

MAKING WAVES

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Japan's crisis will affect nuke power worldwide

The unfolding crisis at the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant is, of course, not just a problem for Japan alone. The future of the peaceful use of nuclear energy around the world rests with how effectively this country can cope with the situation. Because of a nearly unimaginable natural disaster — a devastating earthquake and ensuing colossal tsunami — the Fukushima plant's reactors, which were credited as among the world's best in terms of safety, are now in a wretched condition.

Up until the current crisis, nuclear power was undergoing a positive re-evaluation globally as a clean energy source emitting no greenhouse gases, and construction work on new nuclear plants was under way in many parts of the world. The trouble at the Fukushima nuclear power plant has thrown cold water on what was being called a "nuclear energy renaissance."

In the aftermath of the disaster, the European Union decided to put all nuclear plants within its jurisdiction under review to check their earthquake resistance and other safety arrangements.

In Germany, where 17 nuclear plants are in operation, seven that were built in 1980 or earlier have suspended operations for three months. German Chancellor Angela Merkel's government previously had decided to extend the lifetime of the existing nuclear reactors, in a reversal of the previous administration's policy. But now the possibility has raised that Germany may once again reverse its nuclear energy policy.

At the time of the 1979 Three Mile Island nuclear crisis and also after the 1986 Chernobyl disaster, misgivings about the safety of nuclear power plants became widespread in the United States and European countries, forcing them to put construction plans for new nuclear power plants on hold.

From the standpoint of protecting energy security and fighting global warming, however, nuclear power plants, as long as they are managed safely, are certain to remain an important source of electric power. About 30 countries now have nuclear power plants in operation, and about a dozen more have them under construction or on the drawing board.

In the United States, which has more nuclear power plants than any other nation, some members of Congress have called for a freeze on the construction of new nuclear power plants. U.S. President Barack Obama, however, has remained committed to his policy of encouraging nuclear power generation, saying Washington needs to "take lessons learned from what's happening in Japan."

France, which has the second largest number of nuclear power facilities, has vowed to go ahead with its construction plans for new facilities. Its sale of reactors to other

countries also is continuing as scheduled. South Korea also has kept its posture of encouraging nuclear power generation unchanged.

Many countries, including such emerging economies as China and India, would find it extremely difficult to meet fast-growing demand for energy without making use of nuclear power plants.

Under the circumstances, it is imperative for the international community to firmly ensure the safety of nuclear power generation. Should the release of radioactive material from the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant continue, the problem could develop into a profoundly grave international issue.

Japan must bring the nuclear crisis under control as quickly as possible by sharing relevant information with other members of the international community and asking for cooperation from nuclear experts from around the world. Making utmost efforts in this regard is the sole way for Japan to maintain international confidence in the viability of nuclear power.

Source: 29 March 2011

<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/editorial/T110329003485.htm>

Need for a Nuclear Safety Review in India

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh's assurance that the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) will be converted into a truly autonomous and independent regulatory authority, and to ensure that it is of the highest and the best international standards, is welcome. The tragedy at the Japanese nuclear power plant has raised worldwide concerns that have to be addressed and it is the AERB in India that is the primary agency concerned with assessing the safety of the facilities during the siting, design, construction, commissioning, operation and decommissioning stages. That the PM has been prompt in rising to the occasion and directing a technical review of all safety systems of our nuclear power plants right after the accident is also a wise move. Since India has a very creditable record on the nuclear safety front (in fact, as pointed out by Manmohan Singh, our impeccable safety track record in nuclear power stretches over the past 335 reactor-years of operations), strengthening of the AERB will add to that record.

One of the key calls the AERB can take is on the issue of promoting the number of fast breeder test reactors. The design, especially the sodium-based cooling system, was India's response to the nuclear apartheid. An independent AERB will be expected to arrive at a decision that will be acceptable to all constituencies. Positioning of AERB outside the government-controlled nuclear establishment will be in line with the emerging global consensus to put regulatory institutions at an independent distance from the nodal ministries or other facilitating and promotional agencies. In India, the distance has been lacking so far as the chairman of the AERB reports to the secretary, Department of Atomic Energy. It is time that AERB is made independent of the government departments that operate the nuclear power plants owned by the public

sector. It is also important that the regulatory institutions are designed to limit the scope for political interference in regulatory decisions. International experience shows nuclear safety regulations work better the more independent and open they are. While strengthening the regulatory framework, it is equally important to ensure consistency of regulatory processes and the simplification of procedures, which are essential to remove uncertainties and encourage new investments. Uncertainty and delays while seeking regulatory approvals have been a cause of concern and have a debilitating impact on investments. Another aspect that needs greater attention is the safety of the nuclear fuel facilities. Traditionally, the regulatory attention has been focused more on power plant design and operational issues that have a greater potential for accidents. Fuel facilities that handle greater quantities of radioactivity usually receive less priority.

This lacuna should also be addressed.

Source: 31 March 2011

<http://www.financialexpress.com/news/fe-editorial-fine-nuclear-news/769399/0>



Indian Navy arrests 61 pirates, rescues 13 sailors

In a major breakthrough in its anti-piracy operations, the Indian Navy said it had arrested 61 heavily armed pirates and rescued 13 sailors from captivity in the Arabian Sea, about 600 nautical miles west of India. "The navy's INS Kalpeni intercepted pirate mother vessel Vega 5 in the sea. Thirteen crew members were rescued and 61 pirates nabbed," a navy spokesperson said.

Source: 14 March 2011

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2011-03-14/news/28688478_1_pirate-attack-pirate-mother-mother-vessel

India proposes pro-active role in UN-flagged anti-piracy efforts

India has proposed a pro-active role for its Navy in UN-flagged effort to tackle the threat to maritime traffic from piracy. 'India is in favour of strengthening multilateral cooperation under a UN framework to meet the complex challenges of maritime security,' the defence ministry said in its annual report for 2010-11 tabled in parliament.

Describing the increased incidence of piracy in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) as 'an issue of serious concern,' the report said 'the threat of piracy and terrorism to international trade and safety of the sea lanes of communication had emerged as a major problem.' The report said 'the threat of piracy emerging from Somalian waters continued to endanger the safety of the sea lanes and was a matter of concern for the international community'

'The spread of piracy to areas close to our western seaboard has made this a cause of great concern. The presence of Somali pirates in the waters around our western island

territories has been an unwelcome development which requires heightened vigil. The linkages between terrorists based in Somalia and transnational organised crime is also a cause of major concern globally,' it added. Terming the IOR as 'central' to the country's maritime interests and concerns, the report said New Delhi was engaged in enhancing cooperative interaction and exchanges with various countries in the region to tackle common security challenges.

'The Indian Navy has been actively involved in combating maritime piracy in the region on its own and in coordination with the Navies and coalition forces of various countries in the Gulf of Aden,' it said. 'India's economic development is crucially dependent on the sea because of the criticality of sea-borne trade in an increasingly inter-linked world, as well as because of the potential of vast economic resources of the oceans. India's maritime interests involve the safeguarding of our coastline and island territories, as also our interests in our EEZ, as well as in maintaining open and secure sea lanes of communication,' it added.

Dwelling on the security scenario in the immediate neighbourhood, the report said India's relations with China are of 'crucial importance.' 'India is conscious and watchful of the implications of China's evolving military profile in the immediate and extended neighbourhood. India's policy is to engage with China on the principles of mutual trust and respect and sensitivity for each other's concerns,' it said.

Taking note of the recent political developments in the Middle East and North Africa, the report said: 'The impact of these developments on the security situation in the region and on the security of energy supplies is of global concern.' Underscoring India's vibrant ties with all the countries in the region, the report said that New Delhi would continue to engage with them on the basis of mutuality of respect and interests.

'India has also been actively involved in peacekeeping operations in Africa under the UN mandate and seeks to consolidate its relations with many countries in the region with which we have historical linkages,' it said.

Source: 16 March 2011

<http://www.sify.com/news/india-proposes-pro-active-role-in-un-flagged-anti-piracy-efforts-news-national-ldqq4hadeca.html>

22 Indian fishermen held in Pakistan

At least 22 Indian fishermen have been taken into custody in Pakistan for allegedly violating the country's marine border. Five boats belonging to the Indians were seized off the port city of Karachi, the Daily Times citing Pakistan's maritime security agency reported.

Source: 19 March 2011

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-03-19/india/29145484_1_indian-fishermen-maritime-security-marine-border

Coast Guard station at Ratnagiri commissioned

A new Coast Guard station was commissioned at Ratnagiri in the coastal Konkan region, the Coast Guard officials said. Vice Admiral Anil Chopra, Director General of Coast Guard, commissioned 'ICGS Ratnagiri', expected to strengthen coastal security in the state which saw sea-borne terrorists attacking Mumbai in 2008. Commandant B H Kumbhare has been appointed as the first commanding officer of the new station, which will play an effective role in undertaking joint coastal patrol along with the state police, departments of Customs and Fisheries to thwart maritime security threats. Coast Guard sources said that another station is being planned at Dahanu besides setting up a Coast Guard air station at Ratnagiri.

Source: 26 March 2011

<http://ibnlive.in.com/generalnewsfeed/news/coast-guard-station-at-ratnagiri-commissioned/624937.html>



Aman- 11: Sharing of data for maritime security stressed

The need for information sharing in dealing with the challenges of maritime security was emphasised at the fourth international maritime conference, which was part of the Aman-11 multi-national maritime security exercise.

Different features of maritime security were deliberated upon at the conference entitled "Maritime security management-contemporary challenges and need for global cooperation", which was held at the National Centre for Maritime Policy Research, Bahria University.

Earlier speaking at the conference, scholars from Pakistan, speakers from the US, the UK, China and Canada presented papers on maritime issues like maritime information sharing and non-traditional security challenges. They said that security of sea lanes had assumed more importance than past as global economy was dependent on sea lanes for trade and energy flows.

It was noted that current major threats to the security of sea lanes were increasingly non-traditional, which all nations could agree to cooperate in countering. They included maritime piracy, maritime terrorism, proliferation of weapons, weapons of mass destruction and missiles, besides illegal trafficking in drugs, people and goods.

Importance of long-range identification and tracking was also highlighted at the conference. However, it was noted that potential existed for the misuse of shared tracking data by pirates or criminal groups and by some nations desiring to restrict customary and treaty navigational freedoms.

It was noted that maritime security challenges in the Arabian Sea were both multidimensional and multifaceted and involved a host of non-traditional or non-military threats and challenges. Growing maritime terrorism and piracy in the Indian Ocean region resulted in the formation of many coalition's operations against maritime terrorism and piracy and drug trafficking. It was said that Pakistan Navy was the only regional Navy to form part of the Coalition Maritime Campaign Plan and, despite its resource constraints, contributed significantly towards the regional maritime security.

Source: 9 March 2011

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/03/09/sharing-of-data-for-maritime-security-stressed.html>

India-U.S. defence meetings kick off

In the backdrop of the approaching United States-India Strategic Dialogue meetings in New Delhi this spring, the 11th U.S.-India Defence Policy Group (DPG) met in Washington during March 3-4 for extensive discussion on strengthening bilateral defence ties, particularly in the areas of maritime security, counterterrorism, disaster relief, and personnel exchanges.

According to officials at the Indian Embassy, the meetings were co-chaired by Pradeep Kumar, Defence Secretary, government of India and Michelle Flournoy, Under Secretary of Defence for Policy. Officials said Mr. Kumar also met William Burns, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, and William Lynn, Deputy Secretary of Defence.

Reaffirming that the bilateral defence cooperation was an "important facet of the overall India-U.S. strategic partnership," Mr. Kumar and Ms. Flournoy expressed satisfaction at the progress in this area, noting in particular the increasing number of joint exercises that the two armed forces held regularly. Additionally India's procurement of defence equipment such as C-130J aircraft was an important aspect of this progress, officials said.

In a statement, Indian embassy also said that both sides had "welcomed the removal of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Bharat Dynamics Limited from the U.S. Entities List," especially as this relaxation of restrictions would likely open up new opportunities for cooperation in the field of defence supplies and industrial and technological cooperation between the two countries more generally. During the meetings, the reports of four sub-groups of the DPG were reviewed and a policy-level dialogue was held on the global strategic and security situation.

On broader regional themes, both sides touched upon the multilateral security architecture in Asia and looked forward to continued cooperation in regional organisations, officials said. The two sides had agreed that the next DPG meetings would be held in New Delhi early next year, they said.

Source: 11 March 2011

<http://www.hindu.com/2011/03/11/stories/2011031155791600.htm>

Indian, Singapore Navy to exercise in South China Sea

Five Indian Navy ships, under the command of Rear Admiral Harish Chandra Singh Bisht, arrived in Singapore for the drill that aims to strengthen bilateral maritime security relations. The joint exercises held on alternate year in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, has built up understanding and knowledge between Indian and Singapore navies, Rear Admiral Joseph Leong, Fleet Commander of the Republic of Singapore Navy told PTI at a reception hosted on board INS Jyoti.

He cited benefits of the joint exercise and cooperation developed by the Indian and Singapore navies in tackling major challenges and especially the piracy in the Gulf of Aden.

"We understand each other and have a high level contact in managing maritime security," said Rear Admiral Leong.

Rear Admiral Bisht said the annual exercises, held since 1994, were important to sharpen the skill of naval forces. INS Delhi, INS Ranvijay, INS Ranveer, INS Jyoti and INS Kirch manned by 1,400 naval personnel are participating in the exercise. Singapore will have four naval ships including a submarine. INS Ranvijay, the most powerful Indian naval ship, will carry out anti-submarine and anti-missile exercises. But this time, the exercises would be a "mock warfare" though in the past live firing were tried out.

Source: 18 March 2011

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/146889/indian-singapore-navy-exercise-south.html>

U.S, Gulf forces stage naval exercise

U.S. and Gulf naval forces have staged a joint exercise in the Gulf focused on tracking vessels deemed threatening. Ships from Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and the United States took part in the seven-day Exercise Goalkeeper 11-01 in central and southern Gulf waters to "train across the spectrum of Maritime Security Operations (MSO)". The exercise focused on coordinating coalition security operations at sea, as well as "improving the dissemination of information among regional command centres and building relationships between contributing nations," said Bahraini Colonel Isa al-Doseri, who is currently heading the Combined Task Force 152 that is in charge of Gulf security and cooperation task force within Combined Maritime Force (CMF).

Tension has escalated between Gulf Arab states and Iran on the northern shore of the narrow Gulf, as Tehran condemned the deployment of Gulf troops in Bahrain and slammed the heavy-handed crackdown on protests.

CMF is a multi-national naval partnership in the Middle East, where some of the world's most important shipping lanes are located.

Source: 21 March 2011

http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gB676DbqbQpu3uOZ_GSaRN-GYbbQ?docId=CNG.e623321b6a9f7efb561fd470f40817bf.a41



The Comptroller and Auditor General raps defence ministry for delay in ship building

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has slammed the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the Navy and the government shipyards tasked with shipbuilding for poor cost estimation, delay in ship building, design, technology and infrastructure issues, financial management, procurement and old and aging platforms with no fresh inductions keeping the increasing role of the Navy in mind.

Taking the performance audit between 1998-2009, the CAG sought to review three projects at varying stages of construction, the (Project)P-15A (Destroyer), P-17 (Frigate) and P-28 (ASW Corvettes). Tabled in Lok Sabha, the report said the Indian Navy was facing large shortfalls against its planned levels owing to delays in the above mentioned projects. Because of delays in finalisation of structural drawings and availability in material, and would have to continue with reduced fleet strength. The report says, "The three Defence PSU shipyards tasked with this responsibility, Mazgaon Dock Ltd, Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers and Goa Shipyard Ltd, differ widely in their role, areas of strength and outputs. Put together, the present ship building capacity of these Defence PSUs based on past averages is close to four ships per year - a number too low to meet the expectations of Navy."

The audit talks about unrealistic estimates at the time of project sanction and the absence of a professional mechanism to provide reliable and accurate data regarding costs. Undue delays in the conclusion of the contracts leading to weak contractual management of costs and timelines are other audit objections.

Source: 22 March 2011

http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report_cag-raps-defence-ministry-for-delay-in-ship-building_1523096

Pipavav eyes Indian Navy contracts after foreign investment promotion board nod

Pipavav Shipyard received the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) clearance for foreign direct investment (FDI), paving the way for it to bid for defence sector deals in India. "We wish to secure sizeable business out of the current and upcoming requirement of the Indian Navy," said Nikhil Gandhi, chairman, Pipavav.

Earlier, ABG Shipyard received a similar approval from FIPB. However, while granting the approval, FIPB capped the current foreign equity holding in the company of 21.91% as the maximum ceiling. According to Pipavav officials, the yard has not been asked to cap its FDI at any specific limit. Pipavav's current FDI holding is around 13%.

According to industry sources, the Indian Navy is expected to add four destroyers, six submarines, four LPDs and seven frigates in the next two to three years' time. The total for the planned six submarines orders itself is pegged at Rs50,000 crore.

Pipavav is highly bullish on the defence segment; the company was targeting a total order book of \$7 billion in the next fiscal. While orders worth \$3 billion are expected to come from overseas, the remaining is expected from domestic orders. As of December 2010, the company's order book was at around \$ 1.4 billion. Out of these, exports were around worth \$ 690 million, offshore orders \$110 million and defence orders around \$600 million.

Pipavav had signed a protocol with Rosoboron Export, a Russian government arm for defence cooperation with foreign governments last year and a memorandum of understanding with Saab Dynamics AB, a part of Swedish multinational giant Saab, to tap orders in the defence segment.

Source: 25 March 2011

http://www.dnaindia.com/money/report_pipavav-eyes-indian-navy-contracts-after-fipb-nod_1523909



Cochin Shipyard forges ahead through rough weather

The public sector Cochin Shipyard Ltd is proposing to expand capacity by setting up a ship-lift system at an investment of Rs 500 crore. The new system, to be set up at the northern end of the premises, will be 120 metres long and can accommodate ships of up to 6,000 tonnes. The project is likely to be operational by next year, Commodore K. Subramaniam, Chairman and Managing Director, Cochin Shipyard Ltd, said.

The ship lift facility will ease congestion in the shipyard's drydocks. The yard has two drydocks. One of the docks is being used for the construction of the indigenous aircraft carrier of the Navy and the other is used for shipbuilding and ship repair, he said.

Cochin Shipyard (CSL) also has orders for 34 ships. 14 offshore platform vessels for domestic and international owners, and 20 fast-patrol vessels for the coast guard, valued at Rs 4,000 crore. Mr Subramaniam said India's first indigenous aircraft carrier was to be floated out December last year. But due to various reasons, the ship will be ready to sail only by this year-end.

Taking a hit

The Commodore pointed out that recession had an impact on the shipyard as it did not receive any orders from 2008 to September 2010. After September 2010, the yard received orders for 24 ships out of the 34 orders it has now. The effect of recession will be felt this year and next year. The company had good growth in the last five years,

though this situation may change this year and the next. But the company's performance will not be affected, he said.

The yard, said the Managing Director, faces harsh competitive environment. Shipbuilding and ship repair orders are secured on the basis of international, competitive bidding. A disparity in the tax structure with foreign countries makes it difficult for Indian yards to survive in this competitive world.

Profit

Referring to the expansion plans, Commodore Subramaniam said the yard is looking at the proposed Vizhinjam International Port project in a big way and the company has already set up a bollard pull test facility there to test the pulling capacity of anchor handling tugs of up to 500 tonnes.

The growth of CSL has been phenomenal as shipbuilding income rose to Rs 1,012 crore in 2009-10 from Rs 222 crore in 2005-06. The turnover has tripled during the same period. The net profit increased by 12 times during the period to touch Rs 223 crore. The authorised capital and paid-up capital of the company is Rs 250 crore and Rs 192 crore respectively as of today.

The main factors for CSL achieving stellar performance in the last five years was the adoption of the right product mix, catering to an international clientele and entering the Defence sector by taking up the prestigious aircraft carrier project.

Products in shipbuilding range from double hull tankers, bulk carriers to port crafts, offshore supply vessels, passenger ships, dredgers and tugs.

The yard moved into the international market in a modest way by building a barge for National Petroleum Construction Company, Abu Dhabi, in 2002. Since then, CSL has built and delivered 35 ships for owners in Bahamas, Norway, the Netherlands, Greece, the US and Saudi Arabia.

Repair expertise

The company entered into the ship repair business in 1982. It has gained expertise in complex and sophisticated repairs to various types of ships. The company's main clients in ship repair are ONGC, Indian Navy, Coast Guard, SCI and Lakshadweep Administration.

At present, only CSL is capable of undertaking repairs and maintenance of large vessels of Indian Navy such as the *INS Viraat*. The company has also undertaken repairs and upgrade work of ONGC's jack-up rigs and mobile offshore drilling unit ships, which are of strategic importance.

Source: 13 March 2011

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/logistics/article1534683.ece?homepage=true>



Indian Environment Minister unveils marine bio-diversity centre

Union minister for environment and forests, Jairam Ramesh unveiled the National Centre for Marine Bio-Diversity (NCMB) at Marine National Park in Jamnagar on March 2, 2011.

R D Kamboj, chief conservator of forests, Marine National Park, said the centre will help protect the rich marine bio-diversity of the country. "The objective is to promote different kinds of research activities in respect of coastal and marine eco-systems of the country. The coastline of India is 7,500 km and about 22 per cent of it is in Gujarat, which has 1,650 km. The coastal and marine eco-system plays a very important and significant role in providing livelihood securities to the communities who are based on the coastal line," Kamboj said.

Source: 1 March 2011

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-03-01/rajkot/28642938_1_marine-bio-diversity-coastal-areas-eco-systems

Ministry of Environment and Forests now sets eyes on marine biodiversity

Marine biodiversity is now set to become the latest buzz word at the Ministry of environment and forests (MoEF). Environment minister Jairam Ramesh said that marine biodiversity had been consistently ignored in India's conservation programs so far, a reason why about 25 species of fish and amphibians found their way into the list of critically endangered species in India.

"Due to our preoccupation with carnivores and forests, we have not paid attention to marine biodiversity. In fact, oceans themselves play a vital role in sequestering carbon so they are a huge asset in combating climate change. The integrated coastal zone management committee that has been set up will look at these aspects. None of the marine species mentioned in the critically endangered list are in protected areas and we intend expanding the network of marine national parks to at least partly address this issue," Ramesh said.

Source: 10 March 2011

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-03-10/developmental-issues/28676690_1_marine-biodiversity-marine-species-sets-eyes

Tsunami may have damaged marine life

The huge wave that followed the 9-magnitude quake carried huge volumes of water in land, destroying towns and engulfing everything in its path. It returns back to sea with a great amount of force and can be directed by the shape of the coastal floor, causing whirlpools similar to the huge swirl that was seen. The damage caused by such a

formation is dependent on the area where it occurs, but it can lead to significant long-term harm to marine life.

"It's a little bit like a cyclone on a smaller scale," said Dr Mark Gibbs, Deputy Chief of the CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research group. "And the tsunami itself going through there would have caused a lot of damage." Those sorts of massive events will suck up lots of seaweeds and animals and cause a lot of (marine) mortality."

The wave would have dragged a lot of sediment and debris from the land and deposited it into the ocean. Experts believe this impact will affect light and sediment levels, further damaging the unique marine environment.

Mark Baird, a biological oceanographer at Sydney's University of Technology, said it could take years for the area to regenerate, even if there was only grass on the sea floor. "If it was just micro-organisms in a muddy bed it might take only a short time," he said.

Source: 18 March 2011

<http://news.ninensn.com.au/world/japanquake/8225802/tsunami-may-have-damaged-marine-life>