



MAKING WAVES

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Editorial Team

*Captain (Dr.) Gurpreet S Khurana
Commander Dinesh Yadav
Ms. Richa Klair*

Address

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

Email:maritimeindia@gmail.com

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Maritime Security, Data Science Applications Discussed at BSides Las Vegas

-James R. Lint

Overview: On August 2nd and 3rd, BSides Las Vegas held its eighth annual information security conference at the Tuscany Suites in Las Vegas. BSides is a community event organized and run by volunteers. The following is our second survey of some of the many strategies, insights and experts that enriched the entire two-day experience for cybersecurity professionals.

Chad Dewey Explains Urgent Need for Better Maritime Security

One of the Tuesday sessions featured an interesting and alarming talk, "Cruise Line Security Assessment or Hacking the High Seas." Speaker Chad Dewey, a computer science and information systems instructor at Michigan's Saginaw Valley State University, discussed a physical security assessment that found incidents of cruise line staff leaving doors unlocked and forgetting to wear their nametags. These lapses in security are indicators of a descending, slippery slope of security standards.

The talk also pointed out that some navigation systems on cruise line ships are run by the older Windows XP operating system. Windows XP was new back in 2001 and ceased getting security updates in April 2014, leaving security holes that could be exploited by the wrong people.

Dewey mentioned that most ships are connected to the Maritime Telecom Network at sea. A security assessment found that some default usernames and passwords were still in use, leaving ships' public-facing IT services vulnerable.

Analyst Ken Westin Analyzes Data Science Applications for Information Security

Ken Westin, an information security analyst and researcher, spoke about applying data science concepts to information security. He said that we can access more threat intelligence, network intelligence and endpoint security data now than ever before. The tools and data sources have evolved, increasing access to meaningful data for information security.

Westin noted that cyber security professionals can leverage machine learning, but we have to beware of statistics that masquerade as machine learning. Machine learning is more than statistics; it is an evolution of information and the quality of the information. According to Westin, the goal is to enhance, not replace, current information security processes. He believes that the weak human + machine + process can equal superior knowledge, compared to machines alone.

Westin explained the need to keep data fresh and flowing, saying that data has a half-life; it can get old and obsolete. With the copious threat data that flows from computer systems, we have a lake of fresh data available to us if we choose to use it.

BSides Offers Career Services For IT Professionals

A fascinating area that was busy on both days of BSides was the Hire Ground room. Hire Ground provided mock interview practice runs with hiring managers, resume reviews and career advice, in addition to Hire Ground's interesting presentations about getting hired and job hunting. These career-related services were helpful for IT professionals desiring to move up the ladder, change jobs or explore new job areas.

The Hire Ground room also offered a game called "Recruiter Bingo." Applicants would take a bingo card, get the card stamped at the various sponsor and hiring tables, and win prizes. While the Hire Ground room was a serious and potentially career-enhancing

area, the sponsors and hiring managers in the room kept the activities light and interesting.

“I Am The Cavalry” Discusses Uncomfortable Approaches to Solving Problems

On the last day of BSides, the nonprofit and advocacy group called “I Am The Cavalry” (or IATC) held a discussion, “Uncomfortable Approaches to Problems.” The morning focused on problems and the afternoon on solutions.

Experts Beau Woods and Joshua Corman offered some excellent slides on explaining problems and ways to define the problems. They also led discussions for potential solutions to those problems.

IATC members are often selected to sit on government panels to help leaders define and solve cyber issues that can become drastic in the future. The potential is out there for hacking medical implants and medical devices.

In addition, hackers have used ransom ware to hack hospital computer systems. The cost of shutting down a hospital’s day-to-day operations by preventing access to patient records can be costly in dollars. But someday, it may be costly in lives.

IATC also discussed a program they have advocated for since 2014: the Five Star Automotive Cyber Safety Program. The most intriguing element of this program was evidence capture. Most automotive systems will not always show evidence of tampering or the required normal computer logging to facilitate safety investigations.

Evidence capture will create issues with privacy sensitivity and the balance of a “black box” with the additional legal issues of surveillance infractions of citizens. By contrast, many areas of the European Union have much stricter surveillance and privacy laws.

IATC has their work cut out for them, but they seem to be pushing forward new ideas and finding ways to explain the problems to non-technical people.

BSides Combines Unique Qualities, Fun, Education and Networking

Although BSides is a small conference compared to the large information security events (Black Hat and DEF CON) held near the same time frame, it is strategically scheduled to take advantage of the presence of leaders, professionals and new learners. Ultimately, it helps attendees improve the field of information security.

Attendees can visit this conference for free (many people leave a donation). This is unique among Las Vegas conferences. At BSides, everyone is a participant, sharing their wisdom and experience with others of varying IT/cyber skill levels. Organizers offered a variety of discussions with labels such as “Common Ground” (focusing on non-tech issues of importance to the IT community), and “Underground” (an off-the-record series delving deeper into the subjects that are better discussed behind closed doors).

Another label was “Proving Ground,” referring to BSides’ unique mentorship program for first-time presenters. This mentorship program is different from many conventions and enables BSides’ speakers to improve their public speaking skills, while BSides gets a new, fresh focus on the topic of the conference talks.

BSides also has a “Pros vs. Joes Capture the Flag” event to allow new information security personnel to test their computer system defense management. It’s a live-fire security challenge where the “Joes” (new learners) get a chance to practice their skills in a real network without fear of causing a global computer shutdown. The professionals get to practice against personnel who are not doing “normal” security. It is also a tryout for the BSides’ standing Red Team.

If you’re a computer security professional, business leader, engineer, IT student or IT faculty, BSides provides a wealth of insightful, career-relevant information. It offers an entertaining mix of fun and serious learning for everyone, and you have the opportunity to talk with industry leaders in a relaxed, low-stress environment.

Source: [InHomeland Security](#), 4 August 2016

US, South Korea to Boost Joint Maritime Security Ties in Western Pacific

South Korean Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Jung Ho-sub said that he agreed with US Chief of Naval Operations Admiral John Richardson the importance of alliance, particularly navy-to-navy, to deal with the "threat from the North Korea," as well as the instability that may take place in the South China Sea.

WASHINGTON (Sputnik) — The chiefs of naval operations for the United States and South Korea agreed to increase bilateral efforts to ensure maritime security, especially in waters near North Korea and in the South China, the US Navy said in a press release on Thursday.

"I agree with the importance of our alliance, particularly navy-to-navy, to deal with the threat from the North [Korea], as well as the instability that may take place in the South China Sea," South Korean Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Jung Ho-sub said, according to the release.

Jung and his counterpart, US Chief of Naval Operations Admiral John Richardson agreed during a Wednesday meeting at the Pentagon that enhanced cooperation and information sharing between the navies, particularly in anti-submarine and mine warfare, will help counter threats across the Indo-Asia Pacific region, the release explained.

The US and its allies have conducted a number of exercises in the South China Sea to emphasize international opposition to Beijing's claim of sovereignty over the key waterway for commercial shipping

Source: [sputniknews](https://sputniknews.com), 4 August 2016

Protection Vessels International: Weekly Maritime & Onshore Security Report

Six assailants armed with knives boarded a berthed product tanker at 0520 hrs local time at SDS Terminal at Lubuk Gaung port. The robbers entered the engine room and took the oiler and another crew member hostage while they stole the ship's spares and personal belongings before fleeing. The incident was reported to the Port Control.

-PVI Analysis: The incident is the latest in a spate of violent armed robberies at Indonesian ports and anchorage areas in recent weeks. The trend indicates deteriorating port security at Indonesian ports and vessels should remain vigilant at all times, particularly after dark when many robbers look to take advantage of decreased visibility.

Philippines: ReCAAP issues advisory on maritime kidnappings off Sabah 28 July
The Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combatting Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) has issued an advisory for vessels following a series of Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) kidnappings and hijackings off Malaysia's Sabah in the Celebes and Sulu Seas since mid-March. There have been six reported hijackings and kidnappings since March, and 15 of the 33 crewmembers abducted remain in captivity. ReCAAP reported that the attackers targeted slow-moving boats with low freeboards, occurred during daytime and that the pirates work in groups of five or more.

PVI Analysis: the advisory comes days after the last reported abduction, claimed by ASG, off Sabah on 18 July as kidnappings continue in the Celebes and Sulu seas despite increased maritime security and restrictions on coal shipments in the area.

WestAfrica

Ghana: Vessel reports robbery at Takoradi Anchorage 28 July
A gang of robbers boarded an unidentified maritime vessel anchored in the Takoradi Anchorage at around 0350 hrs local time. According to the crew, the robbery failed after the crew raised the alarm and the robbers fled the scene. No harm was done to the crew or the vessel and no properties were stolen. Local authorities are investigating the incident.

-PVI Analysis: Robberies at Takoradi Anchorage are occasionally reported, although many more incidents are thought to go unreported through recognised channels. Robberies at West African ports and anchorages tend to be non-violent in nature due to the proximity of security forces, with more violent acts taking place further out at sea.

Selected Maritime News

Australia: Port of Newcastle launches appeal against Glencore 27 July

The Port of Newcastle commenced legal action at the court of appeal against mining firm Glencore over control of port access fees. Since the port's privatisation in 2014, port authorities have raised fees to access the channel by between 40 to 60 percent, prompting Glencore to launch a case to have its monopoly over granting access to the port more thoroughly enforced. The action is likely to draw closer scrutiny to other government assets undergoing privatisation.

China: Beijing asks Washington to support maritime talks with Manila 26 July
China has asked the US to support the resumption of talks between Beijing and Manila over the South China Sea dispute. The move comes after the UN-backed Permanent Court of Arbitration on 12 July ruled in favour of the Philippines in a case brought by Manila over China's claims to the South China Sea. Beijing has refused to recognise the ruling and has accused Washington of stoking tensions in the region. While the previous Philippine government had adopted a tough stance against China on the issue, the new administration of President Rodrigo Duterte has expressed a willingness to negotiate with Beijing. The Philippine foreign minister said Manila was in favour of a peaceful resolution to the bilateral dispute and that the issue did not concern other countries.

Source :hellenicshippingnews 4 August 2016

Security Breaches in Indonesia's Waters May Affect ASEAN: Navy Official

The head of the Indonesian Navy's Staff and Command School, First Adm. Arusukmono Indra Sucahya, said recent security breaches in Indonesia's waters may also affect regional security, especially in Asean.

"Precautionary measures are necessary to avoid more incidents," Indra said at a discussion on maritime security in Jakarta on Tuesday (09/08).

Indra said some of these incidents could be classified as transnational crimes or terrorism, including sabotaging vital offshore objects, piracy and hijacking.

People smuggling, drug trafficking and territorial transgressions have also been rampant and need to be stopped.

Indra said Indonesia has to do more to ensure security on its waters, especially since most of Asean waters are within Indonesia's jurisdiction, including on the busy Malacca Strait.

"If Indonesia shows it can ensure security on its waters, it will earn the respect of our neighbors and other countries," Indra said.

Source [JarkataGlobe](#) 9 August 2016

China Accelerates Response Time for Possible Taiwan Invasion

-Ryan Pickrell

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) claims that it has found innovative new ways to accelerate a potential assault against the island of Taiwan.

According to an article released in the PLA Daily and republished on the Chinese Ministry of Defense website, new innovations have given China's 1st Amphibious Mechanized Division, the unit charged with making preparations for a possible invasion of Taiwan, a serious boost.

The 1st Amphibious Mechanized Division has reduced the amount of time needed to prepare and mount an assault by roughly one-third by embracing several modern warfare tactics. For starters, China has abandoned what it calls the "Cold War-era 'fight from the barracks' approach" and combined its storage facilities and amphibious assault vehicles to increase mobility.

Vehicles have reportedly been loaded with all the materials needed to ensure that China's soldiers are ready for a war against Taiwan. The purpose is to replace outdated storage facilities with assault vehicles and eliminate the time-consuming preparation process, which has traditionally involved moving supplies from the storage facilities to the assault vehicles.

The PLA has also intensified its efforts to construct reliable information network infrastructure in order to facilitate dynamic data monitoring and the development of integrated command systems. These new systems, which are now operational, allow for unified battlefield management and real-time data sharing for dramatically-improved combat readiness.

As a test of its new capabilities, the 1st Amphibious Mechanized Division was given an order to prepare for an assault without any prior notification or warning. The PLA reported that not only was the military's response orderly and effective, but the

preparation process was completed in a noticeably reduced amount of time. In addition to combat readiness, the PLA's new tactics also improve combat sustainability.

When Chinese President Xi Jinping took office three and a half years ago, he called upon China to build a strong army capable of winning wars. Since then, he has been pushing the PLA to pursue modernization and the development of advanced battlefield tactics. A lot of emphasis has been put on turning ceremonial drills into real combat drills for actual scenarios that the PLA might encounter while defending China's national sovereignty. Taiwan, like the East and South China Sea, is a "core interest" of the Chinese state.

China has more than 1,500 ballistic missiles deployed and aimed at the island of Taiwan. PLA ground forces also regularly conduct joint training operations with the PLA Navy (PLAN) in preparation for an attack against Taiwan. China's activities in the East and South China Sea are putting Chinese military units in positions around Taiwan. A Taiwanese report released late last year argues that China will attempt to retake the island before 2020

Source: [dailycallernewsfoundation](http://www.dailycallernewsfoundation.com) , 11 August 2016

Togo sees launching of African journalists network for maritime security.

Togolese Minister of Communication Guy Madje Lorenzo, during launching ceremony, said the network initiative will help African populations appropriate the spirit of African Union summit on maritime piracy issues and the blue economy in Africa scheduled to be held in October this year in Lome.

Lorenzo added it will help also popularize resolutions and recommendation of the Summit expected to secure and protect maritime activities for substantial economic returns from African sea resources.

Arimiyao Tchagnao, a journalist from Togo, has been elected chairman of the network executive board of thirteen members.

He said African countries have been facing, over the past few years, acute sea insecurity issues including maritime piracy, human, weapon and drug trafficking by sea.

“Statistics are horrifying. Gulf of Guinea experiences one maritime piracy act every week and illegal fishing represents the enormous loss of 10 to 23 billion US dollars for African countries”, Arimiyao Tchagnao said.

The chairman also said 75 percent of major global fisheries are over-exploited and are becoming depleted.

“Seas and oceans have become places where poisonous substances are discharged devastating marine fauna and flora”, he added.

He explained the main objective of the African journalists’ network for maritime security is to sensitize journalists and populations on topics related to sea. Tchagnao added it is also to promote best practices intended to protect sea resources.

Source: [news4security](http://news4security.com), 14 August 2016



Royal Australian Navy establishes new mine warfare team.

The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) has officially christened the new mine warfare team at the HMAS Waterhen shore installation in Sydney.

Christened after the 16th Mine Sweeping Squadron, the new Australia Mine Warfare Team 16 is expected to bolster the mine warfare capabilities of the RAN.

RAN Chief of Navy vice-admiral Tim Barrett said: “The team’s formation follows a major review of navy’s mine clearance capability.

“This has resulted in a significant workforce restructure and the delivery of upgraded mine warfare and clearance diving systems.

“Ultimately, the review and restructure will deliver a sustainable, full-spectrum, deployable mine warfare capability to enable future expeditionary maritime task group operations.”

According to Australia Mine Warfare Team 16 commanding officer lieutenant commander Ryan Carmichael, the newly formed team will be assigned a key role in aligning mine warfare and clearance diving with Navy Strategy 2018.

Navy Strategy 2018, which was launched at RAN’s maritime warfare training centre HMAS Watson last year, aims to secure a naval force that will be able to generate and deploy a self-supported and sustainable maritime task groups that can engage in a range of maritime security operations with lethality.

Specifically, the strategy outlines the means to achieve the objectives set by Chief of Navy, vice-admiral Tim Barrett, in Plan Pelorus - Navy Strategy 2018.

Source: [naval-technology](#) ,2 August 2016

US to provide Argentina with 24 state of the art T6-C Texan II training aircraft.

Argentina is in the process of purchasing 24 T6-C Texan II training aircraft from the United States, which will also be employed in border control and combating drugs. Apparently the operation has been approved by the US Defense Department and was one of several good news Secretary of State brought last week when he visited Buenos Aires.

The aircraft will be used for training pilots as well as in “border control missions, particularly the porous northern border of Argentina”, according to the release announcing the operation with Beechcraft which will demand 300 million dollars.

The sale is considered a strong gesture to help cement bilateral relations between Argentina and the United States, launched by president Barack Obama when he visited the country last March upgrading deteriorated relations to almost a strategic partnership.

The training aircraft will also represent a strong material and morale boost for the depleted Argentine Air Force, which has very few units in flying conditions hampering the training of new pilots.

According to Buenos Aires reports, the president Mauricio Macri administration is also looking to replace the obsolete decommissioned French built Mirage with a light fighter plane, the Aermacchi M346.

Since taking office president Macri has repeatedly said that the Armed Forces have a “preponderant and participative” role to play in the three objectives of his administration, zero poverty, defeating the drugs trade and uniting Argentines.

However members of the opposition question having the military involved in domestic security issues which is specifically banned by law.

The Beechcraft T6-C Texan II is a single-engine turboprop aircraft built by the Raytheon Aircraft Company, which became Hawker Beechcraft and later Beechcraft Corporation.

Based on the Pilatus PC-9, the T-6 has replaced the US Air Force's Cessna T-37B Tweet and US Navy's T-34C Turbo Mentor. The T-6A is used by the US Air Force for basic pilot training and Combat Systems Officer (CSO) training and by the US Navy and US Marine Corps for Primary and Intermediate Naval Flight Officer (NFO) training. The T-6A is also used as a basic trainer by the Royal Canadian Air Force; the Greek Air Force, the Israeli Air Force, and the Iraqi Air Force. The T-6B is the primary trainer for U.S. Student Naval Aviators. The T-6C is used for training by the Royal Moroccan Air Force, the Royal New Zealand Air Force and the Mexican Air Force.

Source:mercopress ,8 August 2016

China's Only Luhai-Class Shenzhen Destroyer Gets Weapons Upgrade, Ready to Return For Operations in South China Sea.

-Vishakha Sonawane

China upgraded the missile system of its only Luhai-class destroyer Shenzhen, which will resume operations with the People's Liberation Army Navy's fleet in the South China Sea. The move comes at a time when tensions continue to mount in the disputed region.

Shenzhen's missile system was upgraded to a 32-cell vertical launch to fire medium-range HHQ-16 surface-to-air missiles, according to a report by IHS Jane's 360, a British publishing company that keeps records on military equipment, on Wednesday. HHQ-16 SAM system is reported to have a range of 19 nautical miles and a maximum speed of

2,148 miles per hour. According to defense experts, it is comparable to the Russian Gollum/Shtil-2 missile system.

The 6,000-ton destroyer was commissioned in 1999, and it is exclusive among modern destroyer classes due to its steam propulsion system. Shenzhen also works as a helicopter hangar and has space for the landing and takeoff of up to two helicopters

The development comes nearly a month after the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague ruled that China's unreserved claims in the South China Sea are illegal and not based on any historic claims. In response, Beijing rejected the court's ruling with Chinese President Xi Jinping saying the South China Sea islands have been "Chinese territories since ancient times." Russia supported China's rejection of the court ruling.

The South China Sea region has been long contested, with Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam laying claim to various areas. Beijing has been expanding its presence in the disputed region and has built three runways on the Spratly archipelago. However, China has consistently defended its actions, saying it does not have any intentions of starting a conflict and that its aircraft facilities will maintain safety in the region.

Source: [ibtimes](#), 11 August 2016

Urgent Israeli Navy order for new US coastal craft

The Mediterranean is fast filling up with bigger and more sophisticated warships than ever before, leaving the Israeli Navy lagging behind and short of the new kind of vessels needed to meet the changing challenges to its shores and marine assets, notably from seaborne terror.

Israel's naval edge has melted down rapidly in the past year. Egypt took delivery in June of the first of two advanced French Mistral-class helicopter carriers, the Gemal Abdel Nasser, with the second due in two months. Each carries 46 attack helicopters. And Russia has moved over to the Mediterranean its aircraft carrier, as well as a fleet of cruisers and nuclear surface and submarine vessels. Israel's small and dated fleet is less than ready for the kind of asymmetrical warfare posed by new enemies, such as terrorist organizations, including Hamas' naval commandos from the Gaza Strip, Hizballah's rubber rafts from Lebanon and the small submarines operated by various jihadist organizations in the Red Sea. The jihadists acquired them from South American gangs which used them to smuggle drugs and upgraded them to carry terrorists with their weapons and equipment, or be rigged like a carbomb.

The Israel Navy, in addition to defending Israel's shores, is responsible for protecting commercial ships heading to and from Israel; defending drilling platforms, gas pipelines and undersea optic cables; enforcing the blockade on Gaza; and securing Israel's ports.

In a hurry to restore the IDF's naval edge, the Defense Ministry and the Navy are pressing US defense contractor Lockheed Martin to produce the results for the tender it won in July to evaluate the operational viability of a new battleship, in terms of its compatibility with Israel's military needs, suitability to its naval theater of operations and ability to contend with the types of threats Israel faces in the Mediterranean and Red Seas.

The high price set for this evaluation (about \$5.2 million) and the short timeline (nine months) given Lockheed Martin researchers to come up with results attest to the urgency of the Israel Navy's need for a new type of vessel, namely the littoral combat ship (LCS), which the United States has introduced to guard its shores. These ships have a minimal radar signature and are capable of high speed relative to their size. They can also land and store helicopters, transport troops, operate drones and carry and store armored vehicles.

These LCSs are armed with artillery, missile and electronic warfare systems. The LCS would fill the gap in Israel's defenses against asymmetrical threats to its shores. At present, the Israel Navy's most sophisticated and costly craft are three Dolphin-class submarines. Two more of them are scheduled to join the fleet in 2018 and 2019. They are the spearhead of the Israel's secret warfare capabilities. According to foreign media, some of those subs carry missiles with nuclear warheads. Their shortcoming is that they run on diesel engines which are outdated compared to nuclear-powered subs.

The Navy also uses a wide range of other vessels of various sizes and capabilities in terms of speed, visibility, troop transportation, weaponry and intelligence systems. None provide an adequate response to the new type of terrorist warfare that could threaten Israel's shores. Israel tends therefore forego the additional two Dolphin subs on order from Germany and instead update its Navy with the purchase of a pair of the littoral combat ships that are better suited to its changing needs.

Source: [debka](#) 11 August 2016

Japan Takes More Aggressive Stance in East China Sea; Plans to Deploy Missiles to Disputed Islands

-Som Patidar

Japan is adopting a more aggressive stance in the East China Sea with a new plan to deploy new land-to-sea missiles to the disputed islands.

Japanese media reported that Tokyo has decided to deploy the new land-to-sea missiles to increase its maritime defense capabilities in the wake of China's growing "aggression" in the region.

"In light of China's repeated acts of provocation around the Senkaku Islands, Japan aims to increase deterrence with improved long-range strike capability," Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper reported.

The new missiles, with a range of 300 kilometers, will be deployed on islands such as Miyako in 2023. Japan aims to protect its territorial waters around the disputed Senkaku Islands with the help of the new missile

Chinese state media has slammed Japan's decision to deploy missiles to the islands. "If Japan wants to make trouble with China on the latter's path to the Pacific, then it shouldn't make a fuss about the fact that China will limit Japan's waterways in the South China Sea," Global Times said in a strong-worded editorial. "Japan shouldn't use double standards between the militarization of the Miyako Islands and the militarization of the Nansha Islands."

Japan has been engaged in a bitter maritime dispute with China over the East China Sea. Tokyo is also supporting the Philippines in its dispute with China over territories in the South China Sea. The Japanese government last week announced that it would provide two patrol vessels and a surveillance aircraft to the Philippines.

Source:[chinatopix](http://chinatopix.com) , 15 August 2016



China should dispel India concerns over Colombo port project: Sri Lankan media.

China needs to dispel India's concerns over its presence in the Indian Ocean relating to the \$ 1.5 billion Chinese-backed Colombo Port City project in Sri Lanka, a media report said on Thursday.

"Dispelling concerns from India over China's increasing presence in the Indian Ocean, China will need to let the Colombo Port City Project in Sri Lanka really play a role in promoting the development of the local economy," an article in the state-run Global Times said. "What is important now is that the Colombo Port City Project can be allowed to move forward and become an engine of economic growth in Sri Lanka that will benefit the local economy. If that goal can be reached, the project itself will be the best response to India's concerns about ties between Sri Lanka and China."

"India has long worried that the project would serve as a platform for the expansion of China's military power in the Indian Ocean, posing a threat to its national security" which is the reason for Sri Lanka withdrawing permission for free hold on 20 acres of land for Chinese firms and convert it to 99 years lease. However, regardless of India's protest, it is gratifying to see that the big picture of China-Sri Lanka cooperation has not changed. After Sri Lanka announced the resumption of the project earlier this year, both China and Sri Lanka reached an agreement over compensation due to delay of the project," it said.

"Given Colombo's strategic location on the Indian Ocean, it is almost certain that a closer relationship between the two nations will unavoidably arouse suspicion from New Delhi," it said. "India has great influence on Sri Lanka's political system and has long expressed concerns over China's enhanced cooperation with Sri Lanka."

Tensions between China and India have been increasing, noticeably at a time when China is promoting its Belt and Road initiative and has been forming cooperative relations with countries along the route in fields such as infrastructure.

“An inevitable result of such efforts has been China’s increased presence in some South Asian countries which have been, until now, mainly influenced by India,” it said. “The successful implementation of the project will make these words all the more convincing. With the Port of Colombo’s key location in a network of international trade routes, this will contribute to economic development in Sri Lanka and the wider region, including India. In this regard, New Delhi may need to take the long view of its national interests.”

Source:indiatoday.intoday, 4 August 2016

Mega-ship dredging at leading Indian port moves forward

India’s busiest container handler, this week launched phase two of a Rs. 2,029 crore (approximately \$310 million) dredging project by awarding a “project management” contract to domestic consulting group Tata Consultancy Engineering.

The project calls for deepening JNPT’s 21-mile fairway to 15 meters (about 50 feet), allowing it to accept ships with capacities of more than 12,500 twenty-foot-equivalent units. The work should be complete within two years of selecting a contractor through a competitive bidding process.

“The key benefits of the project includes handling bigger size vessels by using tidal window, increase in future container traffic, reducing ocean freight cost per TEU, faster turnaround of larger vessels and optimum utilization of capacity,” JNPT said in a trade advisory.

The action follows the completion of dredging by Netherlands-based Royal Boskalis Westminster in 2015 that brought the port to a depth of 14 meters. That moved the state port into an era of mega-ship calls with the April 1 berthing of the 13,000-TEU MSC Cristina, the largest container ship ever to have called Indian shores.

JNPT loads more than half of the containerized freight passing through India's 12 major ports, which together account for roughly 70 percent of the nation's overall container trade.

Amid growing competition from private rivals, especially Mundra, JNPT has been frantically rolling out congestion-alleviating and productivity-boosting measures including: gate automation, inter-terminal trucking system linking all terminals; establishment of new parking lots for trucks; allowing more shippers to use direct port delivery services for import cargo; creation of a logistics data bank to track the movement of containers and introduction of new tariff incentives for rail cargo to drive up intermodal volumes.

The effort seems to be paying off. Details obtained by JOC.com show average pre-berthing times at the port during the first fiscal quarter through the end of June dropped to 2.06 days from 4.74 days in the same period last year. Average gross berth productivity increased from 64.91 moves per hour to 73.92 moves per hour, while average gross crane productivity climbed from 20.04 moves per hour to 22.29 moves per hour, respectively.

Port officials in a recent advisory claimed that container dwell times have fallen dramatically, averaging 1.5 days, from a previous level of 11 days, for imports and 63 hours, compared with 88 hours previously, for exports.

Most notably, congestion at the public harbor has eased considerably and stakeholders and terminals are communicating more, providing greater visibility into the outcomes of various initiatives.

Source:[joc](#) ,9 August 2016

China goes fishing in the East China sea.

-Jacob L. Shapiro

The latest round of Japanese and Chinese squabbling over disputed islands in the East China Sea has escalated in recent days. On Aug. 5, according to Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as many as 230 Chinese fishing vessels and 13 coast guard ships sailed into the contiguous zones surrounding a group of islands, known as the Senkaku Islands in Japan and the Diaoyu Islands in China. Three of those ships reportedly had gun batteries, and two more Chinese government vessels allegedly got within 12 miles of the Senkakus/Diaoyus on Sunday evening.

There are two main things to note in this development. The first is that it represents a moderate intensification of tensions between Japan and China in the areas around these disputed islands where both countries' territorial claims overlap. The second is that this escalation should not be blown out of proportion. China is not really spoiling for a fight, and Japan is not in a position to give it one.

It is difficult to pinpoint a precise moment when tensions between China and Japan began to rise; this particular territorial dispute exerts a constant low-level pressure on both sides, even when relations are good. However, a few recent events stand out. On June 15, a Chinese Type 815 spy ship entered Japan's territorial waters near the Sakishima Islands in Okinawa – the first time since 2004 that China had been so bold. Then, on Aug. 2, Japan issued its annual defense white paper, which criticized China for an overly aggressive posture in the East China Sea. China's Defense and Foreign ministries responded in harsh terms to what they saw as unfair allegations and pledged to safeguard Chinese sovereignty with an “unshakeable” resolve.

Using fishing boats to encroach on Japan's territorial waters isn't necessarily a novel tactic, but the degree to which China put it to use this past weekend against Japan is notable. In the South China Sea, China often uses these fishing vessels – with or without coast guard escorts – to delegitimize other claimants like Malaysia or the Philippines. China has also done this around the Senkakus/Diaoyus before; in 2010, a Japanese coast guard vessel collided with a Chinese fishing vessel, which sparked nationalist

protests in mainland China. However, 230 fishing ships and 13 coast guard vessels are a direct challenge, not a mistake or a few fishing boats looking for a big pay-day.

This is an effective strategy for China because it allows China to assert territorial claims without actually sparking violent conflict. In this case, Japan does not want to initiate conflict with China. For one thing, Japan cannot be certain that the U.S. will back it if Japan is seen as the aggressor. Japan also does not want to give China an excuse to become even more strident, nor does it want to set off nationalist sentiments in China in response to any offensive action it would take.

China then gets to pick the best kind of fight: one that won't actually become a fight. It gives the impression that China is more powerful than it appears and makes Japan look weaker than it is. It allows China to play the role of provocateur and see just how far it can push its claims, while also leaving room to retreat if necessary. Even though China is the weaker party – perhaps even because it is the weaker party – it can and often does push the envelope in this way.

Why a U.S. destroyer would pay a courtesy call to a Chinese port during an intensifying argument between Japan and China is unclear. It seems unlikely that China invited a U.S. ship there to cause problems between the U.S. and Japan. The Benfold would have had enough time to turn around if it needed to. But it underscores the hollow nature of the war of words, fishing trawlers, and uninhabited islands in the Pacific. Strain in the relationship between China and Japan is important, as is where the United States situates itself, but ultimately, this is balance of power politicking, not a prelude to imminent violence.

Source: [geopoliticalfutures](http://geopoliticalfutures.com) ,9 August 2016

Malaysia introduced new tax perks for shipbuilding and ship repair yards.

-Svilen Petrov

Ministry of International Trade and Industry of Malaysia introduced tax perks for shipbuilding and ship repair yards, trying to stimulate the economy and to make local businesses more competitive on the Asian market. Malaysian Ministry offered new companies to apply for pioneer status, which gives 70% of income tax exemption on statutory income for five years or investment tax allowance of 60% on the first qualifying capital expenditure incurred within five years. According to the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, this should stimulate creating of the shipyards and restructuring of the currently troubled ones.

Existing shipbuilding and ship repair companies will be given an investment tax allowance of 60% on the additional qualifying capex incurred within a period of five years. All applications will be evaluated by the Malaysian Investment Development Authority.

The new incentives are applicable to all areas in Malaysia, with the objective of boosting the overall growth of the industry in line with the Malaysian Shipbuilding and Ship Repair Industry Strategic Plan 2020 and the 11th Malaysia Plan.

Malaysia has about 100 shipyards, but only 6 of them are large and have capacity of more than 600 tonnes. The country shipbuilders are focused in offshore-related construction, but sector is in serious delay during the last months following the low oil prices and freezing offshore oil sector. The country is highly depending from the shipping industry and want to stimulate foreign investors and local companies to invest in heavy industries business.

Malaysia is facing great competition with the neighbours in Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam and the Philippines, which all have significant yard facilities and also offer tax allowance for the shipbuilders.

Source: [maritimeherald](http://maritimeherald.com), 11 August 2016

Japan Searches For Shipwrecked Chinese Fishermen

TOKYO, Japan – Japan is searching for 8 Chinese crew members who went missing when their fishing boat sank after colliding with a Greek cargo vessel near disputed East China Sea islands on Thursday, August 11, the Japanese coast guard said.

The coast guard, which dispatched a patrol boat and plane to the site after receiving a signal from the cargo ship, has rescued the 6 other members of the sunk vessel's 14-strong crew, a coast guard spokeswoman told Agence France-Presse.

"We've put priority on the search and rescue of the missing 8. We have not been able to determine the cause of the collision," she said.

China expressed its appreciation for the rescue efforts, the Japanese foreign ministry said in a statement.

The accident comes after Foreign minister Fumio Kishida on Tuesday, August 9, called in Cheng Yonghua, Beijing's envoy to Tokyo, following what Tokyo calls "intrusions" by Chinese ships near the disputed islands for 5 consecutive days.

"The situation surrounding the Japan-China relationship is markedly deteriorating," he told Cheng, according to the ministry's statement on its website.

The two countries are locked in a long-running dispute over the uninhabited islets known as the Senkaku in Japan and the Diaoyu in China.

The Japanese coast guard on Monday, August 8, caught sight of 15 Chinese coast guard ships near the islands -- the highest number ever spotted in the area.

Some 230 Chinese fishing vessels and 7 coast guard ships, including 4 apparently carrying weapons, sailed into waters close to the disputed island on Sunday, August 7

Bilateral relations had improved over the past two years, but tensions over the islands have been a frequent irritant between the countries.

Source: [rappler](#) ,11 August 2016

Funding India's maritime renaissance

-Vice Admiral Anil Chopra

India's maritime roots are amongst the oldest in the world, traceable to the Harappan civilization more than three millennia ago. Indian mariners were active from the shores of Africa and Arabia in the west, to the lands of Southeast Asia in the east, well before the advent of the Europeans at sea. There is much archaeological and documentary evidence, highlighting both the extent and continuity of Indian maritime activity through the ages. Regrettably, this maritime impulse faded at a critical moment in history, during which period the world transitioned from the medieval to the modern. Let alone the Mughals, even the Marathas, and the kingdoms of the southern peninsula, failed to give impetus to sea power at that juncture.

In sharp contrast, European maritime emergence originated in the Iberian Peninsula in the 15th century, spurred by funding provided to explorers like Bartholomew Diaz and Vasco de Gama by a visionary prince, Henry the Navigator of Portugal. It was successfully taken forward by Spanish, English, Dutch and French monarchs during the 16th century, a period which coincided with the Mughals, the Mings, the Shoguns and even the Caliphs concurrently turning their backs to the sea, eventually leading to European domination of Asia through the innovative use of sea power.

The Mughals, coming as they did from landlocked Central Asia, and entirely ignorant of the seas, hastened the collapse of India's maritime capabilities, which went into near terminal decline. The British created and sustained an Indian Army, separate from the British Army, but the maritime defence of India was outsourced to the Royal Navy, allowing indigenous maritime skills and experience to wither. Consequently, when India gained its freedom, the Indian Navy had to begin its innings with a motley collection of a few small sloops and gunboats, and virtually no industrial support.

The seven decades since Independence have, no doubt, witnessed a revival of maritime activity in both military and civilian spheres, but India's ancient maritime impulse has yet to be fully unleashed. Progress in the maritime domain has been incremental, mainly on account of inadequate funding, coupled with sporadic and uncoordinated initiatives on the part of successive governments. Till very recently, the bulk of Indian politicians and mandarins, ensconced in inland New Delhi, continued to be afflicted by classical 'sea-blindness', a debilitating, inherited legacy of the Mughals.

On the economic front, India's maritime trade and commercial interests have expanded manifold over the decades since Independence. This has been a natural consequence of the burgeoning population and the developing economy. However, marine infrastructure, from ports to ship-building yards, has suffered from lack of sustained impetus and coherent, holistic policies, till very recently. The Sagar Mala project, launched by the Modi government, and its maritime vision, articulated to the world at large at this year's maiden maritime summit in Mumbai. The project promises to

redress the neglect of the maritime sector, but it is to be seen whether the requisite funding priority will be provided to this initiative.

In so far as maritime security is concerned, the prevailing Westphalian international order continues to be essentially anarchic in nature, with military and maritime power still very much currencies of exchange in the equations between nation-states. Without military muscle, neither economic power by itself, nor even in combination with superior diplomatic finesse, can translate into heft in the existing global construct.

Sea power then, continues to remain as relevant as ever in today's globalised world for both the security and prosperity of nations. This is clearly illustrated by the on-going imbroglio in the South China Sea. Despite the exploration and use of space, and the advent of a host of communication, surveillance and aerospace technologies, the 21st century has been termed as the 'century of the seas', since the oceans, covering 70% of the planet, are central in the global balance of power, and vital for human economic activity.

History has clearly demonstrated that the destinies of nations and their navies are firmly intertwined. In the current world order, India's security, its extensive maritime interests, its prosperity and its capacity to influence geopolitical outcomes, literally demands the possession of a strong and capable Navy.

Since Independence, the Indian Navy's leadership has doggedly built a truly three-dimensional blue-water navy, despite a constant paucity of funds and lack of awareness of matters maritime in New Delhi. A far-sighted vision created early synergies between the Navy, the public-sector ship-building yards and the Defence Research and Development Organisation, as well as the acquisition of in-house warship and submarine design capability. The Navy also initiated a Coast Guard to address constabulary functions at sea, and established the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium or IONS to further maritime diplomacy in the wider Indo-Pacific region. India today possesses a potent, engaged and respected Navy, with aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines in its order of battle, capable of operating in the contemporary network-

centric warfare scenario despite some sophisticated equipment and capabilities still being imported.

To maintain this, to enhance strength, and simultaneously modernise its platforms calls for a long-term commitment beyond the 15%-18% of the defence capital budget currently allotted to the Navy. A vibrant indigenous defence industrial base also calls for more from the defence budget. No amount of private sector participation, PPP projects, FDI, FII, offsets, or joint ventures with foreign majors, will enable the success of the 'Make in India ' initiative in the defence sector, if inadequate orders are placed by the Indian Armed Forces due to intermittent or insufficient funds.

The prevailing dictum from more than a century ago has been: "Whoever controls the Indian Ocean, dominates Asia. This Ocean is the key to the Seven Seas in the 21st century. The destiny of the world will be decided in these waters." [1] The shift of economic and military power to the East may well prove this right. It is vital that India's maritime renaissance, presently primed and ready-to-go, be allowed through sustained and bipartisan political support, translated into long-term provision of the considerable funding that both the civil and military maritime domains require. Anything less, and India may well miss the boat again.

Source: [gatewayhouse](http://gatewayhouse.org) , 11 August 2016



Antarctica's Sea Ice Contains Toxic Levels Of Mercury, Posing Risk For Both Marine Life And Humans.

-Susmita Baral

A new study from researchers in Australia has found Antarctica's sea ice to contain toxic levels of a potent neurotoxin called methylmercury. The team from University of Melbourne, led by Caitlin Gionfriddo and John Moreau, published their findings in the journal *Nature Microbiology*.

The researchers collected samples of the Antarctic sea ice while on a two-month expedition to better understand how methylmercury enters the marine environment and the food humans ingest. The ice from icebreaker *Aurora Australis* was tested for mercury, and DNA and proteins from sea ice microorganisms were analyzed.

"We spent two months on the ship, went down to the sea ice zone just off of east Antarctica," said Gionfriddo, Moreau's PhD student, in an interview with Australian radio program PM. "I was collecting sea ice cores and sea water and measuring total mercury and methylmercury, which are two different forms of mercury, in the sea ice and sea water and collecting samples to look at the microbial communities that live in those environments." The researchers found that sea ice contains bacteria that has the "genetic ability" to convert mercury, a heavy metal pollutant, into a more toxic form: methylmercury.

"These results are the first to identify a particular genus of bacteria, *Nitrospina*, as capable of producing methylmercury in Antarctic ice," said Moreau, a geomicrobiologist at the University of Melbourne School of Earth Sciences, in a statement.

Methylmercury poses several threats, as it can contaminate the marine environment and, if exposed to humans, it can result in developmental and physical problems in children, infants and fetuses.

“It becomes a neurotoxin that partitions into fatty acids and lipids,” said Moreau in an interview with Australia’s ABC local radio. “Basically it has a faster pathway into neural tissue, whether that's in fish or sea birds or humans.”

It all starts with mercury—the pollutant gets released into the environment through various means from natural events like volcanic eruptions and bushfires to man-made activity like burning fossil fuels and gold smelting. According to Moreau, mercury has a long lifecycle in the atmosphere and can travel long distances.

“It can stay in the atmosphere for up to a year and it has a long resonance time so it can travel up to thousands of kilometres,” said Moreau. “So mercury from the northern hemisphere can circulate down to the southern hemisphere and be deposited in Antarctica.”

After it deposits itself into sea ice, and comes into contact with mercury-methylating bacteria, the pollutant gives birth to methylmercury, which then enters the food cycle via a process called biomagnification where toxins accumulate through the food cycle.

"Larger fish eat smaller contaminated fish, and continuously accumulate methylmercury at harmful levels for human consumption," said Gionfriddo. The findings of the study spotlight the importance ending mercury pollution from the environment is crucial.

"We need to understand more about marine mercury pollution," said Moreau. "Particularly in a warming climate and when depleted fish stocks means more seafood companies are looking south."

Source: [ibtimes](http://ibtimes.com) ,2 August 2016

Kuwait Environment Public Authority (EPA) launches project to float anti-pollution stations.

KUWAIT: The (EPA) has launched a project to build floating stations to stave off any forms of pollution in territorial waters and detect potential threats. Four stations have already been erected to ward off chemical and air pollutants, EPA Chairman Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said, adding that a total of 15 stations will be configured shortly.

Moreover, the EPA Chairman added that once the stations are set up, they would transmit “online” status, signifying their surveillance under EPA apparatuses. These stations will produce alert signals in the event of an increase in pollution levels, he added. Meanwhile, Deputy General Manager of Environmental Inspection Affairs Dr Mohammad Al-Ahmad noted that as stipulated by the country’s new environmental protection law, EPA is obligated to follow a comprehensive method to ensure maritime environment protection.

Furthermore, Al-Ahmad revealed that the total cost of the project was KD 2 million, as the stations are fully on par with international standards and will be linked to EPA databases. Speaking on the significance of the project, EPA official Hamza Karam told KUNA that that the stations will be set up in all maritime areas nationwide, adding that these devices have been designed to function efficiently. He also added that the devices have been equipped with the latest technological breakthroughs to ensure maximal maritime environmental protection. – KUNA

Source : kuna.net, 5 August 2016

Noisy neighbours: Measuring the impact of human-generated noise pollution on sea mammals in the Mediterranean.

Researchers at the Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV), Valencia's Oceanogràfic and the University of Alcalá (UAH) are carrying out a study to analyse the possible influence of anthropogenic or human-generated disturbances on different cetacean mammals in the Mediterranean Sea. Led by the UAH, the study focuses on three areas within the Levantine-Balearic marine region: Cabrera Island, Cape San Antonio and the Columbretes Isles.

Specifically, the researchers are looking at the presence of cetaceans in relation to submarine sound pollution caused by fishing. Another of the project's goals is to control these and other activities in the protected marine areas being studied.

They will use two new SAMARUC units to carry out the acoustic monitoring, designed by researchers at the UPV's Institute of Telecommunications and Multimedia Applications (iTEAM) and the Oceanogràfic. This device will detect, record and classify the calls of the different marine species in the area. Located at different depths, they will record the sounds made by the resident cetaceans and fishing activity.

Compared to the first SAMARUC unit built in 2013, this second version is much more precise, easier to use by biologists and has a longer battery life. It can also incorporate different types of sensors, which increases its feature base and therefore the potential of this measuring device.

"Unlike other devices that act as mere sound recorders, SAMARUC incorporates sound processing algorithms and is able to provide indexed audio files for the different acoustic events detected. The system can be programmed to detect and classify the sounds recorded, distinguishing between dolphins, fin whales or human-generated noise from vessels, port installations, etc." says Ramón Miralles, iTEAM researcher.

Cape San Antonio and Columbretes Isles

With measurements already taken for Cabrera Island, the team will be submerging a SAMARUC unit this August in the area round Cape San Antonio. The second unit will be installed on the seafloor near the Columbretes Isles in September.

"Through this project we hope to shed light on biodiversity in these Mediterranean regions. It will help us to detect the movements of cetaceans in this area and establish migratory patterns, as well as isolate the main sources and levels of sound pollution, with a view to establishing possible thresholds for their mitigation," concludes Juan Junoy, of UAH.

Source: [sciencedaily](#) ,8 August 2016

Africa: We Need a Global Treaty On Plastics. Here's What It Should Look Like.

-Nils Simon

Plastic pollution is more than an ocean problem, and it's time we treat it as such.

Plastics have boosted our economy because they are versatile, cheap and durable. Yet, thanks to these same traits, in the course of establishing a US\$750 billion global industry, we have also created a massive problem. Rivers are filled with plastic garbage. Plastic bottles soil beaches. Masses of plastic are floating in the ocean. Birds become entangled in plastic pieces, and whales' stomachs fill with plastic debris. Plastics can harm humans, too, by releasing toxic additives.

And the problem is getting worse: The production of plastics reached 311 million metric tons (343 million tons) in 2014 and is continuing to increase worldwide. Scientists estimate that in 2010 alone between 5 and 13 million metric tons (6 and 14 million tons) of plastics streamed into the sea. Many hopes have been put on biodegradable plastics, but those still don't break down easily enough.

A number of initiatives have recognized the need to address plastic pollution more decisively, including the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. In the Leaders' Declaration from its 2015 summit, the G7 committed to "combat marine litter."

The U.N. Environment Programme has published several reports on the environmental impact of plastics, launched a number of initiatives against marine litter, and passed a resolution on microplastics and marine litter at its latest U.N. Environment Assembly in May 2016. Although the resolution recognizes plastic pollution as "a rapidly increasing serious issue of global concern that needs an urgent global response," thus far these initiatives have done little to solve the problem.

Back to the Land

Plastic ends up in the oceans, but it doesn't start there. Why has plastics pollution been so intransigent from a global governance perspective? One reason is the inevitable difficulty that comes with complex policy problems, where many actors have a stake in the game and no clear-cut remedy exists. Still, I believe that a more hands-on approach can at least pave the way toward more durable solutions.

However, for it to do so we must rethink current efforts to shape multilateral actions, which have mostly taken place with a focus on oceans. After all, plastic ends up in the oceans, but it doesn't start there. Oceans-based agreements just don't have what it takes to tackle the main sources of plastic pollution. It is time to step up the game by negotiating a global treaty aimed at reducing plastic pollution that goes beyond marine pollution and tackles the roots of the problem.

Two options seem most viable for crafting a binding international agreement to deal with plastics. First, a stand-alone treaty could be negotiated, a multilateral environmental agreement dealing specifically with the production, use and disposal of plastics. It would not have to be built entirely from scratch because the U.N. already has a cluster of treaties dealing with a range of chemicals (which plastics are) and waste (which most plastics become).

This chemicals and waste cluster is built by the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, which deal with the shipment and treatment of hazardous waste, international trade of toxic chemicals, and persistent organic pollutants, respectively. This cluster will soon be joined by the Minamata Convention, restricting the use and trade of mercury and dealing with its disposal.

Any of these conventions could be a model for a plastics treaty that would be far more appropriate than a marine agreement because they contain provisions on how to deal with harmful substances from a life-cycle perspective, ban the most hazardous ones, and offer a framework through which countries in need can receive assistance.

Second, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal could be amended to specifically address plastic throughout its life cycle. Back in 2002, the Basel Convention's member states passed technical guidelines on how to deal with plastic waste. These guidelines could serve as the basis for negotiating an amendment that, once ratified, would make sustainable management of plastics mandatory to its members.

First and foremost, a common vision and clear goals are crucial. There are also quirkier alternatives, building on a mix of legally binding and voluntary measures. For example, so-called emerging policy issues like nanoparticles or lead in paint are tackled under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. SAICM is a voluntary multi-stakeholder policy framework for managing chemicals sustainably.

It could be used to launch a plastics-based program, to raise awareness among governmental and non-governmental actors alike, and to prepare negotiations on a treaty. In addition, land- and oceans-based approaches could be combined to build on their respective strengths. The former could be covered in a stand-alone treaty or a treaty amendment as described above, whereas the latter could be tackled under the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea, MARPOL or the various regional seas agreements to focus on waste dumping at sea or lost fishing gear.

Source: [allafrica](#) , 9 August 2016

Cape Town beach pollution fears

-Helen Bamford

Cape Town - Kayakers paddling around Three Anchor Bay, Cape Town, have been alarmed at the amount of pollution flowing out of three stormwater drains into the sea, and have taken samples to try to identify what it is.

Last month, a bright blue liquid poured out of the drains into the bay while a whale was breaching 150m offshore.

It was reported to the council and a sample taken, but so far no results have been forthcoming. Last week, a white, foamy chemical-like substance was spotted and photographed.

Tracy Fincham, the owner of Kaskazi Kayaks, which operates from Three Anchor Bay, said the pollution had been bad for some time, but had worsened over the last two years.

“Yet nothing has been done by the authorities.” Fincham said they were testing a few samples to see if they could find out what was in these discharges and others.

“I know there are e-coli because you can often smell the sewage.” Priya Reddy, spokeswoman for the City of Cape Town, confirmed a sample was taken by the Water Pollution Control Inspectorate and submitted for testing, but that the laboratory results were still pending.

“A combined team from Transport for Cape Town, the Environmental Resource Management Department and the Pollution Control section will be assessing the stormwater system and all points of possible pollutants and contamination,” Reddy said.

Last year, the issue of ocean pollution came under the spotlight when it emerged the council's marine outfalls were discharging up to 55 million litres of untreated effluent a day.

Marine photographer Jean Tresfon captured images from his gyrocopter showing sewage “plumes” at marine outfalls near Hout Bay and Green Point - close to popular tourist beaches. He was one of a number of concerned Capetonians who made

objections when the council asked for public comment when applying for a new permit via the Department of Environmental Affairs to discharge the wastewater into the marine environment.

“But we have heard nothing since then. They have not been very transparent about this process.”Tresfon said he believed Cape Town was the best run metropole in the country, but had “dropped the ball” on this issue.

He works closely with Leslie Petrik, associate professor at the University of the Western Cape's department of chemistry, who warned last year that partially metabolised prescription drugs, pesticides, household disinfectants and even paracetamol and caffeine were some of the pollutants being pumped into the sea off the Atlantic Seaboard daily.

But Reddy said the Environmental Resource Management Department sampled a grid of 14 points around each of the three outfalls on an ongoing basis to monitor the water quality and rate of dispersion, as well as sample animal tissue and sediment to assess any chemical impacts.

“To date, the results all fall well within the national requirements and demonstrate no inshore health risk to bathers.”She said the three outfalls were designed as high dispersion pre-screened and diluted outfalls as per global norms.

“The outfalls operate according to the licence standards and have been operational for 30 years. “The effluent is both diluted to standards, passes through multiple screens and is dispersed as per engineering specs.”

Regarding the permit the council applied for, Reddy said the current rim outfalls had licences which authorised the discharge of wastewater to the sea, but that studies were being undertaken to inform the regulator on the conditions to be included in the permit, which was still to be issued.

Source: [iol](#) , 9 August 2016

Equipment received from New Zealand Government will boost marine environment

The oil spill response equipment received from the New Zealand Government will minimize the effects of oil spills on Fiji's marine environment.

Assistant Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment Lorna Eden is thankful to New Zealand for its continued support towards Fiji's maritime sector. Eden says the protection of Fiji's marine environment from accidental oil spills was vital in light of an increased maritime trade and other maritime activities locally and within the region.

The equipment worth \$1.25million was part of the recommendation made by a team which carried out the Marine Pollution Risk Assessment for Fiji in February last year. MSAF officials will also undergo further training to use this specialized equipment.

Source:[fbc](#) ,10 August 2016

Ahead of foreign minister Wang's India Visit,China stress on consensus

-Atul Aneja

In a conversation with The Hindu, Liu Zongyi of the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies stressed that "geo-economics rather than geopolitics," should rule India-China ties.

Ahead of the visit of its Foreign Minister, China on Tuesday said it intends to send across a message to India to insulate the basic framework of Sino-Indian ties, as defined by the two leaderships, from the occasional bouts of friction that hamper engagement between the two countries.

In a statement, underscoring the bottom-line of expectations in Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Hua Chunying said that during his visit to India this week, Foreign Minister Wang Yi will “communicate with the Indian side about how to carry forward consensus between the two leaders and enhance mutually beneficial cooperation in different fields in a bid to make sure that the relationship will keep growing as planned”.

The Chinese side has insisted during earlier situations of frostiness, including the acrimony surrounding India’s membership to the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), that the established blueprint visualised during the visits of Chinese President Xi Jinping to India in 2014, and the return visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to China last year, should remain immune from disruption. “China and India have identical strategic goals and their common interests far outweigh differences,” Ms. Hua observed. She added:

“China-India relationship has been developing fast and sound in all aspects following President Xi Jinping’s visit to India in 2014 and Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to China last year.”

Chinese state media also pitched in on Tuesday to suggest that India-China ties should focus on amplifying their economic agenda, which requires urgent attention. “India’s exports to China have dropped 16.7 percent year-on-year in the first seven months of the year, Chinese customs data showed on Monday, suggesting that a large number of Indian enterprises are having a hard time exploring the Chinese market amid simmering tensions between the two countries,” a write-up in a state-run tabloid Global Times observed.

The article also found India’s focus on the controversial South China Sea issue “puzzling”. It emphasised that the move “might risk unnecessary side effects to Sino-Indian ties and potentially set up obstacles for Indian exporters”.

In a conversation with The Hindu, Liu Zongyi of the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies stressed that “geo-economics rather than geopolitics,” should rule India-China ties. “With India resolving the General Sales Tax (GST) issue, Chinese

companies will now have more opportunities to invest. We cherish these opportunities,” he observed.

Long Xingchun, Director of Center of India Studies, China West Normal University told The Hindu that the two countries need to establish a comprehensive China-India strategic and economic dialogue, that would synergise the economic and security tracks of the relationship on the lines of a similar arrangement between Beijing and Washington.

Some Chinese scholars highlight India’s visa policy towards journalists, scholars and business people as an unnecessary and outdated roadblock, that is out of sync with the current demands of the relationship. “It is sad that just before Mr. Wang’s visit, India decided to expel three Chinese journalists. That is a step that

dilutes China’s efforts to bring China-India ties back on track after the NSG episode,” says Han Hua, director for Arms Control and Disarmament at Peking University.

A separate article that appeared in the Global Times on Tuesday also underscored that India’s GST reform has “galvanised waves of optimism among business communities across China”, but getting a quick business visa remains problematic. “Unlike non-work tourism visas that can be issued promptly via the e-visa system, most other types of visa must go through the tedious process.”

Many academics anticipated that Mr. Wang’s visit could only result in a modest achievement. “The Foreign Minister’s visit would be helpful in the improvement of the relations to some extent; especially in correcting some of the negative public opinion in the two countries,” observed Professor Long.

But he also underscored that unchallenged and deep-seated perceptions have been significantly responsible for imparting a poor image to Sino-Indian ties. “In India, there is a wrongful perception that China has adopted a policy of containment and encirclement. This seriously distorts China’s image and can lead to needless miscalculations,” he observed.

Source: thehindu, 10 August 2016