

MAKING WAVES

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Inside this brief.....

MARITIME EDITORIAL

- Asia's maritime security is all at sea
- 'Gawadar Port' and the 'Great Game' of politics

MARITIME SECURITY

- Japanese tanker attacked off Indonesian island
- Maritime disputes between Japan and China

MARITIME ENVIRONMENT

- The Coming Conflicts of Climate Change

MARITIME CO-OPERATION

- Taiwan, China to launch joint maritime rescue drill
- India, US defence deal set to get bigger

MARITIME INFRASTRUCTURE

- Vietnam to turn into a sea power
- Paradip to have airstrip as investment pours in to the port town

SHIPPING

- India to Triple Port Capacity in 10 Years

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Asia's maritime security is all at sea

By Rory Medcalf

Recent tensions between China and Japan are a worrying reminder that Asia's maritime security order is under dangerous strain. This month (September 2010), the Japanese coast guard arrested the captain of a Chinese fishing trawler after it twice collided with patrol boats in disputed waters controlled by Tokyo. Japan chose this moment to take a stand against what it saw as a pattern of Chinese bullying at sea.

The incident is reminiscent of an episode in April 10, when a large Chinese naval force ventured into waters close to Japan and a Chinese helicopter buzzed Japanese ships at a range of just 90m. China, like always, is standing firm, warning of repercussions if Japan prosecutes the captain under domestic law. Already, Beijing has called off scheduled talks about contested energy deposits in the East China Sea.

The immediate spat may be about sovereignty over the uninhabited Senkaku or, in Chinese, Diaoyu islands. But there is much more at stake than fish and face. This is the latest in a series of disturbances in Asian waters this year, in which the changing balance of strength and interests among the region's naval powers points to heightened risks of miscalculation and even conflict.

It is no surprise that Asia's key security interactions are at sea, given this maritime region's vast and growing reliance on seaborne commerce, especially energy imports. What is alarming is the new degree of risk that some powers, notably China, seem willing to incur in this Indo-Pacific commons.

This first of this year's troubles was off the coast of the divided Korean peninsula. In March, a North Korean torpedo sank the small South Korean warship Cheonan, killing 46 crewmen in an action Beijing refused to condemn. When the US and South Korea responded with massive naval war games, Beijing objected, and the exercises were shifted to waters far from China. Beijing then held firepower exercises of its own.

Washington and Seoul then planned new drills, bringing a US aircraft carrier into the contested waters in defiance of China's protests. In a separate move, American, South Korean and Australian forces plan to hold a small-scale re-enactment today of the historic Incheon landings that turned the tide of the Korean War in 1950. This commemoration was long scheduled, but symbolises that South Korea is far from friendless in the face of continued provocations from the North.

Much of the wider regional tension involves China. Beijing is pursuing assertive deployments and uncompromising diplomacy in several maritime theatres. Beijing has declared the entire South China Sea "a core interest", on a par with Tibet and Taiwan.

Recently a Chinese submarine reportedly planted a flag on the seabed. This suggests a new willingness to confront nations, such as Vietnam, in disputed waters.

In the Indian Ocean, the potential for confrontation between Beijing and New Delhi is gradually growing. On the bright side, there has been some welcome co-ordination between China's and some of the other naval taskforces patrolling against Somali pirates. And New Delhi, rattled in 2008 by the speed of Beijing's deployment to an ocean India had long considered its own, has proposed limited maritime security co-operation with China.

But this idea may fall victim to wider differences between two rising giants, including recent arguments over their land border. Broadly, Beijing's naval modernisation is the understandable response of a vast trading power to anxiety about its vulnerable energy supplies. It was inconceivable that China would forever outsource sea-lane security to the US.

At this time of unprecedented Chinese naval power, modernisation and audacity, it is troubling that diplomatic mechanisms for communication and preventing strife at sea remain weak to non-existent. This is as bad for China as it is for everyone else.

The increasingly crowded maritime highways of the Indo-Pacific lack even the basic code that helped keep the Cold War cool. In the early 1970s, the Americans and Soviets crafted a detailed agreement and operating rules to stop incidents at sea from escalating to war. Today, no such understanding exists between China and the other powers its navy is increasingly brushing up against.

And while Beijing, New Delhi and Japan are finally talking about setting up leadership hotlines to help cope with their security tensions, there remains much confusion about how these might work in practice. Beijing and Tokyo cannot so far even agree if their proposed military hotline would simply give warning of defence exercises or serve to manage crises in real time.

For now, though, Asia's maritime leviathans are not communicating properly with each other over keeping the peace at sea, at the very time when the risks of confrontation in the region's waters are growing.

With little near-term chance of smaller countries or regional diplomatic forums having much say, the stability of Australia's wider region is at the mercy of the strong and the reckless.

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Source(s): September 15

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/opinion/asias-maritime-security-is-all-at-sea/story-e6frg6zo-1225922896731>

'Gawadar Port' and the 'Great Game' of politics

Mariah CRWE

According to some media reports published in Islamabad the Government of Pakistan has finally decided to give control of the Gawadar port to time-tested friend China.

The Government of Pakistan has solid reasons to do so, as PSA has failed to bring even a single cargo ship to the port. The terms of the agreement make PSA the sole manager of the port for 40 years. PSA also promised to invest \$52.5 million but actually didn't bring even one fourth of it.

If this actually happens, then according to analysts the geopolitical situation of the region will change a great deal and in view of some, perhaps the entire world will be changed. Gawadar port is located on the shores of the largest Pakistani province of Baluchistan. It is its unique geostrategic location that distinguishes it from the other ports in the region. It connects the oil-rich Middle East, the south Asia and the future energy hub of the world, Central Asia.

It was finally in the spring of 2002 that the construction started. It was also decided to build a naval base on Gawadar port. The then Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and the Chinese communication minister Li Shenglin decide that China would provide financial and technical assistance in this regard. This was the decision that has always been feared by the West and this was the possibility that led the 'powers' to play the 'Great Game'.

It is believed that the USA has always feared that if China gets access to the warm waters through the Pakistani Gawadar port USA will lose its traditional dominance in the Strait of Hormuz. The strait is the traditional route of all oil tankers in the region. US Energy Information Administration had estimated an average of 15 oil tankers that carry approximately 16.5 to 17 million barrels of crude oil pass through the strait everyday. Gawadar port is located just 40 miles away from the Strait of Hormuz.

When China became industrializing the booming economy demanded more energy resources. The need for energy is growing with every passing day. China has just surpassed Japan as the second largest economy of the world and according to some estimates will surpass the USA as the largest economy of the world in probably 2020. A mere 10 years.

China has made heavy investments in the energy sector of Africa. It has signed agreements with Saudi Arabia, Iran and many other Arab oil rich states. And the Chinese are still exploring new energy resources.

Gawadar port is the place that can provide China easy access to the energy hub of the world. And in Pakistan, its traditional ally, the Chinese tankers could move safely and freely to China.

But perhaps some friends and enemies of Pakistan didn't like the idea at all. It is believed that to contain any such Chinese plans in the future, the USA in the 1990's decided to establish a strong presence in Afghanistan. The proponents of 'conspiracy theories' believe that in order to justify the invasion of Afghanistan a reason had to be created and that reason was done in the form of the 9/11 attacks.

The Iranians fear that Gawadar Port will give a tough competition to the Iranian Chabahar Port that is being built with the assistance of India. Besides this the new Indian naval doctrine focuses on guarding the energy routes in the Arabian Sea. India fears that by maintaining a strong naval presence at Gawadar China will be monitoring all its maritime activities. China is already monitoring the Indian maritime activities in Orissa through a port built in Myanmar.

Besides the Chinese government also intends to build a network of roads which connects Pakistan with Central Asia and China. But the situation became worse later and the Chinese government decided to call back its engineers. It is believed that through this port not only Pakistan and China will benefit but the neighboring countries will also be at an advantage. The IPI (Iran, Pakistan, India) Gas Pipeline may become IPC (Iran, Pakistan, China) Pipeline. It is noteworthy that India has been already excluded from the pact. It means that the region now may be witnessing the formation of new alliances that will be uneasy for the west.

China may also be forming oil refineries in Gawadar and will set-up tax free industrial zones. It also intends to establish a railway line that will pass through 'Khunjarab Pass' in Pakistan. In this regard both countries have already signed an accord.

Through the Chinese expertise a deep sea port, tax free industrial zones, oil and gas pipelines that expand to Afghanistan and Central Asia, Gawadar will be able to compete with any modern city of the twenty first century.

Gawadar will emerge as the new centre of the Silk Route providing both land and marine routes to the hydrocarbon hub, the land-locked Central Asia. Pakistan will earn one billion dollars as transit fees annually. Not only Asians but analysts say that Russians are also very happy on this project because if Iranian gas comes to Asia via Gawadar, the Russian Gazprom will no longer have tough competitor in Europe. The Pak-Chine plan of gas pipeline is also believed to be severely affecting the niBoko project. It is also believed that the Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India (TAPI) pipeline may change into Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, China (TAPC) once Afghanistan becomes stable.

All these projects that seem like a beautiful dream for the billions of Asians are feared to become a nightmare for Washington. It is predicated that Gawadar will be turned into a battlefield by the Americans.

Source(s): 16 September

<http://tradeonline.stock-pr.com/?p=8555&aidref=A1090527938>

MARITIME SECURITY

Japanese tanker attacked off Indonesian island

A Japanese tanker has been attacked by armed pirates off an Indonesian island, the latest in a spate of incidents in a South China Sea shipping lane, a global maritime watchdog said. Noel Choong, head of the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) Piracy Reporting Centre, said the Japanese-owned chemical tanker was travelling from Singapore to China when it was targeted off Indonesia's Mangkai island.

Mangkai island lies on a busy sea passage running along the east coast of the Malaysian peninsula. It is a major route for ships heading between East Asian nations and the Pacific Ocean. Choong said there was growing concern over piracy in the area, with the IMB receiving reports of 10 attacks in the past 20 days.

Source(s): September5

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5guVnQJWpyjSdXjuYskTCKbpEwi4A>

Maritime disputes between Japan and China

Japan has arrested the captain of a Chinese fishing boat that collided with two Japanese coastguard vessels near disputed islets in the East China Sea on 7 September, prompting anger in Beijing and reigniting territorial tensions.

Following are some facts about maritime disputes, a long-term source of friction between the two neighbouring countries:

- The incident took place near a group of East China Sea islets -- called Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China -- over which Tokyo and Beijing, as well as Taiwan, claim sovereignty.
- The groups of uninhabited islands are thought to lie near potential oil and gas reserves in an area rich with fish, west of Japan's Okinawa island, northeast of Taiwan and east of China's south-eastern Fujian coast.
- Tokyo says the islands were unclaimed until 1885 when it began surveying them and that they were then officially incorporated into Japanese territory.
- China says they were used by its fishermen for several centuries after they discovered them in 1403, and were administered as part of Taiwan, which China regards as a Chinese renegade province.

- Japan is worried about China's military modernization, especially its double-digit defence spending and expanding naval reach near Japanese waters.

The dispute over the islands gained significance after a 1969 United Nations report said there might be large oil reserves in the vicinity. Since then, surveying has been a sensitive issue.

The larger drive to secure the East China Sea's natural gas resources has seen over-lapping claims from Japan and China of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ). Both claim 200 nautical miles of EEZ, although the East China Sea is only 360 nautical miles wide. Japan says the median line between the two countries' coasts marks the boundary between their exclusive economic zones. China says the boundary is defined by its continental shelf, extending its zone beyond the median line.

The two countries are also at odds over China's exploration for natural gas in the East China Sea. In 2008, they agreed in principle to solve the feud by jointly developing gas fields.

Talks began in July on an international treaty on the joint development but progress has been slow and Japan has accused China of drilling for gas in violation of the deal.

Source: 9 September

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE6880NF20100909>

MARITIME ENVIRONMENT

The Coming Conflicts of Climate Change

As Pakistan continues to struggle with flood devastation, U.S. national security experts are considering the long-term effects of the disaster. Among the concerns are the Pakistan government's stability, opportunism by extremist groups providing relief, and the impact on the U.S. war effort in neighbouring Afghanistan, where U.S. forces depend on smooth supply lines through Pakistan.

The case of Pakistan reflects how natural disasters can weigh on U.S. national security considerations. Interest in these types of contingencies is such that the U.S. Navy recently conducted a gaming exercise at the Naval War College in Newport, RI, to study scenarios where the Navy might have to support U.S. or international relief efforts to help maintain regional and global stability. In each scenario, a climate-induced disaster (or disasters) triggered catastrophic death tolls, migration, and panic affecting regional or global security and spurring the UN Security Council to issue a humanitarian response resolution. This was the first time the Navy had conducted a gaming exercise to determine how to respond to climate-induced challenges. This unique effort brought together climate scientists, water experts, health practitioners, logisticians, diplomats, aid workers, and military officers to think through possible response options.

The exercise follows a real world trend of Navy support for humanitarian aid missions and responses to natural disasters at home and abroad. Catastrophic floods or increasing desertification can pose severe challenges for local populations and national governments and may carry regional or even global ramifications. What's more, if these irregular challenges go unchecked, they could lead to large-scale international conflict as states compete for dwindling resources, populations migrate en masse, or governments seek to deflect domestic pressure onto neighbours.

With this in mind, the U.S. Navy is contemplating partnerships with other militaries, especially where maritime crime, epidemics, or other disasters are likely to cause destabilization. The goal is to develop a system for collectively addressing "irregular challenges" such as tsunamis and earthquakes, epidemics, or narcotics and human trafficking--challenges that strain governments and local populations alike, often without respecting international borders. President George W. Bush's 2006 National Security Strategy stressed that responding to natural disasters was important for national security; but President Barack Obama's first National Security Strategy and the 2010 Quadrennial Defence Review (QDR) go a step further, with the former making climate change a national security priority and the latter pointing to the potential for dangerous conflict that could arise from the effects of climate change.

South Asia Flashpoints

Perhaps nowhere is this more concerning than in South Asia. Aside from floods in Pakistan, consider the ramifications of years of flooding due to the rapid melting of glaciers in the Himalayas. Those mountains are a primary source of water for people in Nepal, India, China, Pakistan, and Bangladesh; flooding damages crops, carries water-borne disease, and forces migration. If the glaciers completely melt, the region's rivers will experience considerably lower flow and could see a far worse fate: "desertification." The Indus River is particularly critical: It's Pakistan's longest river, but it flows from the Himalayas and then through India before reaching Pakistan. Pakistan is guaranteed a certain amount of water through the Indus River Treaty, but India still controls that flow. Add to that tension the risk of rising sea levels forcing the migration of millions of people living along the coastal regions of Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh, and the picture turns even darker.

If catastrophes resulting from these sorts of climate change aren't handled through multinational cooperation early on, they may spark intense competition for water resources, humanitarian relief, and international aid funds. These threats could also draw into question the territorial integrity of the region's states--among which are three nuclear powers. The United States needs to begin a consultative process with other states' security and relief agencies on how to mount rapid responses to such irregular challenges, or it could face the tricky prospect of deescalating tensions amidst the threat of climate-induced state collapse.



The State Department and the Office of Foreign Disaster will have to take the lead on these sorts of challenges, bringing to bear their experience in humanitarian relief and diplomacy. But OFDA and State can't do it alone. Washington needs to give serious attention to the ability of the military services to create global partnerships that can lend credible support to meeting the challenges posed by climate change.

Any military security cooperation plans forged by the United States should incorporate crisis response activities with key states--such as those highlighted above in South Asia--that are prone to natural disaster. This is not only prudent planning; the skills shared with foreign militaries through this type of partnership tend toward enhancing logistics, communications, interoperability, civil-military relations, and command and control. All are important elements for professional military personnel to master, providing them with the tools to support disaster assistance teams.

The popular debate surrounding "global warming" is rife with emotion and has paralyzed U.S. policymakers. Military planners, however, remain divorced from the emotional content of the topic, looking at possible future scenarios and conducting planning to address the associated challenges and threats arising from sharp changes in climate.

Creating military partnerships years before a crisis allows countries to collectively respond when a catastrophe occurs and offers a reasonable avenue for political and cultural dialogue crucial to avoiding inter-state conflict. This is true for a variety of "irregular challenges," including the possible risks due to climate change.

Source(s): September 7, 2010, *CDR Michael Baker*
http://www.cfr.org/publication/22886/coming_conflicts_of_climate_change.html

MARITIME CO-OPERATION

Taiwan, China to launch joint maritime rescue drill

Taiwan's Coast Guard Administration (CGA) will conduct a joint maritime rescue drill with its Chinese counterpart, the first time the two countries' coastal patrol agencies hold joint marine exercises.

According to the CGA, it will hold the drill with China's Maritime Search and Rescue Centre in waters off south-eastern China, between Taiwan's Kinmen Island and the Chinese city of Xiamen. Boats and aircraft from Taiwan and China will simulate the collision of two ships on the Kinmen-Xiamen route -- one of the busiest areas in the Taiwan Strait -- and try to save passengers that fall into the sea, the CGA said. The CGA will send nine patrol boats, including a 500-ton patrol vessel, and helicopters to Kinmen for the joint drill.



To avoid unnecessary political disputes, the two sides have decided that all participating vessels and rescue teams will only carry flags that symbolize the joint drill, CGA officials said. They underlined that the drill was being held for the sole purpose of preparing for possible accidents in the Taiwan Strait. The drill may be the first between the two countries' central government coast guards, but joint exercises have taken place at the local level.

In October 2008, the Kinmen County government dispatched ships and rescue personnel to conduct a joint marine rescue drill with a similar patrol squad from Xiamen. The exercise was formed amid warming cross-strait relations after President Ma Ying-jeou took office in May that year.

This past June, Kinmen County Magistrate Li Wo-shih urged the two sides to establish a cross-Taiwan Strait marine accident rescue mechanism as soon as possible because of the fast pace at which transport services between Kinmen and Xiamen are growing.

Source(s): 10 September

http://focustaiwan.tw/ShowNews/WebNews_Detail.aspx?Type=aALL&ID=201009100031

India, US defence deal set to get bigger

India's biggest- ever defence deal inked with US till now is all set to get bigger. Plans are virtually final now to order another four P-8I Poseidon long-range maritime patrol aircraft to add to the eight already contracted under the \$2.1 billion deal inked last year. Defence ministry sources say the project to acquire four more Boeing P-8I aircraft will be taken up for approval in the meeting of the defence acquisitions council, headed by A K Antony, on October 8.

It will be held in the backdrop of the recent visits of Antony and Navy chief Admiral Nirmal Verma to US. "The new P-8Is will cost the same as each of the eight ordered in January 2009, without any cost escalation. There will also be similar offsets requirements. In the original \$2.1-billion contract, the offsets were valued over \$600 million," said a source.

India is going in for the 12 P-8Is to plug huge gaps in its maritime snooping capabilities in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), which has become heavily militarised with even China increasingly making strategic forays into the region.

At present, Navy has maritime reconnaissance fleet of eight ageing Russian Tupolev-142M turboprops and five upgraded Ilyushin-38SD aircraft, a dozen Israeli Heron and Searcher-II spy drones, and a few Dornier-228 squadrons. Based on the Boeing 737 commercial airliners with cruise speeds of 445 knots, the P-8Is will not undertake just surveillance missions. They will also be capable of deadly anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare, armed as they will be with torpedoes, depth bombs and Harpoon missiles.

They will have "a mission radius" of 600 nautical miles, with 5.5 hours on-station loitering time, and 1,200 nautical miles, with 4 hours on station. With mid-air refuelling, their operational radius will further go up. The first of the eight original P-8Is is slated to be inducted by early-2013, with the others following by 2016. The US Navy, too, will begin inducting the first lot of its 117 P-8A multi-mission maritime aircraft around the same time.

P-8Is are being customised to Indian naval requirements, with communication, electronic warfare and other systems being sourced from India. For instance, defence PSU Bharat Electronics is delivering Data Link-II, a communication system to enable rapid exchange of information among Indian warships, submarines aircraft and shore establishments, for the P-8Is to Boeing. There is, however, the question of India having not yet inked the Communication Interoperability and Security Memorandum Agreement (CISMOA) being pushed by the US as "a sensitive technology-enabler" for P-8I and other arms procurements.

But MoD and Navy are not too worried. Antony, in fact, told his American counterpart Robert Gates in Washington on Tuesday that while India appreciated the US government's view that pacts like CISMOA would "facilitate access to high technologies", there were still some concerns which needed to be addressed.

Source(s): 30 September

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/India-US-defence-deal-set-to-get-bigger/articleshow/6655253.cms>

MARITIME INFRASTRUCTURE

Vietnam to turn into a sea power

Local and foreign experts agree that Vietnam has favourable circumstances for development of a maritime economy and for its emergence as a shipping centre for the region and the world.

The western shore of the East Sea (what the rest of the world calls the South China Sea) is rich in natural resources, especially oil. Of even greater significance is the fact that Vietnam's waters are on the vital shipping route that connects East Asia with Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

Vietnam's long coast offers many bays and estuaries. This geographical position is very favorable for development of a maritime economy. Government planners expect the shipping sector to become increasingly important to Vietnam's economy. According to the Maritime Agency, Vietnam's shipping industry has grown nearly 12 percent annually in recent years, faster than other transport sectors.

Small and medium-sized ships can bring goods from other nearby countries to Vietnamese ports where they can be transhipped. The Malaysian news agency, Bernama, recently quoted international experts as saying that Vietnam could become a logistic centre for the region and the world.

Van Phong Bay, just north of Nhatrang, is bidding to become an international transshipment port. This deepwater bay is only 30km from the international shipping lanes. It can compare to Singapore or Hong Kong in terms of geography and natural conditions, and accommodate the largest vessels now built.

A question of having the right vision

The example of Singapore is instructive. Four decades ago its capacity as a maritime trading hub was non-existent. Today, it is the world's leading trans-shipment port. Vietnam's maritime advantages are much different from that of Singapore's, but, so far, the nation has not greatly profited from them.

With only 5 million people, Singapore has a merchant fleet totalling 55.5 million tons. Vietnam, with over 85 million people, has a merchant fleet of less than four million tons. Singapore's international container port handled 29 million standard containers of goods in 2007; Vietnam's ports handled four million.

The largest container vessels can carry over 15,000 TEU (standard shipping containers). Many ports can welcome ships that big, but Vietnam's largest port so far, Cai Mep, southeast of HCM City, can only host ships of up to 6,000 TEU. Haiphong and Saigon Ports can welcome ships of 2000-3000 TEU. Thus, Vietnamese ports are still off the list of big cargo transporting firms.

Why is Vietnam not a logistics centre for the region and the world? Dr. Thu, a tireless promoter of the Van Phong deepwater port project, says that the biggest reason is a lack of vision. Vietnam has not focused its resources to develop big seaports with good and cheap logistical and stevedore services, he says, nor has the nation mobilized capital from all sources to develop port infrastructure.

Source(s): 1 September

<http://english.vietnamnet.vn/reports/201008/To-turn-Vietnam-into-a-sea-power-932995/>

Paradip to have airstrip as investment pours in to the port town

Orissa's port town Paradip will soon have an airstrip. The Paradip Port Trust (PPT) in its board meeting on July 29 last has approved a proposal in this regard. Sources said the union shipping ministry has also given its nod and now taken up the matter with civil aviation ministry and sought his approval. With fast industrialization in and around

Paradip, construction of an airport has become inevitable. Paradip now has a helipad and the airport will come up near the helipad.

Paradip port has of late emerged as one of the busiest ports in eastern India, especially because in the boom in metal and metal based industries sectors. The port town in Jagatsinghpur district, about 120 km from the state capital of Bhubaneswar, has already emerged as one of the country's major investment hotspots by attracting investment in excess of Rs 3.5 lakh crore including the Rs 2, 74,134 crore Petroleum Chemicals and Petrochemical Investment Region (PCPIR) and the biggest FDI proposal by Posco to build a 12-million ton steel plant at an estimated cost of Rs 51, 000 crore.

The port town already boasts of major fertilizer manufacturers like IFFCO and Paradeep Phosphates Limited, a brewery along with central depot of Indian Oil and other small industries like Kargil Oil, Paradeep Carbon and a host of other units.

The major investment proposal of Rs 2,74,134 crore comes in the shape of an integrated Petroleum, Chemicals, and Petrochemical Investment Region (PCPIR), a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) promoted by the state government on the lines of Pudong in China, Rotterdam in Europe and Houston in North America.

IOC is already coming up with 15 MMTPA grassroot refineries cum petrochemical complex five kilometer to the south of Paradeep Port at an estimated cost of Rs 25,646. For this, the state government has given incentives to IOC by exempting entry tax on crude oil and sales tax deferment for 11 years. The IOC already has got the required 3344 acres of land.

The Railways is also committed to boost connectivity in the Paradeep region which includes the 82-km Paradeep-Haridaspur broad gauge line, being taken up at an investment of Rs 577.78 crore. East Coast Railway (ECoR) has acquired 1,146 acres of private land out of the total of 1,653 acres of land required for the project. This project being implemented by Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) is scheduled for completion by March 2011.

The other projects in different stages of implementation Hydrate Pellets Ltd's six lakh tone hydrate pelts plant at Rs 10,724 crore, Essar Steel Orissa Ltd's six million ton steel plant at Rs 10,721 cr], Deepak Fertilisers and Petrochemicals Corporation Ltd. (DFPCL's three lakh mtpa green-field complex for Nitric Acid and Ammonium Nitrate at Paradeep at a cost of Rs 400 crore NSL Sugar Ltd's sugar plant at Rs 800 crore and other mini projects.

Absence of an airstrip at Paradip and the jammed traffic through 150 km road journey from Bhubaneswar to Paradip has been identified as a major stumbling block to woo business leaders who have shown interest to set up other ventures.

Source(s) 18 September

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/Paradip-to-have-airstrip-as-investment-pours-in-to-the-port-town/articleshow/6575286.cms>

India to Triple Port Capacity in 10 Years

The Indian Shipping Ministry said it plans to augment the country's overall port capacity from the current 1 billion tons to 3.5 billion tons over the next 10 years.

The announcement came after the ministry held a meeting with senior officials of the Maritime Development Council in New Delhi to review progress of ongoing port developmental projects and identify priority areas.

Under a seven-year National Maritime Development Program (2005 to 2012), the government earlier announced plans to spend about \$12 billion to implement various capacity expansion projects, of which \$8 billion is expected to come from the private sector. Major public-private-partnership projects that are in the pipeline include a fourth container terminal at the Port of Nhava Sheva (Jawaharlal Nehru), the country's largest container gateway, and a 4-million-TEU deep-water facility at Chennai, for which bidding is underway.

Other issues that arose at the meeting included the formation of state maritime boards, mechanism to curb environmental hazards, port security measures and contingency plans for accidents such as oil spills. India has 13 major ports and nearly 200 minor ports located along its 4,600 miles of coastline. Consolidated cargo tonnage for fiscal 2009-10 was estimated at 845 million tons, up 13.6 percent from a year earlier.

Source(s): 31 August

<http://www.joc.com/maritime/india-triple-port-capacity-10-years>