



MAKING WAVES

Inside this Brief

- **Maritime Security.....p. 6**
- **Maritime Forces.....p. 18**
- **Shipping and Ports.....p. 27**
- **Geopolitics and Miscellaneous.....p. 39**

Editorial Team

*Captain (Dr.) Gurpreet S Khurana
Commander Dinesh Yadav
Ms Neelima Joshi*

Address

*National Maritime Foundation
Varuna Complex, NH- 8
Airport Road
New Delhi-110 010, India*

Email:

maritimeindia@gmail.com

Acknowledgement: 'Making Waves' is a compilation of maritime news and news analyses drawn from national and international online sources. Drawn directly from original sources, minor editorial amendments are made by specialists on maritime affairs. It is intended for academic research, and not for commercial use. NMF expresses its gratitude to all sources of information, which are cited in this publication.



U.S. Navy Warns Against Chinese Flights in South China Sea

Regional response to piracy, armed robbery

USA Joins Ghana To Ensure Maritime Safety And Security

Increase in piracy and armed robbery attacks against ships in Asia, says ReCAAP

South Korea dismisses China's warning on US missile system

Beijing Building Radar in South China Sea

South China Sea: US Navy to sail more in disputed parts of island

Nigerian navy rescues oil tanker taken by pirates during US training mission



MARITIME FORCES



US Navy's 11th San Antonio-class USS Portland (LPD 27) vessel launched

Japanese navy may seek greater electronic, cyber warfare collaboration with US Navy

India-Myanmar Naval ships takes part in coordinated patrolling exercise

Russian Ships with Kaliber Cruise Missiles to be on Permanent Mediterranean Sea Duty

Russian Navy Fleet to Dock at Iran's Anzali Port: Commander

Playing Catch-Up: US Navy Lags Behind Russia, China by a Decade

India's first Nuclear Submarine INS Arihant Ready for Operations, Passes Deep Sea Tests

Malaysian and Indonesian navies to focus on improving ties

Pakistan Navy conducts exercise 'Tahaffuz-e-Sahil'

Murphy's Law: Dutch and German Navy Merger



SHIPPING & PORTS



Visakhapatnam port to spend Rs 4,500 cr on modernization

Nepal to use Vizag Port as alternative EXIM gateway

Budget 2016: Construction of ports should be exempted from service tax payment for reviewing the sector

Shipping Industry Making Waves in Progress towards Sustainability: SSI Annual Report

Paris Climate Deal: Implications for International Shipping

Economic Survey 2016: India in urgent need to increase shipping fleet



Cambodia to welcome Chinese warships as Japan navy heads home

How Does Noise Pollution Affect Marine Life?

US Aims to Build Powerful Partnership of Asia-Pacific Democracies

First China-India Maritime Dialogue: Beyond 'Icebreaking'

Indonesia sinks 27 foreign boats to stop illegal fishing

Indian Controller of Warship Production and Acquisition meets SL Navy Chief

Pakistan Navy's distinctive plans to protect Gwadar seaport and Chinese there

India, US navies to sail together in Indo-Pacific waters soon

Iran, India to stage maritime maneuver in Indian Ocean

India seeks to be maritime, international trade power: President

ASEAN ministers resent China's moves to "militarise" South China Sea



U.S. Navy Warns Against Chinese Flights in South China Sea

A senior U.S. naval officer says it would be destabilizing if China tries to fly jet fighters from its new man-made islands in the South China Sea. Vice Admiral Joseph Aucoin, the commander of the U.S. Navy's Seventh Fleet, told reporters Monday in Singapore that any attempt by China to fly military aircraft from the islands would not deter U.S. flights over the area. "We will fly, sail and operate wherever international law permits, and that includes flying over that airspace," he said. "We're not being provocative here," Aucoin added. "We are just exercising our rights and freedom according to international law, and we will continue to do this. It will benefit all countries no matter their size and strength."

Aucoin said he does not know when China might start flying fighter-type aircraft from the disputed Spratly archipelago, where China has created artificial islands and a 3,000-meter runway. When asked about the impact of possible Chinese jet fighter patrols, Aucoin said "it's a destabilizing uncertainty." He urged China to make its intentions for the South China Sea better known, saying it would relieve some of the "angst" that countries are expressing. Aucoin's comments come amid a two-day summit in California between President Barack Obama and leaders from Southeast Asian nations. The issue of the South China Sea is expected to be high on the agenda.

China claims much of the South China Sea, while several other nations, including the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam, have rival claims.

Source: [Chosun Media](#), February 17, 2016

Regional response to piracy, armed robbery

On May 19, 2015, the South Korean ship Petro Alpha was attacked by pirates while crossing the Strait of Malacca. Armed with knives, the pirates assaulted the crew and robbed them of their personal belongings and cash. The Singaporean MT Ocean Energy, attacked about two weeks earlier in the same strait, was less lucky: after threatening the crew members at gunpoint and hijacking the tanker, the pirates made off after transferring the ship's oil cargo to another vessel. These incidents are just two examples of a continuing spate of pirate attacks on vessels transiting the narrow stretch of water located between the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian island of Sumatra.

Needless to say, acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships are a source of great concern to the international community. Given the recent sharp rise in pirate attacks in Southeast Asia, East Asian states are particularly apprehensive about piracy and armed robbery. According to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) Piracy Reporting Centre, a total of 190 incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships occurred in 2015 between January and September. This is a 6.7 percent increase over the same period in 2014. Particularly noteworthy is the sharp rise of incidents in Southeast Asia. Approximately 83 percent of all cases were registered in this area, with the majority taking place in Indonesia (86 incidents), followed by Vietnam (19), Malaysia and Bangladesh (11 each). While pirate attacks in other locations such as Somalia and West Africa have diminished considerably, incidents in Southeast Asia registered a 38.9 percent year-on-year rise.

Today, the South China Sea and the Strait of Malacca are among the world's most dangerous waters with far too many incidents. Ships of diverse nationalities pass through the South China Sea and the Strait of Malacca, as it is an important shipping route linking the Indian Ocean to South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan and other countries. The rising number of transnational pirate attacks and the increasingly violent nature of the incidents make the question of piracy and armed robbery against ships a rising safety threat in Southeast Asian sealanes. It is also likely that modern-day pirates

are becoming increasingly involved in other types of organized crime such as human and drug trafficking.

Moreover, some analysts have long warned of the danger that pirate groups and terrorist organizations could join hands, thus heightening the risk of major sea borne attacks. The global scope and severity of piracy and armed robbery call for a boost in multilateral, national and bilateral efforts at combating piracy. Recent effective multilateral efforts have led to a sudden drop in pirate incidents in Somalia: no pirate incidents have occurred off the coast of Somalia from January to September 2015. The combined efforts of the navies of various nationalities, including South Korea, together with the stabilizing factor of the central Somali government have surely contributed to this positive outcome. The precipitous decline of piracy in this area underscores the importance of strengthened regional and multi-dimensional cooperative efforts at combating piracy. The precedent of successful international efforts in Somalia is a clear sign of the need for expanding region-wide cooperation in Southeast Asia. Since present-day pirates are often extremely mobile and equipped with state-of-the-art technology, piracy and armed robbery against ships have become extremely difficult to eradicate on a purely national level.

Moreover, with the economic slowdown and persisting poverty, some of the root causes of piracy, this trend is expected to increase in the coming years. In this regard, the region's countries, including littoral states, port states and flag states should jointly strengthen multi-dimensional cooperative efforts such as information sharing, coordination of sea patrols, conducting of cross-border and multi-agency operations and regional training, as well as the swift prosecution and extradition of pirates. Furthermore, it is necessary for countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia to become party to the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against ships in Asia (ReCAAP).

In Korea, the task of formulating and implementing anti-piracy efforts takes on special importance when considering the country's status as a major trading nation. As an export giant that is highly reliant on global trade, Korea is particularly vulnerable to

piracy that threatens maritime trade routes. In Operation Dawn of Gulf of Aden in 2011, Korean troops engaged in a naval operation against Somali pirates that had captured and held a Korean tanker, the Samho Jewelry. This operation has shown that Korea is willing and able to protect its nationals and property whenever and wherever needed. It also points toward the possibility of Seoul taking on a more dynamic role in regional anti-piracy efforts.

The recent escalation in piracy incidents in Southeast Asia signals a strong need for boosting the region's efforts to deter pirates, and calls for Korea and other Asian nations to strengthen regional cooperation aimed at combating piracy.

Source: [Korean Times](#), February 21, 2016.

USA Joins Ghana To Ensure Maritime Safety And Security

The programme christened “The African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership (AMLEP)” is held annually by the two countries to test their readiness to combat the global threat posed by piracy, human and illicit drug trafficking in the maritime industry in the West African sub-region. This year’s exercise focused on vessel boarding, search and seizure as well as communication familiarization between maritime operation centres and vessels on the sea.

Addressing the media at the close of the two-weeks training exercise, Commodore Tim Ferracci, Mission Commander for Africa Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership, stated that the partnership sought to reinforce the skills of security personnel in real-life operations and improve the detection, boarding, and law enforcement activities that were crucial to maritime security. He noted that the United States Navy was eager to improve its relationship with partners in the West African sub-region to strengthen regional cooperation and address challenges no one nation could tackle on its own. “The best way to ensure prosperity is through strong relationships, established in trust with a common goal of increasing safety, stability, and deterring illegal activities. “The lessons

learned and partnerships established over the last couple of weeks are invaluable and we look forward to working with our partners in the future,” he stressed.

Commodore Mark Ransford Nana Banyin Yawson, Flag Officer Commanding the Eastern Naval Command, noted that both countries would constitute legal and regulatory framework to preserve fisheries resources and ensure judicious use of fish stocks for the wellbeing of their peoples. He added that the exercise had improved the capabilities of the maritime fisheries taskforce and Navy personnel in vessel boarding, search and seizures. Mr. Emmanuel Marfo, the Deputy Western Regional Director, Fisheries Commission, noted that the Commission was tasked to manage the country’s fisheries resources to ensure its sustainability. “Therefore, the partnership of the two countries and the Monitoring Control and Surveillance Unit of the Fisheries Commission had upgraded their knowledge and skills to improve maritime security and safety,” he added. The training was undertaken on-board a United States Naval Ship, Spearhead, which has a speed limit of 45 nautical miles per hour and could carry 600 tons of equipment with a 350 passenger-capacity.

Source: [News Ghana](#), February 22, 2016.

Increase in piracy and armed robbery attacks against ships in Asia, says ReCAAP

A report from anti-piracy watchdog ReCAAP has revealed an increase in piracy and armed robbery attacks against ships in Asia. According to ReCAAP, a total of nine incidents of armed robbery against ships were reported in Asia in January. Five were reported in the Gulf of Kutch, Kandla, and one in Visakhapatnam, India and other incidents were reported at Tianjin outer anchorage, China, Vietnam, and Indonesia. However, no piracy incidents were reported. The crews from the vessels were reported to be safe, while perpetrators escaped the vessels on being discovered by the crew.

Meanwhile, none of the events involved hijacking of tankers for theft of oil cargo. ReCAAP report stated: "The situation of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia has improved since August 2015. Notably, for a consecutive three months since November 2015, there has been no actual incident reported on board ships while underway in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS); and also no reported incident involving hijacking of tankers for theft of oil cargo since September 2015." However, there is no room for complacency as more needs to be done to enhance port security at certain ports and anchorages." The ReCAAP ISC has directed all vessels operating in this area to exercise improved vigilance and take extra precautionary measures. In addition, the anti-piracy watchdog urged all the relevant enforcement agencies to step up surveillance and patrols.

Source: [Ship-technology](#), February 22, 2016.

South Korea dismisses China's warning on US missile system

South Korea on Wednesday dismissed China's warning that the planned deployment of a US missile defence system could damage ties, stressing that it was to counter "growing threats" from North Korea. "The deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence system (THAAD) is a measure of self-defence against growing nuclear and missile threats from North Korea," presidential spokesman Jeong Yeon-Guk said.

Jeong said the issue would be "decided in accordance with security and national interests," adding that "China will have to recognise the point." The remarks came after Chinese ambassador Qiu Guohong Tuesday warned that installation of the THAAD system on the Korean Peninsula could "destroy" relations between Beijing and Seoul.

China has repeatedly protested since Washington and Seoul announced plans to deploy the missile defence in the South, in response to North Korea's recent nuclear test and rocket launch. But Tuesday was the first time that a Chinese diplomat or official has warned of the effect on diplomatic ties with Seoul.

South Korea's foreign ministry said it was taking "necessary measures" about Qiu's comments without elaborating further. "Before raising an issue about the THAAD deployment, it will be reasonable to consider the root of the problem," the ministry said. The THAAD system fires anti-ballistic missiles to smash into enemy missiles either inside or outside the Earth's atmosphere during their final flight phase.

The interceptor missiles carry no warheads, instead relying on kinetic energy to destroy their targets. The allies announced their intention to begin talks on its deployment following Pyongyang's long-range rocket launch on February 7, which was seen by the US and its allies as a covert ballistic missile test.

Source: [First Post](#), February 23, 2016.

Beijing Building Radar in South China Sea

Beijing is installing radar facilities on its artificial islands in the disputed South China Sea, an American think tank has said, in a move analysts warned would "exponentially improve" the country's monitoring capacities.

Satellite imagery of Cuarteron reef in the Spratlys released by the Washington-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) showed what appeared to be a high-frequency radar installation, as well as a lighthouse, underground bunker, helipad and other communications equipment.

US accuses China of raising tensions with apparent missile deployment- The photographs came only a week after US officials said China had deployed surface to air missiles in the Paracel islands further north, and with tensions mounting in the strategically vital region. "Placement of high frequency radar on Cuarteron Reef would significantly bolster China's ability to monitor surface and air traffic coming north

from the Malacca Straits and other strategically important channels,” said CSIS’s Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative.

Images of other small reefs nearby which China has transformed into artificial islands — Gaven, Hughes, and Johnson South — revealed other features identified by CSIS as probable radar towers, gun emplacements, bunkers, helipads, and quays.

China sends missiles to contested South China Sea island: Taiwan

CSIS said that while the earlier deployment of HQ-9 surface to air missiles was “notable”, it “does not alter the military balance in the South China Sea”. But it went on: “New radar facilities being developed in the Spratlys, on the other hand, could significantly change the operational landscape.”

Beijing claims almost the whole of the South China Sea — through which a third of the world’s oil passes — while several other littoral states have competing claims, as does Taiwan.

The US has in recent months sent warships to sail within 12 nautical miles — the usual territorial limit around natural land — of a disputed island and one of China’s artificial constructions in what it says is a defence of the right to free passage.

China warns US of ‘serious consequences’ over Washington plaza name

The Chinese military has already been using the islands to monitor military and civilian traffic electronically but the new radar installations “will exponentially improve that capability”, said Euan Graham, director of the International Security Program at the Lowy Institute. They would be highly vulnerable in conflict but would give China “a significant intelligence advantage — and make it much harder for the US and other regional navies and air forces to move through the South China Sea undetected,” he added.

Over-the-horizon radar is vital for missile targeting, he noted. Last week China confirmed it had placed “weapons” on Woody Island in the Paracels, defending what it said was its sovereign right to do so.

Asked about the radar installations, Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said Tuesday that the area was Chinese territory “beyond dispute” and Beijing was entitled under international law to the “necessary and limited deployment of defence facilities”.

No plans at this time for joint US-India navy patrols: State Dept

“Verbally, what the US talks about is freedom of navigation, but in its heart, perhaps what it’s thinking about is absolute hegemony on the sea,” she told a regular briefing. Beijing says it defends the right to free passage, and insists its island building has civilian purposes, such as search and rescue facilities, as well as military.

A host of installations with potential military use are being developed, according to CSIS, including as many as three runways — at least one of them 3,000 metres (10,000 feet) long.

China is looking to deploy “all the defensive and offensive capability means that it has” as it seeks regional dominance, said Jean-Pierre Cabestan, of Hong Kong Baptist University. “In view of the weaknesses of other claimants, China will be able to dominate and then potentially control the South China Sea — its main objective being to force the US Navy and Air Force to think twice before cruising or flying over the area,” he told AFP. In the last three or four years, the Obama administration had become “more willing” to challenge Beijing’s claims in the South China Sea, said Lin Wencheng, of Taiwan’s National Sun Yat-sen University, adding: “The radar to some extent targets the US’s military activities in this region.” Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi was heading to Washington on Tuesday for talks with US Secretary of State John Kerry, where the issue was expected to be on the agenda. Kerry told reporters

last week: “There is evidence, every day, that there has been an increase of militarization of one kind or another. It’s of a serious concern.”

Source: [The Express Tribune](#), February 23, 2016.

South China Sea: US Navy to sail more in Disputed Parts of Island

The US Navy plans to increase “freedom of navigation” operations in the South China Sea as Beijing continues its military buildup in the contested waterway, a US admiral has said. The sailings involve a US warship coming within 12 nautical miles of islets claimed by China as a way of rebutting Beijing’s assertions of sovereignty. Since October, the Navy has carried out two such freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea, saying the missions are an important way of upholding international law. “We’ll be doing them more and we’ll be doing them with greater complexity in the future,” Admiral Harry Harris, the commander of the US Pacific Command, yesterday told lawmakers in Washington. “We’ll fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows.”

China’s claims to almost all of the South China Sea are widely disputed and the body of water has long been viewed as a potential flashpoint. China is using dredgers to turn reefs and low-lying features into larger land masses for runways and other military uses to bolster its claims of sovereignty in the region. Satellite imagery released by a Washington think tank this week shows China is installing radar facilities on its artificial islands. China has also deployed surface-to-air missiles and lengthened a runway to accommodate fighter jets on one such islet, Woody Island. “China’s intent to militarize the South China Sea is as certain as a traffic jam in DC,” Harris told the House Armed Services Committee in reference to congestion on the streets of Washington. He did not offer specifics on the upcoming freedom of navigation sailings but suggested they be carried out by a type of destroyer that “is well able to defend itself should those operations go awry.”

Source: [The Indian Express](#), February 25, 2016.

Nigerian Navy Rescues Oil Tanker taken by Pirates during US Training Mission

US Navy captain Heidi Agle had been directing a training exercise against piracy with maritime agencies of Ghana when the hijacking provided a real-life lesson. It was supposed to be a US-led naval training maneuver off the coast of West Africa when real-life drama intervened, with pirates taking over an oil tanker and turning the exercise into a rescue mission. Navies from the United States, Ghana, Togo and Nigeria tracked the hijacked tanker through waters off five countries before Nigerian naval forces stormed aboard on 20 February amid a shootout that killed one of the pirates. It was the first big success in international maritime cooperation in the pirate-ridden Gulf of Guinea, the commodore in charge of US operations in Africa and Europe told the Associated Press.

Capt Heidi Agle, the commodore, had been directing a training exercise against piracy with maritime agencies of Ghana when the hijacking provided a real-life lesson, she said in a telephone interview on Friday from her base in Italy.

First word came from the French embassy, which sent information to Agle's USNS Spearhead via Ghanaian officials and US diplomats of a possible pirate ship loitering off Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

There, pirates seized the Dubai-owned MT Maximus, on lease to a South Korean company and carrying 4,700 tons of diesel fuel, on 11 February.

The Spearhead tracked down the hijacked Maximus, identified it and then monitored its progress for two days as it sailed from Ivorian waters into Ghanaian territory. Then Agle handed over to Ghana's navy, which continued to shadow the ship until it entered the waters of Togo, when that country's navy took over.

As the pirates steamed across the gulf toward the tiny island nation of São Tomé and Príncipe, officials there contacted the Nigerian government for help.

The tanker had sailed nearly 800 miles (1,280km) before the Nigerians made the assault.

Dirk Steffen, maritime security director of Denmark-based Risk Intelligence, agreed the operation was “the first anti-piracy success in the region of this scale”. “Never has a west African navy carried out an opposed boarding before,” he said. Agle called it “a coordinated effort and the biggest piece in progress in the region” since the US began training with African nations in the Gulf of Guinea in 2009. The rescue was directed by Rear Admiral Henry Babalola of Nigeria, who told the AP that it was made possible by a maritime agreement allowing Nigeria to patrol São Tomé’s waters.

“When we challenged them [the pirates], they said that they were in international waters” with the law of the sea on their side. But the agreement allowed the Nigerians to storm the ship after eight hours of attempted negotiations. “International cooperation is the new mantra for maritime security,” Babalola said. “We cannot go it alone.” Six pirates were captured and 18 crew members freed. Several pirates escaped with two crew members who remain hostages, Steffen said. Babalola stressed the economic impact of piracy, pushing up the price of maritime insurance with costs ultimately passed on to consumers.

One-fifth of all maritime crime in the world is committed in the Gulf of Guinea, but that is only the tip of the iceberg since an estimated two-thirds of piracy acts there are never reported, according to Ocean Beyond Piracy, a private, Colorado-based organization.

The Gulf of Guinea is primed for economic growth, a major route for oil supplies shipped around the world with a mild climate that is ideal for commerce, docking and fishing.

Source: [The Guardian](#), February 26, 2016.



US Navy's 11th San Antonio-class USS Portland (LPD 27) Vessel Launched

Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII) shipyard has launched the US Navy's future San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship, USS Portland (LPD 27). The 684ft-long vessel transited from its land level facility to the dry dock, which was then flooded to let the vessel float off the blocks. Expected to be delivered to the US Navy in late 2017, the 105ft-wide ship has a displacement capacity of 24,900t and can provide combat support for the US Navy and US Marine Corps.

"The vessel will feature enhanced fighting capabilities, such as advanced command-and-control suite and increased lift-capabilities for carrying vehicles cargo." The vessel constitutes the US Navy's 11th San Antonio class vessel, which is capable of accommodating 800 troops.

The vessels will serve as the launch pad to two Sikorsky CH-53E Sea Stallion helicopters, six Bell AH-1W Super Cobra helicopters, four Boeing Vertol CH-46 Sea Knight helicopters or two Boeing Bell MV-22 Osprey tilt rotor aircraft on its flight deck.

Additionally, the vessel will feature enhanced fighting capabilities, such as advanced command-and-control suite and increased lift-capabilities for carrying vehicles cargo. The vessel will also help transport combat and support elements of marine expeditionary units and brigades.

Under the LPD 17 programme, the ships are set to replace the US Navy's ageing LST 1179 Newport-class tank landing ships, LKA 113 Charleston-class amphibious cargo ships, the Anchorage-class dock landing ships (LSD 36) and Austin-class ships (LPD 4). The LPD 27 vessel is anticipated to undergo its first phase of sea trials soon.

Source: [Naval Technology](#), February 16, 2016.

Japanese navy may seek greater electronic, cyber warfare collaboration with US Navy

The Japanese navy may seek to expand collaborative efforts with the US Navy (USN) in the electronic and cyber-warfare domains, the former's chief said on 18 February.

In a move that would build on the already close relationship between the two navies, Admiral Tomohisa Takei - chief of staff of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) - told an audience at the AFCEA International and US Naval Institute's West 2016 symposium in San Diego, California, that his navy and the USN currently work together on areas such as anti-surface warfare (ASuW) and anti-submarine warfare (ASW).

In the future, such co-operation might extend to electronic and cyber warfare, although the two navies would need to discuss prioritizing the most urgent areas, he said.

Source: [IHS Jane's 360](#), February 18, 2016.

India-Myanmar Naval ships takes part in coordinated patrolling exercise

As part of the ongoing India-Myanmar defence relations, the navies of the two countries have conducted coordinated patrols along the maritime boundary since 2013.

As part of the ongoing India-Myanmar defence relations, the navies of the two countries have conducted coordinated patrols along the maritime boundary since 2013. Taking it forward, the Fourth Edition of the India-Myanmar Coordinated Patrol (IMCOR) was successfully undertaken from February 13 to 16, 2016 along the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) in the Andaman Sea.

Indian Navy Ships Saryu and Bitra along with Union of Myanmar Ships Aung Zeya and FAC 563 participated in the 4th IMCOR. CMDE Girish Garg, Naval Component Commander from the Tri-Service HQs in Port Blair was embarked onboard INS Saryu.

Source: [India](#), February 18, 2016.

Russian Ships with Kaliber Cruise Missiles to be on Permanent Mediterranean Sea Duty

Black Sea Fleet Commander Adm. Alexander Vitko said that New Russian Navy cruisers from the Black Sea Fleet armed with Kalibr cruise missile systems will be on battle duty in the Mediterranean Sea. New Russian Navy cruisers from the Black Sea Fleet armed with Kalibr cruise missile systems will be on permanent duty in Russia's naval group in the Mediterranean Sea that are tasked with operations in Syria, Black Sea Fleet Commander Adm. Alexander Vitko said Friday.

"Yes, we'll have rotations and all the new ships, including ships from the Buyan-M project, will be on battle duty," Vitko told RIA Novosti.

Source: [Sputnick News](#), February 19, 2016.

Russian Navy Fleet to Dock at Iran's Anzali Port: Commander

A Russian navy fleet will berth at the northern Iranian city of Anzali soon as part of its journey to participate in ADEX-2016 international naval exhibition, a Russian commander said.

"In the second half of the year, naval squadrons will visit the Iranian port of Bandar Anzali, Kazakhstan's port of Aktau, as well as Azerbaijan's port of Baku to participate in

ADEX-2016 (Azerbaijan International Defense Industry Exhibition) international naval exhibition," Russian Rear Admiral Igor Osipov said as quoted by Sputnik on Saturday. Osipov added that the flotilla will also take part in joint Kazakh-Russian naval drills and the Caucasus-2016 strategic command-and-staff exercise.

This will be the fourth trip of a Russian fleet to Anzali, with the first three being made in 2007, 2014 and 2015.

Back on August 9, 2015, two Russian warships, Volgodonsk and Mahachkala, arrived in Anzali for a three-day stay with around 130 personnel on board in a bid to boost friendly maritime ties between the two countries.

Source: [Tasnim News](#), February 21, 2016.

Playing Catch-Up: US Navy Lags Behind Russia, China by a Decade

The US Navy is trying to upgrade its arsenal as soon as possible as it does not want to lag behind the Russian and Chinese navies. However, the US is unlikely to develop any new missiles earlier than 2020.

The Pentagon has asked Congress to allocate a budget for 2017 in the sum of \$434 million, directing it for the update of 250 Tomahawk cruise missiles.

However, according to the US Naval Institute, even that amount will not be enough to modify all of the Tomahawks, RT reported, citing data from the US Naval Institute.

This type of missile has one of the longest ranges at 1,852 km. Moreover, the US Navy is seeking to adapt another Standard 6 (SM-6) missile for use against ships. If this modification is successful, according to US Defense Minister Ashton Carter, the range of the SM-6 will be increased from 249 to 370 km.

But the most important anti-ship missile of the US Navy according to the US Naval Institute is the RGM / UGM-84 Harpoon, it can be launched from a fighter jet and a ship or submarine. But the main disadvantage of this missile however, is that it is extremely short ranged — even less than 130 km.

According to RT, attempts by the US Navy to modernize its fleet urgently are caused by the successful demonstration of the capabilities of the Russian and Chinese navies.

In October 2015 the Russian Navy used Caliber Cruise Missiles capable of striking targets at a distance up to 2,500 km with an accuracy of three meters. The missiles were launched against Daesh terrorists in the Caspian Sea and they hit targeted areas in Syria with exact precision.

Simultaneously, China publicly demonstrated its ‘East Wind’ (Dongfeng DF-21D) missile with a range of 1,450 km and a high destructive power.

Source: [Sputnick News](#), February 22, 2016.

India’s first Nuclear Submarine INS Arihant Ready for Operations, Passes Deep Sea Tests

India's first nuclear armed submarine is now ready for full-fledged operations, having passed several deep sea diving drills as well as weapons launch tests over the past five months and a formal induction into the naval fleet is only a political call away. Multiple officials closely associated with the project to operationalize the INS Arihant nuclear missile submarine have confirmed to ET that the indigenously-built boat is now fully-operational and over the past few months, several weapon tests have taken place in secrecy that have proven the capabilities of the vessel.

The Arihant, which is the first of five nuclear missile submarines or SSBNs planned for induction, has also undergone deep sea dives off Vishakhapatnam where it was build. A Russian diving support ship —the RFS Epron that arrived on October 1 — has been

accompanying the Arihant on its deep sea dives and launch tests, officials told ET. The Epron — a Prut class submarine rescue vessel — was also the Russian representation for the recently concluded International Fleet Review (IFR) in Vishakhapatnam. India does not currently possess a submarine rescue vessel of this class - a vital requirement during weapon firing tests where all possibilities need to be catered for.

The Arihant incidentally did not take part in the IFR even though it was ready due to security concerns. The presence of 24 foreign warships, equipped with sensors and equipment that could pick up vital electronic intelligence being the main deterrent.

The Navy has managed to keep under wraps several weapon launch tests from the Arihant over the past five months. The submarine is to be equipped with K 15 (or BO-5) short range missiles with a range of over 700 km and the K 4 ballistic missile with a range of 3,500 km. "It has passed all tests and in many things has surpassed our expectations.

Technically the submarine can now be commissioned at any time," a senior official said. Sources told ET that the commissioning date could be as early as next month if the Modi government desires. A communication facility to interact with the submarine has already been commissioned into the Navy.

At present, work is already in progress on two more Arihant class submarines at the Ship Building Center (SBC) in Vishakhapatnam which will be larger and more advanced than the first boat. The navy is also accelerating work on INS Varsha - a new strategic naval base with underground pens on the Eastern Coast near Kakinada - where the nuclear assets would be based.

The Navy's Submarine Design Bureau is also presently working on a new class of nuclear powered attack submarines (SSNs) that it hopes to induct within the next 15 years. The plan is to build at least six SSNs in India, with financial sanction given last year for the project that could cost upwards of Rs 90,000 crore. At present, the only

nuclear powered platform in service is the INS Chakra, a Akula class SSN on lease from Russia.

Source: [The Economic Times](#), February 23, 2016.

Malaysian and Indonesian Navies to Focus on Improving Ties

The Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) and the Indonesian Navy (TNI-AL) will give new focus emphasizing on efforts to improve the existing ties between the two nations. RMN chief Datuk Seri Ahmad Kamarulzaman Ahmad Badaruddin said among the approaches to be adopted were to strengthen people-to-people relationships, and not to take heed of things that could jeopardise the bilateral ties between the two countries. He said the new approaches were among the matters discussed during his courtesy call on the Indonesian Minister of Defence Ryamizard Ryacudu here today. Ahmad Kamarulzaman said the navies of both countries also agreed to emphasize on efforts to enhance military cooperation to face common threats.

"Malaysia and Indonesia are facing common threats, such as the militants, drug trafficking and cross-border crimes, and we must improve our cooperation to combat crime together," he told reporters after meeting with Malaysian Ambassador to Indonesia, Datuk Seri Zahrain Mohamed Hashim here.

Ahmad Kamarulzaman said that during the courtesy call. Ryamizard also said that the good relationship between Malaysia and Indonesia navies was not only established through joint exercise, but also through personal ties at various levels.

Ahmad Kamarulzaman, who was appointed Navy chief last November, said among the reasons for his first visit to Indonesia was to pave the way for improving economical, political and social cooperation between both countries.

However, he said both parties did not raise the 'issue' of maritime borders, as they felt it was not really an issue, but more of a mapping problem of boundaries which were set during the colonial period. "The real issues (discussed) were those of parties coming from outside, such as terrorists and militant groups," he said, adding that the RMN also agreed to send two military ships to participate in a joint military exercise in Padang, West Sumatra in April.

Source: [Astroawani](#), February 23, 2016.

Pakistan Navy conducts exercise 'Tahaffuz-e-Sahil'

Pakistan Navy on Thursday conducted the coastal security exercise code named 'Tahaffuz-e-Sahil' at Ormara to check the efficacy of security mechanism in place at Jinnah Naval Base and associated infrastructure against any maritime terrorist threat. Special Operations Forces (SOF), Pak Marines, Pakistan Navy ships and helicopters participated in the exercise. A high degree of professionalism and coordination was displayed by the various segments of PN, other law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and organisations so as to practice and boost the security of this important base of Pakistan Navy.

In order to validate plans for defence and security of coastal bases, Pakistan Navy regularly holds such exercises all along the coast with special focus on Gwadar Port to ensure security of the maritime domain which has a crucial linkage with the upcoming developments related to CPEC project and smooth conduct of economic activities in our maritime region.

Source: [Pakistan Today](#), February 26, 2016.

Murphy's Law: Dutch and German Navy Merger

In early 2016 the Netherlands and Germany agreed to a naval collaboration program that will involve German sailors helping the Dutch overcome a personnel shortage. Germany would provide German sailors that the Dutch would train to work on new Dutch ships which have been operating reduced capacity because the Dutch could not provide full crews. In return the Germans will share use of these ships with the Dutch. The largest ship involved is the new Dutch replenishment ships, the Karel Doorman, which entered service in 2015 but will only be completely functional once German sailors are trained to fill out the crew of 300.

The Karel Doorman is a 28,000 ship that carries fuel, ammunition and other supplies for peacekeeping or disaster relief missions worldwide. The ship carries six medium (NH90 or CH-47) helicopters plus landing craft. Defensive weapons consist of two Goalkeeper seven barrel 30mm autocannon for defense against anti-ship missiles and aircraft. There are also two 30mm cannon for use against surface targets plus a dozen smaller caliber (12.7mm and 7.62mm) machine-guns. There is also a hospital onboard with two operating rooms and ten treatment areas. The ship has communications and other electronics needed for a command center to provide an offshore headquarters for a peacekeeping or relief missions ashore. The ship can travel up to 18,000 kilometers (at 22 kilometers an hour) on internal fuel. Half the crew handle the helicopters, hospital, landing craft and other support functions. Because of budget cuts Germany had to cancel plans to build two ships similar to the Karel Doorman.

Germany is also making its “Sea Battalion” available to the Dutch for joint operations. This battalion has 800 security personnel, combat divers and other amphibious specialists. The Dutch marines will also work with their German counterparts on joint operations. In 2015 the Netherlands agree to provide a combat brigade for a largely German multinational Armored Division. In 2014 the Netherlands contributed their 11th Air Mobile Brigade to a largely German rapid reaction force.

Source: [Strategy Page](#), February 26, 2016.



Visakhapatnam port to spend Rs 4,500 cr on modernisation

Visakhapatnam Port Trust (VPT) has planned an investment of R4,500 crore over the next four years as part of its modernisation plan, which includes increasing container trade, clean cargo, setting up multi-modal parks and free trade zones. The port, which currently handles about 60 million tonne (MT) of cargo volume, hopes to handle over 125 MT by 2020.

“As part of our long-term modernization plan, we plan to invest about R4,500 crore by 2020. We have already invested over R2,500 crore for increasing container trade, maintaining 50% clean cargo, multi-modal parks and free trade zones in the expansion plan. We expect to complete modernization, mechanization and berth improvement by 2020,” MT Krishna Babu, chairman, VPT, said. “The detailed project report (DPR) for multi-modal logistics park is expected to be ready in the next three months with KPMG as the consultant and we hope to complete in the next three to five years,” Krishna Babu said.

Visakhapatnam Port, which is expecting a 10% growth in revenues from R1,000 crore reported last year, had undertaken a number of projects to augment its capacity and efficiency including doubling capacities of inner harbour, modernise berthing structures besides setting up multi-cargo berths under the PPP mode.

“The proposed investment would be deployed for capacity augmentation to 125 MMTPA, adding four more berths, improvement in evacuation infrastructure, boosting clean cargo terminals, development of multimodel logistic hubs/parks, development of IT for paperless, seamless, transparent transactions, sustainability through environmental sensitivity, and generation of non-conventional energy,” he said.

Incidentally, the port has been facing a lot of competition from the closely-located Gangavaram Port on freight volumes and cargo handling.

VPT has signed concession agreements for a public-private partnership (PPP) project for the extension of the existing container terminal on a design, build, finance, operate, transfer (DBFOT) basis. “Considerable investments through the PPP mode are on the anvil, envisaging deepening of channels and berths, construction of new berths, installation of state of art mechanised handling facilities and other logistics,” he said.

The port has three harbours which include an outer harbour, inner harbour and a fishing harbour. The outer harbour with a water spread of 200 hectares has six berths and the inner harbour with a water-spread of 100 hectares has 18 berths. The outer harbour is capable of accommodating 150,000 DWT vessels and draft upto 17 metres. The inner harbour is capable of accommodating vessels upto 230 metres and draft upto 11 metres.

Meanwhile, the ministry of shipping has set a target of achieving 135 MW across eight major ports in the country through solar power and 50 MW. “VPT becomes the first port to be powered by solar energy and has already commissioned 2 MW solar plant and will add another 8 MW by March 20,” he said.

* Visakhapatnam Port Trust’s modernization plan includes increasing container trade, clean cargo, setting up multi-modal parks and free trade zones.

* The port, which is expecting a 10% growth in revenues from R1,000 crore reported last year, had undertaken a number of projects to augment its capacity and efficiency including doubling capacities of inner harbour, modernize berthing structures besides setting up multi-cargo berths under the PPP mode.

Source: [The Financial Express](#), February 20, 2016.

Nepal to use Vizag Port as alternative EXIM gateway

The signing of Letters of Exchange between Nepal and India for using Visakhapatnam Port as an alternative EXIM gateway for the Himalayan country will benefit both the countries in strengthening their economic ties.

After yearlong consultations culminating in the visit of Nepal's Minister for Commerce Deepak Bohara and Ambassador Deepak Kumar Upadaya last month and the signing of agreement between Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday with his Nepal counterpart K.P. Sharma Oli is considered a major breakthrough.

During the visit of Nepal team to the city, Visakhapatnam Port Chairman M.T. Krishna Babu and Deputy Chairman P.L. Haranadh had shown the existing facilities and explained how they could complete dredging to handle larger draft vessels and incorporated changes for removing bottlenecks to improve efficiency parameters.

Nepal is banking on the port facility for handling containers, fertilizers, coal and project cargo. Though it had arrangement with Kolkata and Haldia port earlier, it ran into rough weather due to several reasons. As per the Letters of Exchange, train facility connecting Visakhapatnam with Kathmandu will also be worked out after sometime. Nepal is expecting to increase its GDP growth to eight to 10 per cent in the next seven to eight years.

BCG recommendations:

On the basis of recommendations of the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) to remove the bottlenecks, the port has initiated several measures to improve efficiency as it has plans to increase its capacity from 93 million tonne to 125 million tonne in a couple of years with a total investment of around Rs.4,000 crore.

A port official said due to series of initiatives, they could cut down pre-berthing detention from 2.77 to 1.65 days, turnaround time from six to four days and ensure improvement in output per ship per berth-day from 10,317 tonne to 12,296 tonne.

The port recently completed dredging in inner harbour to handle fully laden Panamax vessels with a draft of 14.5 metres.

As part of mechanisation and modernisation, projects are under way for development of Ore Handling Complex at a cost of Rs.845 crore, expansion of container terminal at a cost of Rs.633 crore and conversion of east quay-2, 3, 4 and 5 berths into two berths by raising draft to 14 metres from 11 metres to simultaneously handle two Panamax ships. Nepal is banking on the port facility for handling containers, fertilizers, coal and project cargo.

Source- [The Hindu](#), February 22, 2016.

Budget 2016: Construction of ports should be exempted from service tax payment for reviewing the sector

‘Make in India’ has been poised as one of the most ambitious programs launched by our Honorable Prime Minister, pledging lower barriers to doing business and promoting foreign investment, thereby transforming Asia’s third largest economy into a manufacturing powerhouse like China.

However to support the ‘Make in India’ campaign, India needs enhanced infrastructure facilities which includes effective and efficient connectivity between ports, better road and rail connectivity between ports and plants and initiatives from the government to create more facilities to enable the seamless inward and outward movement of goods. In an economy, for any manufacturing or trade activity to breed and grow, robust backing of equally efficient infrastructure and logistics sector plays an extremely critical role.

Ports are economic multipliers, as they induce factors in development of an area thus providing space for industrial clusters. Thus ports create a kind of value chain of interrelated activities of the hinterland that are mutually supportive and continuously growing. In developing countries, the lack of proper infrastructure, including ports, can mean the difference between sustainable progress and persistent under-development.

In November 2015, India was re-elected un-opposed to the Council of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). It was also highlighted by the Gov. of India delegates that India's Overseas Maritime Trade which is currently about 600 Million Tonnes Per Annum is expected to be quadrupled to about 2200 Million Tonnes by the Year 2020 which clearly revealed that Indian Maritime Trade is observing an upward graph and is steadily progressing. Therefore, to meet the requirements of the trade, the country's infrastructure along with the capacity of the existing Ports have to be increased and many more new Ports have to be constructed.

Until 28 June 2015, the construction of the port was exempted from the payment of Service Tax. However, in the General Budget of 2015-2016, the Union Government, Department of Revenue, withdrew the exemption resulting in levy of Service Tax on the construction of Ports (Infrastructure).

In accordance with the vision of the Government of India, and as a part of 'Ease of Doing Business', the existing provisions relating to levy of service tax on construction of Port should be revisited and preferably the exemptions which were available prior to 01 March 2015, should be restored which will surely help investors to review the sector with more significance from the business investment perspective.

The transport sector, especially roads, rail and ports would all benefit from the positive economic outlook facilitated by enhanced investment in infrastructure, focus on improving rural India, ease of doing business, Make in India related impetus and a more predictable tax environment. Encouraging coastal shipping through subsidies to manufacturers/exporters will not only decongest the roads but also promote energy saving and cost efficiency in transportation. The Union Government had evolved the

SAGARMALA concept with a clear focus on port infrastructure enhancement, setting up of new ports and efficient evacuation to and from the hinterland.

The SAGARMALA concept was an extremely encouraging move and we are extremely bullish that projects of similar nature would be key to revolutionizing the Maritime trade in India. Also considering the fact that construction of ports is a very expensive proposition with long gestation periods, payment of Service Tax @ 14.5% would be an additional expenditure discouraging project developers in undertaking construction activities at ports and hence the same should be revised.

Project financing and fast tracking of all the pre-approved major projects will be highly appreciated by the industry as it will directly benefit the logistics industry and hence the economy at large. Addressing the key regulatory challenges including lack of policies to push development in coastal shipping, inland waterways and ports and thereby developing these modes to leverage their full potential will be crucial in enhancing the readiness of the logistics sector thus building a more resilient economy.

Source: [First Post](#), February 22, 2016.

Shipping Industry Making Waves in Progress Towards Sustainability: SSI Annual Report

The Sustainable Shipping Initiative (SSI) Tuesday announced the release of the organization's latest annual report—the document suggests that while there are significant short-term challenges around International Maritime Organization (IMO) and COP 21 meeting requirements, progress is happening.

"There is no room for complacency, and we must be under no illusion of the significant challenges that lie ahead. But we have shown that when organizations within the industry come together to make a difference and drive more sustainable behaviors great

things can be achieved," said Alastair Fischbacher, chief executive officer of the SSI, commenting on the release of the report.

The main challenges referred to include new requirements agreed to at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the so-called COP 21 conference, which has resulted in a demand that global industry cap emissions as a way realizing less than two degrees warming.

Some of the achievements the organization claims over the past year include facilitating access to SSI's Save as you Sail (SAYS) financial concept, which allows charterers, owners and financiers to model returns on investment from using more efficient vessels. The report also claims progress in terms of the challenges around responsible ship recycling, improving the transparent exchange of information on the future of shipping through the Futures Centre, as well as new research on attitudes to life at sea as a way of making shipping a more attractive place to work and develop a career.

The SSI report also said progress had been made in terms of developing a "Roadmap" – to be launched in the first quarter of 2016 – consisting of a 'live' tool that sets out the key milestones for charting a path to a sustainable industry by 2040, which is the goal of the SSI.

"Our second Progress Report shows the real developments that the SSI and its members are making, and the positive work that is being conducted among members," said Fischbacher.

"The Progress Report demonstrates the real value of being a member of SSI. It highlights the sense of purpose and pride that comes from...working on the front line, investing time, knowledge and expertise to pioneer new initiatives and progressive ways of thinking in order to create a more sustainable and profitable shipping industry," he said.

Last month Ship & Bunker that Fischbacher said the financial pressure to reduce bunker bills was "simply not there."

Source- [Ship and Bunker](#), February 24, 2016.

Paris Climate Deal: Implications for International Shipping

A historical climate deal was reached in Paris on 12 Dec 2015. The legally binding agreement which has been touted as differentiated, balanced, durable and ambitious aims to limit the increase in the global average temperature to "well below 2 degree C", above pre-industrial levels while "pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degree C". But what if any, are the implications of the agreement for international shipping? And, how can the maritime sector contribute to mitigating global GHG emissions?

International Shipping and CO₂ Emissions

If international shipping was a country it would be the seventh largest GHG emitter in the world, in the year 2014. However, international shipping which contributes to 2-3 per cent and the aviation sector which contributes to approximately 2 per cent of the global carbon emissions were omitted from national commitments under the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. For the shipping sector, ships have different port of origin, destination port, intermediate ports of call, flag state of the ship (country where the ship is registered) and there are other actors in the industry such as private owners and operators of ships which have registered offices in all countries. Hence these sectors were excluded due to the complexity of accounting and appropriating emissions to countries. Nevertheless, due to environmental concerns on growing emissions the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) were mandated to frame and implement laws to control the emissions from these sectors. Despite steps taken by the organizations, there was an 80 per cent increase in CO₂ emissions from these sectors between 1990 and 2010, as

compared to a growth of 40 per cent from other activities across the globe. Further, according to the third IMO GHG study, it is estimated that the GHG emissions from international shipping are projected to grow to 6-14 per cent by 2050, an increase of 50-250 per cent from the business as usual (BAU) scenario due to increase in demand for seaborne transportation.

At the start of the negotiations the draft text of the Paris agreement had an explicit paragraph to control emissions from aviation and international shipping. However, during the course of the negotiations, the optional paragraph was omitted and these sectors are not included in the current climate deal. Therefore the responsibility to control GHG emissions from the shipping sector continues to rest with the IMO and there would be no national effort to regulate emissions from international shipping.

IMO's Leadership Role

While the nature of activities and the non-homogeneity of the actors was an impediment in including international shipping in any country based GHG accounting framework, the sector, under the guidance of the IMO was able to successfully negotiate and adopt a model for controlling emissions. Three key agreements have been evolved by the IMO since 2010 under a sectoral framework, and these will continue to be implemented by the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) in a phased manner. These are:

- (a) Adoption of NO_x Emission Standards for engines
- (b) Reduction in sulfur content of fuel to contain SO_x emissions
- (c) Mandatory mechanisms aimed at reducing GHG emissions from ships such as Energy Efficiency Design Index (EEDI) and implementation of Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plan (SEEMP)

Not undermining the efforts of the IMO to regulate emissions from international shipping within the overarching framework supported by UNFCCC, much more still remains to be done. An overall cap on emissions was resisted by the IMO in the run up

to the Paris meeting on the plea that it would restrict the profitability of shipping and would compromise on the industry's ability to meet the growing demand of the world's economy. However, the IMO expressed its solidarity with the global goal and has vowed to continue efforts to curb emissions from the sector.

An overall CO₂ emissions cap for the sector has to be implemented equally across all countries for reductions of aggregate GHG emissions. Such an initiative has to be global and flag neutral and can be best delivered and implemented under the guidance and leadership of the IMO. Considering that the shipping sector continues to be 'a servant of the world economy' and that there are no overall caps which have been agreed in the Paris climate deal, the IMO is doing a decent job of driving the shipping industry on the path of lower CO₂ emission intensity. The sectoral model which is applicable to all countries has triggered the growth of clean shipping and has the potential to reduce emissions of CO₂ per tonne-km by 50 per cent by 2050. While an absolute cap may not be feasible as it is incident on the quantum of world trade, deeper emission intensity cuts which are in the range of 80-90 per cent have been suggested by 2050 if a 2 degree centigrade goal has to be met. An aggressive approach to meet this goal would also require that emissions from international shipping have to peak by 2020 and need to fall thereafter at a drastic pace. A CO₂ neutral shipping industry by its own would be expensive to deliver and hence IMO must work towards offsetting these emissions by investing in carbon sinks in other sectors. Alternate options and other measures to reduce emissions would be discussed in the forthcoming 69th session of the MEPC meeting in April 2016.

Conclusion

While the global climate deal can be considered as a diplomatic success, it has left the maritime sector out of its ambit. This implies that the international shipping industry led by the IMO needs to demonstrate continued leadership for evolving binding agreements and for adopting targets which are consistent with the goal 1.5-2 degree C rise. The IMO is in a position to deliver a win-win arrangement as it can guide the

sector to regulate itself while contributing to the global goal of attaining carbon neutrality. It can do this at a pace which is technologically feasible while maximizing profits and contributing to the growth of the world economy.

Source: [National Maritime Foundation](#), February 25, 2016.

Economic Survey 2016: India in urgent need to increase shipping fleet

India's troubled shipping sector is in a dire need to change its fleet, which has as many as 42 per cent of the vessels that have crossed 20 years of age. In addition, 12 per cent of the fleet is in the 15-19 years bracket, while the ship-breaking sector continues to be in turmoil, the Economic Survey for 2015-16, tabled in Parliament by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, said today.

"The shipping sector has been passing through tumultuous waters in recent years... There is urgent need to increase India's shipping fleet. With asset prices currently being serendipitously low, the time is right to acquire new generation ships to replace ageing ones," it said. Expressing concern over the condition of India's fleet, it said it is aging and "42.42 per cent of the fleet is over 20 years old and 12.43 per cent in the 15-19 age group."

There is a "need for cheaper finance and longer tenure for funds in light of the fact that Indian ships are ageing and need to be replaced and asset prices are serendipitously low" it said.

There has been a sharp decline in the share of Indian ships in the carriage of India's overseas trade from about 40 per cent in the late 1980s to 7.45 per cent in 2014-15, it cautioned.

The significance of the sector can be understood from the fact that about 95 per cent of India's trade by volume and 68 per cent in terms of value is transported by sea.

As on 30 November 2015, India had a fleet strength of 1,246 ships with dead weight tonnage (DWT) of 15.37 million.

Despite having one of the largest merchant shipping fleets among developing countries, India's share in total world DWT is only 0.9 per cent as on 1 July 2015.

"The shipping sector has been passing through stormy waters... The Baltic Dry Index, a freight index and a good proxy for the robustness of trade as well as an indicator of demand for shipping services had fallen from a peak of 11,793 on 20 May 2008 to a low of 663...and is now in the red at 290 as on 10 February 2016," it said.

This, coupled with the fact that world and Indian services and merchandise trade growth was in negative territory in 2015 as in 2009, is a clear signal of the fragile international trade and shipping situation, it said.

The survey said import of cheap Chinese steel billets into the major ship-breaking locations is resulting in falling demand for scrap ships. Recognising the need to encourage the growth of Indian tonnage and for higher participation of Indian ships in Indian EXIM trade, the government has taken several key steps including making fuel tax free for all Indian flag coastal vessels and removing other obstacles, it said.

Source: [Economic Times](#), February 26, 2016.



Cambodia to Welcome Chinese Warships as Japan Navy Heads Home

China will hold its first-ever exercise with Cambodia's navy next week, in swift succession to a visit by the military vessels of Beijing's old enemy Japan, the latest sign of China's growing presence in a region where maritime tension is rising.

Three warships carrying 737 Chinese sailors will dock on Monday at a port in Preah Sihanouk province, just over a day after the scheduled departure of three vessels of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force now holding cultural exchanges with Cambodian navy personnel. While attention focuses on China's activities in the East and South China Seas, Beijing has been busy strengthening defense and economic ties with Cambodia, from which it is increasingly receiving political support, particularly within the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) grouping.

The visit by the warships come amid regional jitters over China's deployment of surface-to-air missiles to a disputed South China Sea island it controls, which Beijing said on Wednesday were "necessary self-defense facilities".

The Chinese navy will conduct a rescue exercise for just a few hours, close to where the Japanese are now docked. "This will be a big cooperation and joint exercise training in rescue operations," Cambodia's deputy navy chief, Vice Admiral Vann Bunneang, told Reuters. "This is to boost readiness for when boats sink and natural disasters occur."

China jointly runs a military academy in Cambodia and has been supplying its armed forces with helicopters, shoulder-fired rockets and vehicles, while sending cadets to China for training. Analysts say the United States is concerned about Cambodia becoming a vassal state that could do Beijing's regional bidding in the consensus-led ASEAN, a notion Phnom Penh rejects.

Washington has sought to keep Cambodia onside with its own military exercises, despite friction over the country's poor human rights record. In November it held a sixth search and rescue drill involving 200 U.S. and 300 Cambodian sailors.

Asked about China's exercises, the Japanese embassy in Cambodia said in a statement it would not comment on the activities of a third country. Visits by Japanese and Chinese ships showed competition for influence and Cambodia should be cautious in managing its future ties, said Ou Virak of the Future Forum think tank. "The question is actually how to deal with this when Japan wants a piece of influence, while China tries to do as much as they can, both financially and militarily," he said. "We need to be very careful, we need to balance relationships with all of them and eventually, we need to be self-reliant."

Source: [Reuters](#), February 17, 2016.

How Does Noise Pollution Affect Marine Life?

As our knowledge and experience as a species has unfolded, we have learned to traverse great distances at high speeds, mine valuable resources from untold depths and reach remote oceanic locations with ease. However, with these innovations and abilities comes a knock-on effect on the other species with which we share this planet and these waters – noise pollution.

A few years ago, it was learned that noise pollution could affect marine life feeding habits, especially with regard to the foraging patterns of blue whales. Now, a new study published in Nature Communications indicates that the consequences could be far worse than a missed meal – those affected by noise pollution could end up becoming a meal themselves.

Damselfish in Distress- A team of scientists at the University of Exeter and the University of Bristol carried out a number of experiments on damselfish, a particular strain of species which boasts more than several hundred varieties and is found mostly in tropical habitats. Conducting investigations both in a controlled laboratory situation and in the wild, the team found that damselfish were intensely affected by sonar interference when it came to avoiding predators.

Regardless of whether the noise was produced by a real motorboat overhead (as in the wild) or by a sound recording (as in the laboratory), the damselfish were far more likely to succumb to the jaws of a predator than in tranquillity. Their most likely predator in the wild is the dusky dottyback, which was recently found to be something of a chameleon in the marine kingdom.

“The combination of stress and poor responses to strikes by predators is why these fish become such easy prey,” explained Andy Radford, who is a co-author on the study.

Noise Pollution by the Numbers-

- Sound travels five times more quickly when underwater than it does through air.
- Noise pollution is most commonly found in the most densely packed habitats – for example, shallow coral reefs are home to over 25% of the ocean’s biodiversity, despite the fact that they only make up significantly less than 1% of its floor surface area.
- The Australian government estimate that half a million motorboats will traverse the Great Barrier Reef by 2040.
- Fish subjected to noise pollution consume as much as a third more oxygen than normal, indicating their elevated stress levels.
- Damselfish disorientated by noise pollution were 200% more likely to be eaten by a predator and six times less likely to even attempt escape.

Not Just Sea Life that is Under Threat

Noise pollution doesn't just affect life under the waves, either. A recent study by the University of Sheffield found that noise pollution could threaten the lives of baby birds and interrupt breeding patterns. This is largely because parents can't hear the distressed chirping of their young, leading to neglect and starvation.

Meanwhile, some species of bat do not depend on sonar, as many people think, but on a highly-sharpened sense of hearing. This allows them to hear the slightest rustling of prey in amongst the undergrowth and pinpoint their location – noise pollution throws a sizable spanner into those works. As such, the din we insist on making could be having a disastrous effect on our fellow Earth dwellers without us even knowing it.

Source: [Pollution Solutions](#), February 20, 2016.

US Aims to Build Powerful Partnership of Asia-Pacific Democracies

Aimed at counterbalancing and deterring coercion or unrestrained national ambitions, the Pentagon today told US lawmakers that it wants to build a strong quadrilateral partnership framework of the most powerful democracies in the Asia-Pacific, including India.

"USPACOM aims to build a powerful quadrilateral partnership framework of the most powerful democracies in the Indo-Asia-Pacific," Admiral Harry B Harris, Commander of the US Pacific Command, said during a Congressional hearing.

"India, Japan, Australia, and the US working together will be a force for the maintenance of the regional rules-based order, counterbalancing and deterring coercion or unrestrained national ambitions," Harris said in his testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Headed to India next week, Harris said he is excited about America's burgeoning relationship with the country.

"As the world's two largest democracies, we are uniquely poised to help bring greater security and prosperity to the entire region. Two visionary policies are now coinciding as the United States re-balances west to the Indo-Asia-Pacific and India implements its Act East policy," he said.

Last October's Malabar exercise between India, Japan and the US shows the security inter-connectedness of the Indian Ocean, Asia and the Pacific Ocean, he added.

Source: [The New Indian Express](#), February 23, 2016.

First China-India Maritime Dialogue: Beyond 'Icebreaking'

On 4th February 2016, India and China held their first-ever "Maritime Affairs Dialogue" at New Delhi. While the Indian side was led by the Joint Secretary (Disarmament and International Security Affairs) in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the Chinese delegation was led by the Assistant Minister of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Given that the two sides agreed to institutionalize a dialogue, the inaugural event was indeed a "seminal". Although the details of the discussions are not yet available in the public domain, this essay attempts to extrapolate the open-source reports, and "look beyond" it in context of emerging imperatives.

Since the turn of the new millennium, or even earlier, it began to be realized and acknowledged world-wide that the texture of future security and geopolitical environment in the "resurgent" Asia will depend much upon how the two resident regional powers – India and China – will shape their relations at the bilateral level. The two countries have traditionally been continental neighbours. However, since at least a

decade ago, the waters of the Indo-Pacific have become an arena for a maritime interface between the two in diverse arenas encompassing geopolitics, economics and security issues. The need, therefore, for the two countries to institutionalize a maritime dialogue has been long overdue.

It may be recalled that the foreign ministers of two sides had first decided to initiate the maritime dialogue nearly four years ago in March 2 2012. Such an arrangement is essential to foster cooperation, while also preventing unproductive competition and confrontation. Soon after the first Dialogue, the Indian MEA issued a press-release indicating its essentials. It states, “The dialogue covered issues of mutual interest, including exchange of perspectives on maritime security, developments in international regimes such as UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982) and (the other) IMO (-related treaties) and prospects for maritime cooperation”. The Chinese MFA press-release on the Dialogue states, “Both sides introduced their respective maritime development strategies and their respective stance and views on current maritime security situation, and agreed to enhance policy dialogue and expand practical cooperation in such areas as marine scientific research, navy exchanges, fishery and navigation in a joint effort to ensure maritime security and harmony.” The “exchange of views and perspectives on maritime security” may have begun with the two sides drawing satisfaction from the successful multinational anti-piracy mission in the Gulf of Aden, wherein India and China have been coordinating their policies and naval operations since 2008, including at the “Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia” (CGPCS).

The discussions may have also included other issues relating to good order at sea in the Indo-Pacific region. The “international regimes” are likely to have been discussed in the context of the developments in the South China Sea (SCS) relating to the maritime-territorial disputes, freedom of navigation and resource exploration. These discussions would have been valuable for both sides. For India, it is necessary to tell China its position on its hydrocarbon exploration in the SCS and its growing naval engagements with the other SCS littoral countries.

To China, it was an opportunity to present its perspectives, 3 achieve transparency of policies and allay concerns of the regional countries over its increased politico-military assertiveness in the region. It seems, however, that the first India-China Maritime Dialogue was essentially an “ice-breaker”; and in their own ways, both sides had envisaged their objectives to be rather limited, and rather symbolic. Since the Indian side was led by a Joint Secretary, the representation from the “functional” agencies/ navy would have been pitched at the “Director/ one-star” level or even below. From China’s perspective, the dialogue seems to have been accorded even lesser significance.

The photograph released by the Chinese MFA indicates that the Chinese side did not have any naval representation at all, at least not in uniform. Notably, two days earlier, a Chinese delegation under the same leadership was in Islamabad for the second China-Pakistan Maritime Dialogue; the first dialogue having been held in Beijing in July 2014. Since Pakistan’s delegation was headed by an Additional Secretary of the Foreign Ministry, functionaries much above the “Director/ one-star” level would have been represented. The Islamabad event itself, the higher level of representation and the indicative scope of the discussions encompassing “maritime connectivity”, “security of international shipping lanes” (ISL), “marine scientific research”, “search and rescue” and “naval and coast-guard cooperation” reveal the difference.

On the Dialogue in New Delhi, neither the Indian nor the Chinese official report mentions any discussion on China’s “Maritime Silk Road” (MSR) initiative, which is surprising. Further, the discussions on “practical cooperation” on each of the issues mentioned in the Chinese MFA report is unlikely to have gone beyond China gauging whether and to what extent India is amenable to the prospect of cooperation on a particular issue. The mention of “marine scientific research” is particularly instructive.

It is a pointer to China’s emergence as a major maritime power and its intent to undertake such research in the Indian Ocean, with major strategic implications for India. The next round of the India-China Maritime Dialogue is planned to “be held in

Beijing on a mutually convenient date”. The agenda for this – and the ensuing dialogues may need to be more “encompassing”, and include key issues that hold the key to a “harmonious” maritime interface between the two countries.

Most of these substantive issues broadly relate to China’s strategic intent in the Indian Ocean. These include ironing out the prevailing ambiguities on China’s MSR initiative; the rationale behind its emphasis on cooperating for “marine scientific research”; and an agreement on a naval code of conduct; both for force deployments and unintended tactical encounters, which could be reciprocated by India with regard to its own naval units in the western Pacific.

To address these issues, Dr. Ouyang Gouxing of China’s Hainan Academy for World Watch (HNIWW) aptly recommends a 2+2 Dialogue, wherein both sides are represented at the apex level by their respective foreign and defence ministries. He adds that the Chinese delegation would need to include a PLA Navy contingent from its South Sea Fleet (SSF), which is being integrated to the South War Zone responsible for China’s Indian Ocean strategy. India may also need to upgrade its naval participation accordingly. Hopefully, in due course, the two sides would be able to transcend bilateral issues and develop sufficient mutual trust to contribute to maritime security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

Source: [National Maritime Foundation](#), February 23, 2016.

Indonesia sinks 27 foreign boats to stop illegal fishing

Indonesia sank 27 impounded foreign boats on Monday, a minister said, as the world's largest archipelago nation stepped up a campaign against illegal fishing in its waters. The empty vessels from the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Myanmar were blown up or scuttled at five separate locations across the country, said Fisheries Minister Susi Pudjiastuti. The boats had been all caught fishing illegally in the archipelago of more

than 17,000 islands. Four Indonesian boats were also sunk after they were caught fishing without proper documentation. "The government is taking stronger and firmer action to enforce regulations to keep our waters safe," Pudjiastuti, a key figure in the campaign against illegal fishing, told journalists. Indonesia has sunk foreign boats on several occasions since the government launched the drive to combat illegal fishing, with President Joko Widodo claiming the practice costs the country's economy billions of dollars annually. However, the campaign has caused tensions with other countries in the region. China last year expressed concern after a Chinese boat was blown up.

Source: [Mizzima](#), February 23, 2016.

Indian Controller of Warship Production and Acquisition meets SL Navy Chief

Vice Admiral GS Pabby, the Controller of Warship Production and Acquisition (CWP & A) of the Indian Navy met the Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy Vice Admiral Ravindra Wijegunaratne at the Naval Headquarters yesterday (23 Feb). They held cordial discussions on matters of mutual interest and bilateral importance during the meeting. Mementos were also exchanged to mark the occasion.

Source: [Ministry of Defense Srilanka](#), February 24, 2016.

Pakistan Navy's distinctive plans to protect Gwadar seaport and Chinese there

Gwadar port city in Baluchistan was purchased by Pakistan from Oman in 1958 for Rs 5.5 billion Pak Rupees. At the present times, it is predominantly synonymous with China's presence there. There is general perception that it was China which due to its strategic interests pursued Pakistan to develop Gwadar seaport.

Contrary to this belief, it was Pakistan Navy which was first to identify importance of this strategically located location at Gwadar and carried out practicability study to establish a port for navel and commercial activities. Simultaneously, in July 1987, Pakistan Navy commissioned a base at Gwadar with a jetty and made it operational. However, it was the then Chinese vice-premier Wu Bangguo, who along with President Parvez Musharraf had laid the foundation stone a deep-sea port at Gwadar on March 22, 2002.

Pakistan Navy was known as Royal Pakistan Navy and was commanded by Rear Admiral James Wilfred Jefford of British Navy when Pakistan came into being on August 14, 1947. After partition of the Indian sub-continent, Royal Pakistan Navy, as its share, got four sloops (a single-mastered sailing vessel), four fleet minesweepers, eight motor minesweepers and harbor defense launches. On January 17, 1948 all ships of Royal Pakistan Navy (except one minesweeper) had left Bombay for Karachi to join Royal Pakistan Navy.

Meanwhile, on January 31, 1953, Vice Admiral Haji Mohd Siddiq Choudhri became the first Commander in Chief of Royal Pakistan Navy. On March 23, 1956, when Pakistan was proclaimed as 'Islamic Republic of Pakistan' under the 1956 Constitution, Pakistan Navy was re-designated as 'Pakistan Navy', replacing Queen's colour with Pakistani flag and the order of precedence was too changed from Navy, Army, Air Force to Army, Navy, Air Force.

Pakistan navy is mainly responsible for safeguarding country's coastline along the Arabian Sea. It is supported by two other naval paramilitary forces viz Pakistan Coast Guard and Maritime Security Agency. More recently, with the increasing developmental activities at Gwadar seaport and China's immense interest in the project, the responsibilities of Pakistan Navy have increased manifold.

China has strategic interests in Gwadar seaport as it would give access to them of the "hot waters" of Arabian sea, bringing them close to the Middle -East market and more

importantly China would be able to import oil through Gwadar Seaport and transport it to China through Korakoram Highway (KKH) in safe, secure, cheaper and shorter route to west of China.

With the commencement of \$46 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor(CPEC), to which Gwadar seaport is most important and significant project for China, Pakistan army has raised a Special Security Division(SSD), led by Major General Abdul Rafiue and comprising of nine army battalions and six wings of civil armed forces to provide security cover to about 1500 Chinese on three thousand kilometer long route from Gwadar port , Baluchistan to China's Kashgar city, northwestern China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

Pakistan Navy too has been assigned with special responsibility to protect Gwadar seaport project from offshore threats and the over five hundred Chinese working there. CPEC was initially proposed by the then Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang in May 2013 during his visit to Pakistan. CPEC, is also known as new Maritime Silk Route, came into existence in May 2015 during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit(April,2015) to Pakistan.

After Chinese President's visit to Pakistan, Pakistan Navy had accelerated its operational activities to safe guard Chinese working in Gwadar seaport from any threat emanating from the waters of the Arabian Sea. Pakistan Navy conducted (August, 2015) an exercise viz; "Tahaffuz-e-Sahil" to check the efficacy of security mechanism for the safety and security of Gwadar seaport and its associated infrastructure against any terrorist venture.

Since China was concerned about any impending threat to Chinese working in Gwadar and its establishments there as well as other parts of the Pakistan, it sent a high level security and military delegation to Pakistan to take up the issue with the host country. This was led by QU Jainjing, Deputy Director General of China's Ministry of Public Security, Chinese delegation which visited Gwadar (November 1, 2015) in this context.

Following Chinese security delegation visit to Gwadar, Pakistan naval chief Admiral Muhammad Zakaullah also visited (November 7, 2015) and took stock of security arrangements there. There he disclosed the raising of a Special Marine Battalion against any impending threat to Chinese engineers working at Gwadar seaport as well as to infrastructure of the port. Admiral Muhammad Zakaullah also ensured protection of workers at Gwadar seaport and port itself from any asymmetric threats.

Meanwhile, 'Navy News' of the Pakistan Navy, in January 2016 reported that Pakistan Navy had decided to deploy two more Marine Battalions at Gwadar area for round the clock security of Chinese working at several sites of the port as well as well any threat from the sea. These marines would also make the sea links secured which is used for communications and also provide protection to other trade ships routing in and out of the Gwadar port.

In the meantime, Pakistan Navy had conducted (February 2016) mock exercises of boarding and unloading helicopters on its naval frigate in the sea. Pakistan Navy was also reportedly contemplating to take more operational measures to ensure security at safety at Gwadar seaport and Chinese working there, including shifting of some of its operational assets from Karachi to Jinnah Naval Base at Ormara, which is located about 350 Km from the Karachi port and it is mid way between Karachi and Gwadar.

Gwadar seaport is considered to be the backbone of US\$ 46 billion worth mega CPEC project. Pakistan Navy, therefore, is to play a major role in its security which is vital not only to Pakistan but for China too, who through this route has been planning to reach markets of Middle-East and to transport oil from Middle-East and Africa. For China it would be a low-cost, safe, secure route, reducing thousands of kilometers for oil transportation. China has already started operations at Gwadar seaport which is 70 kilometers from Iran and 700 kilometers from east of the Strait of Hormuz, a major oil supply route. Pakistan Navy is now operationally engaged to look after all sea related security aspects of the Gwadar seaport, its affiliated infrastructure and more importantly safety of Chinese engineers there.

In the meantime, China will invariably remain concerned not only about safety and security of its nationals working at Gwadar seaport but also for the entire project as in future it would be a China's naval outpost on the Indian Ocean.

Source: [Merinews](#), February 24, 2016.

India, US navies to sail together in Indo-Pacific waters soon

The warships of India and the United States will soon sail together in the Indo-Pacific waters, according to a new roadmap New Delhi and Washington recently worked out for implementing their joint strategic vision for Asia Pacific and Indian Ocean Region.

Though the roadmap does not implicitly propose joint patrol by Indian and American naval vessels in the disputed South China Sea, it apparently reflects broader synergy between the navies of the two nations in response to increasing maritime assertiveness by Beijing. “I hope that in the not too distant future, United States and Indian Navy vessels steaming together will become a common and welcome sight throughout Indo-Pacific waters,” US ambassador to India, Richard R Verma, said, while speaking at an event organized by Indian Association of Foreign Affairs Correspondents and India International Centre in New Delhi. He said that India and America of late concluded “a roadmap for the implementation of the historic joint strategic vision for the Asia Pacific and Indian Ocean Regions”, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Barack Obama announced in New Delhi in January 2015.

“Our countries will cooperate as never before on the high seas, during responses to natural disasters, on maritime security issues and in consultation with other partners and allies in the region,” said Verma.

India and US concluded the roadmap for greater maritime cooperation in Asia Pacific and Indian Ocean regions, at a time when China’s dispute with its neighbours—Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam and Philippines—over South China Sea escalated. Amid reports about

China deploying surface-to-air missiles in one of the disputed islands in South China Sea, New Delhi last week joined US and other nations to ask Beijing to refrain from taking any “unilateral action” in the region. India earlier joined US and Japan to stress that freedom of navigation in international waters must be protected and sovereignty issues must be resolved peacefully in accordance with accepted principles of international law, including the United Nations’ Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982. Beijing’s bid to create strategic assets in Indian Ocean region encircling India has also been a cause of concern for New Delhi.

Source: [Deccan Herald](#), February 24, 2016.

Iran, India to Stage Maritime Maneuver in Indian Ocean

Iranian Navy Commander Habibollah Sayyari told the reporters that Iran’s navy would have joint short term maneuvers with Indian navy before expanding tactical cooperation. The 38th flotilla of the Iranian Navy is currently in Tanzanian waters and intends to dock at the Tanzanian port city of Dar us Salaam in the next couple of days, Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari told the reporters on the sidelines of his meeting with an Indian Navy delegation on Thursday in Tehran.

Touching upon the importance of the Indian Ocean for Iran and the whole world, the Rear Admiral announced that Iran would not allow insecurity in the waters. We can boost our combat capability to that stage that no threat would be out of our control, noted the Iranian Commander.

About the talks he had with the Indian delegation, Sayyari told the press that there would be a great deal of cooperation between Iranian and Indian Navies, and keeping the security in the northern waters of the Indian Ocean is one of them.

An Indian flotilla will berth in Iran's port city of Bandar Abbas in late April or early May, the Iranian commander said talking about the plans to let flotillas of both countries be in touch. He affirmed that before establishing long-lasting tactical cooperation, maneuvers and rescue operations, some short drills will be held jointly.

Source: [Mehr News](#), February 25, 2016.

India seeks to be maritime, international trade power: President

President Pranab Mukherjee today said India is desirous of once again emerging as a major centre for international trade and become a maritime power as he inaugurated the country's largest heritage conservation project here.

The initiative called the Muziris heritage project is an ambitious plan comprising development and conservation of palaces, museums, a synagogue and a number of archaeological monuments in the state and is being implemented by the Kerala Tourism department with support of its central counterpart. "Being the largest conservation project in the country and first green project of Kerala government, Muziris heritage project has a lot to boast about, be it in the area of heritage, conservation or tourism," he said.

Mukherjee said he has been informed that the next phase of this project is the 'Spice Route Initiative' which will explore international connections and linkages that the Malabar coast had with many parts of the world.

"The Spice Route Initiative is both important and timely with India seeking to once again emerge as a major centre of international trade and transport as well as a maritime power," he said.

The Spice Route initiative aims to link 41 countries in Asia and Europe with India. The President lauded Kerala's "spirit of tolerance and catholicity of outlook".

"The Muziris heritage project celebrates this magnificent heritage of our land where people of different religions, castes and languages live in harmony. This project reminds us that our history is one of assimilation, mutual respect and celebration of our differences, respecting each other's beliefs and values," Mukherjee said.

He said India has always been one of the most cosmopolitan societies around the globe as it is "comfortable in dealing with diversity and welcoming of new ideas and cultures." "I hope this project will spread the message of Indian cosmopolitanism far and wide adding thereby to India's soft power across the world," the President said.

Source- [India TV](#), February 27, 2016.

ASEAN ministers resent China's moves to "militarise" South China Sea

Foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) adopted a statement Saturday expressing veiled resentment over China's building of artificial islands and fortifying of its garrison in the South China Sea, without specifically naming the country.

"The ministers emphasised the importance of non militarisation and self-restraint in the conduct of activities" in the disputed waters, Lao Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Thongloun Sisoulith said at the close of the one-day ministerial retreat in the Laotian capital.

Laos, this year's chair of the 10-member ASEAN, announced the negotiated press statement.

The foreign ministers noted in the statement that they "remained seriously concerned over the recent and ongoing developments" in the South China Sea, where up to 50 percent of the world's oil tanker shipments and over half the world's merchant tonnage

pass through. In an apparent allusion to China's activities in the waters, they said such moves have "eroded trust and confidence" and "increased tensions" in the region.

The Philippines and Vietnam, both claimants to the disputed sea, were among those who voiced concern over China's land reclamations and "escalation of activities" which could undermine peace, security and stability in the region, some ministers said.

Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh told reporters that they discussed China's latest move to position surface-to-air missiles on disputed territory in the Paracel Islands chain.

"We expressed our concern not only over the land reclamation but also the deployment of the military equipment on Woody Island, including the missiles and the aircraft and all the things that threaten peace and security in the region," he said.

He also said that during the retreat the ASEAN ministers "placed emphasis on centrality and unity" of the regional grouping. "We speak in one voice," he said.

The press statement said the foreign ministers "reaffirmed the importance of maintaining peace, security, stability, and freedom of navigation in and over-flight above the South China Sea."

They also called for avoiding "actions that may further complicate the situation" and pursuing "peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law."

The ministers reiterated their call on claimants to help in resolving the dispute peacefully and to have "full respect for the legal and diplomatic processes, without resorting to the threat or use of force."

Like in past meetings, the ministers again stressed the need to speed up the forging of a binding code aimed at reducing the risk of conflict in the disputed sea that ASEAN and China have been trying to hammer out since efforts to reopen talks began in 2012.

Competing claims to the South China Sea have for decades been a source of tension in the region.

ASEAN has been criticised for failing to foster cohesiveness and unity especially in dealing with the overlapping territorial and maritime disputes involving China, Taiwan and four ASEAN members -- Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam.

Apart from maritime security issues, the ASEAN ministers also discussed matters including emerging nontraditional security challenges such as terrorism, cyber security, natural disasters, climate change, irregular migration and trafficking of persons.

They also talked about the impact of North Korea's latest nuclear test conducted in January on peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

The ministers reiterated ASEAN's "full support for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner" and called on all parties concerned "to exert more efforts to maintain peace and security" in that region.

They sought the creation of "an environment conducive to an early resumption of the six-party talks to help pave the way for maintaining and strengthening peace, security and stability in the Korean Peninsula."

The six-party talks, involving North and South Korea, China, Japan, Russia and the United States and which is aimed at ending Pyongyang's nuclear program have been stalled since late 2008.

On the recent terror attack in Jakarta, the ministers reaffirmed "ASEAN's commitment to working with the international community to further intensify its cooperation to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations."

ASEAN also includes Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Singapore and Thailand.

Source: [Bangkok Post](#), February 28, 2016.