



MAKING WAVES

Fortnightly E-News Brief of National Maritime Foundation

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Indian Ocean May be Key to Global Warming 'Hiatus'

- Julia Rosen

The Indian Ocean may be the dark horse in the quest to explain the puzzling pause in global warming, researchers report on 18 May in Nature Geoscience. The study finds that the Indian Ocean may hold more than 70% of all heat absorbed by the upper ocean in the past decade.

Scientists have long suspected that oceans have played a crucial role in the so-called warming hiatus by storing heat trapped in the atmosphere by rising levels of greenhouse gases. But pinpointing exactly which ocean acts as a global air conditioner has proved challenging.

Prior research suggested that a significant amount of heat moves from the atmosphere into the Pacific Ocean, where La Niña-like conditions have dominated since the turn of the century. As a result, wind patterns and ocean currents have increased the drawdown of warm surface waters in the subtropics. This process and others enhance ocean heat uptake.

But when Sang-Ki Lee, an oceanographer at the University of Miami in Florida, and his colleagues went looking for this heat beneath the surface of the Pacific Ocean, they couldn't find it. Temperature data compiled by the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) World Ocean Atlas (WOA) suggest that the upper 700 metres of the Pacific have actually cooled in recent years, Lee says.

So Lee's team used a computer model to explore the fate of the ocean's 'missing heat'. The results suggest that easterly trade winds have strengthened during the hiatus, causing warm water to pile up in the western Pacific. The water seeps between the islands of Indonesia and into the Indian Ocean, bringing heat with it.

In the model, this surge of water produces dramatic warming in the upper Indian Ocean starting in the early 2000s, in agreement with the WOA data, the authors write. This explanation also fits with measurements of flow through the largest Indonesian channel the Makassar Strait which increased over the same period of time.

“The big story is that they’ve found the heat,” says Matthew England, an oceanographer at the University of New South Wales in Sydney. He says the study solidifies the Pacific’s role in driving the hiatus. “It’s resolving a question that has a lot of people stumped.”

However, some say the case isn’t closed yet. Lee’s team only analyzed trends in the upper 700 metres of the ocean, but “there’s evidence that a significant part of the heat has been going down into the mid and deeper layers,” says Gerald Meehl, a climate scientist at the US National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Boulder, Colorado.

Kevin Trenberth, also a climate scientist at NCAR, says the results disagree with studies that use alternatives to the WOA data. There are large observational gaps in the WOA dataset, and Trenberth says that NOAA has accounted for these without considering the long-term warming of the ocean, leading to cooler values where measurements are missing.

For instance, Trenberth and his colleagues found pronounced Pacific warming during the hiatus and only modest warming in the Indian Ocean using heat content estimates derived in part from satellite measurements. Other studies have also implicated warming in the North Atlantic and Southern Ocean. For now, it seems that the hunt for the missing heat may continue. But scientists say it is important to get to the bottom of the story to fully explain the current hiatus and prepare for others that might occur in the future. “We need to understand the energy imbalance of the Earth,” Lee says.

Source : Nature.com, 18 May 2015

What Are Chinese Submarines Doing in the Indian Ocean?

- Brahma Chellaney

China, although an outside power, is seeking to carve out a role for itself in the Indian Ocean region through its Maritime Silk Road initiative. The Maritime Silk Road -- along with an overland Silk Road to connect China with Central Asia, the Caspian Sea basin and beyond -- bears the imprint of President Xi Jinping, who has articulated a more expansive role for China than any modern Chinese leader other than Mao Zedong.

China's quiet maneuvering in the Indian Ocean, where it is seeking to challenge America's sway and chip away at India's natural-geographic advantage, draws strength from its more assertive push for dominance in the South China Sea -- the critical corridor between the Pacific and Indian oceans. With China converting tiny, largely submerged reefs into islands that can host military facilities and personnel, the South China Sea has become pivotal to the contest for influence in the Indian Ocean and the larger Indo-Pacific region.

The dual Silk Road initiatives -- also labeled the "One Belt and One Road" by Beijing -- are part of Xi's strategy for China to break out of the East Asia mold and become a more global power, with its clout extending to the Middle East. The projects will enable China to build economic advantage and help pull regional countries closer to its orbit.

Not a Marshall Plan

The twin initiatives, however, are not a Chinese version of America's altruistic post-World War II Marshall Plan. Rather, at a time of slowing economic growth in China, they have been designed to win lucrative contracts for Chinese state-run companies by presenting commercial penetration as benevolent investment and credit as aid. Beijing indeed is doing a great job in fobbing off overseas business as economic aid.

The contracts that China is bagging will help it to deal with its problem of overproduction at home. From a \$10.6 billion railroad project in Thailand to more than \$20 billion worth of new power projects in Pakistan, China is emphasizing infrastructure exports.

By embarking on connecting China's restive Xinjiang region with the Arabian Sea through a 3,000-kilometer overland transportation corridor to Pakistan's Chinese-built Gwadar port, Xi has made Pakistan the central link between the maritime and overland Silk Roads. This corridor through Pakistan-held Kashmir will hook up the two Silk Roads, besides permitting China to challenge India in its maritime backyard.

China is also seeking to tap the Indian Ocean's rich mineral wealth, and is inviting India to join hands with it in deep seabed mining there. Yet it opposes any Indian-Vietnamese collaboration in the South China Sea. "Your sea is our sea but my sea is my sea" seems to be the new Chinese saying.

Purchasing Friends

More broadly, the Silk Road initiatives mesh with Xi's larger strategy of co-opting regional states, especially by integrating them with China's economy and security. According to the Chinese conservative scholar Yan Xuetong, the "lie low, bide your time" dictum of the late strongman Deng Xiaoping is no longer relevant and has been replaced by Xi's more ambitious and assertive policy toward smaller countries. In Yan's words, "We let them benefit economically and, in return, we get good political relationships. We should 'purchase' the relationships."

One example of how China has sought to "purchase" friendships was the major contracts it signed with Sri Lanka's now-ousted president, Mahinda Rajapaksa, to turn that strategically located Indian Ocean country into a major stop on China's nautical "road." The new president, Maithripala Sirisena, said on the election-campaign trail that the Chinese projects were ensnaring Sri Lanka in a "debt trap."

In his election manifesto, without naming China, Sirisena warned: "The land that the White Man took over by means of military strength is now being obtained by foreigners by paying ransom to a handful of persons. This robbery is taking place before everybody in broad daylight... If this trend continues for another six years, our country would become a colony and we would become slaves."

The Maritime Silk Road initiative, with its emphasis on high-visibility infrastructure projects, targets key littoral states located along the great trade arteries in the Indian Ocean, the new global center of trade and energy flows. This critical ocean region, extending from Australia to the Middle East and Southern Africa, is likely to determine the wider geopolitics, maritime order and balance of power in Asia, the Persian Gulf and beyond.

Through its Maritime Silk Road, China is challenging the existing balance of power in the Indian Ocean. Its effort involves securing port projects along vital sea lanes; building energy and transportation corridors to China through Myanmar and Pakistan; and assembling a "string of pearls" in the form of refueling stations and naval-access outposts along the great trade arteries.

China's interest in the Indian Ocean has grown steadily since 2008, when it embarked on a naval mission as part of a multilateral effort to combat piracy off the Horn of Africa. It was the first time the Chinese navy had deployed that far in 600 years.

Chinese Submarines in Colombo

Illustrating how China blends its economic and military interests, Chinese attack submarines last fall undertook their first known voyages to the Indian Ocean, with two subs docking at the new Chinese-built and Chinese-owned container terminal at Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo. After building Sri Lanka's southern port of Hambantota, China now wants to construct a major stop on its nautical "road" in the form of a \$1.4 billion city, roughly the size of Monaco, on reclaimed land off

Colombo. Beijing is also interested in leasing one of the 1,200 islands of the politically torn Maldives.

Under Xi, China has moved to a proactive posture to shape its external security environment, using trade and investment to expand its sphere of strategic influence while simultaneously asserting territorial and maritime claims against its neighbors. The Maritime Silk Road project -- part of Xi's increasing focus on the seas -- is driven by his belief that the maritime domain holds the key to China achieving preeminence in Asia.

In this light, the new Asian order will be determined not so much by developments in East Asia as by the contest for major influence in the Indian Ocean, the maritime center of the world.

Source: [Huffington Post](#), 19 May 2015

The Chinese 'Century' Is Already Over

- Gordon G. Chang

On 17 May, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry completed a two-day trip to Beijing. The day before, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi wrapped up his three-day visit to Xian, Shanghai, and Beijing. Everyone, it seems, is going to China, implicitly acknowledging that this is indeed its century.

In reality, however, the period of Chinese primacy, if it ever existed, is just about over. Neither Modi nor Kerry was in any mood to accommodate Beijing on core issues. We start with Modi.

Modi, however, was not persuaded to agree to what Beijing wanted. He did not, for instance, endorse Chinese president Xi Jinping's "One Belt, One Road." This initiative, considered the centerpiece of Xi's foreign policy, seeks to create trade

routes through Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the Indian Ocean connecting China to Europe. Modi, of course, did not give an inch on China's expansive claims to India-controlled territory.

In addition, in public, he surprised observers by telling the Chinese to be more accommodating. "I stressed the need for China to reconsider its approach on some of the issues that hold us back from realizing full potential of our partnership," Modi said while in Beijing. "I suggested that China should take a strategic and long-term view of our relations."

"For him to say we hope the Chinese will reconsider their approach it has very politely put," said Siddharth Varadarajan of the Indian news site The Wire. "But that's quite a strong way to put it."

Kerry also used strong words, from all accounts. As a State Department official said before the visit, the Secretary of State was traveling to China to "leave his Chinese interlocutors in absolutely no doubt that the United States remains committed to maintain freedom of navigation." Xinhua, China's official news agency, put it this way: Kerry was coming to Beijing to "pick a fight." In fact, Kerry had hoped to find a diplomatic solution, but neither side budged on the South China Sea during the weekend meetings.

None of this is to say that China cannot make agreements with India or the United States on specific issues. Kerry, for his part, talked about progress on climate change and terrorism, for instance. Modi's trip resulted in the signing of two dozen government-to-government framework agreements on Friday. In addition, as the widely quoted Madhav Nalapat of Manipal University has pointed out, India and China share strategic interests and can work together.

Chinese officials maintain America has no legitimate interest there. "The United States is not a party in the South China Sea disputes, which are between China and other claimants and should be handled by those directly involved," Xinhua stated on Saturday.

At the beginning of this century, Beijing was able to compromise on those claims. Yet, for more than a half decade, it has not signed an agreement to settle a border dispute. And there is little sign of compromise in the near term, as Xi Jinping's statements make clear. As the Chinese economy continues to erode, the Communist Party is increasingly relying on nationalism to bolster legitimacy, and as it becomes more nationalistic, its ability to work with other nations has markedly

Beijing and Washington like to talk about "win-win cooperation," but Beijing is deliberately creating zero-sum contests. So relations going forward between the two capitals will fundamentally change, and they promise to turn decidedly nasty as Beijing is forcing issues that cannot be compromised. As Kerry said on Saturday, "Where we may have different opinions, we don't simply agree to disagree and move on."

Washington once had a policy of moving on whenever there was disagreement with Beijing. The concept was that America could overlook current problems because and that is why the Chinese century is coming to a close. Both the world's most populous democracy and its most powerful one are now viewing China in darker terms and beginning to act accordingly.

Source : [National Interest](#), 19 May 2015

A New Plan to Manage Asia's Submarine Race?

- Prashanth Parameswaran

This week, Singapore co-hosts the Asia Pacific Submarine Conference (APSC) with the United States. Founded in 2001, the APSC has established itself as a major forum dealing with submarine rescue, and this year reportedly saw the highest attendance with 23 navies and organizations.

At the conference, Chief of the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) Rear-Admiral Lai Chung Han delivered a speech, seen by The Diplomat, outlining how Asia should take multilateral submarine rescue cooperation “to the next bound.” More specifically, given the busyness and shallowness of some of the Asian waters as well as the rapid rise of submarines expected in the region over the next few years, Lai suggested that Asian nations should enhance submarine operational safety and proactively minimize the risk of incidents by developing a regional framework.

Such a framework, Lai argued, would comprise four elements. The first would be better information exchange. This would not involve sharing sensitive information about submarine positions and movements, but other sorts of information like the real-time movement of fishing vessels and very large crude carriers. He suggested that the effort could be supported by the Information Fusion Center (IFC) at the Changi Command and Control Center through a dedicated Submarine Safety Information Portal. In his view, the information platform, along with the extensive network of International Liaison Officers at the IFC and the information technology and command and control support of the Multinational Operations and Exercises Center, would provide robust infrastructure for this information exchange to occur.

The second element would be the sharing of best practices. While he acknowledged that some of this is already being done at APSC, he encouraged such exchanges to extend beyond just submarine rescue to encompass best practices, certification, and training to enhance the safety of navies and submarine operators.

The third element, Lai said, would be the setting of common standards. For instance, he recommended leveraging an established material safety standard, such as the United States Navy’s SUBSAFE regime, to ensure that submarines are in the best technical condition for safe operations.

The fourth element, and the most ambitious one, is coming up with a Code of Conduct for submarine operations or underwater “rules of the road.” He noted that given the confined and congested waters in some parts of the Asia-Pacific, there is

a need to develop regulations for the underwater domain to help avert catastrophic incidents should submarines encounter each other unexpectedly underwater.

The challenges to such a regional framework are clear, and Lai acknowledged some of these himself. First, even the more basic elements of such a framework, such as information sharing, are hard to accomplish fully because of a classic catch-22: more information is required to build greater trust, yet it's precisely the lack of initial trust rooted in a range of factors including history, current geopolitical competition, and unresolved disputes that often makes parties unwilling to share that information in the first place. While that does not make this an unworthy goal to strive for, it does mean that achieving it will not be as easy as it looks, even though the infrastructure exists and it makes sense to do so.

Second, although the sharing of best practices and the adoption of common standards may seem like no-brainers, they may take time to implement fully in practice. In reality, the speed through which practices are shared and standards are harmonized is the product of a variety of factors, including the extent to which there is similarity in capabilities; the degree to which different countries exercise with each other to facilitate interoperability; and, of course, the level of willingness of the different actors to make this a priority.

Third and lastly, the wide divergence in the experience of Asian states both in terms of operating submarines as well as cooperation on submarine safety will likely make the specifics of a regional framework more complicated. While some countries have robust submarine fleets, other major states have just acquired them within the past few years and still others have plans in the pipeline to get them in the future. That has significant implications for designing a regional framework, including the dilemma usually inherent in such arrangements about how to balance inclusivity and high standards.

Given these challenges as well as others, Lai was right to note that Asia has a long way to go before getting anywhere near the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) preventive system for submarine operational safety, which has the

Submarine Movement Advisory Authority deconflicting underwater activities as well as endorsed procedures and standards by NATO's International Submarine Escape and Rescue Liaison Office. But he was also right to stress that while this is probably a bridge too far, that should not stop countries from taking small steps now. Otherwise, as he gloomily suggested, it may not be a matter of whether, but when, a submarine related crisis occurs in the future in the Asia-Pacific.

Source : [Diplomat](#), 21 May 2015

Will China and Thailand's Kra Isthmus Canal Agreement Sink Singapore?

- Jude Chan

Are China and Thailand joining hands to revive plans for an age old canal project that will cut through Kra Isthmus, the narrowest part of the Malay Peninsula in southern Thailand and cut Singapore out of the world's maritime trade?

Chinese media on May 18 reported the signing of a memorandum of understanding in Guangzhou between Chinese and Thai officials for a Kra Isthmus canal that will be built at a cost of some US\$28 billion over 10 years.

The 100km long canal would allow ships to bypass the Strait of Malacca and Singapore, saving ships some 1,200km off total distance travelled. Experts estimate that moving 100,000 tonnes worth of cargo through the canal will shorten the journey two to five days, and save approximately US\$350,000 in fuel cost.

The reported project would fall under China's proposed "Maritime Silk Road," an effort to revive a trade route running from China through Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean to Europe. The Strait of Malacca is one of the world's busiest international shipping lanes with up to 40 per cent of the world's trade passing through it.

The Kra Isthmus canal, an idea which was mooted as early as in the 17th century, would also allow ships to avoid the pirate-infested waters of the Malacca Straits. The implications for Singapore, however, are grave. In fact, if the Kra Isthmus canal project sails through, it is likely to torpedo Singapore's economy. The maritime industry contributes to about seven per cent of Singapore's GDP.

At present, Singapore's port is one of the busiest in the world. It is the focal point for some 200 shipping lines with links to more than 600 ports in over 120 countries worldwide.

According to the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA), more than 60,000 containers are loaded or unloaded from more than 60 container vessels. At any one time, there are about 1,000 ships in our port. The port has been a cornerstone of Singapore's economy for nearly 200 years and has played a key role in Singapore's transformation into a global trading power. Since 1986, Singapore has been the busiest port in the world in terms of shipping tonnage.

In 2004, total vessel arrivals for the year, in terms of shipping tonnage, reached 1.04 billion gross tons, crossing the one billion mark for the first time in Singapore's maritime history. Singapore's port terminals routinely handle over 2,000 containers per vessel, and turn vessels around in less than 12 hours.

Last year, annual vessel arrival tonnage reached 2.33 billion gross tons (GT). Its container throughput hit 32.6 million Twenty-Foot Equivalent Units (TEUs), while total cargo tonnage handled reached 557.5 million tonnes. The total volume of bunkers sold in the Port of Singapore remained the highest in the world, at 42.7 million tonnes.

In 2014, the Port of Singapore won the 'Best Seaport in Asia' award for the 26th time at the 28th Asian Freight and Supply Chain Awards (AFSCA). With the planned Kra Isthmus canal, these accolades may soon be sunk into history and forgotten like a shipwreck.

But there is no cause to abandon ship just yet. According to news reports following up on the stir created by the initial media stories, officials from both China and Thailand have denied the signing of the agreement for the Kra Isthmus canal. Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong also brushed off concern over the proposed Kra Isthmus canal project.

Speaking on a call-in programme on a local Chinese-language radio station, Mr Lee pointed out that despite the fact that Thailand is in a better geographical position, Singapore has been able to maintain its position as an aviation hub in the region and rise above the competition because Changi Airport has been well managed.

PM Lee said Singapore's efficiency and operational capacity have allowed it to thrive as a maritime hub. "If we can maintain such high standards of efficiency, we can still keep our jobs," he said.

Source : [The Establishment Post](#), 21 May 2015

Indonesia Sinks First Vessel from China under Jokowi

- Prashanth Parameswaran

On May 20, Indonesia destroyed a Chinese vessel caught fishing illegally in Indonesian waters near the South China Sea, the first since President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo declared war on illegal fishing since coming to office late last year.

The Jakarta Post cited Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister Susi Pudjiastuti as saying that the Gui Xei Yu 12661, a steel-made, 300-gross-ton boat, was sunk on Wednesday in Pontianak, West Kalimantan after it was detonated by the ministry with an explosive device planted on it. The boat was reportedly among 41 vessels simultaneously destroyed to commemorate National Awakening Day, with the others being from neighbouring states including the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

The Indonesian government has been criticized by some in Southeast Asia for its controversial policy of sinking foreign boats from neighbouring countries, a practice which Jokowi and his advisers say is necessary since illegal fishing costs the country billions of dollars in lost revenue each. According to The Jakarta Post, between October 2014 and March 2015, the ministry and the navy sunk 18 boats from Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

But observers had questioned whether Indonesia would be willing to sink a Chinese vessel and risk potentially straining ties with a country which is Jakarta's second largest trading partner, its top source of foreign tourists, and a growing investor. As The Diplomat reported exclusively in December, a Jokowi foreign policy adviser had suggested that the government would not be afraid to do so. Yet, over the past few months, though Indonesia had detained several Chinese vessels, it held back from actually sinking them.

By now finally sinking its first Chinese vessel, the Jokowi government has shown that it is indeed willing to apply its 'sink the vessels' policy consistently, and confirmed that the strident tone it has adopted on sovereignty and territorial integrity extends even to its most important economic partners, as I had emphasized earlier.

That being said, the way which Jakarta chose to carry this out does suggest caution on its part. As opposed to other Asian states whose vessels were sunk with immediate effect, Indonesia's stance towards China evolved more gradually, with the seizure of several boats in December leading the government to revoke a deal signed with Beijing on cooperation in the fisheries sector in early 2015 before the first sinking was carried out this week. The first Chinese vessel to be sunk was also destroyed among 41 vessels in line with a particular national occasion, rather than being done alone or with other Chinese boats only, as has been the case at times with vessels from other countries. In addition, Susi was careful to emphasize that the sinking's which were carried out jointly by the ministry and the navy was not a show of force, but merely a case of Indonesia enforcing its laws.

Source: [Diplomat](#), 21 May 2015

China Says U.S. South China Sea Actions "Irresponsible, Dangerous"

- Sui-Lee Wee and David Brunnstrom

China said on Friday it was "strongly dissatisfied" after a U.S. spy plane flew over part of the South China Sea this week near where China is building artificial islands, and called on the United States to stop such action or risk causing an accident.

The U.S. flight on Wednesday highlighted by the unusual Pentagon decision to invite a CNN team aboard the Poseidon surveillance plane. It said the Chinese navy issued eight warnings to the aircraft to move away from the contested territory. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said the Chinese military drove away the aircraft, in accordance with relevant regulations. He labeled the U.S. action a security threat to China's islands and reefs.

"Such action is likely to cause an accident, it is very irresponsible and dangerous and detrimental to regional peace and stability. We express our strong dissatisfaction, we urge the U.S. to strictly abide by international law and international rules and refrain from taking any risky and provocative actions," he told a news conference.

"China will continue to closely monitor the relevant area and take the necessary and appropriate measures to prevent harm to the safety of China's islands and reefs as well as any sea and air accidents." A Pentagon spokesman called the mission "routine" and said such flights occurred "every few days."

Colonel Steve Warren said the Poseidon had not gone within 12-mile (19-km) territorial limits that China claims around the artificial islands but said this could happen in the future.

"We don't recognize those islands as anything other than international space," he said. "For us to fly through that, we wouldn't see that as a change in the way we do business. It just so happens we haven't flown over them in the last 20 years."

The U.S. stance reflects the fact that while it does not recognize Chinese territorial limits around reclaimed land, it wants to avoid escalating the issue further than necessary, he said.

U.S. says flights "entirely appropriate"

Washington has been struggling to find a way to discourage what it has described as the "unprecedented" speed and scale of China's land reclamation work. The senior U.S. diplomat for East Asia, Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Russel, told reporters on Thursday the decision to take a TV crew on the Poseidon was in the interests of "transparency."

He said the U.S. reconnaissance flight was "entirely appropriate" and that U.S. naval forces and military aircraft would "continue to fully exercise" the right to operate in international waters and airspace. The Pentagon believes the work is aimed at cementing China's claim to the vast majority of the South China Sea - an important international shipping route and an area thought to have significant energy reserves and rich fishing grounds.

Washington is particularly concerned that China, whose claims overlap with those of Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan, may at some point declare an exclusion zone in the sea that could limit free movement of ships and aircraft.

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Thursday that China's land reclamation was undermining freedom and stability and risked provoking tension that could lead to conflict. The Global Times, a tabloid owned by the ruling Communist Party's People's Daily, called the U.S. flights "provocative".

"Washington is purposefully raising tensions with China, a move that has created a higher risk of a physical confrontation," it said in an editorial on Friday. "China should be prepared to ramp up its countermeasures, one notch at a time, according to the degree of provocations from the U.S.," it said.

Source: [Reuters](#), 23 May 2015

Shipping in the Great Barrier Reef: the Miners' Highway

- Adam Smith

The Great Barrier Reef has deteriorated since its World Heritage listing in 1981 and, as a report from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority made clear, this downward trajectory is likely to continue without significant intervention. At the same time, the global demand for coal, gas and minerals has led to rapid port expansion along the Reef's coast, most prominently at Abbot Point, Hay Point and Gladstone.

The impact of ports and dredging on the Reef's values are a focal point of local and international attention. Dredging establishes shipping lanes, swing basins and berth pockets to service the navigation of large shipping vessels. But what about the ships themselves? The impacts of shipping have been reported as well managed in the past, but will this change as more ships move through the region?

Traffic report

More than 9,600 ship voyages were recorded in the Reef between 2012 and 2013, and 3,947 individual ships called in at Reef ports in 2012. At the current growth rate of 4.8% per annum, the projected increase in ship numbers calling into these ports will exceed 10,000 by 2032.

The average size of ships is also increasing: worldwide, average vessel size has grown by 85% over the past 15 years. In addition to commodity vessels, the number of cruise ships, super yachts and navy vessels are also predicted to increase.

When the Chinese bulk coal carrier MV Shen Neng I ran aground on Douglas Shoal northeast of Gladstone in 2010, it left a 400,000 square metre scar the largest ever recorded in the Great Barrier Reef. More than 600 shipping incidents were recorded in the region between 1987 and 2009, not to mention the many near misses that have gone unreported.

The result has been that, despite the reported increase in vessel traffic of about 1% per year over the past decade, the 2014 Outlook Report judged the likelihood of an acute shipping incident as “unlikely to impossible” the same level as it was in 2009.

Chronic impacts - the sleeping giant?

The shipping industry has committed to continually improve the design and operation of ships to ensure they have no harmful impact on the environment. In practice, the biggest issues for the industry are cost and safety the environmental conservation is not a priority, except in the case of acute events such as oil spills.

Yet the chronic impacts of shipping, despite generally causing only low-level damage, can accumulate significantly over time. Examples include physical damage from propellers and anchors, the introduction of invasive species, greenhouse gas and nitrogen oxide emissions, and contamination from the release of coal dust, rubbish, sewage, anti-fouling agents and non-synthetic compounds such as oil and heavy metals. The global trend toward deeper-draft ships is also increasing the likelihood of propeller scouring and the resuspension of sediment.

The Commonwealth and Queensland government’s Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan concentrates its actions, targets and objectives on acute shipping incidents. However, it does not address the monitoring or management of the cumulative impact of chronic shipping pressures that cover a much wider area than acute incidents.

Shift to environmentally sustainable shipping

The strategies to avoid shipping accidents on the Reef are arguably world-leading. But there is room for improvement. Materials and equipment for disaster responses are dispersed and difficult to mobilise in the Reef, particularly in the wet season, when many roads and airstrips can be unusable. Logistical difficulties and high transport costs limit the ability to respond quickly to accidents, especially in the remote north.

Good incident management needs sufficient funding, equipment, procedures and personnel, to provide for pilotage and assistance of stricken vessels, ship inspections, and immediate clean-up in the case of spills or groundings. Authorities should also consider closing the Reef's waters to ships that don't meet prescribed standards of crew competency and vessel condition, similar to the eco-certification of tourism vessels.

The shipping industry is an integral part of Australia's maritime economy. But it needs to be managed in a way that will not increase pressure on the Great Barrier Reef's unique values. Given the region's World Heritage status and its vulnerable state, we should expect to see continued improvement in shipping management. If the government prioritises strategic planning, partnership and funding to shipping management like they have for Reef Rescue, we could see a transformation in the environmental sustainability of the shipping industry.

Source : [Conversation](#), 25 May 2015

China to Embrace New 'Active Defense' Strategy

- Franz-Stefan Gady

Today, China released its first defense white paper outlining a new military strategy that emphasizes a more “active defense posture” and a greater Chinese naval presence farther from the People's Republic's shores. Issued by the State Council Information Office, it is the ninth defense paper published since 1998, but the first to focus exclusively on strategy.

While the document contains various new observations, the principal doctrine of the Chinese military appears to be unaltered: winning local wars under conditions of informationization. Thus, network-centric warfare and the growing informatization of the battlefield are seen as particularly important for the PLA's “preparation for military struggle (PMS).”

“The world revolution in military affairs (RMA) is proceeding to a new stage. Long-range, precise, smart, stealthy and unmanned weapons and equipment are becoming increasingly sophisticated. Outer space and cyber space have become new commanding heights in strategic competition among all parties,” the paper notes.

In line with the strategic requirement of offshore waters defense and open seas protection, the PLA Navy (PLAN) will gradually shift its focus from “offshore waters defense” to the combination of “offshore waters defense” with “open seas protection,” and build a combined, multi-functional and efficient marine combat force structure. The PLAN will enhance its capabilities for strategic deterrence and counterattack, maritime maneuvers, joint operations at sea, comprehensive defense and comprehensive support.

However, despite this grand rhetoric, many Chinese and Western military analysts have in the last few years pointed out that the Chinese military appears incapable of conducting information-centric, integrated joint operations, which are required to fight and win future “local wars under informatized conditions” whether on shore or in the maritime domain.

Also, at least for now, the major focus of the PLAN will remain on anti-surface warfare instead of abruptly progressing into new uncharted territories. However, the paper does hint at the growing Chinese desire to further develop its expeditionary capabilities in the light of the military’s new more active defense posture:

In line with the strategic requirement of mobile operations and multi-dimensional offense and defense, the PLA Army (PLAA) will continue to reorient from theater defense to trans-theater mobility. In the process of building small, multi-functional and modular units, the PLAA will adapt itself to tasks in different regions, develop the capacity of its combat forces for different purposes, and construct a combat force structure for joint operations. The PLAA will elevate its capabilities for precise, multi-dimensional, trans-theater, multi-functional and sustainable operations.

While attacking the United States' "meddling" in the Asia-Pacific region on multiple occasions in the paper, the report closes with a more conciliatory tone towards Washington pointing out that:

China's armed forces will continue to foster a new model of military relationship with the U.S. armed forces that conforms to the new model of major-country relations between the two countries, strengthen defense dialogues, exchanges and cooperation, and improve the CBM mechanism for the notification of major military activities as well as the rules of behavior for safety of air and maritime encounters, so as to strengthen mutual trust, prevent risks and manage crises.

Source : [Diplomat](#), 26 May 2015



Anti-Submarine Ship to be Launched in Kolkata

- IANS

Kavaratti, which is 90 percent indigenous, is the last of four ASW class stealth corvettes being built for the Indian Navy under Project 28. The other three ships of the same class are INS Kamrota, Kadmatt and Kiltan. If the three, Kamrota was delivered to the navy in 2014, and has been commissioned. Kadmatt and Kitan are expected to be delivered between 2015 and 2017. The 3,300-tonne Kavaratti can reach a speed of over 25 knots. An X-shaped hull, full beam superstructure, inclined ship sides and an Infra Red Signature Suppression system increase the stealth feature of the ship.

Navy officials said the weapons systems on the ship were largely indigenous. The ship is also equipped to fight in nuclear, biological and chemical warfare conditions. Designed by Naval Design and built by Garden Reach Ship Builders and Engineers Kolkata, the contract for construction of four ships was signed in June 2012 at an estimate of around Rs. 7,800 crore.

Source: [New Kerala](#), 17 May 2015

George Washington Carrier Strike Group Begins Patrol, Increases Maritime Security

The Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George Washington departed Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan, for its patrol of the Indo-Asia-Pacific region as the flagship for the George Washington Carrier Strike Group, May 18.

George Washington served as the U.S. Navy's forward deployed aircraft carrier for seven years, and is currently scheduled to conduct a hull swap with the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan this summer.

"On behalf of my crew, we are grateful for the friendships we have shared while forward-deployed in Yokosuka," said Capt. Timothy Kuehhas, George Washington's commanding officer. "USS George Washington will now begin a journey, which will end in Virginia, but some of the crew of USS George Washington will transfer to Reagan during our voyage."

As George Washington departs, Ronald Reagan scheduled to return as the U.S. Navy's next forward-deployed aircraft carrier. "As George Washington departs today, rest assured, we will return with Ronald Reagan to maintain our commitment to security within the region," said Rear Adm. John Alexander commander, GWCSG. "I look forward to continued teamwork with our Japanese allies across a broad range of regional and global issues."

GWCSG returned to sea with the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Antietam (CG 54), Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) and USS Preble (DDG 88) and its embarked air wing, Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5, which consists of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 27, VFA-102, VFA-115, VFA-195, Electronic Attack Squadron 141, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 115, Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 30, Detachment 5, Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 77 and Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 12.

GWCSG provides a combat-ready force that protects and defends the collective maritime interests of its allies and partners in the Indo Asia Pacific region.

Source : [DVIDS](#), 18 May 2015

Indian Navy Committed to 'Make In India': Navy Chief

The Indian Navy is firmly committed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Make in India" project, with 48 ships and submarines being built in the country's shipyards, navy chief Admiral R.K. Dhowan said here on Tuesday.

Speaking at the launch of the fourth and last anti-submarine warfare corvette named "Karavatti", he said "self-reliance and indigenisation" were the blueprints the Indian Navy was firmly anchored to. The navy was making efforts to raise the indigenous content so as to make warships completely in India, said the navy chief.

"Karavatti", made at the Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), has over 90 percent indigenous content. GRSE chairman and managing director Rear Admiral A.K. Verma (retd.) said for the first time in the country, the superstructure of the corvette has been built of carbon fibre composite material.

Minister of State for Defence Rao Inderjit Singh was the chief guest on the occasion, while the ship was launched by his wife Manita Singh.

The minister lauded the contributions made by GRSE, Kolkata in meeting the growing requirements of the navy. Admiral Dhowan acknowledged the "excellent work" done by the yard for contributing towards achieving the Indian Navy's dream of transforming itself from a "Buyers Navy" to "Builders Navy".

GRSE is building four ASW Corvette class of ships under P-28 Project. The basic design for these ships was developed by navy's directorate of naval design and the detailed design was made by the in-house design department of GRSE. INS Kamorta, the first ship of the series, was commissioned on August 23, 2014 at Visakhapatnam.

The ship is now an integral part of the Eastern Fleet of the Indian Navy. The ASW corvette - 109 metre long with a displacement of 3,200 tonnes- is a most modern warship, with advanced stealth features having very low radar cross section and very low radiated underwater noise. The ship has a maximum speed of 25 knots,

with an endurance of over 3400 NM at 18 knots speed, and is designed to accommodate 17 officers and 106 sailors.

Source : [India TV](#), 19 May 2015

China Illegally Fishing off Coast of West Africa, Greenpeace Study Reveals

- Agence France-Presse

Chinese companies have been illegally fishing off the coast of west Africa, environmental campaign group Greenpeace said in a study Wednesday, at times sending incorrect location data suggesting they are as far away as Mexico or even on land.

The number of Chinese-flagged or Chinese-owned fishing boats operating in Africa has soared in recent decades, from just 13 in 1985 to 462 in 2013, the international advocacy group said. It said it found 114 cases of illegal fishing by such vessels in periods totalling eight years in the waters off Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal and Sierra Leone. The boats were mainly operating without licences or in prohibited areas.

“While the Chinese government is starting to eliminate some of the most destructive fishing practices in its own waters, the loopholes in existing policies lead to a double standard in Africa,” Ahmed Diame, a Greenpeace Africa ocean campaigner, said in a statement.

The cases were reported by the surveillance operations coordination Unit of the Dakar-based Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission, various national lists of infractions, and by Greenpeace itself, it said.

A Greenpeace ship found 16 cases of illegal fishing by 12 Chinese-flagged or - owned vessels in one month last year, the group said. Some of the ships

Greenpeace observed were reporting incorrect automatic identification system information, the campaign group added, including data that suggested they were in Mexican waters – or even on land.

The CNFC under-reported gross tonnage for 44 of its 59 vessels operating in west Africa, the report alleged, a practice which enables companies to evade licensing fees and could potentially mean they were fishing in prohibited areas.

The Chinese ships were “taking advantage of weak enforcement and supervision from local and Chinese authorities to the detriment of local fishermen and the environment”, said Rashid Kang, head of Greenpeace East Asia’s China ocean campaign.

“Unless the government reigns in this element of rogue companies, they will seriously jeopardise what the Chinese government calls its mutually-beneficial partnership with west Africa,” he added. Chinese companies are increasingly looking abroad for resources, with fish stocks no exception.

Fishing resources are also an element of the competing territorial claims in the South China Sea, which Beijing claims almost in its entirety. China has clashed with Vietnamese and Filipino fishing ships in the region, sometimes boarding vessels or chasing them off with water cannons.

Source: [The Guardian](#), 20 May 2015

INS Sindhukirti Submarine Begins Voyage after Retrofitting at Vizag

- Santosh Patnaik

The sea trial of Russia-made INS Sindhukirti, the seventh Sindhughosh class diesel electric submarine of Indian Navy, was launched after successful completion of retrofitting at Hindustan Shipyard Limited here on Thursday. “Today is a red-letter day in our history as retrofitting involved a complex process a more difficult process than building a new submarine. Our workforce deserved credit for completing the

Herculean task adhering to stringent quality standards stipulated by the Navy,” Rear Admiral N.K. Mishra told The Hindu.

The HSL, the premier shipyard of the country set up in 1941 had earlier completed retrofitting of two submarines belonging to Egyptian naval forces and INS Vagli. “This was the biggest-ever repair of a submarine undertaken in any shipyard in the country proving our capability to take up orders to construct generation next Greenfield submarines,” Mr. Mishra said.

The INS Sindhukirti was built at Admiralty Shipyard and Sevmash in the erstwhile Soviet Union and commissioned on January 4, 1990. The cost of the retrofitting project is estimated at around Rs.700 crore to Rs.800 crore. The delayed completion of the submarine is attributed to insistence by the Russians to source electrodes and several parts from their country including change of mainline cables in 2011, according to sources.

The HSL also had to undertake dredging after undocking it on November 4 due to accumulation of sand in its area reducing the draft from seven to four metres under the influence of Cyclone Hudhud, which battered the industries of Visakhapatnam on October 12, 2014.

Source : [Hindu](#), 21 May 2015

Zubr-Class Air-Cushioned Landing Craft (LCAC) to Power up PLA Navy

- Staff Reporter

China's ambitions to dominate the East and South China Seas will receive a powerful boost with the commissioning of four new Zubr-class air-cushioned landing craft (LCAC), reports the Beijing-based Sina Military Network.

The Zubr, meaning "European bison", is the world's largest military hovercraft. Originally designed in the 1980s by the St Petersburg-based Almaz Shipbuilding, construction of the first Zubr began in 1982 and was completed in three years. Issues identified during initial trials were corrected before a second series of tests in 1986, with the vessels officially commissioned by the Soviet Union in 1988.

Apart from the Russian and Ukrainian navies, the Zubr is operated today by the Hellenic Navy and the People's Liberation Army Navy. China placed an order for four of the vessels from Ukraine in 2009 for US\$350 million. The first two were built under Chinese supervision on the Crimea Peninsula, while the second pair are being built under license in China.

Regarded as a "hovering fortress," the Zubr has a full length of 57 meters and a width of 22 meters, dwarfing the US Navy LCAC, which is 26.8m long and 14.3m wide. It is fitted with five Kuznetsov NK-12MV gas turbines and three four-bladed variable-pitch propellers, enabling a maximum speed of 60 knots and a cruising speed of 30-40 knots.

The vessel has a maximum carrying capacity of over 130 tons and is typically equipped with three 40-ton-level main battle tanks (MBT) or eight BMP-2 amphibious infantry fighting vehicles. By comparison, the US Navy LCAC can only carry one MBT. If just used for transporting personnel, the Zubr is capable of moving a battalion-sized force to islands as far as 5,000 kilometers away.

The Zubr also features impressive defensive capabilities, with a light alloy armor that protects against small arms and shrapnel and an active system that protects against magnetic influence mines. Personnel are also protected from the effects of weapons of mass destruction due to the vessel's ability to provide airtight sealing to combat stations and crew compartments, which are equipped with individual gas masks and protective suits.

In terms of weapons, the hovercraft has a pair of 30mm AK-630 close in weapon systems and a pair of 140mm Ogon rocket launchers, with 22 rockets each and 132

rockets in total, It also has a man-portable air defense system that launches Strela-3 point air defense missiles fitted in a 16-round turret launcher and a pair of manually aimed Stela-2 Grail missiles.

The Zubr-class LCAC is said to be valued highly by the PLA Navy because of its usefulness in conducting beach landings and landings in locations without ports or piers, greatly expanding the scope of China's strategic and tactical operations. The craft is particularly well-suited for amphibious operations, giving China a distinct advantage against Taiwan and countries with which it is engaged in territorial disputes, including Japan in the East China Sea and Vietnam and the Philippines in the South China Sea.

Source : [Want China Times](#), 22 May 2015

Iran's Yemen-Bound Aid Ship Docks in Djibouti, WFP to Deliver Aid Cargo

- Jonathan Saul

An Iranian aid ship docked on Friday in Djibouti, where its cargo will be inspected by the United Nations before being moved to conflict-torn Yemen, Iran's semi-official Fars news agency reported.

"The ship docked a few minutes ago in Djibouti," Fars said. "The ship entered Djibouti waters yesterday and after inspection by the international organization will head toward Yemen."

Tehran agreed this week to allow an international inspection of the vessel, the Iran Shahed, averting a potential showdown with Saudi-led forces, who are enforcing searches of ships entering Yemeni ports to stop arms reaching Houthi rebels. Shiite power Iran backs the dominant Houthi militia in Yemen's civil war while regional arch-rival Saudi Arabia and its Sunni Muslim allies have carried out almost two months of air raids against them and want Yemen's president reinstated.

Tehran has rejected Saudi accusations it is arming Houthi fighters. The ship had originally been bound for the Yemen's Red Sea port of Hodaida, which is controlled by the Houthis, but the World Food Program will now deliver its aid cargo, the U.N agency said on Friday.

"The cargo of the ship will be handed over to WFP in Djibouti and will be transferred to WFP-chartered vessels for shipment to the Yemeni ports of Hodaida and/or (the southern port city of) Aden," WFP representative Abeer Etefa said. "It will be delivered to humanitarian partners on the ground for distribution." Etefa said the WFP had been told the 2,500 ton cargo, included supplies of rice, flour, canned fish, medicine, water, tents and blankets.

Source: [Reuters](#), 22 May 2015

Indian Warships Take Part in Naval Exercise

- PTI

Indian Navy has dispatched four vessels, including a destroyer and a stealth frigate, on a long overseas deployment to Indian Ocean and South China Sea during which they will make port calls in various countries, including Australia and Cambodia.

As part of this deployment, a four-day bilateral naval exercise began Saturday with Singapore in which INS Satpura, an indigenously-built guided missile stealth frigate, and INS Kamorta, the latest indigenous anti-submarine warfare corvette, are taking part.

Naval sources said that the Eastern Fleet's deployment, led by Rear Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh, will see the vessels which also include guided missile destroyer INS Ranvir and fleet tanker INS Shakti make port calls in Australia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand.

The present deployment is part of a regular exercise conducted to make port calls in friendly countries, the sources said. "Every year such port calls are made to fly our Indian flags in friendly countries and to showcase what the Indian Navy is all about. Our ships regularly use the routes in South China Sea to reach countries situated in that region," the sources added.

INS Satpura and Kamorta had reached Singapore on May 18 and participated in IMDEX-15, a maritime defence show. They are now taking part in the bilateral naval exercise, SIMBEX-15, with Singapore Navy from May 23-26, Indian Navy said in a statement here. Operational interaction between the two navies commenced with Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) training exercises in 1994, which has grown steadily over the past 20 years.

The operational interaction was formalised as an annual bilateral exercise, 'SIMBEX', in 1999. Since its inception, SIMBEX has grown in tactical and operational complexity, the official statement said. It has transcended the traditional emphasis on ASW to more complex maritime exercises involving various facets of naval operations such as air defence, air and surface practice firing, maritime security and search and rescue.

This year, Singaporean ship Supreme and submarine Archer along with Maritime Patrol Aircraft and fighter aircraft are participating from the Singaporean side whilst Indian Navy is represented by INS Satpura, INS Kamorta and Long-Range Maritime Reconnaissance Anti-Submarine aircraft P-8I.

Source: Brahmand.com, 24 May 2015

Libya Attacks Ship near ISIS-Controlled Port

- Pat St. Claire and Khushbu Shah

A Libyan air force plane Sunday morning, the chief of the air force told CNN, attacked a ship filled with "mercenaries, weapons and ammunition".

Saqr al-Joroushi, the head of the Libyan air force for the internationally recognized Tobruk-based government, said the attack took place off the coast of Sirte after Libya received information that the ship was allegedly bringing fuel for ISIS. The fuel was destined for electricity stations in Sirte, which ISIS controls, he claimed.

"The fighter jet warned off the un-flagged ship, giving it time to reassess, opposite Sirte port, but the ship ignored the warning," he said in a statement to Libya's state news agency, LANA.

The ship was slightly damaged after being hit by one rocket but is still near Sirte port, he told CNN in a phone call. It's not known exactly where the ship or the fuel came from, according to al-Joroushi, other than "the north." CNN's Jomana Karadsheh and Ruth Hetherington contributed to this report

Source: [CNN](#), 24 May 2015

Navy Chief to Review Operational Issues on 25 May 2015

- Age Correspondent

Naval Chief Admiral R.K. Dhowan will "review the critical operational and administrative issues in the Navy" at the four-day naval commanders' conference that will begin in the capital on Monday.

"The conference comes in the wake of a high tempo campaign season for the Navy, starting with Operation Near in the Maldives during December 2014, the Theatre Readiness Operational Level Exercise in January and February 2015, Operation Rahat in Yemen during March and April 2015 and the joint operation with the Coast Guard to nab drug runners off the coast in April, 2015. Coming against the backdrop of numerous successful operations, it is axiomatic that the conference will provide a valuable opportunity to discuss issues of operational relevance, identify capability gaps and review future plans," the Navy said on Sunday.

“The conference will cover a wide spectrum of issues relating to operations, infrastructure and manpower, including operational readiness of the Commands and issues relating to coastal security. Strengthening cyber security in the Indian Navy would be another key area of discussion,” it added. The meeting will also focus on existing infrastructure and induction of aircraft into the Navy.

“Another significant aspect that will bear discussion is consolidation and strengthening of the rapidly expanding aviation arm of the Navy. Deliberations would be held on infrastructure and operating requirements for new induction aircraft, including Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and enhancement of surveillance. A further critical area covered would be the strengthening of Maritime Operations Centers for collation and analysis of vast swathes of information from a multitude of sources to enable alacrity and effectiveness of operations in all four dimensions,” the Navy added.

“The commanders would also interact with MoD officials to discuss key cases pending with the government,” it said.

Source: [Asian Age](#), 25 May 2015

Government -to- Government Deal on Submarines

- Sujan Dutta

India has sounded out Germany for a direct government-to-government deal to buy six submarines, bypassing a competitive bidding process in what could be New

Delhi's costliest military acquisitions programme.

The Indian Navy is now in the middle of finalising the specifications for and choosing a shipyard for its P75i programme to acquire six conventional submarines. The submarines must be capable of firing missiles to attack targets on land and must have air independent propulsion (AIP) that gives them more endurance to stay underwater. The total cost of the project could top \$11 billion.

The enquiry to the Germans was made at delegation-level talks last evening, a source in the defence ministry said today. The German defence minister, Ursula Von Der Leyen, is currently visiting India.

The Indian Navy currently operates a fleet of 13 conventional diesel-electric submarines after its INS Sindhurakshak sank in Mumbai in August 2013. Four of the submarines are of German-origin.

"We asked them what they would offer if we went for the submarines in a direct government-to-government deal," said the official.

German conglomerate, Thyssenkrupp, the original builders of the U-Boat of Hitler's navy in World War II, currently owns HDW from which the Indian Navy sourced its Type 209 Shishumar-class submarines between 1986 and 1994 before the deal was hit by allegations of bribery and suspended.

Thyssen Krupp Marine Systems is now contracted to upgrade the four submarines. The up gradation involves equipping them with capability to fire Harpoon missiles.

The Project 75i programme is designed to assist the navy in beefing up its under surface power after a three-year submarine-building project drafted in the 1990s went askew. The navy wanted 24 submarines by 2024; it now effectively has 13 with two or three constantly under refit.

Last year, the government decided to select an Indian shipyard for P75i for which a

committee headed by the navy's chief of design, vice-admiral Ashok Subhedar, has been tasked.

A defence official said the Modi government was closer to a policy in which all purchases of "strategic equipment" would be made through government-to-government deals. He cited the example of the decision to buy 36 Rafale fighter jets from France.

An official statement from the ministry said the talks between Manohar Parrikar and the visiting German minister focused on "partnering of Germany in the Make-in-India initiative in the defence sector and supply of state-of-the-art equipment and technology".

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Germany last month. German chancellor Angela Merkel is slated to visit India later in the year. The German defence minister will be visiting the Western Naval Command in Mumbai tomorrow

Source: [Telegraph India](#), 27 May 2015

Navy to Hold 'Conclave of Chiefs' on 28 May 2015

- TNN

The Navy will hold a unique brainstorming session on Thursday with seven of its former chiefs called for a "conclave of chiefs" to exchange views on policy, manpower, procurement, doctrine and other matters.

Admiral Robin Dhowan had extended invitations to all former chiefs, of which Admirals R H Tahiliani, L Ramdas, V S Shekhawat, Vishnu Bhagwat, Sushil Kumar, Arun Prakash and D K Joshi will take part in what is billed as the "first-of-its-kind initiative" in the maritime force.

"The former chiefs can give guidance on a myriad of issues. The intent is to take advantage of their collective experience and wisdom to chart out the path ahead for the Navy. They, in turn, will be apprised of the latest developments in the force and its future plans anchored on the Make in India initiative," said an officer.

As reported earlier by TOI, the Navy has 42 warships and six submarines on order for construction in domestic shipyards for around Rs 3 lakh crore, with the aim to build a powerful three-dimensional Navy to protect its huge maritime interests, from the Persian Gulf to Malacca Strait, as well as counter the expanding Chinese naval presence in the Indian Ocean Region. It has also identified around 100 advanced technologies for DRDO to develop over the next 15 years in tune with the 'Make in India' policy.

Source: [Times of India](#), 28 May 2015

Australia Hopeful of Finalizing Economic Cooperation Agreement by Year-End

- Surojit Gupta

Australia is confident of concluding the comprehensive economic cooperation agreement with India by the end of this year, foreign minister Julie Bishop has said, as it moves to deepen economic and bilateral relations with New Delhi. "I am confident that we will be able to conclude the agreement that would be to the benefit of both countries and I am aware that there is political will on both sides and I am sure that we can overcome any of the challenges we face", Bishop told a group of visiting Indian journalists.

Negotiators are racing against the tight deadline set by the political leadership of the two countries. The next round of negotiations are expected to kick off in July.

"There are always challenges in free trade agreements in sectors of the economy. We were able to overcome those barriers with Japan where there was a very strong

agriculture focus. It requires give and take on both sides but the overall benefits are enormous not only in goods but also in services and investment," Bishop said.

The slowdown in China and the impact on its economy has prompted Australia to look at other markets such as India to expand its services business and skill training. It has signed free trade agreements with China, South Korea and Japan has provided the impetus to wrapping up the pact with India.

"I believe we should be ambitious to seek high quality comprehensive agreement and we don't want to fail in our efforts because we were not ambitious enough. We have concluded free trade agreements in the past 18 months with China, Japan, and South Korea. At that time people said we were ambitious but we were able to conclude comprehensive high quality agreements, " Bishop said.

The two countries are also deepening their cooperation in the defence and security areas and have drawn up plans for joint military exercises later this year.

"I think that brings a new level of cooperation on the defence and security side of things. We continue to cooperate closely on Indian Ocean Rim matters. This is a significant moment in terms of Australian and Indian bilateral relationship. Our Prime ministers have very good foundation for us to deepen and diversify the relationship," Bishop said.

Asked if China objects to the joint military exercise with India, Bishop said "Australia would also invite China to take part if that were to be the case". "China has taken part in joint exercises with Australia and the United States recently. We encourage more engagement with China on joint military exercises and if they were concerned about it, we would invite them to exercise with us," she said. "If China objects they haven't, Australia carrying out joint exercise with India, we would invite China to take part in joint exercises with Australia," Bishop said.

Asked whether the slowdown in China has prompted Australia to look at India, Bishop said, "New Delhi's strong commitment has raised the level".

"We always had a focus on India. India has demonstrated a willingness to engage. Prime Minister Modi's visit was the first prime ministerial visit in decades and so we welcome that warmly. We feel that that there is so much in common. We can work together with so many common interests and Prime Minister Modi's visit most certainly reinvigorated the whole relationship," Bishop said.

She said the agreement to supply uranium to India is likely to be given the go ahead later this year after the parliamentary process of examine the deal gets over. She said the CECA also provides an opportunity to enhance energy supply in coal, LNG and uranium. "Australia hopes to be a partner of choice in providing with support," Bishop said.

She also pledged support for the Made in India drive. "We support Prime Minister Modi's economic reforms that include the Make in India campaign," Bishop said. "We understand that is an economic imperative for India and if we are able to enhance two-way trade in goods and services and investment then the government will certainly support that," she said.

Source: [Times of India](#), 29 May 2015

Chinese Activities in IOR Monitored Minutely: Navy

- Express News Service

Naval chief Admiral R K Dhowan on Thursday said that the activities of the Navy's Chinese counterpart in the Indian Ocean Rim was being minutely monitored with its presence growing in the region.

The Navy chief reiterated that along with the submarines, Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) ships have been deployed for anti-piracy operations in the Indian Ocean since 2008 and the Indian security establishment sees the presence of Chinese

submarines in waters close to it and its developmental activities in neighbouring countries like Pakistan, Maldives and Sri Lanka as a matter of concern.

“PLA Navy’s activities are minutely monitored by the Indian Navy and our belief is that the responsibility of protecting the Indian Ocean and our coastline lies with the Navy. Our ships and aircraft are always on alert so that this responsibility is carried out well,” he said on the concluding day of four-day Naval Commanders Conference in the capital.

He was responding to questions on China’s recent white paper on defense, which talks about enhancing its naval reach for the first time to ‘open seas protection’ far from its shores. However, Dhowan sought to downplay the assertive report saying every Navy makes its plan as to what it is supposed to do and it is a ‘normal activity’.

“There would be aspects related to defensive operations, surveillance, and all kinds of operations, which spread out during the period of peace and during hostilities. So it is natural for any Navy to have its plans which covers the spectrum of entire operations. That (Chinese white paper) is a normal activity for any Navy,” he said.

On Tuesday, China had unveiled an assertive military strategy enhancing its naval reach for the first time to ‘open seas protection’ far from its shores which could pose a challenge to the Indian Navy especially in the Indian Ocean.

The 9,000-word paper has warned of threats to China’s maritime rights and interests, citing the provocative actions of some offshore neighbors. It also spoke of threats from illegal military presence in Chinese territory, and outside parties involving themselves in South China Sea affairs.

Source: [Indian Express](#), 29 May 2015



Is a Sea Change Needed for the Shipping Industry?

- Emel Aktas

The world of container shipping is crucial to our everyday existence. More than 60% of the goods we use every day are transported by sea. This takes its toll on the environment. Maritime transport accounts for approximately 3% of the world's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and 4% of the EU's total GHG emissions.

Many maritime companies have started lowering the speed of their ships (slow steaming) to help reduce fuel emissions. However, reducing the environmental impact of the shipping industry is complex as there are many uncertainties around a ship's journey at sea. Adverse weather conditions can also have a big impact on journey times but also the time that a ship spends at each port on its journey can play a major part in delays and result in increased emissions.

Ships will visit many ports along their journey and the time they spend at each port loading and unloading cargo can vary from a couple of hours to more than a day. The uncertainty around port timings is the result of less than perfect planning and communication systems that are used by port authorities across the world.

Vessels are given a time window for their arrival at a port. As long as they arrive within this time window, they will meet their service objective. If they arrive at the port earlier than their nominated time window, they will have to wait and if they are late, they will have to wait for a new slot. This delay then results in ships increasing their speed in order to try and make up time to get to the next port in time.

The time windows allotted by ports can be very tight, especially when the ports are busy. A good analogy can be made with the bullseye on a dartboard. The smaller

the target, the more difficult it is to hit. The tight timescale at which a ship can dock at a particular port often leads to ships rushing to catch a nominated time window to achieve their set service targets. The problem then is the faster a ship travels, the higher the emissions.

The issue of port times is less of a problem for transpacific or transatlantic journeys, as for these journeys the time spent at ports is a small fraction of the total time they spend at sea. For longer journeys, the uncertainty of port times has relatively less impact on the service level since there is usually plenty of time at sea to make up for any delays incurred at ports.

For those ships with shorter journeys, a change in sailing speed may not always help, as the distance to be travelled to the next port is often not long enough to make up for the lost time incurred by port delays. However, changing speed would help them if they were not so restricted by the arrival time window at their next port.

Based on extensive research with port operators and ship liners over the last two years, we have found that the length of the journey and the level of uncertainty around port times has an impact on the service levels that can be achieved by changing the speed of sailing. This problem poses a trade-off between service levels and carbon emissions. The uncertainty of port times results in speeding of ships, which leads to higher fuel consumption and higher carbon emissions.

Better coordination between ships and ports in terms of available time windows and likely disruptions to service will help both parties achieve higher service levels. To achieve this, the port authorities must review the systems and technology they currently use for communication and scheduling of ships. As the industry continues to grow, ports must adapt and innovate. Out-of-date systems must be addressed in order to improve efficiencies and ultimately the industry's impact on the environment.

Source : [Link 2](#), 18 May 2015

Caribbean Shipping Association Commended for Leading Role in Regional Shipping

Mark Vanterpool, minister for communications and works in the British Virgin Islands (BVI), which played host to delegates attending the 14th Caribbean Shipping Executives Conference in capital city Tortola last week, has commended the Caribbean Shipping Association (CSA) for fostering the development of the vital regional shipping industry since its inception in 1971.

"I encourage you to continue this very important work of information exchange, training and development of our human resources, and generally being the voice of the Caribbean shipping industry," Vanterpool told the delegates attending the conference, held from May 11-13.

"With our Caribbean islands as strategically positioned as they are in this part of the world, it is definitely to our benefit to work together to maximise these advantages, as it relates to trade, travel and transport. The Caribbean has had a history of cooperation in inter-regional relations, and it is commendable to see the Caribbean Shipping Association doing its part to foster the development of the vital shipping industry," he added.

Experiencing BVI

At a cocktail event at the Moorings Mariner Inn, on the first night of the conference, delegates were royally fêted by the minister, under whose portfolio the BVI Ports Authority falls. They were also able to experience the BVI through various networking events and tours throughout the conference, including a 'BVI Night' at the newly expanded Cruise Pier, and an island cruise which landed them at the famous Foxy's bar and restaurant, located in Great Harbour on the island of Jost Van Dyke.

Some 150 delegates from countries in the Caribbean, Latin America and Europe, as well as shipping interests in the US and trade experts from as far as Geneva,

Switzerland, were in attendance at the three-day conference organised by the CSA in collaboration with the BVI Ports Authority and held at the UP's Complex in Tortola.

CSA president, Grantley Stephenson, set the tone for the meeting in his opening remarks, challenging the region's shipping executives to stay ahead of the unfolding events in the sector in order to capitalise on the opportunities that present themselves. To illustrate, among other things, he pointed to the need for the delegates to fully understand how trade logistics can impact the sector.

"Trade facilitation is pivotal to development. It enhances countries' competitiveness by allowing them to trade goods and services on a timely basis with lower transaction costs. Conversely, inefficient logistics procedures and infrastructure can pose a significant obstacle to trade by making it difficult for countries to tap new market opportunities or improve their overall competitiveness. We need to fully grasp our role and business potential in this critical area," Stephenson said.

Delegates heard insights on this topic as part of presentations by Patricia Francis, head of the trade facilitation task force of Jamaica, and Rajesh Aggarwal, chief of business and trade policy from the International Trade Centre in Geneva.

The conference also provided updates on critical maritime developments in the region, including a progress report on the construction of the giant lock gates that are a key part of the Panama Canal's multibillion-dollar expansion project, slated to be officially opened in 2016. The updates on proposed tariffs for the expanded Panama Canal by Oscar Bazan, executive vice-president, planning and business development, Panama Canal Authority, also proved a popular topic among the region's shipping executives in attendance.

Delegates also heard from presenters on topics ranging from drug trafficking to corporate philanthropy and environmental preservation. Presentations from Charles 'Bud' Darr, senior vice-president - global technical and regulatory affairs, Cruise Line International Association, as part of a cruise forum, were among those which were

well received, as was information on liquefied natural gas production and shipping by Eduardo Pagan, vice-president and general manager, Sea Star Line, and John Hatley, PE - Americas vice-president from Ship Power, Wartsila.

Members of the CSA will meet again in October at the CSA's annual general meeting, conference and exhibition slated for Cartagena, Colombia.

Source: [The Gleaner](#), 19 May 2015

Indian Shipyards Open to Technology Collaborations

- PTI

India's leading shipyards are open to more technological collaborations with foreign maritime companies to keep themselves abreast of the advanced technology required for making high-end products, an expert said here today.

"We will collaborate to gain from technology transfer with international shipyards but we are also in a good position to do projects for other countries," said Rakesh Anand, director of corporate planning at Mazagon Dock Ltd (MDL) at a defence exhibition.

"We are in South East Asia to showcase our expertise and ready to undertake project for any markets," he added. Anand said there is big scope for MDL to undertake commercial vessel projects but the focus is defence and naval projects as the yard's record of accomplishment shows and its commitment to national projects.

he shipyards have delivered a number of projects to countries in the region such as the delivery of CGS Barracuda to Mauritius in December 2014, he said. Anand also underlined the importance of keeping updated with advanced technologies through interaction with international shipbuilders for making high-end products and keep abreast with global industry. He, however, also pointed out that defence and naval

projects were subject to approvals from the government as the shipyards operates under the Ministry of Defence.

Mazagon Dock Ltd has delivered commercial projects such as multi- support vessels for international oil companies as well as hydrocarbon exploration rigs for the Indian oil and gas sectors in the past. MDL together with Goa Shipyard Ltd (GSL) and Garden Reach Shipbuilding's & Engineers Ltd (GRSE) are taking part in the International Maritime and Defence Exhibition.

"The successful completion of 'Barracuda Project' has evoked tremendous interest in the neighbouring countries and a number of countries are showing interest in building warships in India," said R C Nautiyal, Director at GRSE. Nautiyal highlighted the challenge of building a world class fleet of Stealth Frigates under Project P-17A for the Indian Defence Sector.

MDL is building four Frigates and GRSE 3 Frigates. The first of these Frigates would be delivered in about five years. The 7-vessel project at the two yards is in various stages of planning and implementation. GSL director of operations, Shrihari Pai Raikar highlighted the massive upgrade and modernisation his shipyard was undertaking.

With this modernised facility in place, the shipyard's vessel building and repair capacity will increase multi-fold," he said. "GSL will be able to undertake construction of Mine Counter Measure Vessels, one of the most advanced vessels for India," Raikar said.

GSL's international projects include two vessels for Sri Lanka to be delivered from 2017 onwards and a training simulator facility in Myanmar to train seafarers in managing a damaged vessel back to shore. GSL-built INS Kamotra and MDL-built INS Satpura were part of the Indian participation in the exhibition.

Source: [Economic Times](#), 20 May 2015

Nor Shipping Continues to Change with the Times

- Norwegian Solutions 2015

Like the maritime sector's ability to constantly reinvent itself, Nor-Shipping's flair for keeping pace with change, makes it the leading global maritime event week. Nor-Shipping director Vidar Pederstad said: "While the shipping industry may be conservative, it has always been good at adapting to change, and we must be too."

A trend that continues in 2015 is the shift towards synergies between related industries. While Nor-Shipping is, of course, focused on shipping, this focus started to expand in 2011. The Nor-Shipping Agenda Offshore Conference was held for the first time this year, born of the growing link between the shipping and oil and gas industries.

But the synergies concept really took off in 2013, when the term Ocean Industries came to the fore as a way to describe the holistic relationship between the seafood, offshore energy and shipping industries.

Two Nor-Shipping events that underline the interconnectedness of the Ocean Industries are Ocean Talent Camp and Ocean Industry Podium, the latter being held for the first time this year. Its fast-paced one-hour sessions offer busy delegates a quick way to meet people and gain relevant information without having to sit through day-long conferences.

In all, there will be 24 Ocean Industry Podium sessions on finance, law and insurance, and technology and innovation. Oslo is the strongest city in terms of maritime services such as finance, legal matters and insurance, and Ocean Industry Podium gives international visitors a chance to meet with this 'softer' part of the industry.

Recognizing that now is the time to find the talent needed in the Ocean Industries in the coming decades, the Ocean Talent Camp recruitment drive is going all out to attract young people to careers in these sectors. Since its launch at Nor-Shipping

2013 and subsequent nationwide road show, just over 25,000 young people have passed through its doors.

Another event aimed at the next generation is Young@Nor-Shipping, a mix of social and professional events. The programme is the result of many years of collaboration between Nor-Shipping and Young Ship to bring young and experienced maritime professionals together.

This spirit of collaboration underpins the Nor-Shipping approach and will be seen in action during the Brazil@Nor-Shipping programme of activities.

The strong economic relationship between the oil nations of Norway and Brazil was the driver for this new event. Norway, home to the world's most modern and second largest fleet of offshore vessels, is a natural location in which to present the Brazilian offshore sector. With one in four Brazilian offshore service vessels being Norwegian-owned, the strength of the ties between the two countries is obvious.

Ricardo Cesar Fernandes, executive director of the Brazilian Association of Norwegian Ship-owners (ABRAN), says: "The Norwegian oil and gas sector is a benchmark for Brazil."

The Nor-Shipping conferences are well known for putting high-level speakers on the stage and not shying away from the hard discussions that move the industry forward. Innovative Investment and Transformative Technology are just two of the hot topics on its 2015 agenda.

Players who will present, debate and discuss these topics include IMO Secretary General Koji Sekimizu, BW Shipping Managing Director Yngvil Eriksson Åsheim, Nordea head of shipping, offshore and oil services Hans Kjelsrud and many more. Key players from outside the industry will also take a stand. These include World Economic Forum Managing Director Espen Barth Eide and the world-renowned strategy, globalization and entrepreneurship expert Dr Anil Gupta.

Borderless Business and Collaborative Society are two of the topics up for debate at Agenda Offshore 2015. Teekay chief executive Peter Evensen, National Oilwell Varco chief executive and president Clay Williams, and many others will also weigh in here.

Other high-profile Nor-Shipping visitors will include King Harald V of Norway and prime minister Erna Solberg. The Norwegian Government has also been invited to hold business meetings at Nor-Shipping and many media houses have their conferences here. The Arctic Business Council will hold its second meeting here to explore the agenda for the Arctic Business 2006 conference.

Mr Pederstad says: “Our goal is to provide the framework for companies and regulators to organize ways to meet at Nor-Shipping. In 2013, the International Chamber of Shipping held its annual meeting at Nor-Shipping, as did Intertanko. This is exactly what we look for and I welcome the participation of any relevant organizations, bodies and companies.”

Following on from Agenda Offshore, women will set the agenda at the Women@Nor-Shipping Waves of Change conference, where both men and women will debate issues relating to leadership and the environment.

At the heart of Nor-Shipping is the exhibition. Spread across six halls, it has an easy-to-navigate layout that features over 20 national pavilions and themed industry segments. The completeness of Norway’s maritime cluster means that Nor-Shipping is able to offer delegates the chance to connect with every part of the maritime value chain here.

Recognizing that the best connections are often made outside the meeting room, there will be a high number of social activities in Oslo during Nor-Shipping week.

The waterfront area of Tjuvholmen in Oslo will transform into Nor-Shipping Island, an arena for many of the social happenings. The concept enables the spontaneous

networking that naturally takes place when many maritime players are in one location to expand beyond Lillestrøm and into the city of Oslo.

Tjuvholmen's high-quality hotels, restaurants and bars, central location and maritime feel make it a first choice for the Nor-Shipping community.

The ever-popular Nor-Shipping BBQ is a networking paradise that attracts over 2,500 people, including players from all segments of the industry, while Nor-Shipping's 50th anniversary party at Tjuvholmen promises to be the event of the year.

It is important to mention that seafarers around the world will benefit throughout Nor-Shipping 2015, but especially on 1 June, when 500 runners take part in The Mission to Seafarers fun run through the streets of Oslo. A portion of every ticket or pass sold at Nor-Shipping will also be donated to The Mission to Seafarers, as will a part of ticket sales for the Nor-Shipping BBQ and 50th anniversary party.

In its 50th year, the longest running maritime event in the world will do what it has always done: provide an opportunity to meet people, discuss hot topics and debate issues relevant to the industry, as well as finding new business opportunities.

Source: [Riviera](#), 27 May 2015

Clarity Needed as New Rules on Reporting Formalities Loom Over Shipping Community

- International Shipping News

In an effort to gather much needed information and to obtain some clarity regarding the situation on the ground, cargo owners, freight forwarders, port authorities, terminal operators, ship agents and shipping companies have sent EU Member States a questionnaire to ascertain which systems countries are putting in place to

comply with Reporting Formalities Directive 2010/65/EU, which enters into force on June 1st. The Directive was part of a wider Commission initiative to reduce administrative formalities for shipping and increase the ease of doing business.

Progress on the implementation of the directive has been slow and uneven between Member States, partly due to the fact that the 2010 Reporting Formalities Directive only foresees the creation of digital single entry points for the required data, also called Single Windows, at national level. Member States are not required to set up similar, or even compatible systems, which in turn leads to a major compliance challenge for the shipping industry. Coordination efforts led by the Commission have so far not yielded the expected results, leaving ship operators in a difficult position.

In the short term, the shipping industry needs clarity with regard to the information that it will be required to provide to each Member State as well as additional information on the means and practicalities linked to the delivery system. It also needs the extension of existing systems for a certain period of time so as to guarantee a smoother transition.

“With the deadline for the entry into force of the Directive only a few days away, ship-owners need to know which information they need to transmit and how. The main reason behind the questionnaire sent to EU member States is to determine what is expected from the shipping community, in other words which measures we need to take to be compliant with the Directive. Finally we also ask Member States to allow for a continuation of existing reporting formalities so as to avoid any major disruptions in trade” said ECSA Secretary-General Patrick Verhoeven.

In the longer term however, a more homogenous reporting formalities landscape is required to provide ship operators with real facilitation instead of a patchwork of non-compatible Single Windows.

“We share the aims of the Directive, namely digitalizing, streamlining and rationalizing extremely burdensome, repetitive and arcane ship reporting formalities

when calling at EU ports. This is why we renew our plea to the European Commission and Member States to do everything in their power to remain in line with the spirit of the Directive. The underlying logic behind this piece of legislation was to provide the industry with trade facilitation and increase the ease of doing business” he remarked.

Source: [Hellenic Shipping News](#), 28 May 2015

Ownership Structure No Guarantee for Success in Shipping Business

- P. Manoj

The state-owned Shipping Corp. of India Ltd posted a net profit of Rs. 200.93 crore in the year ended March its first in four years.

There has been much debate in the shipping industry in recent times whether the government, be it in India or elsewhere, should be in the business of running ships.

It would be preposterous to link the poor performance of a shipping firm to its ownership. The biggest factor that influences the performance of a shipping firm is the market in which it operates, no matter if it is owned by a private firm or the government, or whether it is based out of India, where the tax regime is not exactly friendly to the shipping industry, or tax havens overseas.

It can be argued that there is no other industry where the market plays such a pivotal role in the performance of a firm as in shipping. As the saying goes, shipping is a terrific industry on the way up, but a terrible one on the way down.

While Shipping Corp. is the prime example of the travails faced by a government-owned shipping firm during the longest slump in the industry, Mercator Lines (Singapore) Ltd presents the example of the other side of the ownership structure that of a privately-owned firm.

Mercator Lines (Singapore), the Singapore-listed dry bulk shipping firm owned by India's Mercator Ltd, widened its net loss to \$125.4 million in the year ended 31 March from \$22.8 million in the previous year, its third consecutive full-year loss. It reported earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) of \$7.7 million in the year to March.

In 2005, Mercator spun off its dry bulk shipping business and listed it on the Singapore stock exchange. Many global fleet owners have set up shop in Singapore because of its investor-friendly policies. Mercator weathered the aftermath of the global meltdown in 2008 well, but a prolonged weakness in dry bulk freight rates appears to be taking its toll.

The dry bulk shipping industry remains volatile with the benchmark Baltic Dry Index (BDI) dropping from 1,362 points on 31 March 2014 to an unprecedented low of 509 on 18 February 2015. The London-based index tracks the cost of shipping dry bulk commodities such as coal, steel, iron ore and food grain. Falling commodity prices, an oversupply of new bulk carriers and weakening global demand slowed global trade and depressed freight rates. The average market rate for panamax vessels (called so because they can pass through the Panama canal fully loaded) in fiscal 2015 was \$6,304 per day against \$10,308 in the previous year, indicating an almost 39% fall. The market rate for panamax vessels closed at \$4,780 per day on 31 March.

"The dry bulk shipping markets are indeed very challenging, but given our track record and competitive strengths, the firm is confident it would ride over the current downturn in the industry," said Shalabh Mittal, managing director and CEO of Mercator Singapore.

Shipping Corp.'s turnaround came through a lot of belt-tightening, apart from aggressively pursuing money owed by debtors including other state-run firms. The company's trade receivables, which stood at Rs. 1,059.99 crore in March 2014, was brought down to Rs. 787.82 crore in March 2015.

The firm not only put a freeze on buying new ships from 2012, it cancelled previous ship orders whenever shipyards jumped delivery dates. Unlike Mercator, Shipping Corp. is present in almost all shipping sectors by bulk ships, oil tankers and vessels used to support off-shore oil exploration activities—with a fleet of 69 vessels.

Shipping Corp. also managed the immediate aftermath of the global financial crisis well but was hit hard by higher depreciation charges on new ships that were ordered during the boom years of 2005-2008 and which entered its fleet from 2009 onwards. A return to profitability may just help the state-owned carrier to hold on to its so-called nirvana tag that gives greater financial autonomy to India's government owned companies.

Running ships used in supporting offshore oil exploration activities was a steady revenue earner for Shipping Corp. during the downturn, but the company has been handicapped by the absence of a larger fleet in this segment.

Shipping Corp. owns nine offshore supply vessels. In comparison, the Great Eastern Shipping Co. Ltd, India's biggest privately-owned ocean carrier, runs a fleet of 55 ships, including 26 offshore supply vessels that comprise four oil drilling ships. Mercator is not present in the offshore supply vessel segment at all.

Buying and selling of ships is a normal part of the shipping business globally. There are times when selling a ship makes much more commercial sense rather than operating it at rates that don't even allow recovery of operating costs. This is one area where Shipping Corp. needs a better focus.

The turnaround will also help clear the cobweb in the government's mind about the relevance of continuing to run Shipping Corp. as a state-owned company, strategic and oil security reasons notwithstanding.

Source: [Live Mint](#), 29 May 2015



Arctic Pollution Rules 'Not Enough'

- Helen Briggs

The Polar Code, passed at a meeting in London of the International Maritime Organization, ban ships from releasing oil, sewage, chemicals and waste into the sea.

The measures are set to come into force in 2017. But environmentalists say the regulations do not go far enough. WWF said a strong, legally binding Polar Code was particularly urgent in the Arctic, where new sea routes are expected to open up in coming decades. IMO member states should "honor the original vision of the Polar Code, which saw environmental protection as a priority," said Rod Downie, WWF-UK's Polar Program Manager.

"That means additional measures to reduce the risk of invasive marine species, more stringent requirements for oil spill response, banning the use and restricting carriage of heavy fuel oil by ships in the Arctic, reducing air emissions and black carbon, and addressing underwater noise," he said.

Ice retreat

The IMO is the United Nations agency with responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships. A spokesperson for the IMO said many of the things not specifically addressed in the Polar Code are addressed, or will be addressed, by other measures.

The Arctic is the fastest warming region of the planet.

If the polar ice retreats it could speed up the rise in global temperatures and change the world's weather patterns. It could also open up a faster route for commercial

cargo ships between Europe and Asia, and boost trade in ports in Arctic countries such as Russia, Norway and Canada.

Source : [BBC](#), 16 May 2015

Indian Ocean Hides Global Warming

A team of scientists from the US and the German geomar Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel was able to now show that the heat content of the Indian Ocean has risen substantially since late 1990s although the global temperature showed only little changes. This increase is very likely caused by a higher heat transfer from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean, as the authors report in the international scientific journal Nature Geoscience.

Although the emissions of greenhouse gases continued to rise steadily, global warming seems to pause unexpectedly at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 1st century. In a recent study that used observational data as well as model results researchers were able to show that the Indian Ocean has stored much more heat in the past two decades than in previous times. A large fraction of the heat has been transferred from the Tropical Pacific via the Indo-Pacific Archipelago into this part of the world ocean.

Initially the hypothesis was that above average heat was stored in the Pacific, according to Dr. Wonsun Park, co-author from GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel. The researchers had to reject this hypothesis because observed hydrographic data showed a decline of the heat content in the Pacific. Thus, lead author Dr. Sang-Ki Lee from University of Miami and NOAA AOML conducted a series of comprehensive model studies. With these results Sang-Ki Lee and Wonsun Park were able to come up with a conclusive mechanism to

explain the pause of global warming.

In the Indo-Pacific region the past two decades were characterized by enhanced “La Niña-like” conditions with cold waters in the Eastern Pacific and warm waters in the Western Pacific. Driven by the enhanced trade wind system, warm water was moved westward by the Indonesian throughflow into the Indian Ocean. Finally, about 70% of the global heat uptake is stored in the upper 700 metres of the Indian Ocean.

The results of this study underpin the importance of the Indonesian throughflow as an important part of the global (thermohaline) circulation, according to Mrs Sang-Ki Lee. The accumulated heat could be redistributed globally by other ocean currents such as the Agulhas current and finally may reach the Atlantic. At present stage, it is unknown which climate variations might be affected due to this redistribution of heat. This phenomenon will be observed and the researchers are to conduct further model studies.

Source : [Hydro-International](#), 20 May 2015

New Explanation for The Warming Pause

- Steven Hayward

We’ve reported before on various explanations for the current “pause” in global warming that we’re told us not happening, now going on for nearly 18 years. According a study published last week in Nature Geoscience, the culprit may be the Indian Ocean:

The Indian Ocean may be the dark horse in the quest to explain the puzzling pause in global warming, researchers report on 18 May in Nature Geoscience. The study finds that the Indian Ocean may hold more than 70% of all heat absorbed by the

upper ocean in the past decade.

Scientists have long suspected that oceans have played a crucial role in the so-called warming hiatus by storing heat trapped in the atmosphere by rising levels of greenhouse gases. But pinpointing exactly which ocean acts as a global air conditioner has proved challenging.

Prior research suggested that a significant amount of heat moves from the atmosphere into the Pacific Ocean, where La Niña-like conditions have dominated since the turn of the century. But when Sang-Ki Lee, an oceanographer at the University of Miami in Florida, and his colleagues went looking for this heat beneath the surface of the Pacific Ocean, they couldn't find it. Temperature data compiled by the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's World Ocean Atlas (WOA) suggest that the upper 700 metres of the Pacific have actually cooled in recent years, Lee says.

What's a climatista to do when the data won't cooperate? Tweak your computer model until it spits out a more congenial finding: So Lee's team used a computer model to explore the fate of the ocean's 'missing heat'. The results suggest that easterly trade winds have strengthened during the hiatus, causing warm water to pile up in the western Pacific. The water seeps between the islands of Indonesia and into the Indian Ocean, bringing heat with it.

While this study does offer some data to corroborate its computer model, it doesn't jibe with other data sets and competing computer models: Kevin Trenberth, also a climate scientist at NCAR, says the results disagree with studies that use alternatives to the WOA data. There are large observational gaps in the WOA dataset, and Trenberth says that NOAA has accounted for these without considering the long-term warming of the ocean, leading to cooler values where measurements are missing.

For instance, Trenberth and his colleagues found pronounced Pacific warming during the hiatus and only modest warming in the Indian Ocean using heat content

estimates derived in part from satellite measurements. Other studies have also implicated warming in the North Atlantic and Southern Ocean.

For now, it seems that the hunt for the missing heat may continue. But scientists say it is important to get to the bottom of the story to fully explain the current hiatus and prepare for others that might occur in the future. “We need to understand the energy imbalance of the Earth,” Lee says.

Source : [Power Line](#), 24 May 2015

Barrier Reef Spill: Authority Cannot Afford to Clean-Up Grounded Ship's Toxic Mess

- Jake Sturmer

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority says it cannot afford to clean up all the toxic mess left over from the grounding of a bulk coal carrier on the reef in 2010.

Chinese ship Shen Neng One ran aground on Douglas Shoal off the central Queensland coast on April 3, 2010, after veering more than 10 kilometers outside the shipping lane. The grounding damaged one of the ship's fuel tanks, resulting in a four-kilometer-long slick of heavy fuel oil and leaving toxic antifouling paint embedded in the sea floor.

It also carved a three-kilometer-long, 400,000-square-meter scar in and around Douglas Shoal, about 120 kilometers east of Rockhampton, which was the largest known damage to the Great Barrier Reef caused by a ship. The Federal Government is pursuing legal action against the owner, Shenzhen Energy Company.

Source: [ABC News](#), 25 May 2015