



# MAKING WAVES

**Fortnightly E-News Brief of National Maritime Foundation**

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## MARITIME SECURITY



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### **ICG Interacts with Fishers to Safeguard Maritime Boundaries**

-V. Raghavendra

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and the Customs Department, which constitute a crucial link in coastal security, are closely engaging themselves with the fishermen community to be informed of any anti-national activity in the context of heightened surveillance along the country's maritime boundaries.

After the Customs Department which sought the help of fisher folks in preventing smuggling through places identified by it as 'sensitive landing points', it is now the turn of ICG to organise the Special Community Interaction Programmes (SCIP). According to official sources, the ICG has given top priority to educating and cautioning fishing boat owners against crossing International Maritime Boundary Line and other security aspects. Besides, it (ICG) has decided to groom suitable persons as security wardens who would gather intelligence from coastal habitations. Next on the ICG's priority list is equipping its officers and staff with card-readers that will check the authenticity of biometric cards being provided to members of the fishing community.

In Andhra Pradesh, biometric information of 80 per cent of fishermen and women was completed by central public sector undertakings ECIL and BEL with cooperation of the Fisheries Department. As part of the SCIP, awareness will also be spread about the preservation of marine environment preservation and protection. The ICG has taken steps for organising the SCIP twice a year having considered the fisher men and women as a vital link in the flow of information. It has suggested that the fishing boats have to venture into the sea in pairs and carry distress alarm transmitters to alert the ICG about any emergency at sea.

The ICG has at present four stations at Visakhapatnam, Kakinada, Nizampatnam and Krishnapatnam under the control of eastern regional headquarters in Chennai. The Customs Department has Shore Guard Customs Preventive Units (SGCPU) at Kakinada, Machilipatnam, Narsapur, Ongole, Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam.

The ICG has given top priority to educating and cautioning fishing boat owners against crossing International Maritime Boundary Line and other.

Source: [The Hindu](#), 15 December 2015

### **Royal Navy Helps Seize Cocaine Worth £350M In English Channel**

A joint operation involving UK and French law enforcement has resulted in the seizure of around 2.4 tonnes of cocaine from a freighter a few miles off the UK's south coast. Acting on intelligence from the National Crime Agency and the French Customs investigation service DNRED, the Moldovan flagged MV Carib Palm was intercepted in the Eastern Channel on Thursday 10 December. It had sailed from Colombia and was on its way to Gdansk in Poland.

The interception, led by French Customs and supported by Border Force and the Royal Navy patrol vessel HMS Severn, was coordinated by the UK's Portsmouth-based National Maritime Information Centre (NMIC) and the Maritime Analysis and Operational Centre - Narcotics in Lisbon. 2.4 Tonnes Of Colombian Cocaine Bound For Europe Seized By Royal Navy HMS Severn on exercise "Our varied remit routinely sees the ship working with various organisations and agencies all focused on enforcing UK maritime law." Lieutenant Commander Steven Banfield HMS Severn, once tasked by the NMIC, sped to the Dover Straits where she then spotted the vessel and tracked its movements before it was intercepted by the French authorities.

The ship was taken to the port of Boulogne-sur-Mer where it was searched by French Customs. The cocaine seizure is believed to be one of the biggest ever made in France. But it wasn't the biggest the Royal Navy has seized...In the UK the drugs would have had a wholesale value of around £90 million, but if cut and sold at street level purity the haul could have had a potential value in excess of £350 million. HMS Richmond recently seized £3m in cannabis in the Mediterranean. The twelve crew members, who were Georgian, Turkish and Ukrainian, were arrested and now face prosecution in France.

Tom Dowdall, Head of the NCA's Border Policing Command, said: "The sheer scale of this seizure makes it likely that a large amount of the seized drugs would have ended up being sold on the streets of the UK." "This operation is an excellent example of how the NCA works with international partners to target and disrupt the organised crime groups involved in trafficking cocaine to Europe and the UK."

The Commanding Officer of HMS Severn, Lieutenant Commander Steven Banfield said: "The Royal Navy's River Class Offshore Patrol Vessels are highly versatile ships operating throughout the year in and around UK waters. "This activation highlights the utility of OPV's and that of the ships' company. "Our varied remit routinely sees the ship working with various organisations and agencies all focused on enforcing UK maritime law. "In this case, whilst acting as a support unit, the combined operation has been a success and a substantial amount of narcotics has been seized and prevented from being distributed throughout the streets of Europe."

Source: [Forces tv](#), 15 December 2015

### **S. Korea, U.S. Hold Talks to Expand Maritime Cooperation**

South Korea and the United States held talks in Washington to discuss ways to expand maritime cooperation between the two close trading partners, the government said Tuesday. The Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries said the working level talks touched on the need to expand information on maritime policies, allowing U.S. car carriers greater access to South Korean cargo, and guidelines issued by U.S. port state control (PSC) authorities.

The PSC is tasked with checking foreign ships to make certain they comply with internationally accepted safety and environmental rules. It also said that the U.S. Maritime Administration provided information on measures being taken to expand the Panama Canal and its impact on traffic, while Seoul raised the issue of delays and other inconveniences being felt by South Korean ships entering U.S. ports." The United States is South Korea's second-largest trading partner and a leader in setting rules and standards on maritime policies," said Park Gyeong-cheol, head of the ministry's maritime logistics bureau. "Close ties and better flow of information are

beneficial to South Korean vessels, and for trade." The meeting is the second of its kind, following the first gathering held in September 2014.

Source: [Yonhap News Agency](#), 15 December 2015

### **Maritime Security Concerns Growing**

-Steven Jones

Piracy and hijacking are hitting all-time highs in Southeast Asia as oil demand and a thriving black market continue to drive maritime attacks in the region. In an incredible display of capability and tenacity, pirates hit six vessels in the Malacca and Singapore Straits in less than 30 hours over one weekend. The pirates eventually managed to successfully board five, which demonstrates just how vulnerable shipping remains.

According to the industry watchdog, the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against ships in Asia (ReCAAP) Information Sharing Centre (ISC), all the incidents took place in the eastbound lane of the traffic separation scheme (TSS).

Source: [Security Middle East](#), 18 December 2015

### **Coast is Clear: Pirates in Retreat after Navy Increases Patrolling**

The Western Naval Command (WNC), which is based in the city, says it has achieved a major success in combating pirates. The Navy announced that intensive patrolling in Gulf of Aden and off the Somalia coast has led to pirates shifting bases.

The two locations are important sea lanes for trade. The WNC controls the anti-piracy operations. Currently, INS Trishul, extensively patrols the seas at these locations and is the pivot of the missions. On December 3, aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya along with several other warships took part in patrolling Gulf of Aden and the Somalia coast. Last year, there were four attacks by pirates in Gulf of Aden and three off Somalia seas. The Navy has so far escorted 3,000 merchant vessels to safety and foiled piracy attacks on 46 ships at other locations.

A report by the ICC International Maritime Bureau (IMB) showed a decrease in piracy cases reported across the world. While 245 cases took place last year, the figure for 2015 is 223. The IMB, which is based in the United Kingdom, said a crackdown by the Navy has reduced serious attacks in southeast Asia. However, IMB urges vessels to maintain vigilance while travelling in Somalia waters as the threat of piracy has not been eliminated completely. A day prior to the Navy Day celebrations, the WNC Vice Admiral SPS Cheema said the economy is directly linked to the growth in trade and most of India's voluminous trade is carried out using the sea route for import and export. "The Middle East remains a major source of the country's crude oil imports. Our Navy ensures that the trade via the sea is safe at all times thereby guaranteeing unhindered growth of our economy. Our efforts have resulted in zero piracy this year in Gulf of Aden and Somalia," said Cheema.

Cheema said good coordination and understanding with all agencies and stakeholders—Coast Guard, Marine Police, Customs, the fishing boats—is encouraged to prevent threats emanating from the sea

The pirates have been kept on their toes since 2011 when the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard officials caught 120 of them from Somalia in three different attacks. The pirates are facing trial on charges of murder, hijacking and waging war against the Indian government.

They are lodged at the Taloja jail. Given India's strategic location, the Navy requires continuous monitoring of eight major shipping lanes, with a large number of foreign warships being present round the clock. More than one lakh ships pass through the waters along India's coast annually. "If this trade were to be disrupted for any reason, then it would not only be India's but the world economy's loss," said Cheema.

Source: [Times of India](#), 21 December 2015

### **Five Reasons the World Needs to Pay Heed to India's New Maritime Security Strategy**

-Rahul Roy Chaudhury

Credit must be given to India's Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Robin Dhowan for articulating a proactive strategy for the navy's expanding roles and responsibilities in the Indian Ocean over the next ten years. This is evident from the recent official

publication of India's comprehensively revised maritime security strategy *Ensuring Secure Seas*, although it is currently still under restricted distribution. This change is in contrast to the 2007 maritime strategy which it replaces, which was relatively conservative.

### *Growing civil-military convergence*

This strategy is marked by a critical development, the growing civil-military consensus on the importance of the sea for India's prosperity and security. This was not the case when my second book, *India's Maritime Security*, was published 15 years ago. At that time, there were few among the top political leadership in the then BJP-led NDA government who fully understood the growing political-security and geo-economic importance of the Indian Ocean for India. Indeed, during my stint at the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) in New Delhi at that time, there were senior ministers who refused to accept a blurring of lines between civilian and military issues at sea. This was most forcibly apparent when ten Pakistan-based Lashker-e-Taiba terrorists used the sea route to travel from Karachi to carry out the Mumbai terror attacks of 26-28 November 2008. In its aftermath the then Congress-led UPA government carried out an overhaul of coastal security and, in February 2009, formally gave the navy an expanded responsibility for the overall maritime security of the country, including coastal and offshore security. This was an unprecedented responsibility for an armed service whose role in relation to government had largely been limited to assistance to civilian authority.

Economic factors also lie behind the civil-military convergence over maritime security. With higher economic growth fuelled by greater energy consumption, India is dependent on the Indian Ocean for both trade and energy. Over 90% of India's foreign trade by volume and 70% in value terms is seaborne, accounting for 42% of India's GDP. Its oil imports have increased to nearly 80% of total demand. Most major international shipping lanes in the Indian Ocean are located close to India's island territories.

The navy's primary driver towards increasing its capabilities is China's assertive policy towards India and the expansion of Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean, which it perceives as possible encirclement. Pakistan's naval aviation and expanding submarine force also present a threat to the Indian navy. The possibility that nuclear-

armed missiles could be deployed aboard four Pakistani surface ships would require these ships to be tracked as a priority, thereby requiring considerable Indian naval effort and resources.

### *Modi's Indian Ocean policy*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set the Indian Ocean as a foreign-policy priority, with maritime dominance apparently the goal as India seeks to counter China's expansionist policies and confront maritime terrorism.

Modi's first visit outside Delhi after his swearing-in ceremony was to go aboard the Indian aircraft carrier Vikramaditya off Goa in June 2014 and induct this powerful warship into the navy. In March 2015, Modi unveiled a four-part framework for the Indian Ocean, focusing on: defending India's interests and maritime territory (in particular countering terrorism); deepening economic and security cooperation with maritime neighbours and island states; promoting collective action for peace and security; and seeking a more integrated and cooperative future for sustainable development. For the first time, Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar formally released the navy's official strategy at the Naval Commanders Conference in New Delhi on 26 October 2015. Earlier this week, Modi held the first combined commanders conference aboard the Vikramaditya, 40 nautical miles off the Kochi coast in the Arabian Sea.

### *Five key differences in strategy*

Although the revised strategy is not the result of this initiative, it serves to complement it. With the term 'Indo-Pacific' being mentioned only once in the revised strategy, it is clear the core focus for the navy wisely remains the Indian Ocean. Indeed, it is significant in five ways.

First, the revised strategy expands India's areas of 'maritime interest' in meaningful ways. These include 'areas of national interest based on considerations of Indian diaspora, overseas investments and political reasons'. Since the Indian Maritime Doctrine of 2004, revised in 2009, India's areas of maritime interest have been defined as both 'primary' and 'secondary'. While the 'primary' area has broadly encompassed the northern Indian Ocean region, the 2015 strategy expands this both southwards and westwards to include the south-west Indian Ocean and the Red Sea

(formerly a 'secondary' area of interest). The 'secondary' area of interest is also expanded to include the western coast of Africa and the Mediterranean Sea.

Second, it pointedly advances the former Manmohan Singh government's policy of becoming a 'net security provider' to island states in the Indian Ocean. The strategy seeks to 'shape a favourable and positive maritime environment' for enhancing net security in India's areas of maritime interest.

Third, for the first time, the official document formally states that the future fleet will be based on the development of three carrier battle groups, each centred on an aircraft carrier, as well as the development of an operational capability of two carrier task forces, each comprising one or more carrier battle groups.

Fourth, as the sea trials of India's first Arihant-class nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine take place, the new strategy emphasises the assurance of punitive retaliation in accordance with India's 'no first use' and 'non-use against non-nuclear weapon states' policy. Importantly, it notes that 'SSBN deployments also counter an adversary's strategy of seeking advantage from nuclear posturing or escalation'.

Fifth, the strategy emphasises the importance of maintaining freedom of navigation and strengthening the international legal regime at sea, particularly UNCLOS.

The Indian navy's operational footprint in the Indian Ocean has also increased in the last eight years since the publication of its 2007 maritime strategy. The navy has played an active role in counter-piracy operations in the Arabian Sea since 2011 when pirates reached waters near India's Lakshadweep chain of islands. This is in addition to its much-publicised anti-piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden and the Somali basin since 2008. It has also carried out Non-combatant Evacuation operations in Libya (2011), Kuwait (2014) and Yemen (2015), as well as Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations such as cyclone relief (in 2007, 2008, 2013 and 2014). Navy-to-Navy staff talks now take place with over 20 countries and institutional bilateral/trilateral exercises with 11 countries. In August 2013, a dedicated communications satellite for the navy, GSAT-7, was launched for surveillance purposes.

This diplomatic activity is matched by changes to the Indian's navy's capabilities and posture. Its fleet of 14 submarines, 27 principal surface combatants and nearly 100

patrol and coastal combatants, alongside two squadrons of maritime patrol aircraft, is to be expanded with the reported aim of becoming a 200-ship navy in the next decade. As a result, India has one of the most ambitious warship building programmes in the world, with only the US and Russia significantly more active. Of the 40 warships currently under construction in India, there are ten principal combatants including aircraft carriers, nuclear-armed ballistic-missile and conventional submarines, and destroyers and frigates.

### *Challenges still to overcome*

However, the navy remains some way from possessing the capabilities that would be required for the degree of maritime dominance in the Indian Ocean to which India is now aspiring. The navy's fleet is ageing, with an estimated 60% of vessels reported to have reached various stages of obsolescence. Warships under construction are suffering considerable cost and schedule over-runs. The Scorpene-class submarine is the first to be acquired in 16 years, in an attempt to stabilise the fleet's fast-dwindling numbers. The navy is 16% below strength in officer ranks and 11% below strength in non-commissioned ranks. In August 2013, the navy suffered its worst peacetime accident when an ex-Russian Kilo-class conventional submarine sank in Mumbai's naval dockyard, killing 18 personnel. This highlighted shortfalls in training and safety, and led to the resignation of the navy chief in February 2014. Diplomatic relations with the Maldives, currently under considerable strain due to political differences, urgently need to be improved.

Source: [The Wire](#), 22 Decemeber 2015

### **Japan says Armed Chinese Vessel Spotted off Disputed Islands**

Japan said it spotted for the first time on Tuesday an armed Chinese coast guard ship near islands at the center of a long-running territorial dispute between the two Asian giants.

Chinese ships regularly sail around the uninhabited islands, known as the Senkaku in Japanese and the Diaoyu in Chinese, but a Japanese coast guard spokesman said an armed Chinese coast guard vessel had never been sighted before in the area.

“We don’t know China’s intentions, but our response will remain unchanged, and we’ll act calmly and decisively for Japan’s safety,” said Yosuke Watanuki, a spokesman for the regional unit covering Japan’s remote southern islands.

The incident is likely to fuel concern in Japan that China may be slowly escalating its activities in the East China Sea. Last month, a Chinese navy ship took its time traversing the waters, attracting Japan’s attention. Japan also went public earlier this year with complaints about Chinese oil and gas exploration in the East China Sea, posting photos online of Chinese drilling rigs and other equipment.

The Japanese coast guard released a photo of the armed ship sailing in the East China Sea on Tuesday. It was one of four Chinese coast guard vessels spotted in the waters, but was the only one that was armed. They did not come close enough to the islands to violate what Japan considers its territorial waters.

Source: [The Hindu](#), 22 December 2015

### **Indian Coast Guard Ship rescued eight crews from a sinking vessel south of Mumbai**

-V. Narayan

Eight crews of a vessel were rescued 50 kms south of Mumbai by the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Ship Samrat late on Friday. The ICG vessel reached the spot (20 kms of Murud) at around 9pm on receiving an alert from a dhow MSV Sarojini after her engine room flooded and the vessel started sinking. The vessel was on passage from Porbandar to Beypore carrying 430 tonnes of Soda Ash with eight crew (All from Gujarat).

At 10 pm the ICGS Samrat completed the rescue operation and got the eight crews to the Mumbai shore. "The Ship experienced crack on the hull and started flooding in the engine room. On receiving the message, ICGS Samrat proceeded with maximum speed for rescue operation and intimated Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre, Mumbai as well as Coast Guard Regional Headquarters (West). ICGS Samrat also coordinated with MT Harsh Prem, which was about 14 NM (25 kms), whereas

Samrat was 30 NM (55 kms) from the distressed vessel," the Indian Coast Guard spokesperson confirmed TOI.

The official said the Indian Coast Guard Ship Samrat was on patrol when she received a VHF distress alert at about 6.45pm. MT Harsh Prem arrived in vicinity of the distressed vessel first, however the shallow waters, restricted their movement. The vessel was preparing for the rescue mission and was monitoring the situation.

Source: [Time of India](#), 26 December 2015

### **Indian Coast Guard Releases IRS-ICG Rules 2015**

Director General Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Vice Admiral HCS Bisht released the Indian Register of Shipping Coast Guard (IRS-CG) Rules 2015 yesterday at Coast Guard Headquarters, New Delhi. These rules will facilitate design, construction and trials of ICG ships meeting International Standards. The IRS has been involved with construction of a majority of Coast Guard ships. The services of IRS are also being utilized by the Coast Guard during refit of ships.

The IRS-CG Rules were initially formulated and released in 2008. The rules have been revised based on experience gained in ship building by the Indian Coast Guard and IRS. With emphasis on 'Make in India' by the government, these rules will help in supporting indigenous ship building in India, with prominence on excellence in design and quality construction of ICG ships.

The function was attended by senior officials of Indian Coast Guard and IRS including the Additional Director, Indian Coast Guard, General Rajendra Singh, Inspector General SK Goyal, Deputy Director General (Material & Maintenance), Shri Arun Sharma, Chairman & Managing Director, IRS and Vice Admiral (Retd) BS Randhawa, Principal Advisor, IRS were also present.

Source: [Niti Central](#), 29 December 2015



### **India, Japan Strengthen Ties with Industrial, Military Agreements**

-Gabriele Parussini

Japan and India strengthened their military and economic ties Saturday, signing a high-speed-rail agreement and pledging joint exercises for their navies, as countries across Asia seek to counterbalance China's growing assertiveness in the region.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Shinzo Abe, his Japanese counterpart, signed the \$15 billion rail pact, agreed to transfer technology to increase arms production in India and said Japan will be a stable guest at Indian-U. S. naval exercises. They also took a step toward an agreement on the use of civil nuclear energy.

Mr. Modi offered Mr. Abe—a fellow nationalist—support for his concerns over China's land reclamation around small reefs in the South China Sea, which are also claimed by other countries in the region. Japan is also concerned that if China's territorial ambitions go unchecked it could face more pressure in the East China Sea. The alliance between Tokyo and New Delhi underscores how the two countries' relationship can be mutually beneficial. India is hungry for investment to improve its infrastructure and increase industrial production and Japanese companies are looking to the South Asian nation's fast-expanding economy to boost business. The two nations' relations are also free of historical tensions, which have in the past pre-empted cooperation between Japan and the countries it colonized or occupied before and during World War II, including South Korea and the Philippines.

In contrast, India and Japan were in the recent past brought closer by their aversion to the British. Subhas Chandra Bose, a prominent Indian freedom fighter, sought Japanese help to liberate India from British rule during World War II. Afterward an Indian jurist sitting on the international military tribunal that heard Japanese war crimes trials after the conflict was the only one to judge that defendants from the east Asian country weren't guilty. India's strong support for Japan and the stress in the two countries' joint statement Saturday on the "critical importance" of the sea lanes in the South China Sea for regional security and trade, underscore the vital

importance of the waters for Indian business: over half of all its exports travel across it.

Mr. Modi and Mr. Abe announced Japan will become a stable guest in the India-U. S. Malabar naval exercises off the coast of the South Asian country, as the countries seek to develop stronger capabilities to deal with maritime challenges in the Indo-Pacific region. The joint statement published Saturday, which stressed security cooperation between Japan, India, the U.S. and Australia, reflects a containment strategy already agreed to by the U.S. and Japan, which envisions a string of nations around the Pacific checking China's ambitions.

Worries about Beijing's growing ability to deploy forces far from Chinese shores have helped drive a convergence of strategic thinking in Washington, New Delhi and Tokyo and prompted pledges of defence and economic cooperation. The U.S. has challenged Chinese territorial claims in the South China Sea by sending its planes and ships to patrol near the artificial islands Beijing has built there. At the end of October a U.S. warship sailed within 12 nautical miles of one of China's artificial islands.

Other agreements announced Saturday aimed to shore up the two countries' relationship. The railway deal—which comes with financing valued at \$12 billion on terms Mr. Modi described as "very easy"—represents a boon for Japanese business, which suffered embarrassing losses to China in bids for bullet-train contracts in Indonesia and Thailand. The project will use technology developed to build Japan's Shinkansen network—on which trains run at more than 300 kilometers an hour—and will be a welcome update to India's vast but inefficient and overburdened railway network.

An energy accord with Japan would allow India to boost its nuclear-power production, easing international pressure for it to cut carbon emissions. The two countries stopped short of signing a deal, citing technicalities.

India needs nuclear technology to boost the energy supply to its fast-expanding economy, while keeping its carbon emissions—already the world's fourth-largest—under control. Japan, the only country to have suffered nuclear attacks, had sought assurances from India, which isn't a signatory to the global Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. "I know the significance of this decision for Japan, and I assure

you that India deeply respects that decision and will honor and respect its commitments," Mr. Modi said. In Japan, the left-leaning Asahi newspaper, which opposes Mr. Abe's nationalist party, ran an editorial denouncing the deal. "Japan and the U.S. should be defending the non-proliferation regime. So long as they destroy its foundations with their own hands, the nuclear threat will only increase," it said.

The mayor of Hiroshima, Kazumi Matsui, called the Japan-India agreement "extremely regrettable" and criticized Mr. Abe for not paying heed to a statement last week in which Mr. Matsui and the mayor of Nagasaki said a deal with India "could lead to a hollowing-out of the nuclear non-proliferation regime."

Gordon Fairclough in New Delhi and Peter Landers in Tokyo contributed to this article.

Source: [The Wall Street Journal](#), 13 December 2015

### **Chinese Navy Unveils Highly Advanced Missile Destroyer**

The Type 052D world-class guided missile destroyer, the Hefei, has joined the fleet of the Chinese Navy to boost its combat capability. The delivery ceremony of the ship to the South Sea Fleet of the Chinese Navy took place on Saturday at a naval base in Sanya, in the island province of Hainan, the PLA Navy said in a statement.

#### *What is Chinese Navy Fleet Doing at Pearl Harbor?*

"My men have familiarized themselves with the advanced equipment and weapons. In the near future, we will focus on training, aiming to make the ship fully operational within a short period," Commander Zhao Yanquan, captain of the Hefei, told China Daily in an interview on Monday. It is reported that the Hefei is the most advanced destroyer China has ever built. Equipped with a number of cutting-edge technologies, the vessel features a low radar signature, a high information level and state-of-the-art phased array radar, the China Daily reported.

The first Type 052D destroyer, the Kunming, joined the Navy in March last year, while the second, the Changsha, in August. The Type 052D destroyer has a full displacement of nearly 7,000 metric tons and a wide range of weapons, including a single-barrel, 130 mm naval gun, a close-in weapon system, anti-aircraft missiles and

surface-to-surface cruise missiles. China is also developing the Type 055 destroyer, which has a full displacement of around 10,000 tons and can carry more than 100 missiles, according to Yin Zhuo, director of the PLA Navy's Expert Consultation Committee.

Source: [Sputnik](#), 15 December 2015

## **Modi Reviews Impressive Naval Exercise after Tri-services Meet**

- PTI

An impressive array of warships, including nuclear capable submarines, and about 8000 men and officers of Indian Navy presented an exquisite display of operational capabilities in an exercise reviewed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi off the Kochi coast in Kerala today. Having chaired the Combined Commanders Conference, an annual tri-services event held for the first time outside New Delhi on board INS Vikramaditya, the Prime Minister reviewed the exercise about 50 km off the coast where the naval guns blazed and fighter jets roared in a dazzling display of India's military might. The annual event, held against an operational backdrop of the high seas for the first time, was attended by Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Chiefs of Army, Navy and Airforce, secretaries of the government of India besides top tri-services commanders.

"Indian Navy displayed its Naval as well as air power capabilities during the approximately 40 to 45 minute (exercise). Ships of the Navy were there including submarines, as also aircraft, and about 8000 plus men of Indian Navy participated as part of the exercise," a Defence spokesman said. He said it was the Prime Minister's Office which wanted the tri-services meet to be held in an operational setting. "So it was moved out of the South Block and it is a reality today. It is now going to be from operational backdrops to operational backdrops," he said.

After Prime Minister Modi had chaired the meet on board INS Vikramaditya, which lasted for about an-hour-and-half, he reviewed the exercise that began with firing by naval guns followed by a rocket-fire demonstration. "We had 30 plus ships outside, which included INS Vikramaditya, Virat, Kochi, Delhi, Mysore....," the Defence spokesman said. "Then we had nuclear submarine INS Chakra... ..We had 60 aircraft

of the Naval aviation ranging from one end of the spectrum to other end. We also showcased the actual operations of MiG 29 K from INS Vikramaditya. A number of sorties were taken off, one from the larger runway--that is 195 meters and one from the 100 meter runway," he said.

Source: [Times of India](#), 15 December 2015

### **Chinese Unmanned Submersibles on Indian Ocean Expedition**

A specialist Chinese vessel carrying unmanned submersibles Qianlong No. 1 and No. 2 set off on a 170-day scientific expedition in the southwest Indian Ocean on Wednesday. Xiangyanghong 10, on its maiden voyage on deep-sea areas, set sail on Wednesday from the port city of Sanya in south China's Hainan Province with an expedition team of 232 members. During the voyage of more than 24,000 km, the submersibles will explore metal sulfides and conduct environmental and biodiversity surveys in the Indian Ocean in accordance with a contract signed by China and the International Seabed Authority.

China is being more efficient and saving resources through this new approach of carrying the two submersibles on one ship, said Li Jiabiao, a research fellow with the State Oceanic Administration.

Source: [Crienglish.com](#), 16 December 2015

### **‘Malabar’ Exercise Should Not Upset Peace: China**

-Kallol Bhattacharjee

China's Ambassador to India dismisses concerns that China might obstruct free navigation in the South China Sea.

India's trilateral naval exercise with Japan and the United States, named "Malabar", should not destabilise China's maritime neighbourhood, said China's Ambassador to India Le Yucheng to The Hindu on Saturday.

“India should ensure that initiatives like the trilateral maritime arrangement or defence ties with other countries are conducive for peaceful and stable Asia-Pacific region,” Mr Le said on the sidelines of a media event in New Delhi on Saturday. Earlier, Mr. Le pointed out in his speech delivered at the event that the maritime boundary of China in the South China Sea was legitimate and flexing military muscles by other countries was not going to help maintain peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

Dismissing concerns that China might obstruct free navigation in the South China Sea, taking advantage of its territorial and maritime claims, Mr. Le said China’s claims were historically accurate and, therefore, could not be disputed. In a spirited defence of Beijing’s rights over the South China Sea, the Ambassador said, “For a long time after World War II, no one challenged China’s sovereignty over these islands. But certain powers have begun questioning China’s territorial and maritime rights in the region after the discovery of energy fields in the South China Sea.”

“This is our common sea. China has always supported freedom of navigation and we are for creating a code of conduct to ensure smooth navigation in that region,” he said, asking external powers not to meddle in the issue.

Presenting the Indian argument, in response to Mr. Le, Ram Madhav, general secretary of the BJP, said China had to take “utmost care” in ensuring freedom of navigation and peace and stability in the South China Sea region. “We have a few unresolved issues in the Asia-Pacific region. Freedom of navigation is necessary for Japan and South Korea that import most of their energy over the oceans of the Indo-Pacific region,” Mr. Madhav said, while indicating that he supported some fresh policy changes in dealing with China’s claims in the Southeast Asian region. “India will use culture, historic ties with the Indian diaspora to convert Asia-Pacific region into an Indo-Pacific region,” he said.

Source: [The Hindu](#), 19 December 2015

## **Indian Navy's P-8I Recce Aircraft Key Factor in India's New Maritime Strategy**

The vessels involved were the tankers, “Advantage Summer”, “Navig8 Stealth” and “Elbtank Denmark”; the containerhips “Maersk Lebu” and “Atout”; and the bulk carrier “Peace Bright”. Intelligence company Dryad Maritime has echoed the concerns in the region, in their latest report they state piracy incidents in Southeast Asia are up 38 per cent in the first nine months of the year. The report claims that pirate and criminal gangs are operating with “apparent impunity”.

The company said there had been a “stark rise” in attacks in Southeast Asia with 194 incidents in the first nine months of 2015 compared to 140 a year earlier. The apparent willingness and ability of maritime gangs operating in the region has led the industry to call upon the three nations surrounding the Singapore Strait to provide a permanent security presence to deter criminals and to protect maritime trade.

### *Oil crime syndicate*

The Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) believes an oil smuggling syndicate is behind the hijacking of vessels carrying bunkers and oil cargoes in the area. ReCAAP said in its latest update that vessels were hijacked when it was dark and taken to siphon off the fuel cargo.

Following the six attacks there have been calls for shipping companies to strengthen their approach to maritime security in South East Asia. Gerry Northwood OBE, COO of maritime security company MAST, said: “Shipping companies need to look at Best Management Practices (BMP) 4 applied in the Indian Ocean and now adapt it to counter the threat posed by local criminals in SE Asia.” BMP4 has been effective in providing a framework for passive security measures, such as watch-keeping and enhanced vigilance, and the hardening of vessels transiting through the Indian Ocean”. The six attacks have obviously focused attention on the area, but they were not the only ones. According to maritime security company PGI Risk Portal, 11 per cent of the world’s maritime hijacking took place in Malaysian and Indonesian waters. Though the majority of these robberies were small scale, it illustrates the growing trend in Asia.

### *More incidents*

Despite a leap in attacks, and even with local Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) broadcasting reports, there has been very little involvement from regional security forces. The response of deploying a patrol boat to the area after the event can be seen as too little, too late. This approach to security is proving frustrating to many observers. Much of the debate on piracy comes down to reporting and data. This is unfortunately something of a thorny subject – recently academics became hot under the collar as they argued over which data sets are better... International Maritime Bureau (IMB) or ReCAAP.

A leading academic Sam Bateman questioned recent IMB data which indicates a rise in piracy and incidents at sea in Southeast Asia. He strongly favoured the data from ReCAAP. While another leading body, the Lowy Institute has been backing the IMB. While the academics can debate the data, it seems that with both reporting agencies, the IMB and ReCAAP figures showing year-on-year increases of incidents in SE Asia, there is a strong suggestion that action is needed.

### *New security presence*

Perhaps prompted by criticism, or by the growing concern that action was urgently needed Malaysia and Indonesia acted swiftly to form a joint rapid deployment team. The Indonesian Navy is based on Batam Island and intends to deploy two armed helicopters in an effort to secure the Malacca Strait. The Malaysian side is based in Johor and will support the piracy efforts with one helicopter.

Source: [Economic Times](#), 19 December 2015

## **All Eyes on PM Narendra Modi after Nuclear Submarine Plan with Russia Flounders**

- Manu Pubby

Indian plans to lease a cutting edge nuclear attack submarine that would assist in technical knowhow for an indigenous project have run aground with Russia seen to be backing out on the deal. Senior officials in Delhi and Moscow have told ET that

plans to lease a Yasen class attack submarine - two of which are in service with the Russian Navy - are being reconsidered after fairly advanced talks on the project.

India was keen on acquitting on lease the latest Russian submarine under a plan that would result in a new boat being constructed from scratch, giving planners and designers in the Navy here a rare peek into the building process of one of the most complex military systems in the world. By being involved in the process from the beginning, India would have gained expertise for an indigenous project to produce six nuclear powered attack submarines (SSNs) for the Navy under a Rs 100000 crore project that was cleared by the Modi government in February. Talks were at an advanced stage with National Security Advisor Ajit Doval too said to be in the picture.

However, ET has learnt that Russia is reconsidering and has now offered India one of its older Akula class submarines on lease, similar to the Chakra II that is currently in service with the Indian Navy on lease. "The plan now is to lease an attack submarine that is in service with the Russian Navy. This submarine would be deeply modernized to meet Indian requirements," an official familiar with the developments told ET. This submarine would be modernized at a shipyard in Severodvinsk, the Russian city where the INS Vikramaditya aircraft carrier was refitted as well. While the Indian Navy has been taken aback with the development, efforts are still on to rescue the Yasen project, with planners said to be against the lease of yet another, older generation nuclear submarine from Russia. "We are hoping for a resolution and there is a possibility that this (the refusal) is a negotiating tactic. We have not closed hopes on the project yet," an Indian official told ET. The circumstances behind the blockage are unclear, though sources point that the funding required to build a new Yasen class submarine from scratch could be an issue as it mean a considerable contribution by the Indian side. Another issue could be Moscow's observations that Indian planners have been in talks with French and US submarine builders for possible collaboration on the SSN project for the Navy. Clarity is expected on the matter during PM Narendra Modi's Moscow visit this week where the lease plan, as well as other military projects are to be discussed in detail. Besides the nuclear submarine, Russia is also keen on selling India two of its advanced Kilo class submarines that are under construction in St Petersburg.

Source: [Economic Times](#), 21 December 2015

## **IFR Not about Showcasing Strength, but about Strengthening Ties**

-Sulogna Mehta

After a gap of 15 years, India is hosting the prestigious International Fleet Review (IFR) in the Port City from February 4 to 8, 2016. While the Indian Navy is preparing for the mega event on a war-footing basis, the busiest person shouldering major responsibilities is the vice-admiral and flag officer commanding-in-chief of Eastern Naval Command (ENC) Satish Soni. Vice Admiral Soni has been heading the ENC since June 2014. He has been with the Indian Navy since 1976. Recipient of major awards such as Param Vishisht Seva Medal, Ati Vishist Seva Medal and Nao Sena Medal, vice-admiral Soni speaks to TOI in an exclusive interview about the preparations and main attractions of the IFR, how Vizag stands to gain from hosting this international event and about the Indian Navy.

*How significant is it for the Indian Navy to host an international event like the IFR in India after a gap of 15 years? Is India going to showcase her maritime strength?*

Every nation with a navy once in a while hosts the IFR during which ships and delegations from all over the world congregate. For India, this is the second time since 2001, when 29 nations had participated off Mumbai coast at the IFR. But this time, we got to host this event at an important juncture when India is getting recognition as an economic power and mooting maritime security in the comity of nations. Currently, 45 indigenous ships are under construction. It's not just about showcasing one's strength but more about strengthening ties with different nations by playing a collaborative and benign role in ensuring maritime security as part of this recognition. During the IFR, we will be honoured to have the President of India, the Prime Minister, the chief minister and the governor of AP and the defence minister in the city. Besides the navy chiefs from India, around 25 chiefs from foreign countries and more than 500 senior bureaucrats, MPs and politicians will attend.

*How will hosting IFR in port city boost Vizag's image?*

One of the added purposes of having the IFR in Vizag is to project the town and state of Andhra Pradesh. The Bay of Bengal has assumed new importance with various ports in Myanmar, Bangladesh and in the Eastern Coast coming up to facilitate trade and oil exploration. Maritime boundaries are being delineated. It is an opportune time to project Vizag too. Hosting the event will boost the tourism industry and commercial activity. It will boost not only India or Indian Navy's image but most importantly Vizag's image globally. The IFR logo has a mention of the venue - Vizag. Vizag will thus become a brand. We have already met chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu and taken his approval and are appealing to all the public to be hosts for this event along with the Navy. We must set up a very good example.

*How many countries are participating?*

Forty-five countries are participating including the USA, the UK, Russia, Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan and Germany.

*How many ships, aircraft and people are participating in the IFR?*

Around 90 ships are participating in the event and around 60 aircraft will fly past. Of the 90 ships, 70 would be anchored, 10 would be mobile and the remaining 10 are part of the presidential column. Each ship will have around 200 people. So, approximately, 18,000 people would be directly participating in the IFR, including 6,000-7,000 foreign delegates.

Is it true that one of the biggest amphibious vessels INS Jalashwa is not taking part? Will the nuclear submarine INS Arihant be part of the show? INS Jalashwa is in refit and it won't be ready before the IFR. However, we will have some of our Rajput class frigates for IFR. As for the submarine, Arihant is undergoing extensive sea trials. A decision will be taken later about her participation.

*How are the arrangements and preparation for IFR going on?*

The preparation is going fine. We have set up 35 committees and eight committees have the core executing people. A flag officer has been attached for team review. Officials in Delhi are looking after the guest list and sanctions for spending the money. Renovation and painting of buildings, practices for concerts, parades and city beautification and plantation works are in full swing.

*What can Vizagites expect at the IFR?*

For the public, we have the grand operational demo, a colourful international city parade, a maritime exhibition and the IFR village and they can view the presidential review of the ships on television. The IFR village will showcase the rich cultural heritage of India.

*How is IFR going to be a platform for 'Make in India'?*

The overall theme of the maritime exhibition is 'Make in India'. It will showcase innovation, indigenisation and potential of the youth of India. Participation by industry under the categories float, move and fight has been planned. There would be four 'floats' (tableau) on subjects including Vizag — the smart city, Make in India and Space. Indigenous ships too would focus on 'Make in India' and indigenous weapon systems too might be included. What was the response of Pakistan when they were invited for IFR? Through a circular from the ministry of external affairs, I got to know that Pakistan had just said that they won't be able to participate. Are you coordinating with the state police to provide security to the delegates?

Source: [Times of India](#), 20 December 2015

### **India's First Indigenously Designed & Built Frigate INS Godavari to be Decommissioned**

India's first indigenously designed and built warship Indian Naval Ship Godavari is scheduled to be decommissioned on December 23, 2015. Godavari's keel was laid on 03 November 1978 by Adm J Cursetji, CNS, and it was launched on 15 May 1980. It was commissioned in December 1983. Being the first indigenously designed and constructed ship, it was showcased around the world as a symbol of India's growing military might and self-reliance.

The ship is the first of three Godavari Class frigates, others being Ganga and Gomati. At the time of decommissioning, it would have served the country for little over 32 years. "INS Godavari has been replete with achievements and glory. Over the past three decades, Godavari has successfully been deployed in numerous operations, including 'Operation Jupiter' - 1988 (Sri Lanka), 'Operation Shield' and 'Operation

'Bolster' - 1994 (de-induction of Indian Army from Somalia) and 'Patrol of Gulf of Aden' (PoG) - 2009, 2011 (anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden)," said a Ministry of Defence press release.

The ship has participated in numerous operations and deployments, across the expanse of the Indian Ocean and beyond. "INS Godavari came about from the realization among naval planners that self-reliance in design and shipbuilding was essential to build a strong navy. The Leander Frigate Project of the 1960-70s, resulted in not only the construction of six 'Giri Class' frigates (based on the Leander design and in collaboration with the UK) at Mazagon Docks Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), but also in boosting indigenous naval design and shipbuilding capability. As the project was nearing completion, the Directorate of Naval Design at IHQ MoD (Navy), evolved a design for a new generation frigate. MDL was entrusted with the construction of this indigenous frigate, which would essentially retain the steam propulsion of the 'Giri' class frigates," the release said.

"Whilst the Giris were gunships, the Godavari class frigates were armed with potent surface to surface and surface to air guided missiles. She was also among of the first frigates in the world capable of carrying two Sea King helicopters (well known as the 'Flying Frigate', because of its integral firepower and sensor suite). The frigate's weapon and sensor suite comprised of a mix of Russian and Western systems and their efficient integration was a milestone in itself," the release added.

Source: [Economic Times](#), 21 December 2015

### **Seychelles Committed to Indian Naval Base**

Seychelles is expecting India's evaluation team to visit the spot soon, President James Michel told The Hindu. Special Arrangement Seychelles is expecting India's evaluation team to visit the spot soon, President James Michel told The Hindu. Seychelles President acknowledges that India has been steadily increasing its maritime and security cooperation with Seychelles. A plot of land for India to build its first naval base in the Indian Ocean region has been allocated by the Seychelles government in the Assumption Island.

Lifting the veil of secrecy around the planned project, President James Michel of the Seychelles told The Hindu: “This is a joint project between India and Seychelles involving our two Defence Forces in enhancing our mutual security along our western seaboard. Seychelles is absolutely committed to the project.”

Seychelles is expecting India’s evaluation team to visit the spot soon, President Michel said. The project has acquired significance following China acquiring its first African naval base in Djibouti in November. Once ready, the naval base to be built by the defence forces of India, and Seychelles will help India exercise greater control over the Indian Ocean’s western region all the way to the piracy-prone eastern African coastline. The base will be one of the major staging posts for a large maritime security network that India is setting up with the help of the various Indian Ocean region partner countries.

Apart from the naval base, India is set to acquire a fully operational coastal radar system (CRS) based in Seychelles from March 2016, Mr. Michel said. The CRS will provide India with the ability to gather intelligence and assist in surveillance operations of the vital energy lanes near Seychelles. “The Maritime Radar Project is a major development for Seychelles’ and India’s mutual desire for security in the field of maritime security,” said President Michel, who was sworn in for a third term on December 20.

### *Fighting piracy*

Security operation in the Indian Ocean region will also be helped by the leadership role that Seychelles has secured for itself in the Contact Group for Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS), which will hold its first meeting in Mumbai on January 31, 2016. “Both India and Seychelles have a vested interest in securitising the Western Indian Ocean. We have forged a partnership that has gone a fair distance in eradicating the scourge of Somalia-based piracy as well as other maritime security issues.”

Mr. Michel acknowledged that India has been steadily increasing its maritime and security cooperation with Seychelles and that a new patrol vessel from India will be handed over to Seychelles in mid-January 2016. “These initiatives have greatly helped our security environment,” said the President who visited New Delhi in

August. He had been persistent in building a security network to prevent piracy, arms trafficking and financial fraud in the banks of the Indian Ocean region islands.

India, with its strong intelligence network, will also be helpful in maritime law enforcement by Seychelles, he added. While declaring support for India's maritime security plans, President Michel pointed out that small nations are equally important in the contemporary world order and need to be taken seriously for the sake of preserving the security and order.

Source: [The Hindu](#), 23 December 2015

### **‘Shaheen Al Jazeera’ Exercises of Pakistan-Bahrain Naval Forces Concluded**

The bilateral naval exercise ‘Shaheen Al Jazeera’ of Pakistan and Royal Bahrain aiming at polishing skills to tackle maritime terrorism and all the other menace related to sea have been concluded. “Shaheen Al Jazeera”, a series of special forces exercise, have regularly been conducted since 1997 between Special Services Group-Navy (SSG-N) and the Bahrain Navy special forces at Karachi and Manama continually during alternate years. The special forces of the two nations have demonstrated various operations adhered to maritime counter terrorism during the exercise as well as interdiction operations of Maritime Special Warfare (MSW) teams effectively.

As stated Nadeem Bokhari, spokesperson for the Pakistan Navy Commodore, the exercise culminated with the show-off of collaborated special forces operations at sea which comprised of boarding procedures through surface and air platforms. Commanders of the special operation forces of Royal Bahrain and the Pakistan Navy witnessed the summing up part of the exercise. The commanders lauded the ace conduct and knack in related field manifested by the participating teams. Both the commanders boasted that the exercise ‘Shaheen Al Jazeera’ has provided productive augmentation and interoperability between the two navies and their special operation forces.

Source: [The News Teller](#), 26 December 2015

### **More Chinese Ships Join Naval Force in South China Sea: Report**

China has deployed three new ships to naval forces stationed in the South China Sea, suggesting an enhanced capability for maritime support, a media report said on Tuesday. The three ships - the transport and supply ship Luguhu, electronic reconnaissance ship Haiwangxing and pelagic survey ship Qianxuesen - began servicing the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy stationed in the Nansha Islands area in the South China Sea, according to Navy Today, the PLA Navy's official magazine. The magazine said the supply ship can also provide medical aid at sea, while the reconnaissance ship is capable of reconnaissance missions under any weather condition, the Global Times reported. The survey ship will mainly carry out measurement missions at sea and on the islands, and can do so for an extended period of time, the magazine added.

Source: [Business Standard](#), 29 December 2015

### **Indian Navy Gears Up for Maiden Test Firing of Barak 8 Missile from INS Kolkata**

The Indian Navy will tonight carry out the maiden test of the long-range Barak-8 surface-to-air missile from INS Kolkata. Navy spokesperson Captain DK Sharma said the test would take place after 12 AM.

The Barak-8 missile is being developed in joint collaboration by India and Israel. While two tests have been successfully conducted onboard Israeli ships, this is the first time that the test would be held onboard an Indian one. The Barak-8 has been designed to defend against a variety of short-to-long-range airborne threats, including fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, drones and projectiles.

It incorporates a state-of-the-art phased array multi-mission radar, two-way data link, and a flexible command and control system that enables it to simultaneously engage multiple targets day and night and in all-weather conditions. The missile system is being jointly developed by IAI, DRDO, Israel's Administration for the

Development of Weapons and Technological Infrastructure, Elta Systems, Rafael and other companies.

Source: [The Economic Times](#), 29 December 2015

### **Philippines to Receive 10 Patrol Ships from Japan**

The Philippine Coast Guard will receive ten new multirole response vessels from Japan starting next year until 2018 via a financial assistance of US \$156 million from Japan.

The first three vessels would start arriving every other month in the second half of next year, five more by 2017 and the remaining two in 2018, Coast Guard officer-in-charge Rear Admiral William Melad was quoted as saying by Philstar news daily Tuesday. “Our intention is to deploy these multi-role response vessels (MRRV) to the different districts,” he said. “We would assess which district needs an immediate vessel and we will give priority to that district... We would see if there is a need to add ships to the West Philip- pine Sea.” Some of these ships will be assigned to the West Philippine Sea to augment those being used for search and rescue operations. Melad said the deployment of more ships to the West Philippine Sea was not in response to the territorial dispute with China.

The Coast Guard is also taking into consideration that the vessels to be deployed in the West Philip- pine Sea should be bigger than 40 meters to withstand the big waves and strong winds during typhoons, Melad said. “These 40-meter vessels would be used for security, law enforcement and for search and rescue,” he said. “These are multi-role vessels so these could perform several functions such as prevent illegal fishing and anti-piracy patrol.” The acquisition of the 10 vessels from Japan is covered by the Maritime Safety Capability Improvement Project.

Source: [Defence World. Net](#), 29 December 2015



### **Maritime Union Concerned with Reduction in Ship Inspections**

The Maritime Union of New Zealand is concerned about the reduction in monitoring of international shipping by Maritime New Zealand, the Government agency responsible for ensuring a “safe, secure and clean” maritime environment.

Less than half of “Priority 1” vessels (49%) coming into New Zealand were inspected in the 2014/2015 year, according to Maritime New Zealand's annual report. That is well beneath the target of 70% inspections for the year, and the 82% of inspections achieved in the 2013/2014 year. Maritime Union of New Zealand national secretary Joe Fleetwood says the monitoring and investigation of compliance by international shipping was a key role of the agency. While the rollout of the new Maritime Operator Safety System (MOSS) was an understandable focus for resources, as outlined in the report, this could not get in the way of the basic responsibilities of the agency. If there was a resourcing problem, then that needed to be dealt with by appropriate resourcing by the Government, not simply set aside, he says.

According to Maritime New Zealand, a greater emphasis is being placed on “engaging” with international partners to lift the quality of shipping and reduce the level of risk before ships enter New Zealand waters. Mr Fleetwood says the Maritime Union did not agree with this emphasis.

While the Union supported working with international partners and strengthening international maritime agreements, the ability of New Zealand to engage with “Flag of Convenience” shipping registries such as Liberia or Panama was limited or possibly non-existent in a practical sense.

Stringent inspections as part of Port State Control should remain the bedrock of maritime compliance, he says. The deregulated nature of the global shipping industry meant a stick was required as well as carrots to ensure standards were maintained. Mr Fleetwood says the lessons of light handed regulation in issues of safety and compliance in recent New Zealand industrial history could be summed up by the Pike River Mine disaster and the Rena grounding.

In addition, the problems in the fishing industry over many years went back to New Zealand allowing industry to regulate itself with disastrous results as the lowest common denominator set the standard of “global worst practice.” Mr Fleetwood says there are frequent and regular issues with international shipping in New Zealand waters, and the Union together with the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), often had to step in to resolve issues on behalf of foreign crews. The Maritime Union would be seeking assurances that inspections of vessels by Maritime New Zealand would be a top priority.

Source: [Scoop Business](#), 15 December 2015

### **Indo-Bangla Maritime Deal to Boost Shipbuilding Industry**

The Indo-Bangladesh maritime traffic (cargo and passenger vessels) is poised to lead the growth in the shipping segment in the East, which in turn will increase the demand for shipbuilding, said a leading Indian businessman. According to professional services company KPMG, the bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh was valued at \$ 6.9 billion during 2014-15, which is expected to almost double to \$ 10 billion by 2018 in a conducive trade environment. "The share of the east coast ports out of the total cargo handling capacity for Indian ports is expected to increase from the current 35% to 40% over the next 4-5 years", Prahlad Tanwar, Director - Transport and logistics at KPMG in India told this newspaper. The east coast ports in India handled about 370 million tonnes (mt) of cargo in 2014-15 out of the total 1,051 mt handled by all the ports in the country. "If we need to handle more cargo in inland waters as well as increase the Indo-Bangladesh maritime traffic, we need to have the latest technology," Jain said. In June this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inked an agreement with Bangladesh on coastal shipping for two-way trade through ports and renewed the 1972 Protocol on Inland Waterways Transit and Trade, which uses the two countries' waterways for commerce. A memorandum of understanding was also signed for using Chittagong and Mongla ports in Bangladesh for movement of goods to and from India.

Source: [Financial Times](#), 16 December 2015

## **Shipping Industry Rejects CO2 Cap in Echo of UN Climate Talks**

-Miguel Ortega

The UN's maritime arm shelves a proposal from the Marshall Islands to cap surging GHG emissions from shipping. Proposals to cap CO2 emissions from shipping were rejected by the International Maritime Organisation this week, drawing criticism from campaigners who say the United Nations organisation is failing to combat climate change. The Marshall Islands, which is the third biggest registry for vessels and is also at major risk from climate change, called for a CO2 cap that would attempt slow emissions from a sector that is a major contributor to global warming. But at a meeting of the IMO at its headquarters in London this week, delegates shelved the motion, with developed countries pointing out that a complex verification system would need to be in place before they can agree. Campaigners were withering in their criticism of what they see as further procrastination by IMO members, pointing out that the sector is steaming in the wrong direction ahead of the United Nations climate summit in Paris at the end of the year.

Source: [Recorder Standard](#), 16 December 2015

## **Government Nod to Increasing Cooperation with Spain in Ports Sector**

-PTI

The government today approved a proposal for inking a pact with Spain to strengthen ties in the ports sector. "The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its approval for signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Spain on cooperation in port matters," an official statement said.

Recognising the significant benefits that can be derived from ties in the port matters between the two countries, it has been decided to sign the agreement with a view to strengthen cooperation and render sustained mutual assistance and advice on port matters and other related maritime issues, it said.

"Signing of the MoU will help both countries in encouraging and facilitating the development of ports and provide a cooperation platform for enhancing and

stimulating steady growth of maritime traffic, exchange and training of staff and students from various maritime establishments, exchange of information necessary for accelerating and facilitating the flow of commercial goods at sea and at ports," it said.

The pact will also help in establishing of joint ventures in the fields of port led development, port efficiency, modernisation of existing ports, dredging, particularly maintenance dredging in riverine ports, environment and green port initiative, port engineering, maritime training, information technology including development of simulators, facilities and related maritime activities, etc. " The MoU would be signed on a mutually convenient date and venue," it said.

Source: [The Economic Times](#), 16 December 2015

### **Ship Industry Tries to Navigate Rough Seas**

-Ji Xiang

ASIA'S largest maritime exhibition fair, held in Shanghai earlier this month, highlighted the slump in the seafaring industry and tried to pinpoint trends that may lead to a rebound. The usual focus on the latest technologies in oceanic equipment took a back seat. One bright spot for participants was China's "Belt and Road" initiative, which seeks development of a 21st century Maritime Silk Road. "By tapping the opportunities of the Maritime Silk Road, Shanghai can connect the development of its Free Trade Zone with other free trade ports along the route," said Fang Huaijin, vice president at Shanghai International Port Co, which is planning to open a container-shipping route to include nations along the route.

The All China Maritime Conference and Exhibition, also called Marintec China, has been held biennially since 1981. The fair was sponsored by the Shanghai government and the national ministries of transport and industry and information.

Maritime officials who attended a forum during the fair said the global shipping industry is undergoing difficult times due to overcapacity, slack demand and lower prices. Jiang Zhuoqing, vice mayor of Shanghai, also noted the emergence of new ship owners and the declining oil price as factors in the slump.

Experts in the sector warned that the industry would have to enlarge the size of cargo vessels and ally with other companies in an effort to reduce cost and win market share. They estimate added capacity in the next five years would equal existing capacity. A weak shipping industry invariably hurts shipbuilding. Wu Qiang, head of China State Shipbuilding Corp, said the financial crisis of 2008 has had a lasting effect on the global industry.

In the first 10 months of 2015, new orders received by Chinese shipbuilders dropped 62 per cent from a year earlier, according to the China Association of the National Shipbuilding Industry. The decline reflects continuing hardship for companies also plagued by lower prices and financing difficulties, the association said. China is not alone in its suffering. In the first nine months of 2015, new shipbuilding orders globally slumped 24 per cent from a year earlier, according to the China Shipbuilding Industry Research Center. The production of liquefied natural gas vessels led the decline in pace with dropping crude oil prices. Only 31 of the vessels were contracted to be built in the first 10 months of 2015, a 29 per cent decrease, the center said.

Huai Jinpeng, vice minister at the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, said the negative global market amplifies problems in China's inefficient maritime sector, where innovation and quality are generally ranked low. Sun Bo, manager of China Shipbuilding Industry Corp, told the forum that his industry needs to improve its innovation in areas such as cleaner energy vessels. More environmentally friendly shipping could be pivotal in the future of shipping companies, agreed Ding Nong, vice president at China Shipping Co. Other maritime countries are taking steps to address the industry slump.

Singapore shipping firms, for example, are expanding connections with Europe. Dubai is shifting its focus to Europe and Africa. Ports in the Mediterranean are increasing the anchoring volume for large vessels.

### *Offshore alliances*

China's Maritime Silk Road policy is aimed at keeping this nation competitive. It envisions stronger links among ports stretching from China to South Asia, to Africa and to Europe. Huang Youfang, dean of the Shanghai Maritime University, told the forum that Chinese companies need to invest more in building offshore alliances.

Other nations expressed support for the maritime road. Paolo Costa, president of the Venice Port Authority, told the forum that the policy will greatly improve cargo volumes for Mediterranean ports. The conference also focused on the “Made in China 2025” policy, which includes oceanic equipment and high-technology vessels among its 10 priorities. Vice Minister Huai said the next five to 10 years will be a key period for China’s maritime industry in terms of structural reform and innovation promotion. Shanghai, according to Vice Mayor Jiang, is committed to improving its maritime infrastructure and related financial services. China Shipbuilding Industry’s Bo said the market is undergoing rapid restructuring and Chinese companies must speed up research in high-tech ships and oceanic equipment to enlarge the scale of smart digital shipbuilding. One promising sector is luxury cruise liners. Industry capacity there is relatively low and shipbuilders are expected to be swamped with orders by the end of 2021. Cruise travel is becoming a popular among Chinese tourists, and the nation is aiming to develop its own giant luxury liners.

China State Shipbuilding, the country’s top state-owned ship maker, has signed a deal with Carnival Cruise Lines, the world’s largest cruise company, and Italian shipbuilding heavyweight Fincantieri to develop China’s first big cruise ships. Fincantieri currently accounts for 46.5 per cent of the global luxury cruise shipbuilding industry. Maurizio Cergol, a top official at Fincantieri, said the China market is a booming one for cruises. The partners said in October that an estimated than 10 million Chinese tourists would be taking cruises in the next 20 years, requiring about 100 ships. Carnival said some 500,000 Chinese tourists have cruised on its ships this year, a 43 per cent increase from a year earlier. The partnership between State Shipbuilding Corp, Carnival and Fincantieri will see work carried out by Shanghai Waigaoqiao Shipbuilding Co, a wholly owned subsidiary of State Shipbuilding. Chen Jun, vice manager at Waigaoqiao Shipbuilding, said first Chinese-built luxury cruise ship is expected to be finished by 2020. China Investment Corp has agreed to help finance construction of the ships.

Source: [Shanghai Daily](#), December 17, 2015

## **Indian Government to Scrap Over 100 Archaic Laws of Shipping Sector: Nitin Gadkari**

-PTI

As a new year beckons, the government plans to weed out several archaic rules, some of which are over 100 years old, relating to shipping sector and also harness inland waterways, lighthouses and islands as new growth drivers of the Indian economy.

Terming the revamp of shipping sector as a high-priority agenda for 2016, Union Minister for Shipping Nitin Gadkari said the new ship building policy will also give a major boost to the government's 'Make In India' initiative, while the country's vast coastline will see major development projects.

Ship building has a huge employment multiplier and the new comprehensive policy, which has been approved by the Cabinet, will generate manufacturing-led employment, he added. "We have scrapped about 20 archaic laws which has no relevance today and will weed out more such obsolete provisions," Gadkari told PTI.

The industry has for long been complaining some 'biased' taxation and operational issues that have been hurting the interest of Indian shipping companies, including for import of goods and purchase of ships. "We are re-looking at most of our Acts some of which are more than 100 years old and we expect that in the next six-months we should be able to revamp Acts like Major Ports Act, Merchant Shipping Act, doing away with Tariff Authority for Major Ports (TAMP) and so on," Shipping Secretary Rajive Kumar said. The step will be a welcome breath for Indian shipowners who view the age-old laws as a hindrance to sector's growth. To promote 'ease of doing business', the Shipping Ministry recently decided to weed out 13 archaic rules under the Merchant Shipping Act.

The government this month approved a proposal for financial assistance of 20% for ships built in the country, while providing for a budgetary support of Rs 4,000 crore. Gadkari said the government is also planning to set up two new ports — one in Maharashtra and the second in Tamil Nadu — in addition to already approved Sagar port in West Bengal and work on these ports will begin by March.

Also on anvil is a central legislation to declare 106 additional inland waterways as national waterways. Currently, there are only five national waterways in the country.

“Converting rivers across the country into waterways will usher in unexpected economic growth for the country,” the Minister said.

Inland water transport is considered very cost-effective as far as fuel efficiency is concerned, Gadkari said, while adding these waterways can help India join the “league of European nations whose economy thrive due to their waterways.” Quoting a World Bank study, Gadkari said one litre of fuel can move 105 tonne per kilometre by inland water transport whereas the same amount of fuel can move only 85 tonne per kilometre by rail and 24 tonne per kilometre by road. The government is focusing on waterways as transport through rivers is much cheaper and costs barely 30-40 paise per kilometre in comparison to Rs 1 through railways and Rs 1.5 through roads, he added. Also on the Minister’s radar is the development of India’s lighthouses and islands.

Enthused by a higher tourist footfall at historic lighthouses of Mahabalipuram and Cannanore, an ambitious plan has been drawn to unlock their rich history and heritage. India has 189 lighthouses dotting its 7,517-kilometre vast coastline, including the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal and Lakshadweep Islands in the Arabian Sea. The identified lighthouses are in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal and Andaman and Nicobar. Steeped in rich maritime heritage, each lighthouse has its own story to tell and has tremendous tourism potential to be tapped.

Land adjacent to these lighthouses may have hotels, resorts, viewing galleries, maritime museums and heritage museums, adventure sports facilities, thematic restaurants, souvenir shops, laser shows, spa and rejuvenation centres, amphitheatres and allied tourism facilities to attract tourists, the Minister said. Globally, lighthouses tend to attract tourists with their scenic and serene surroundings and rich maritime heritage.

Another important focus area in the new year will be the Sagarmala Project, which is aimed at port-led development in coastal areas, Gadkari said, while adding the project will give a major boost to the Indian economy. The government has lined up about Rs 70,000 crore for its 12 major ports only, he said. “Ports play a pivotal role in boosting the country’s economic growth. Logistic cost has to be reduced. Our logistic

cost is thrice than China's. We are not able to compete with global markets," he added. Gadkari further said that ports will play huge role in double-digit Gross Domestic Product (GDP) target and port, shipping and highways sector will very soon add 2% to the country's GDP.

Gadkari said tenders for development of 16 such projects have already been floated and the government is looking at promoting export of exotic variety of fishes, roping in local youth in projects through skill development. He said 13 states and union territories were involved in Sagarmala initiative, which will be implemented across India's 7,500 kilometres coastline. At the same time the government has already started a strict monitoring of all the projects to ensure their timely completion. Shipping Secretary Kumar said there the cargo growth rate has doubled from 4% in 2013-14 to 8% in 2014-15.

"Major Ports added additional capacity of 71 Million Tons Per Annum (MTPA) in 2014-15, which is the highest in any particular year so far. This was achieved by close monitoring of the on-going projects," he said. "The Cargo handling capacity of major ports in March 2015 was 871.52 million tonnes. This is a result of strengthening of infrastructure in major ports for handling coastal cargo. A new scheme to provide financial assistance to major ports to set up exclusive coastal berths is under implementation. Wherever feasible, green channel facilities have been put in place for coastal cargo," he said. To focus on improving the last mile connectivity to ports, a new Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) is being formed with equity contribution from all major ports and Rail Vikas Nigam, he added.

Similarly, an SPV to take up strategic port development overseas has been formed under the name Indian Ports Global Limited, Kumar said adding this SPV will take up development of Chabahar Port in Iran to begin with.

India has 12 major ports — Kandla, Mumbai, JNPT, Marmugao, New Mangalore, Cochin, Chennai, Ennore, V O Chidambaranar, Visakhapatnam, Paradip and Kolkata (including Haldia) — that handle approximately 61% of the country's total cargo traffic.

Source: [Hellenic Shipping News](#), 23 December 2015

## **Maldives to Tighten Marine Safety Measures Amid Rising Accidents**

-Mohamed Yameen and Mohamed Visham

Government on Thursday announced strict marine safety measures and warned to permanently withhold licenses of captains and crew as it looks to curb the rising marine accidents in the archipelago. Speaking during the inauguration of the first national maritime safety awareness seminar on Thursday, economic minister Mohamed Saeed vowed to extensively investigate all marine accidents in future and warned that the crew would face harsh penalties if negligence was found. "We will do it for the safety of passengers, which would be done within the laws and regulations," the minister said.

According to the minister, dozens of marine vessels have been asked to improve on safety and communications equipment. He said the government was looking to amend the regulation to contain such vessels inside a specific area of travel. The regulation has also been re-drafted to ban passenger vessels from carrying flammable substances such as gas and petrol, he added. Authorities would also compel vessels to complete sea worthiness annually while licenses would also be issued after completing specific training, he said. The minister stressed on the importance of marine safety due to the economy's dependence on sea travel.

Government on Friday announced plans to host a national sit-down on marine safety, less than a day after two tourists were killed in a boat accident. The sit-down comes a week after two tourists were killed after a speedboat and a diving boat collided Thursday afternoon.

A police spokesperson said the accident, which happened close to sunset near the island of Maafushi in Kaafu Atoll, claimed the lives of a 16-year-old Malaysian woman and a 42-year-old Chinese woman. Both of them were on the diving boat, he added. Police quoted doctors as saying that both the victims had been pronounced dead when they were brought to the Maafushi health centre. According to the police, the diving boat had six people on board while four people were travelling on the speedboat, which ferries people between Maafushi and the capital Male. Several marine incidents across the Maldives had been reported in the past few months which had sparked public criticism over a lack of regulations on marine vessels.

Source: [Haveeru Online](#), 24 Decemebr 2015

### **Iran, India Ink Economic Co-op Agreement, Chabahar Port in Focus**

With the signing of the comprehensive economic cooperation document by Iranian and Indian high-ranking officials, India will invest \$85 million in Iran's southeastern port of Chabahar, the Tasnim news agency reported on Tuesday.

The agreement was inked by Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ali Tayyebnia and Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj on Monday in New Delhi at the Iran-India trade cooperation commission. In addition to the port project, the signed document will include cooperation in various fields, including energy, trade, infrastructure, banking, insurance, hygiene, tourism, as well as trade. Also, according to the agreement, India will offer Iran a credit line, invest in the country's petrochemical sector and downstream oil industry, and participation in the construction of Chabahar-Zahedan railroad.

On November 19, Indian Commerce Secretary Rita Teaotia said Iran and India are serious for the expansion of bilateral trade ties. She made the remarks after signing an agreement with Trade Promotion Organization of Iran's Director Valiollah Afkhami-Rad on the promotion of Iran-India trade cooperation.

The Indian official stated that Iran and India are two large and important countries in the region and given their potentialities, they could bolster bilateral economic and trade ties in a short period of time.

She evaluated the prospect of trade relation between Iran and India as very good and expressed hope that this agreement would strengthen bilateral ties between the two countries. India was the fourth major importer of Iranian non-oil goods in the previous Iranian calendar year, which ended on March 20, with importing \$2.441 billion of non-oil goods from Iran and exporting \$3.729 billion of non-oil products to Iran.

Source: [Tehran Times](#), 30 December 2015

## **New IMO Amendments to become effective from January 2016**

New amendments of the International Maritime Organization will become effective since January 2016, including International Maritime Dangerous Goods, SOLAS, Audits under the IMO Member State Audit Scheme, Carriage of stability instruments and LSA Code lifejacket testing. The IMO is trying to ensure that member states live up to their obligations into international maritime transport and will follow the best practices for safety and environment operations. The new regulation and changes will become effective since January 1, 2016 and will apply to all ships and shipping companies, providing service at international maritime transport.

### *International Maritime Dangerous Goods*

New amendments to the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code become effective since January 1, 2016. The new changes in the code are contained in IMO Resolution MSC.372 (93) adopted in May 2014 on 93rd session of IMO Maritime Safety. The IMO Resolution MSC.372 (93) introduced into the code the Rules 1 and 2 Appendix I to the International CSC Convention concerning the labelling upon safety, maintenance and inspection conditions approval. The Resolution also introduced the new sections 7.1.5 Stowage codes, 7.1.6 Handling codes and 7.2.8 Segregation codes. The Dangerous Goods List has been reorganized respectively and column 16 has been divided to cover separately Stowage and handling (16a) and Segregation (16b). Twenty new United Nations (UN) numbers have been added (UN3507 to UN3526), covering various absorbed gases, uranium hexafluoride, asymmetric capacitors and discarded, empty, unclean packaging. A whole range of amendments concern the provisions covering Class 7 radioactive goods, special provisions and packing instructions. RS is ready to carry out survey of containers, certification of packing and tare as well as declaration of dangerous goods taking into consideration the new amendments.

### *SOLAS*

New regulation of SOLAS convention II-2/1, II-2/3, II-2/4, II-2/9.7 and II-2/16.3.3 will introduce mandatory requirement for inert gas systems on board new oil and chemical tankers with deadweight of 8,000 DWT and above, as well as ventilation systems on board new ships. These changes aim to increase safety and

environmental operation of the world cargo vessels. New amendments to SOLAS regulation II-1/29 on steering gear updates requirements relating to sea trials, following the increasing problems with failures of rudder, which might cause of running aground and environmental disasters. Also IMO implement new changes in SOLAS regulation II-2/10, concerning fire protection requirements of new container ships, as the continuing contenzation of the maritime transport.

New amendments to SOLAS regulation II-2/13.4 implements additional means of escape from machinery spaces, in case of accident, such as fire and flooding. In addition SOLAS implement new regulation II-2/20-1, which improves requirements for safety measures for vehicle carriers with Ro-RO ships, used for carriage of motor vehicles with compressed hydrogen or compressed natural gas in their tanks for their own propulsion.

#### *Audits under the IMO Member State Audit Scheme*

The audits under the IMO Member State Audit Scheme become mandatory, trying to improve the quality of service and increase the knowledge of the IMO members in relation with IMO standards and international maritime law. Up to 25 IMO Members audits per year are expected under the audit scheme, which will improve competency and will enforce the applicable IMO instruments by identifying areas in need of improvement.

#### *Carriage of stability instruments*

Since the beginning of 2016 mandatory carriage requirements for a stability instrument for oil and chemical tankers gets into force, following the amendments to MARPOL Annex I, the Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships carrying Dangerous Chemicals in Bulk (BCH Code), the International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships Carrying Dangerous Chemicals in Bulk (IBC Code), as well as the International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships Carrying Liquefied Gases in Bulk (IGC Code).

Source: [Maritime News](#), 30 December 2015



### **China upset over India-Japan agreement on South China Sea**

-Saibal Dasgupta

China expressed dissatisfaction on Monday over India-Japan agreement concerning the freedom of navigation in South China Sea. The agreement was signed during Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's recent visit to New Delhi. Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Hong Lei emphasized that Beijing was justified in carrying out activities in South China Sea because the concerned islands were part of its territory. "We hope countries outside the region respect the efforts of regional countries in maintaining peace and stability of South China Sea, instead of doing the opposite," Hong said, a statement signifying deep disapproval.

Several countries, including Vietnam and Malaysia, have opposed construction and shipping by the Chinese Navy in and around the disputed islands in South China Sea. The United States and Japan too oppose Chinese activities, saying these would impede freedom of navigation.

The India-Japan agreement calls on all parties to refrain from unilateral actions that could endanger peace. China has been opposed to India, Japan and the US, which are outside the South China Sea region, voicing their opinion about the island dispute. Hong said Chinese activities were "justified, reasonable and lawful, targeting no country and impeding in no way the freedom of navigation and over flight in South China Sea". Hong also objected to India's invitation to Japan to participate in the Malabar naval exercises in the Indian Ocean.

"As for Japan's participation in the relevant military exercises, China's position is very clear. Relevant countries should not provoke confrontation and create tension in the region," he said. On India-Japan agreement on Bullet train, Hong said China too is ready to speed up its cooperation with India on high-speed railways.

Asian countries drive national development through infrastructure construction, Hong said, adding, "China and India are also cooperating in the high-speed railway sector. We stand ready to move forward relevant cooperation together with the Indian side."

Source: [Times of India](#), 15 December 2015

## **South China Sea: U.S. Navy Commander Warns of Possible SCS Arms Race**

-Reuters

South China sea, US South China Sea, US Navy South China Sea, South China Sea arms race, China SCS, South China sea dispute South China Sea: File photo – A US Navy photograph taken in May reportedly showing Chinese dredging vessels in waters around the disputed Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. (Source: Reuters)

The U.S. Pacific Fleet Commander has warned of a possible arms race in the disputed South China Sea which could engulf the region, as nations become increasingly tempted to use military force to settle territorial spats instead of international law.

Commander Admiral Scott Swift urged nations, like China, to seek arbitration to settle maritime disputes. “My concern is that after many decades of peace and prosperity, we may be seeing the leading edge of a return of “might makes it right” to the region,” Swift said on Monday in a speech in Hawaii, according to a copy seen by Reuters.

By resorting to military strength to impose territorial claims, nations, including China, risked sparking a military arms race that could engulf the region, he said. “Claimants and non-claimants alike are transferring larger shares of national wealth to develop more capable naval forces beyond what is needed merely for self defence,” Swift said.

China claims most of the South China Sea, through which more than \$5 trillion of world trade ships every year, a fifth of it heading to and from U.S. ports.

Beijing is building seven man-made islands on reefs in the Spratly Islands, including a 3,000-metre-long (10,000-foot) airstrip on one of the sites, according to satellite imagery of the area. “Even now, ships and aircraft operating nearby these features, in accordance with international law are subject to superfluous warnings that threaten routine and commercial operations,” Swift said, speaking at the Cooperative Strategy Forum to naval commanders from Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia and other countries.

Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines and Taiwan also claim parts of the South China Sea. In a challenge to China's island building program, Manila has asked the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague to affirm its right to areas within 200 nautical miles of its coastline, under the terms of a U.N. convention.

"The Arbitration Tribunal's case between the Philippines and China could become the latest opportunity to demonstrate lawful access to regional prosperity for all nations," Swift said.

Beijing so far has rejected the courts jurisdiction and has boycotted the hearing. Rulings are supposed to be binding on its member countries, which include China. But the tribunal has no powers of enforcement and its verdicts have sometimes been ignored.

Source: [The Indian Express](#), 15 December 2015

### **South China Sea: Australia Steps up Air Patrols in Defiance of Beijing**

-David Wroe and Philip Wen

Australia has stepped up military surveillance flights over the South China Sea in a signal to Beijing that it means to continue operating in the regional flashpoint area despite heightened tensions provoked by territorial disputes. In a move that is likely to grate with the Chinese government, an RAAF P-3 Orion aircraft carried out patrols in the air space in recent weeks, prompting a demand from Chinese naval forces in the waters below to explain itself.

Defence confirmed the recent flight, though only after the plane's presence happened to be noticed by a BBC journalist in the area, who recorded an Australian crewman telling the Chinese navy that the plane was "exercising international freedom of navigation rights". Chinese development at Hughes Reef in the disputed Spratly Islands chain in the South China Sea. Chinese development at Hughes Reef in the disputed Spratly Islands chain in the South China Sea. While such surveillance flights have been conducted for years in the South China Sea under Operation Gateway, their tempo has been increased in the past 12 to 18 months, it is understood. This

amounts to a calculated signal to Beijing that Australia does not accept the sea territory claims generated by China's building of artificial islands in the area, which is subject to claims by Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and others.

The government played down the patrol, saying it was a routine part of Operation Gateway But experts said it sent a clear message that Australia would not yield space to China's growing ambition to unilaterally control the strategically important waters. Crucially, it comes amid heightened tensions after a US destroyer sailed close to one of China's artificial islands in late October in a so-called "freedom of navigation" exercise. James Goldrick, a retired naval officer who is now advising the government on its upcoming Defence white paper, said the RAAF's flight could be interpreted as a challenge by China.

"The signal is that we'll continue with our routine operations," he said. "Inherently, it is an element of challenge and what it's saying is we're doing our normal things that we've always done within the requirements of international law." Benjamin Schreer, a strategic expert with Macquarie University, agreed Australia was making a point. "Apparently the pilot seems to feel the urge to convince the Chinese navy ... that we have every right to be in that airspace ... This really takes place in a changing strategic and political context." Peter Jennings, executive director of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, said that "nothing is routine in the South China Sea right now because of the heightened state of tension in the region". "Even the routine takes on a higher profile." But he said it was "ridiculous" that the latest flight was revealed by a BBC journalist. The government should publicly state what it was doing to send the strongest possible signal to Beijing, he said.

The experts agreed such flights did not pose any major risk to RAAF planes through an escalation. BBC journalist Rupert Wingfield-Hayes was on another plane close to the disputed Mischief Reef near the Philippines when he recorded the voice of an Australian airman who had been called to account by the Chinese navy. He published a story describing the encounter on Tuesday. "China navy, China navy," the airman is heard saying. "We are an Australian aircraft exercising international freedom of navigation rights, in international airspace in accordance with the international civil aviation convention, and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Over."

The Chinese did not respond further. Sam Bateman, a former navy officer now with the University of Wollongong, said that this was a standard call. "That's the sort of radio call they would make if they were going near a foreign warship. It's purely a safety measure that the ship knows whose aircraft this is, what it's doing."

Source: [The Sydney Morning Herald](#) , 15 December 2015

## **Arctic Temperatures Hit Record High**

- Renee Lewis

Arctic temperatures in 2015 were the warmest on record, according to a report published on Tuesday that furthered concerns about the negative effects of melting sea ice. Temperatures in the Arctic were more than 2 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than average in 2015, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) report. Some areas of the Arctic experienced temperatures more than 5 degrees warmer than average.

"The Arctic is warming twice as fast as other parts of the planet," NOAA chief scientist Rick Spinrad warned during a press conference on Tuesday. The higher-than-normal temperatures contributed to less sea ice in the Arctic, according to the report, compiled by some 70 authors from 11 countries. Minimum sea ice extent in September 2015 was 29 per cent less than average, and was the fourth lowest in satellite record, the report said. Maximum sea ice extent occurred 15 days earlier than average, and was 7 per cent less than average.

The Chukchi Sea, northwest of Alaska, and Baffin Bay, off the west coast of Greenland, saw the largest warming trends, the report said. "Extensive" melting in Greenland occurred over more than 50 per cent of its ice sheet, the report added. Scientists have said melting on Greenland is a growing factor in rising sea levels that could threaten low-lying coastal areas and islands thousands of miles away. Another consequence of sea ice loss is that previously covered water is exposed to more solar radiation, raising ocean temperatures — affecting everything from weather to marine life. The report cited walrus as just one species affected by melting ice. "In the Pacific Arctic, vast walrus herds are now hauling out on land rather than on sea ice as it retreats far to the north over the deep Arctic Ocean," the report said. In a haul out,

large numbers of sea mammals such as seals and walrus temporarily leave the water to rest, mate or bear young.

The lack of sea ice reduces access to prey for walrus. Meanwhile, female walrus and their young, which typically use sea ice dozens of miles out to sea to keep them closer to prey, now have to hunt from shore, the report said. “Because walrus will make use of terrestrial sites for haul-out, extinction due to climate change impacts on sea ice is unlikely to occur for this species. But, it is certain that land-based sites alone will not support the same number of walrus that the mixed seasonal use of sea ice and land has permitted in the past,” the NOAA said in its report. These indicators show that the environmental system throughout the Arctic continues to be influenced by long-term warming trends, the report added. Spinrad said the report “shows the importance of international collaboration on sustained, long-term programs that provide insights to inform decisions by citizens, policymakers and industry.”

Source: [Aljazeera America](#), 15 December 2015

## **Is India Ready to be a Power in the Pacific?**

- Darshana M. Baruah

Despite New Delhi’s reassurances, it has yet to build a “blue water navy,” a force capable of operating in open seas and projecting power to areas of strategic interest.

### *Is India Ready To Be a Power in the Pacific?*

For some time now, many have argued that India should assume the role of the so-called “net security provider” in the Indian Ocean and across the Asia-Pacific. Taking on this responsibility will require it to assert its strategic goals across the region. But given the evolving security environment in this region, it is quickly becoming apparent that many countries, including the United States, want India to step up perhaps more than New Delhi itself wants to. Furthermore, it also seems that India’s understanding of the role is significantly different from those making these demands.

Despite New Delhi’s reassurances, it has yet to build a “blue water navy,” a force capable of operating in open seas and projecting power to areas of strategic interest.

The Indian army continues to be the favourite child of the Indian military, with nearly half of the defence budget typically going to the ground forces. On the other hand, the navy has seen a reduction in its allocated budget from 19 per cent in 2012 to 2013 to 16 per cent in 2015 to 2016. As of January 2015, the Indian navy had a shortage of 1,322 officers and 11,257 sailors. In the past, there have been reports of acute shortages of ships and helicopters. Furthermore, a series of mishaps aboard Indian naval ships and submarines led to the resignation of former Naval Chief DK Joshi in February 2014 – the first resignation of a leader of the armed forces since Indian independence in 1947.

With the Indian navy, clearly facing numerous organizational challenges, why is Washington encouraging New Delhi to take on the role of the net security provider in the Indian Ocean and Asia Pacific region?

In 2009, U.S. Secretary of Defence Robert Gates argued that India should be a net security provider; Leon Panetta implied the same in 2012. The most recent and significant acknowledgment of the Pentagon's push for India's role as a net security provider was outlined in the U.S. Department of Defence's recently released "U.S. Asia Pacific maritime security strategy" which noted that the United States is "seeking to reinforce India's maritime capabilities as a net provider of security in the Indian Ocean region and beyond."

At the crux of all this is India's geographic location. During his September 2015 visit to India, Australian Defence Minister Kevin Andrews said that "Australia recognizes India's critical role in supporting the security, stability, and prosperity of the Indian Ocean region and the stability of a wider, rules-based global order." Despite the challenges the Indian navy faces, the country's geographic location allows it to assert itself in the Indian Ocean region in a manner that exceeds its capabilities. India's long eastern coastlines provide access and command over the Bay of Bengal, while its western coast provides access to the Arabian Sea. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands, located close to critical sea lines, provide comfortable access to the Malacca Straits and the southern reaches of the Indian Ocean.

Its naval limitations aside, New Delhi's contributions in fighting maritime piracy both off the Horn of Africa and in Southeast Asia are noteworthy. The Indian navy's performance during natural calamities and in search and rescue operations (SAR)

after the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004, Cyclone Nargis in 2008, the Maldives Fresh water crisis of 2014, and during SAR operations for MH370, demonstrate its strength. But to be the net security provider for the region, this is not enough.

India must articulate a clear policy with political will to direct it. It will have to get involved in regional developments and take a lead in creating mechanisms and frameworks, such as the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium and the Indian Ocean Dialogue, while simultaneously joining existing ones (like the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum and the Maritime Silk Road) to expand its reach. Last July, the Philippines' Foreign Secretary Evan Garcia encouraged India to play a greater role in the South China Sea when he remarked that India "is not an invited guest, India should be at the head table" when it comes to policing the South China Sea. Nations such as Singapore and Vietnam also share these sentiments. Furthermore, many navies — the United States, Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Vietnam, Philippines, or Singapore — stand ready to cooperate with the Indian navy. But India can only deliver the guarantees it hopes to through increased participation at regional security forums, where it can shape the discourse and, in doing so, define the role that it is willing to play.

India's own definitions of what being a net security provider entails and what a blue water navy looks like, also differ from that of countries involved in the region. India's definition of power projection in its area of interests may not necessarily align with the definition outlined by other Asia-Pacific nations. India's interests in securing the Indian Ocean are likely to substantially converge with those of Pacific powers like the United States. But in areas like the South China Sea, which form a "secondary area" of interest for the Indian navy, the overlap may be considerably less.

In October 2015, India's Defence Minister Shri Manohar Parrikar released India's revised maritime military strategy document for 2015 (IMSS-2015), which offers a definition from the Indian perspective of what it means to be a net security provider. The Indian Navy, for the first time, has defined the phrase "net security provider" as maintaining "the state of actual security available in an area, upon balancing prevailing threats, inherent risks and rising challenges in the maritime environment, against the ability to monitor, contain and counter all of these." However, the definition does not include the geographical scope of the region where India would

pursue the above defined role, which reflects Indian hesitation to assert beyond its immediate strategic considerations.

The pressure for India to emerge as a regional leader and as a net security provider is high, and will only increase. The support from nations in the Chinese maritime neighborhood (Vietnam, Philippines, and Singapore) is encouraging, but perhaps their expectations exceed India's own vision.

India's current leaders have suggested that India is willing to play the role of an active security provider. After former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh declared that India is well-positioned to be a net security provider, the Modi government has taken a firmer stand through its engagement with its maritime neighbors, joint strategic visions, and collaborations with regional navies. The Asia-Pacific is ready for a new discourse on maritime security. India is a central part of the discussion on maritime cooperation and security in the Indian Ocean region, among Australia, United States, European, and Southeast Asian countries. What the region now requires, however, is a bit of patience while India charts its own policy and adds its own substance to this narrative, before it can truly emerge as a net security provider.

Source: [Foreign policy](#), 18 December 2015

### **Indian Ocean Research Expedition on Board Sagar Nidhi Ends, Collects Mine of Data**

-V Rishi Kumar

The first expedition on board research vessel Sagar Nidhi conducted as a part of the International Indian Ocean Expedition-2 explored the western Arabian Sea concluded its mission gathering useful data for oceanographic studies.

The 18-day expedition, led by PN Vinyachandran of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and Satya Prakash of Esso-Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services, Hyderabad, was flagged off in Goa on December 4, and concluded at Mauritius on December 22. The data collected will help elucidate the currents and water masses in the western Indian Ocean in detail and facilitate in understanding of

the oceanography. This IIOE-2 is being held during 2015-2020, about 50 years after IIOE, which was the first major exploration programme in the Indian Ocean. This is being coordinated internationally by the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research, Inter-governmental Oceanographic Commission and Indian Ocean Global Ocean Observing System.

In this international expedition, apart from Indian scientists, there were participants from Mauritius, Israel, Singapore, Australia and the UK. Twelve Indian scientists representing IISc, INCOIS, NIOT (Chennai), NCAOR (Goa), NRSC (Hyderabad) and Goa University were on board.

#### *Study of water masses*

The objective of this multidisciplinary expedition was to understand the structure of water masses in the western Indian Ocean and assess the difference in their characteristics with respect to observations made in the past, according to a statement from the Indian National Institute for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS). The water masses from Red Sea, Persian Gulf and Northern Arabian Sea are found in this part of the Indian Ocean at its different depth layers.

#### *Underwater profiles*

The other objective of the cruise was to understand the physical-chemical-biological characteristics in the equatorial Indian Ocean and their inter-relationship. Underwater profiles of currents, temperature, salinity, oxygen, light and chlorophyll were measured during the cruise.

Source: [The Hindu](#), 24 December 2015

### **Tensions Growing – Upon U.S. Plane Flying Over Disputed South China Sea Airspace**

-Stella

This time around, China complains of a United States plane flying over the disputed airspace near the Chinese artificial island in the disputed South China Sea, violating China's sovereignty. However, the U.S. negated China's claim as it declared that the U.S. military plane did not intentionally entered the 12 nautical miles of Chinese territory. A senior U.S. defence official told CNN that the incident happened when the U.S. plane strayed into the disputed airspace near the artificial islands. Also, the U.S. added that the military plane's flight "was not part of a freedom of navigation" mission. This is different from the incident in October, when the U.S. sent the USS Lassen warship close to one of China's artificial islands that is if the islands are considered by the U.S. as Chinese territory.

However, the Chinese Ministry pointed out that the U.S.'s sending of two B-52s on December 10 is a show of the U.S. "flexing muscles" and military provocation. China accused the U.S. of complicating and militarizing the South China Sea.

Further, China insisted that the U.S. should exercise preventive actions to avoid confrontation which might destroy "military-to-military" relations and usher in another era of conflict between countries. In defence of the incident, Bill Urban, a U.S. Defence Department spokesperson, pronounced on Friday that the very recent incident was not meant to provoke the Chinese. He said "there was no intention of flying within 12 nautical miles of any feature," he said in a statement. "This was not a freedom of navigation operation."

Urban added that the flight of the B-52 is part of the U.S. routine training missions over the South China Sea. According to the U.S. defence spokesman, the missions are designed to maintain readiness and demonstrate our commitment to fly, sail and operate anywhere allowed under international law." The tensions in the South China Sea have started to grow starting from the time China have reclaimed sandbars into islands. China has built up an estimated 2,000 acres of land in a massive dredging operation, creating artificial islands equipped with airfields, ports and lighthouses. Tensions have been growing since 2014 in the three main reefs in the Spratly Islands – Fiery Cross, Subi and Mischief Reef, which are within the Philippines

The new islands created friction between China and the U.S. which has been sending its navy and air forces in the vicinity of the reclaimed islands, under the protection of international law and freedom of movement.

Also, in May, the U.S. flew over the islands, getting warnings from the Chinese navy. As China complained, the U.S. responded “We will fly, sail and operate anywhere in the world that international law allows. U.S. Freedom of Navigation operations are global in scope and executed against a wide range of excessive maritime claims, irrespective of the coastal state advancing the excessive claim.”

The South China Sea is subject to dispute by claiming nations, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam. These countries have claims of sovereignty of several island chains and nearby waters in the South China Sea.

Source: [Political lore](#), 23 December 2015

### **India’s Emerging Indian Ocean Strategy**

- Abhijit Singh

A few weeks ago, India released its latest maritime guidance document for security operations. *Ensuring Secure Seas*, the new Indian Maritime Security Strategy (IMSS-2015) is an exposition of India’s nautical challenges, existing maritime practices, shifting technological trends, and evolving operational posture at sea. No sooner was the document released than it prompted a discussion on India’s security role in the Indian Ocean. The new publication focuses attention on India’s maritime imperatives in its near littorals, giving credence to reports that the Indian Navy is preparing to expand its sphere of operations in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

New Delhi’s concern for its maritime neighborhood seems well-founded. Recent developments have given India’s security managers good reason to be worried about the growing threats in the IOR. Despite a decline in piracy off the coast of Somalia, the Indian Ocean has been witnessing a sudden rise in non-traditional challenges. Maritime crime has been increasing, with a record number of drug hauls in the Asian littoral in the last two years (a recent seizure of more than 150 kg of heroin from a smuggling vessel by an Australian warship off the east coast of Africa, serving as the latest reminder of the severity of the drug threat in the IOR). While the Eastern Indian Ocean hasn’t seen the same level of crime as the Western theater, the Indian Coast Guard has been reporting elevated levels of narcotics smuggling in the sub-continental littorals.

Migration and human trafficking in South and Southeast Asia too has registered a surge in numbers. Last year, a rise in refugee movement from Bangladesh and Myanmar, resulted in a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented proportions. While India is still largely unaffected by maritime migration, its coastal communities have been at the receiving end of severe climate-related events, which have over the past few years grown in duration and intensity. The Indian Navy got a preview of the destructive potential of climate change during the floods in Chennai last month, when it had to urgently deploy warships and aircraft to provide aid and assistance to citizens marooned in the city.

Source: [The Diplomat](#), 28 December 2015

## **Russia's Far East Realignment: Defence and Security**

-Duncan Brown

In 2015, Russia has aimed to revive its expansive Far Eastern Federal District through unprecedented levels of cooperation with the Asia-Pacific region. In this three part series, we'll explore those efforts. Part 1 looked at domestic initiatives and part 2 explored energy and trade. In part 3, we explore Russia's growing influence in the Asian security sphere.

Defence trade with the Asia-Pacific has always been a key component of relations with the region. This year however, Russia has seen a more prominent role in transnational forums as diplomatic and security ties continue to evolve with China, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, and others. Within the context of simmering tensions in the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea and the Korean peninsula, Russia has reoriented itself, capitalizing on increased demand from many Asian nations.

### *Expanding Security Presence in the Asia-Pacific*

As renewed importance is attached to the Far East, security policy has been firmly entrenched in regional development. Primarily, President Vladimir Putin has sought to upgrade the aging Zvezda nuclear shipyards at Vladivostok, giving them a new lifespan of at least three decades. Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu has stated that sailors should increase the frequency of training maneuvers instead of "sitting

idly at the shipyard.” An investment program of up to \$900 million was announced during September’s Eastern Economic Forum, which would also see the military facilities expanded to enable the construction of large-scale oil and gas transportation.

The joint Russian-Chinese military drills in the South China Sea conducted in August, featuring a vast array of military personnel and equipment, comprised the largest such exercises in history between the two nations. Featuring 22 warships, 20 aircraft, 40 armored vehicles, and over 500 marines, the drills encompassed ground, sea, and air operations and marked an increased presence of Russian naval power in the region. Similarly, the joint Russian-Indian INDRA operation has now become an annual fixture for the two navies. Exercises involving the Pacific Fleet, with live-firing, anti-air, and anti-submarine operations, were conducted off the coast of Vladivostok in the summer of 2014, while a new series of drills took place in December from the Indian port of Visakhapatnam. India is reported to have spent over \$45 billion on Russian defence technology since the 1960s and shows no signs of slowing this trend.

With the Russian defence industry now worth \$15 billion in exports each year according to Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, there have been signs of heightened demand in 2015. China has recently purchased 24 Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jets in a deal worth approximately \$2 billion, while Indonesia, already operating the largest naval forces in Southeast Asia, has also signaled an investment in renewed air-defence technologies. The Indian Defence Council approved purchase of 48 Mi-17-V5 helicopters at the beginning of September in a deal worth \$1 billion, in addition to their existing Russian-made arsenal.

Russian proposals of low-rate loans for military spending will allow countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines — with whom a new agreement for defence cooperation was signed in August 2015 — the opportunity to upgrade their defence capabilities while bringing Russian influence closer to the region. The government’s active participation in the ASEAN Regional Forum in Kuala Lumpur in August, the multilateral Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative in Seoul in October, and shortly after the Asian Defence and Security Conference in Bangkok in early November display Russian attempts to broaden the horizons of its eastward outlook.

Despite progress with many Asia-Pacific nations this year, ties with Japan have so far been limited due to the contentious issue of the Kuril Islands, also known as the Northern Territories. So far, constructive dialogue on the issue has not been forthcoming from either side, although the construction of Russian military facilities on the island chain in December will surely press the issue. The territories were taken by the Soviet Union in the aftermath of World War II, and are currently home to almost 20,000 people. Japan has protested recent visits to the islands — one prominent example being Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev’s trip in August 2015 — but Tokyo still harbors hope for a strategic alliance in the Asia-Pacific, and is reluctant to further antagonize Russian ambitions. This highlights the fine balance between Russia’s emerging role as a regional mediator, while simultaneously becoming further embroiled in its own territorial disputes.

#### *Pivotal Year for Russia’s East*

Russia’s orientation in 2015 has been firmly focused on the emerging East — both within its own borders and with the dynamic and advancing economies of the Asia-Pacific region. The creation and initial success of the Eastern Economic Forum is a fitting snapshot of progress made in the last 12 months. Since the designation of new Priority Development Areas in December 2014, the Russian government has established links in over ten countries in the spheres of energy, security, diplomacy, and economic cooperation. By creating an inviting investment climate in the nine provinces making up the Far Eastern District, the hope is that foreign ventures will work in tandem with domestic policies boosting population growth, living standards, infrastructure capabilities and revival of the eastern ports. With growing Russian influence in the Asia-Pacific security sphere and the rise of national currency trade — removing the dominance of the dollar in the process — Putin will expect tangible results from the reorientation to the Far East in 2016.

Source: [The Diplomat](#), 29 December 2015