

MAKING WAVES

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The Sea Change

C. Raja Mohan

India seems relieved that the internal crisis in the Maldives has quickly boiled over with the resignation of President Mohamed Nasheed and the relatively smooth transfer of power to his deputy.

It is too soon, however, for New Delhi to pat itself on the back for its behind-the-scenes role in ensuring that the political succession in the Maldives stayed within the constitutional framework of the newly democratic nation.

It is a pity indeed that Nasheed, the first democratically elected president of Maldives, could not complete his full term and had to quit amidst a revolt by a section of the security forces, which was preceded by prolonged agitation on the streets by his opponents.

As a genuine liberal democrat, Nasheed will indeed be missed, whatever his missteps in handling the galvanised political opposition. The real question is whether Nasheed's progressive legacy can be preserved after his ouster.

The Maldives will indeed be lucky if the current political discontinuity does not produce long-term negative consequences for the island nation located at the heart of the Indian Ocean.

The new president of the Maldives, Mohamed Waheed, has promised an orderly transition by forming a national unity government that will steer the nation until next year's presidential elections.

In his letter of congratulations to Waheed, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh offered India's strong support for a stable and prosperous Maldives.

So far so good. But the real test for Male and Delhi lies ahead: in preventing further destabilisation of Maldives in the coming months. Internal political fluctuations, however small they might seem, in the Maldives have the potential to trigger a sea change in the overall strategic equilibrium of the Indian Ocean.

Sitting astride the important sea lines of communication between the resource-rich Persian Gulf and Africa on the one hand and the world's thriving industrial hubs in China and East Asia on the other, the Maldives's geopolitical significance is in inverse proportion to the size of its population, estimated at less than 400,000.

Along with Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Seychelles and Diego Garcia (under the control of US), Maldives is among a few critical physical locations in the vast Indian Ocean, from which the flow of vital sea-borne commerce can be monitored, protected or disrupted.

Great Britain saw the Maldives as a critical link in the maritime communication between the North Atlantic and the Western Pacific, and built an airbase in Gan Island during World War II.

In our own time, as China's strategic interest in the Indian Ocean has grown, Beijing has paid special political attention to cultivating a strong partnership with the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Seychelles and Mauritius.

Speculation that China is interested in developing a naval base in Maldives, as part of its so-called "string of pearls" strategy in the Indian Ocean, has always been a bit overstated. But there is no denying the importance of the Maldives to the world's two rising naval powers, China and India. Much more than Beijing, it is Delhi that has devoted considerable diplomatic energies in the last few years towards building a solid bilateral partnership with the Maldives and other Indian Ocean islands.

It is not a coincidence that the presidents of Seychelles (James Michel) and Mauritius (Navinchandra Ramgoolam) have both been hosted in Delhi this month. India's outreach to the Maldives has included assistance in improving the surveillance of its large territorial waters and massive exclusive economic zone. It has also focused on building up Male's capacity to secure a nation comprising of nearly 1,200 islands.

India and the Maldives have steadily expanded their collaboration in the area of maritime security. When Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited the Maldives to attend the South Asian summit last November, he signed with Nasheed a framework agreement for development and cooperation.

This treaty-like agreement has laid a solid foundation for long-term economic and strategic cooperation between Delhi and Male. Whether the two could build on that foundation would depend on internal stability and coherence in the Maldives so threatened by the latest turn of events.

Regime orientation, internal and external, could change quite rapidly in micro-states like the Maldives. As we have seen in the last few months, it did not take much to produce an internal upheaval in Maldives that pitted the president against the judiciary, the political associates of his predecessor, and the conservative religious sentiment.

Coping with internal turbulence within its neighbouring countries has always been a major political challenge for India. Given India's huge stakes in the neighbourhood, stability and predictability will perdure as fundamental objectives of Delhi's regional policy. What is not clear, though, is the appropriate diplomatic template to effectively pursue these objectives.

Should India take a hands-off approach to the political struggles within the neighbouring countries, in the name of non-intervention, and do business with whoever is in power, much in the manner that Beijing deals with our neighbours?

Or, must India distinguish between friendly and hostile forces in the neighbouring countries and back its potential partners to the hilt, right or wrong? Or, should India engage all political forces and focus on institutions rather than individuals?

Should Delhi support progressive political leaders and encourage democratisation in the subcontinent? Or, should Delhi forget the question of values in dealing with the neighbours?

These issues that Delhi has had to confront in dealing with the current crisis in Maldives will remain pressing in India's engagement with the other neighbours in the coming months and years.

From the Maldives to Nepal, and from Myanmar to Pakistan, almost all our neighbours are in the middle of difficult political transitions. In Dhaka, the government of Sheikh Hasina has recently foiled a military coup and is facing growing political opposition.

There is no single formula for dealing with all internal crises in the subcontinent. What matters is Delhi's ability to judge each situation on its own merit and the capacity to generate the appropriate response.

Source: [The Indian Express](#), 9 February

Encounter at Mid-Sea

Nothing can remotely explain, let alone justify, the killing of two Indian fishermen by Italian Navy marines on board a merchant vessel who mistook them for pirates. In recent years, commercial vessels have been tormented by Somali pirates who have held ships and crew to ransom, often for months. Merchant ships need to be aware of the risks involved in sailing in certain regions but there can be no cause for panic at the first sight of an approaching craft. From available accounts, the Italian personnel on board the *Enrica Lexie* did not follow international protocols in dealing with a suspect boat. Warning shots were apparently fired, but the Italian vessel did not do evasive manoeuvres before deciding that the fishing boat actually carried pirates, and not fishermen. The Italian ship ought to have changed course and watched for the boat tailing it before taking drastic measures. Contrary to the Italian ship's claims, the fishermen were not armed; they were waiting for the ship to pass before proceeding further. In any case, common sense would suggest that the area, 14 nautical miles off Alappuzha in Kerala, was not a danger zone. Somali pirates do range over long distances but are certainly not likely to operate bang off the south-western coast of India. Nine of the other 11 fishermen in the boat were sleeping, and no matter what the Italian ship's crew claim to have seen through their binoculars, the boat posed no visible threat.

Although India summoned the Italian Ambassador and registered its protest at the killing, this nasty incident calls for concerted efforts among governments to prevent similar mid-sea misadventures. India is part of the global effort to patrol the piracy-affected sea lanes of the Indian Ocean, but not enough seems to have been done to prevent tragic mix-ups of the kind that cost the lives of two innocent men on Thursday. If the fishermen knew that armed guards are likely to be aboard merchant vessels looking at all boats with suspicion, they would have stayed further away from the *Enrica Lexie*. As it happened, neither the marines nor the fishermen expected to encounter each other. One of the fishermen killed is from Tamil Nadu, where fishing boats have often come under attack from the Sri Lankan Navy for crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line. On the eve of 26/11, sailors from Gujarat were killed on the high seas by terrorists. While taking steps at the international level to guard against the killing of innocents on the high seas, India's unsuspecting fishermen also need to be made aware of the different kinds of dangers they might have to face in pursuit of their livelihood. Sadly, the sea and its creatures are no longer the only challenge facing our mariners.

Source: [The Hindu](#), 17 February

Fighting piracy on dry land

Praveen Swami

Late in 1815, ten British warships arrived off Algiers, armed with dozens of cannon — and orders to use nothing else to negotiate with the Barbary coast corsairs holed up in the citadel-port. The British and their Dutch allies suffered 141 dead — but killed more than 2,000 pirates, destroyed their fleet and levelled their fortifications. Barbary pirates continued to prey on merchant traffic until 1830, when the French occupied Algiers, but their backbone was broken.

For years now, the world's merchant seamen have been fantasising about a similar solution to the grim tsunami of piracy that is washing through the Indian Ocean. Even though 30 navies are now operating in the Indian ocean — an unprecedented multinational effort that has brought together countries as diverse as the United States and Iran, as well as India and Pakistan — attacks by Somali groups actually rose to 237 last year, from 219 in 2010.

Last year alone, 802 crew were taken hostage and eight killed; 159 sailors are still captive in Somalia, waiting for fleet-owners to cough up ransoms that could range up to \$4 million for the 10 ships now held by pirates.

Failed by governments, merchant seamen have increasingly turned to using force to protect themselves. Last week's shooting of two unarmed Kerala fishermen by naval marines stationed on board an Italian tanker has underlined the risks of allowing ill-trained, and often panicked, personnel to use lethal force. There is little point, though, to blaming merchant crews for seeking to defend themselves unless governments can find ways to protect them.

The solution to high-seas piracy lies on dry land — and will need means more complex and subtle than the cannon that levelled the corsairs in 1815.

The pirate cartels

Somalia's pirate cartels have their roots in a failed state: the country has had no real government since 1991. Its Western-backed administration, under siege from the powerful jihadist group al-Shabaab, has no influence outside the capital, Mogadishu, and it survives because of the presence of African Union peacekeepers, backed by the United States. The country's economy is in ruins.

The quasi-independent region of Puntland remained relatively peaceful, but its coastal community none the less felt the impacts of the collapse of the Somali state. Foreign trawlers began to prey on Puntland's fishing grounds with impunity, destroying a traditional source of livelihood. There were no funds to modernise their operations, and no investments to give them market access. The flooding of the region with assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenade launchers led many young men to turn to the pirate cartels that sprang up from 2005.

From 2005, the business began to bring in real money. The Ukrainian-flagged Faina, loaded with tanks and anti-aircraft guns, brought in a \$3.2-million ransom. The super-tanker Sirius Star, netted the pirate cartels \$3 million. Last year, the Thai-owned Thor Nexus and its 27 crew, hijacked 560 km off the coast of Oman on Christmas day, were ransomed for \$5 million.

Experts say the pirate cartels now function much like modern businesses. Puntland's capital, Garowe, hosts a stock exchange where criminal cartels can put up money to fund future attacks. Banks based in Hong Kong and Singapore help route ransom payments from owners to the pirates, while British-owned firms based in Kenya conduct negotiations and air-drop cash to the cartels. Local communities, administrators and even less-than-scrupulous bankers have been seduced with the cash pirate cartels in the Somali ports of Eyl, Xharadhere, Garard and Ras Asir bring in: estimated at \$176 million in 2010, and close to \$200 million last year.

For the last two years, faced with ever-increasing insurance premiums and mutinous crews, merchant ship operators have pumped in ever-more money to secure vessels. In many ships, crew quarters are now equipped with attack-proof strong rooms, where sailors can safely retreat when under attack. In some cases, like Italy, governments have been willing to provide ships with armed guards; in others, companies have turned to private companies, who charge upwards of \$50,000 per voyage for the service.

Dry land solutions

Is there a solution? In a path-breaking paper published last month, the scholar Anja Shortland used satellite images to assess the economic benefits of piracy. Little of the cash, she found, remained in communities at the coastal ports used by pirate cartels to recruit gunmen. Instead, the satellite images Dr. Shortland analysed showed, much of money ended in major towns. Garowe, Puntland's provincial capital, had a dramatic increase in the numbers of new cars and houses. International developmental intervention, this data suggests, could provide a means to deny the cartels their sources

of cadre and support — if governments can find the will and means to work in one of the world's most dangerous regions.

This much, though, is clear: the massed guns of the world's navies have done relatively little to deter global piracy. Last year, the London-based International Maritime Bureau's authoritative international commercial crimes division recorded 439 incidents of piracy and high-seas armed robbery — only a marginal decline from 445 in 2010. Somalia-based groups alone accounted for 54 per cent of those attacks, though concerted naval action destroyed at least 20 pirate fleets.

Finding means to rebuild Somalia's coastal villages, and bring order to the region, might seem just as infeasible — but it is time nations at least began considering how it might be done.

Source: [The Hindu](#), 22 February



A quest for “Cooperative Solution in the Indian Ocean”

The National Maritime Foundation (NMF), New Delhi held its annual seminar at the Institute for Defence Research and Analyses' auditorium on 27-28 February, 2012 (NMF). Titled “The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) – A Quest for Cooperative Solutions”, the conference saw two days of detailed presentations and lively discussions on synergising maritime outlooks and combining efforts to combat the challenges that nations jointly faced in the Indian Ocean.

Making the inaugural address, Defence Minister A.K. Antony made a call for a consensual and cooperative effort in the IOR, where he also pointed out that the challenge of piracy is yet to be "effectively quarantined". Noting that India has already put forward certain proposals before the United Nations -- such as an international naval force on the lines of peace-keeping troops -- to fight pirates, the defence minister said there is a consensus that while the pirates can be neutralised at sea, the real solution lies in addressing the root causes, which are complex and are actually located on land. Taking into account the challenges posed by extremist ideologies, terrorism support and the scourge of the non-state entity, the assessments on piracy needed to be objective and candid for solutions to be effective.

Pointing out that the Indian Ocean Region has seen "new partnerships being forged, old

anxieties being revived and the aspirations of its vast human resource manifesting in myriad manner," Mr Antony said the region was a complex domain, as it hosted many global concerns. The principal need, he said, was to manage the oceanic domain, in keeping with the normative principles of international law and the evolving norms for the 'global commons'.

Source: [The Pioneer](#), February 27

A Need for Strategic Planning In Maritime Affairs

In the run-up to the National Maritime Foundation's (NMF) Annual Maritime Conference, the NMF Chairman, Admiral (Retd) Sureesh Mehta interacted with reporters in New Delhi. Admiral Mehta, who only recently took over as the chairman of the Foundation, said the country needs to work on a long-term Indian Ocean policy. Noting that India "lacks" strategic thinking in terms of maritime affairs, the former Navy chief emphasised the need for advance planning to counter Chinese moves in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

Replying to a question on ways to tackle increasing presence of Chinese Navy in Indian Ocean, he underlined the need for advance planning, but denied that the balance of power in Indian Ocean has tilted in favour of China after its Navy was allowed to make port calls in Seychelles. China, he said had the right for its ships to visit Seychelles, and the Indian Navy, too, had such arrangement with other countries.

On tackling piracy in Gulf of Aden, he underlined the need for making proper laws. Nations, he said, did not have adequate laws to take pirates back and effectively prosecute them.

Source: [First Post.com](#), February 24

Defence Panel approves light combat aircraft for Indian Navy

In a boost to India's indigenous maritime combat plane development programme, a top defence panel has approved the limited series production of the Tejas light combat aircraft (LCA) for the Indian Navy's under-construction indigenous aircraft carrier (IAC).

The approval came from the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) at its meeting on third week of February, even as the project is finding the going tough over the plane's General Electric F404 engine providing inadequate power -- about 80 kiloNewtons -- for a carrier-borne fighter.

Therefore, India's first home-built carrier-borne combat jet may finally be powered by GE F414 engine that provides 90 kiloNewton thrust to meet the specifications for LCA-Navy.

With the aircraft going through its first flight this year, followed by the necessary approvals for final operational clearance in the next three-four years, it could just be cleared in time for the IAC's induction. The 40,000-tonne IAC is under construction at the Cochin Shipyard, and will carry about 30 combat planes, apart from choppers. Meanwhile, the Indian Air Force has ordered seven squadrons - about 140 aircraft - of the LCA and its induction is expected to begin next year.

Source: [Economic Times](#), 27 February

Defence Minister visits Vishakhapatnam Naval Base

Union Minister for Defence, Mr AK Antony, arrived in Vishakhapatnam for a 'Day at Sea' onboard the warships of the Indian Navy, comprising both Eastern and Western Fleets, off Visakhapatnam.

Accompanied by Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Nirmal Verma, the Minister visited the indigenous stealth frigate INS Shivalik at sea and spent the night onboard the Aircraft Carrier INS Viraat, where he witnessed the entire gamut of Naval operations including missile and rocket firings, air power demonstration, interceptor missions involving fighter aircraft of the Navy and the Air Force and several evolutions like underway replenishment, multi ship jackstay and combat freefall. He also interacted with officers and men of the Navy onboard the fleet ships.

Ships, submarines, aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles of the Indian Navy, ships and aircraft of the Indian Coast Guard and the Indian Air Force are scheduled to take part in an exercise codenamed 'Tropex 2012,' commencing off Visakhapatnam. The major annual exercise is aimed at testing the Navy's preparedness in dealing with contingencies.

Source: [The Hindu](#), 8 February

Indian Navy gets first P-8i Radar

Raytheon's Space and Airborne Systems has delivered the first APY-10 multi-mission radar to Boeing for installation in the P-8I maritime patrol aircraft for the Indian Navy. The company is under contract to deliver eight sets.

Although it shares a common designation with the radar being used in the U.S. Navy's P-8A Poseidon, the Indian APY-10 incorporates new modes. "The Indian government had different requirements [from the U.S. Navy]," said Tim Carey, Raytheon's vice president, ISR systems. "It's specifically customized for their needs."

One of the two principal elements of the adaptation is the addition of an interleaved weather/surface search radar mode, which allows the flight crew to access weather-avoidance information while the radar is also performing its surveillance mission.

A second requirement is for an air-to-air capability to exploit the aircraft's typically high operating altitudes. "India is interested in the air picture from high altitude," said Carey. "We've adapted the waveform to give that capability." Details of the kind of air-to-air capability that can be achieved have not been revealed. Adapting the APY-10 for its extra duties has involved changes in the data- and signal-processors, and some alterations to the actual antenna. Mounted in the lower nose of the P-8, the radar has a forward scan over a 240-deg sector.

These developments have aroused interest among other potential customers. The P-8 is being marketed to a number of countries, and is one of the likely competitors for a forthcoming Singapore maritime patrol requirement.

Raytheon sees a growing market for maritime patrol radars, notably in the Middle East/North Africa and Asia Pacific regions. As well as its APY-10 and SeaVue radars, it is also now marketing signals intelligence systems following the acquisition of Applied Signal Technology. The Pegasus is an electronic intelligence system being offered for smaller aircraft and large UAV applications, while the Titan is a Comint system applicable to larger platforms.

Source: [AIN Online](#), 15 February



Regional Navies Participate in MILAN 2012 at Port Blair

The eighth edition of Milan-2012, the biennial meeting of regional navies, organised by the Indian Navy (IN), was held at Port Blair from Feb 01 to Feb 06, 2012. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Nirmal Verma stressed the IN's commitment to ensuring a stable and secure regional environment for the "economic development and social uplift of the masses" in India's neighbourhood. The IN, he said, has been carrying out coordinated patrols with some of our neighbours, and also undertaking EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone) surveillance on request from other governments.

Admiral Verma referred to the Oceans as 'maritime highways' that linked nations. The aim of this meeting, he said, was to forge working-level joint-man-ship and interoperability among the Navies of the region, and to ensure faster humanitarian assistance and disaster relief response, better counter piracy and anti-poaching measures and prevention of contraband smuggling and human trafficking.

Referring to the Indian Ocean Region as a 'critical economic highway' for a predominant chunk of its oil, cargo and container traffic, Admiral Mehta cautioned nations against challenges to the security of the energy and trade seaway that could lead to major conflict.

Lieutenant General (Retd) Bhopinder Singh, Lieutenant-Governor of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, in his address said that current economic challenges demanded maritime interdependencies. "Our combined efforts can postulate joint doctrines... to prevent, deter, limit and localise conflicts and disruptions to the global system that we all rely upon."

This edition of MILAN is the largest since its inception in 1995, with representatives from Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Maldives, Mauritius and Seychelles participating in it. Of these, Maldives, Mauritius and Seychelles are first-timers at the event.

Source: [The Hindu](#), 5 February

China wants to partner India in piracy fight

China has said it wants to work with India and other countries to boost maritime cooperation, particularly with regard to coordinating naval escorts in the Indian Ocean to fight piracy. As naval officers from 20 countries met in the eastern port city of Nanjing at the start of a two-day international initiative on ocean escorts, hosted by the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), Chinese officials expressed their keenness to increase coordination with the Indian Navy.

The Chinese Ministry of Defence singled out India and Japan as two countries with which China wanted to increase exchanges and strengthen coordination of escort missions. The workshop, according to a Chinese MoD spokesperson, was aimed at improving the efficiency of international escort missions deployed in the fight against piracy, through greater exchange of intelligence, commander visits and joint escorts and exercises. He said the countries had agreed to follow an integrated escort schedule, arranged on a quarterly basis, with the schedule-making being led by “a reference country” chosen every quarter. China, as the first reference country, had already proposed a schedule, and other countries involved in the operation would formulate their schedules accordingly.

This message of cooperation from China comes against the backdrop of its navy, which once limited its reach to protecting China's frontiers, spreading its presence with plans in place for the development of a blue water navy, even as the country's first aircraft carrier undergoes sea-trials.

Source: [The Hindu](#), 23 February

Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) workshop begins

The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Operational Issues Workshop, hosted by the Sri Lanka Navy commenced on 28 February. Director General Operations Rear Admiral Jayantha Perera inaugurated the workshop at the Galadari Hotel in Colombo.

The two day workshop conducted under the theme “Enhancing Operational Efficiency through Sharing of Information and Coordination” is attended by representatives from Australia, Bangladesh, France, Indonesia, India, Iran, Kenya, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand and United Arab Emirates.

The hosting of the workshop in Colombo by the Sri Lanka Navy shows the commitment and importance it gives to the ‘IONS’. The workshop, which will focus attention on

maritime security and the freedom of the sea for safe navigation, will conclude on the 29th.

Source: [Sri Lanka Navy](#), 28 February

India, Saudi Arabia seek stronger ties

On a two day visit to Saudi Arabia, the Indian Defence Minister, AK Antony held talks with his counterpart, Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz, and discussed ways to enhance bilateral ties. This was the first time an Indian defence minister was visiting Saudi Arabia. Mr Antony was accompanied by a high-level delegation, including defence secretary Shashi Kant Sharma, Indian Army Vice Chief Lt Gen SK Singh and Indian Navy Deputy Chief Vice Admiral Satish Soni.

During the meeting, they made an in-depth review of aspects of cooperation between the two countries and ways of enhancing bilateral ties. In a statement, Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz hailed Saudi-Indian relations as deep-rooted and highlighted the visit of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, to India in January 2006, which, he said, boosted further cooperation between the two countries and strengthened the partnership in the framework of mutual interest and close ties. He highlighted the meeting of the Saudi-Indian joint committee last month that illustrated the firm desire to continue building on a strong relationship beneficial for both countries.

Mr Antony said his visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was important for promoting cooperation between the two countries. He also stressed the keenness of the Indian government to strengthen further relations with the Kingdom.

Source: [Times of India](#), 15 February



South Korea keen to partner with India in defence sector

South Korea is keen to forge a partnership with India's defence sector in shipbuilding, electronics and aeronautics where it has cutting edge technology. The South Korean Ambassador to India Kim Joong-Keun, in an interaction with the media, said that a Korean firm had been selected by India to supply eight minesweepers and a number of other Korean firms were participating in various biddings under India's defence modernisation programme.

He also commented on civil nuclear energy cooperation between the two countries, noting that it had opened up new avenues for enhancing our economic relationship. South Korea, he said, was engaged in building nuclear power plants for the last four decades and has 20 nuclear power plants which account for 40 per cent of its energy need and that they were already in discussion to set up nuclear plants in India.

Source: [Economic Times](#), 6 February

India Ports Ltd to have Rs. 3,000-CR equity base

India Ports Limited, being constituted to invest in ports and marine facilities abroad, will have an initial equity base of Rs.3,000 crore, raised from cash-rich public sector major ports and private financial institutions. The new investment arm will be promoted on a 50:50 basis by the public and private sector partners, said Union Shipping Secretary K. Mohandas.

He said he expected the proposal for forming the new entity would come up before the Cabinet in two months. Countries all over the world are open to the idea of developing port facilities with foreign collaborations and India can make investments that are commercially and strategically important. Besides, India has a long maritime history and a large pool of personnel capable of undertaking operation of maritime entities.

Mr Mohandas said that major ports in the country would have a new land use policy by the end of March which would help them utilise the land in the best way.

The Union Government was close to finalising a programme of cargo support for Indian flag vessels, he added. Cargo support is not an original idea. Though it is not fashionable, it is a practical one being considered to help the Indian shipping industry, which faces rough weather on account of the global slump in shipping business.

The Shipping Secretary said that only about 8 per cent of the Indian cargo was carried in Indian bottoms. This figure was around 30 per cent in the 1980s. Indian flag vessels accounted for just about one per cent of the global maritime cargo movement. The Shipping Ministry was now consulting ministries such as petroleum, fertiliser and steel that could provide cargo support to Indian flag vessels, he said.

Source: [The Hindu](#), 27 February

Adani Group gets nod to build dry bulk terminal at Kandla

Diversified Rs 30,000 Crore Adani Group's venture Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) received letter of intent from the Kandla Port Trust of Government of India to set up a dry bulk terminal on build, operate and transfer basis.

APSEZ emerged as the highest bidder on revenue share basis and has been awarded the concession in a competitive bidding scenario. The dry bulk terminal will come up at Tekra near Tuna outside Kandla Creek at the Kandla Port, which is India's largest port by volumes. The construction of the new bulk terminal will begin after signing of the concession agreement with the Kandla Port Trust in next couple of weeks.

Source: [The Economic Times](#), 27 February

Japanese delegation meets Modi discusses Alang shipyard project

A high-level delegation of Japan's ship owners' association called on Gujarat CM Narendra Modi and expressed eagerness to undertake their government's proposed project on the Alang-Sosiya shipyard. The delegation comprised officials of leading Japanese shipping companies, including K Tomoda of Kawasaki and S Tatsukawa of Mitsui OSK, among others. They were accompanied by Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB) MD Pankaj Kumar.

The project aims to make the shipyard safer and eco-friendly by meeting international norms. The Japan government is keen to fund the \$22.50-million project.

Source: [The Indian Express](#), 14 February