to amend the Merchant Shipping Act to ratify MLC-2006 to bolster the growth of India's shipping industry," said M.P. Bhasin, managing director, MSC Crewing Services.

Source: [Business Standard](#), 25th July, 2014

Dhaka Lets FCI Ship Food to Northeast India Using Its Key Port

India has begun using a new trade route via a Bangladeshi port as well as land terrain to ship food grains to the North-east, as the NDA government steps up ties with the neighbour on the back of foreign minister Sushma Swaraj's recent successful visit.

In a trial run, the Food Corporation of India (FCI), the country's main grain agency, has successfully shipped 10,000 tonnes of rice to Tripura from its Vishakhapatnam silo via the Ashuganj port in the neighbouring country under the "Indo-Bangladesh protocol route".

The new sea route reduces distance between some south Indian states and the Northeast by about 900 km, potentially cutting down transporters' operating costs and opening up possibilities of greater commercial traffic.

Food minister Ram Vilas Paswan told Hindustan Times that after the trial run, the FCI would now scale up rice quantities transported using this route to the Northeast to 35,000 tonnes. "Since North-East is a rice-consuming region, this new route will help us reach rice from major southern states faster and more economically. Moreover, this route holds a lot of potential for commerce."

With the India-friendly Awami League Party's Sheikh Hasina in power in Dhaka, India and Bangladesh have enjoyed closer ties, although trickier issues, such as the Teesta water sharing pact, are stuck.

The route using the Ashuganj port holds strategic importance to India in reaching all kinds of equipment to the Northeast - including heavy equipment needed to construct border infrastructure. The Northeast, where several militant groups are active, is linked to the rest of India by a single highway running through a corridor known as the "Chicken's Neck". For the food ministry, the new route has come in handy, as railways are about to shut down a major rail route used by the FCI in Assam for conversion to broad gauge. This would have sharply increased time and costs for the food agency. Under the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol route, inland vessels of one country can transit through the specified routes of the other country.

Source: [HT](#), 28th July, 2014

Sea State Forecasts Improve Vessels' Operational Safety at Ports

Forty-eight hour forecasts on sea state conditions are coming to the aid of crews and vessels in ensuring operational safety across all major and many minor ports in the country.

Based on a suite of models run on super computers, scientists from the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) are currently providing the forecasts to 12 major and 64 of the 200 minor ports along the Indian coastline. The services launched in February this year are being utilized by 900 users from various ports. The forecast service basically provides sea state up to a distance of 50 km from the port locations.

Strategically located, the major ports with excellent infrastructure handle both regional and international multi cargo, while the minor ports handle around 30 per cent of the total traffic, said Dr. T.M. Balakrishnan Nair, Head of Ocean Science and Information Services Group, INCOIS.

Quoting Consolidated Port Development Plan of the Indian Ports Association, he said the total traffic in major ports was poised to double by 2025. Similarly, there was scope for development of minor ports into major ones, given the huge international demand for bulk transport of multi-cargo, he added. However, critical information on sea state conditions like currents, winds, waves and swell plays a crucial role in entry and exit of vessels at ports, be it a small fishing boat or a huge oil tanker.

Dr. Nair said prior knowledge of these parameters would greatly help in taking informed decisions regarding operations at the port. He said the real time data from coastal observation systems like wave rider buoys, automatic weather stations, coastal radars, deep-sea moored buoys and satellite altimeter data were being used for validation of the forecast products and improve their quality.

Source: [Hindu](#), 30th July, 2014

Iran to turn Chabahar Port into Trade Hub

An Iranian official has said the country plans to turn its south eastern Chabahar port, which is the only Iranian port with direct access to ocean, into a trade hub in the near future.

Pointing to Iran's development plans for Chabahar port, head of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam Hossein Shafe'ee said at a meeting with Indian Ambassador to Tehran Shri Niraj Srivastava those investing in the area will have a secure and promising prospect, Press TV reported.

Iran's Chabahar port, located 72 kilometers (44 miles) west of Pakistan's Gwadar port, holds immense strategic and economic significance for India. Shafe'ee said the country plans to connect Mashhad rail road in north eastern Iran to the western Afghan province of Herat and launch development projects in Sarakhs special economic zone in north eastern Iran. Srivastava, for his part, described Chabahar port as a key location for the promotion of Iran-India trade and said New Delhi seeks to participate in development of the area. He said India has allocated \$300 million to invest in development of Chabahar port and the country plans to take part in development of rail road from the area and shipping lines in the next steps.

The port is already connected to the city of Zaranj in Afghanistan's south western province of Nimruz and can serve as India's entry point to Afghanistan, Central Asia and beyond. The port was partially built by India in the 1990s to provide access to Afghanistan and Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan. It lies on the border of Indian Ocean and Oman Sea and because of its ease of access to ocean, long ago it was the centre of business, trade and navigation.

In June, the Narendra Modi government in India has decided to get moving on the long-delayed construction of strategically critical Chabahar port. India's Prime Minister Modi has declared his keenness to deepen ties with neighbors and the port is expected to play an important role in the economic reconstruction and development of Afghanistan, Indian media reported.

The project involves a capital expenditure of about Rs 550 crore. It will be implemented by a special purpose vehicle formed by Jawahar Lal Nehru Port Trust and Kandla Port Trust along with a private player.

Source: [Azernews](#), 30th July, 2014

GAIL (India) to Procure Indian-Made Ships to Carry LNG from US

GAIL (India) Ltd, the largest state-owned natural gas processing and distribution company, plans to buy ships made by domestic shipbuilders for transporting gas from the US, which would benefit companies such as L&T and Pipavav, sources said. GAIL, which will start importing liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the US in 2017, would have to shell out a massive \$ 7.6 billion for hiring the required specialised vessels.

However, according to analysts, they were unsure if the domestic ship-makers would be able to deliver these specialised vessels because Indian firms lacked experience in this area. It may be recalled that GAIL had recently become Asia's first company to sign a long-term LNG sales and purchase agreement with Cheniere Energy Partners, LP (Cheniere) to procure 3.5 million tonnes per annum of LNG from the latter's Sabine Pass Terminal in Louisiana, US for a period of 20 years. At present,

US gas is available to only those countries with which it has a free trade agreement (FTA). India is not one of them. It is expected that the US would agree to sell LNG to India by exempting it from the requirement of a compulsory FTA when the Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi, visits Washington DC in September.

Though two projects in the US, where GAIL has a stake, have been given special permission for future sourcing, India would prefer a complete waiver from the existing conditions.

Source: [Exim](#), 30th July, 2014



Activists Warn of Dolphin Demise

Environmental protection groups yesterday called on the public to support a signature drive against a Hong Kong airport expansion project, which the groups said could endanger the habitat and jeopardize the chances of survival of the endangered Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin (*Sousa Chinensis*).

The proposed expansion project is to establish a third runway through land reclamation, which is to cover 650 hectares and force a pod of 30 humpback dolphins to leave their current habitat in the waters between Hong Kong's Lantau Peak and Chep Lap Kok.

Green Party Taiwan member Chang Yu-ching told a press conference in Taipei yesterday that Hong Kong government agencies and non-governmental organizations in 2002 funded a Taiwan Cetacean Society project to analyze the size and makeup of the nation's humpback dolphin population. "Now is the time to return the favor, as animal protection has no boundaries," Chang said. Project executive Hsu Hui-ting of the Taiwan Environmental Info Association said species protection should come before development and urged Hong Kong authorities to carry out a comprehensive appraisal before they permit any construction.

She also read a statement on behalf of Hong Kong Airport Development Monitoring Network speaker Wu Kun-tai, who criticized the expansion project as "unnecessary," as both passenger and cargo volumes have yet to reach the airport's maximum capacity. Once the project starts, the dolphins would be forced to relocate to the turbid waters of the Pearl River and may never return to their original habitat, the statement said, adding that the project would threaten their chances of survival over the estimated seven-year construction period. "It would be too late if the humpback dolphins die out or become too few in number. No matter how vast a conservation zone is set up afterwards, it would not bring them back," Hsu said. She said that today marks the last day of an official public opinion poll by the Hong Kong Environmental Protection Department, so concerned individuals should act swiftly and submit their petitions to 3rwdolphin.weebly.com. The petition is to be collated and handed to the Hong Kong Environmental Protection Department.

The number of humpback dolphins in the seas surrounding Hong Kong has diminished from more than 100 to about 60 over the past decade, while roughly 70 humpback dolphins live off Taiwan's west coast, between Miaoli County and Greater Tainan, Hsu said.

Source: [Taipei Times](http://www.taipex.com), 19th July, 2014

Melting Arctic Ice Will Establish South Korea as Asia Oil Hub

Widening sea routes through the Arctic's ice fields will shorten the time it takes for European oil to reach Asia – placing South Korea in the geographically perfect position for becoming the regional oil storage and trading hub.

Being so closely located to China, Japan and Russia – South Korea, Asia's fourth largest economy, is investing heavily in oil storage units, with the intention to contain 60 million barrels of crude oil and other products as they arrive from the Arctic.

The deputy minister of energy and resources policy for South Korea, Kim Jun Dong, announced the plans would be completed by 2020, and would boast the same capacity Singapore currently holds. The nation will also leverage its energy infrastructure, which includes five oil refineries, to become North East Asia's dominant oil hub.

While the melting of the Arctic is seen as good news for economic development, campaigners and key environmental experts have warned extensively of the global cost of the Arctic's disappearance.

Recently, Greenpeace launched a campaign against Lego for its advertising relationship with oil giant Shell, as it operates drilling rigs in the Arctic region. The Arctic is home to a diverse ecology that is highly sensitive to environmental change, and as statistics and satellite imagery prove, the Arctic is already melting due to increased human activity and the rising global temperature.

However, the economic benefits to the opening of the region are seen as considerable by the global community. The melt will open vast trade routes into Asia and its surrounding regions – cutting traveling time extensively.

Speaking to Bloomberg, Kim said, "After the oil hub is established, we expect to make more than \$25 billion annually," through the processing and storing of third party cargoes. According to the Korea Energy Economics Institute, a government research institute in Gyeonggi province, the Northern Sea Route, which follows Russia's Siberian coast, will be completely free of ice by 2030 as global temperatures rise.

Source: [Blue and Green Tomorrow](#), 23rd July, 2014

El Nino's Location, Not Intensity, Impacts Monsoon

The Monsoon's recovery, with about half of India receiving normal rains and the national deficit down to 25% from 43%, might have something to do with the location of the current El Nino rather than its intensity. Indicating that the El Nino's much vaunted relationship with the Indian Monsoon is at the least "complicated", research

suggests the weather phenomenon's strength may not be the only factor affecting rainfall.

The correlation between an El Nino's intensity and the Monsoon seems weaker if its impact is also gauged by the location of warm waters in the Pacific, a paper on US's national El Nino monitor says. The conclusion comes at a time when the Monsoon has really recovered well in India in the past two weeks. As compared to sub-normal rains in June, the country is likely to receive rainfall of 93% of the Long Range Forecast (LPA) in July. It will improve a bit further as rainfall of 96% of the LPA is expected in August.

The paper on the national oceanic and atmospheric administration (NOAA) site says that while five of India's major droughts since 1950 coincided with El Nino, the phenomenon did not always spell trouble. "During 14 El Nino years, summer rains ranged from well below average to average and even above average," Tom Di Liberto writes in his paper "ENSO (El Nino southern oscillation) and the Indian monsoon...not as straightforward as you'd think". Current El Nino conditions, which have not yet been declared as one, show warming to be highest off the south and Central America. The warming is 0-1.5 degrees C in most of the Pacific. The paper argues that stronger El Ninos did not necessarily mean poor rainfall and suggests that location might be as important with events that occurred in the east Pacific being less impactful. In 2002, when India experienced a very dry monsoon, the warming of Pacific was located in the central part of the ocean. In 1997, when one of the 20th century's strongest El Nino happened, India was unaffected.

Indian experts are more cautious in drawing their conclusions, saying that the effects the El Nino were far from well understood. But they do agree that this year's El Nino may prove less impactful. The more dire forecasts with a private forecaster's predicting a 60% possibility of drought seem an over-estimate as the atmospheric disruption that accompanies an El Nino has not occurred. The Indian Ocean dipole (IOD), a key variable tracking the difference in temperatures between two points in the ocean, also remains neutral and this suggests the monsoon could escape major damage on this score. Di Liberto points out that degree to which the east-west/ west-east circulation shifts in the region of Indonesia is what really matters for the monsoon in India. "During El Nino events, the upward branch shifts east while more sinking motion (anomalous high surface pressure) occurs around Indonesia," he writes. If the ocean warming is mostly in the central Pacific, sinking branches of the circulation expand to include India, reducing the Indian monsoon," the paper says. On the other hand, "If warming shifts to the far eastern Pacific, the sinking branch may not affect the monsoon."

Source: [TOI](#), 27th July, 2014

Blue Whales could be protected by New Shipping Lanes

Blue whales, the largest animals that ever lived, congregate every year in their feeding grounds off Northern California to gulp krill by the ton, but the gathering puts them in the path of peril from heavy freighter traffic along major shipping lanes, scientists have found.

Researchers learned the migration patterns of the endangered whales along the Pacific Coast and pinpointed just where they typically pause to forage during 15 years of tracking them by radio and satellite. Now the new information could lead to changes in the routes ships take from the open sea to California ports and to better protection for the whales, say marine biologists at Oregon State University's Marine Mammal Institute.

"We've pointed out that our new data should be useful to the shipping industry and to the various agencies concerned with the lanes that lead to San Francisco and Los Angeles," said Bruce Mate, the institute's director and one of the study's principal authors. "But we're not out beating the drums, because it's not our job to decide how those lanes should be moved. That's up to all the stakeholders."

To determine the whales' migrations and feeding patterns, Mate and Ladd Irvine, a researcher at the Marine Mammal Institute and the study's other principal author, led a team of marine biologists who used crossbows and air-powered guns between 1993 and 2008 to shoot satellite tags painlessly into the thick, blubbery hides of 171 blue whales. The tags allowed the scientists to follow the whales' movements for weeks, and sometimes for months at a time, before the tags fell off. In one case, Irvine said, a whale they tagged near the Farallon Islands in summer 2004 enabled them to observe it for a year during frequent satellite observations.

The whale migrated across thousands of miles, first swimming from the Farallones to the Channel Islands in Southern California, then south to breeding grounds off Mexico and Costa Rica. It returned to the Channel Islands the following spring and then moved between the Farallones and the Channel Islands until it finally swam up to Cape Mendocino off the Humboldt County coast as it followed rich masses of krill.

The researchers estimated that about 2,500 of the huge marine mammals currently migrate along the coasts of California, Oregon and Washington. But with both northern and southern shipping lanes crossing their major feeding grounds, they suggested that moving the shipping lanes could diminish threats to the whales.

Although specific numbers of fatalities are hard to determine, "slow-moving whales are highly vulnerable to ship strikes," according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Most whale deaths within the lanes happen inside the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, where ships pass on their way into and out of the Golden Gate, and further south along another heavily used set of shipping lanes just off the northern Channel Islands in Southern California.

Whales are attracted to the areas, which lie within 200 miles of the coast, by the tiny shrimp-like, protein-rich crustaceans known as krill, which are brought to the surface by the California current's upwelling waters. "It appears that both of their main foraging areas are coincidentally crossed by shipping lanes," Irvine said. It's where they "maximize their food intake during the summer before they migrate south for the winter to breed and calve."

Their study, which was published Thursday in the journal PlosOne, noted the constant dangers ships pose to blue whales and other whale species. In 2007, they recalled, five dead whales were found floating near the Channel Islands ship traffic area. Three were confirmed as deaths from ship strikes, and the cause of death for the others remains unknown.

A NOAA report in 2013 also noted that in 2010, five whales were killed in collisions with ships in Northern California traffic. Changes in the shipping lanes leading through the National Marine Sanctuaries on the West Coast were altered most recently in June 2013, according to the NOAA, which works with the Coast Guard and the shipping industry to oversee ship traffic within the sanctuaries. The changes were ordered in part to protect endangered whales, the agencies said at the time.

Ships are not required to observe the lane boundaries, a Coast Guard spokeswoman said, but their captains are glad to follow them to avoid traffic congestion.

Blue whales - *Balaenoptera Musculus* - are larger than the largest dinosaurs. They can weigh up to 170 tons and consume an average of four tons of krill daily, marine biologists say. Only an estimated 8,000 to 9,000 are alive in all the world's oceans. At least 36,000 were killed between 1900 and the mid-1960s before they were declared endangered by the U.S. and international agencies.

Source: [SF Gate](#), 24th July, 2014