



# MAKING WAVES

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### **Indian and Chinese navies rescue ship off Yemen coast from Somali Pirates**

In a joint operation, the Indian navy and its Chinese counterpart on Sunday rescued a bulk carrier ship OS35 off the coast of Aden which was suspected to have been hijacked by Somali pirates on Saturday. The latest pirate attack followed a string of attacks after years of calm.

Early on Sunday, the Indian naval ships managed to establish contact with the container ship's captain who, along with his crew members, had locked themselves in a strongroom onboard, as per stand operating procedures. An Indian Navy helicopter taking off from INS Mumbai carried out an aerial reconnaissance of the ship to "sanitise" the upper decks of the ship and trace the whereabouts of the pirates who could still be on board. Emboldened by the Indian Naval cover and on receiving an "all clear signal" that there was no sign of any pirate on board, the crew members gradually emerged from the strong room.

Later, an 18-member Peoples Liberation Army Chinese Navy team from its warship PLA-CNS Yulin boarded the ship, while the Indian Navy helicopter provided air cover for the massive 171-metre long X 28 metres wide, 18-year-old bulk carrier. The Chinese team carried out a full search of the ship along with the crew and ascertained the pirates had escaped under cover of darkness after their hijack attempt was foiled due to timely rescue operations mounted by international maritime forces in the vicinity. The captain of the Tuvalu-flagged ship expressed his gratitude to the Indian Navy, while both Indian Navy and the Chinese Navy thanked each other for the successful joint high seas operation on the critical maritime corridor. Graeme Gibbon-Brooks, the head of private company Dryad Maritime Intelligence had confirmed the hijacking on Saturday.

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO), which coordinates shipping in the Gulf of Aden area, said on its website it had received a notification earlier on Saturday from a vessel in an area in the Gulf of Aden that was under attack and may have been boarded "Vessels transiting the area are advised to exercise extreme caution," UKMTO said, without giving more details. Shipowners have become

less wary of piracy after a long period of calm off the Horn of Africa, experts say, and some have started using a route known as the Socotra Gap, between Somalia and Socotra Island, to save time and costs. The route is considered riskier than others. Earlier this month, officials said Somali pirates had seized a small boat and its 11 Indian crew members as the vessel passed through the narrow channel between Socotra Island and Somalia's coast.

In March, Somali pirates hijacked a Comoros-flagged oil tanker, marking the first such seizure of a large commercial vessel since 2012. They later released the vessel and its Sri Lankan crew without conditions. Pirates later seized a fishing trawler, which Somali authorities warned could be used for further piracy. Piracy off Somalia's coast was once a serious threat to the global shipping industry. It has lessened in recent years after an international effort to patrol near the country, whose weak central government has been trying to assert itself after a quarter-century of conflict. In December, NATO ended its anti-piracy mission off Somalia's waters. But frustrations have been rising among Somali fishermen, including former pirates, at what they say are foreign fishermen illegally fishing in local waters.

Source: [www.hellenicshippingnews.com](http://www.hellenicshippingnews.com), 08 May 2017

### **India, US discuss maritime security cooperation**

India and the US discussed maritime cooperation in the second round of the India-US Maritime Security Dialogue, the External Affairs Ministry said on Thursday. "During the Dialogue, the two sides exchanged views on maritime developments in the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region and considered steps to further strengthen bilateral maritime security cooperation," the ministry said in a statement. "They also reviewed the implementation of the decisions taken at the first Maritime Security Dialogue held in May 2016," it stated. The Dialogue was held on May 9-10 in Newport, Rhode Island, in the US.

The Indian delegation was led jointly by Pankaj Sharma, Joint Secretary (Disarmament and International Security Affairs) and Munu Mahawar, Joint Secretary (Americas Division) in the Ministry of External Affairs, and Devika Raghuvanshi, Joint Secretary (Navy) in the Ministry of Defence. The US side was led by David Helvey, performing the duties of Assistant Secretary of Defence for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs, and Sean Stein, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for



South and Central Asian Affairs. The next round of the Dialogue is scheduled to be held in India, according to the statement.

Source: [www.daijiworld.com](http://www.daijiworld.com), 11 May 2017

### **Somalia, EU mull ways of enhancing maritime security**

MOGADISHU, May 9 (Xinhua) -- The Somali government and the European Union (EU) have held talks on strengthening the Horn of Africa nation's maritime security to help deter piracy along the coastline. Somali Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khaire and EU Ambassador to Somalia Veronique Lorenzo, who were hosted by the EU Naval Force aboard the flagship ESPS Galicia on Monday, discussed how the EU can best support the government to take full control of its maritime security, which is essential for long-term stability of the country.

"We have been a supporter of the security sector in Somalia and maritime safety is a central pillar often overlooked," Lorenzo said in a statement issued on Tuesday. The discussions highlighted the cooperation existing between EU and the Somalia government in policing Somali waters. "The protection of the Somali coast and over 3,300 kilometers of it, is central not only for the fisheries sector but also for the commercial shipping industry; and in general for the private sector, who wish to have some degree of stability, of security, to be able to invest in such a sector with wealth of prospects," Lorenzo added. The EU naval force, a counter-piracy military operation off the coast of Somalia has been protecting Somalia bound ships, belonging to the UN World Food Programme and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

Discussions between PM Khaire and EU officials also focused on counter-piracy operations and recent piracy incidents on the Indian Ocean. During the talks, Khaire, who was also led on a guided tour aboard the ESPS Galicia, which is used in anti-piracy operations, urged the EU Naval Force to intensify counter-piracy military operations, by deploying more ships in the waters; and increasing air patrols, in light of the recent piracy incidents. "We have also raised the issue of joint collaboration in order to devise ways to end the illegal fishing in Somali waters by foreign vessels. So, we have agreed to continue discussions on how we can protect the Somali natural resources," he said.

Major General Robert Magowan, the EU Naval Force Operations Commander, Operation Atalanta which started in June 2016, said they have thwarted attempted

pirate attacks. Maghowan said the forces would continue to sustain the momentum of the operation, in order to deter and suppress piracy on the high seas. "We will continue to deter piracy for as long as we are here. That is something I am very clear about. It is also important for us to continue to reassure our maritime industry, that we will continue to suppress and deter piracy and ensure they deliver best management practices as they move in this region," he said.

Source: [news.xinhuanet.com](http://news.xinhuanet.com), 09 May 2017

### **Indonesian naval officials laud PN efforts for maritime security**

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Zakaullah, who is on an official visit to Indonesia, called on Commandant Marine Corps Maj Gen Bambang Suwantono and Commandant Western Fleet Command Rear Admiral Aan Kumia of Indonesia.

Upon his arrival at Marines Base and Western Fleet Command Headquarters, the naval chief was presented a guard of honour. During the meeting with Commandant Marine Corps, Maj Gen Bambang Suwantono, diverse matters of professional interest ranging from Maritime Security and Stability, Coalition Maritime Campaign Plan (CMCP), Counter Piracy Operations, drug trafficking and various avenues to enhance interoperability between Pakistan and Indonesian Navy were dilated upon. Naval Chief also highlighted Pakistan's commitment and performance in fight against terrorism in general and Pakistan Navy's efforts for maintaining regional peace and security in particular. Gen Bambang Suwantono acknowledged strong foundations and historical ties between Pakistan and Indonesia and lauded PN efforts and focused commitments in support of collaborative maritime security in the region and extending cooperation in diverse fields to Indonesian Navy.

Later, Chief of the Naval Staff called on Commandant Fleet Command, Rear Admiral Aan Kumia. Upon his arrival at Western Fleet Command Headquarters at Jakarta, Indonesia, he was warmly welcomed by Commandant Fleet Command and was also given detailed briefings regarding western Fleet Command of Indonesian Navy. During the meeting, professional matters of mutual interest came under discussion. The Naval Chief Admiral Muhammad Zakaullah appreciated the professionalism and commitment of Indonesian Navy officers and men. The commandant Western Fleet Command highly lauded the role and contributions of Pakistan Navy in spearheading various initiatives for maintaining peace and stability in the region.

Source: [dailytimes.com.pk](http://dailytimes.com.pk), 12 May 2017

### **Maritime security: FG approves \$186m to combat piracy**

The Federal Government has approved \$186 million as part of efforts to combat piracy in Nigerian waters. This is even as the government has also budgeted N100m for the dredging of the River Niger. Speaking in Lagos, on Thursday, during a one-day national conference on fast-tracking port reforms with the theme: 'Making Nigerian Seaports World Class', the Honourable Minister of Transportation, Rotimi Amaechi, stated that the \$186m Dollars approved for the fight against piracy will be used to buy three helicopters and three aircrafts.

According to him, "Mr. President has approved \$186million Dollars to fight piracy in our waters. The funds will be used to buy three helicopters, three aircrafts, 12 vessels stationed in the water, 20 APC. In the next three months, all of this will be deployed to fight piracy in our waters. "We promised change. Change is not talked about, it is felt. That is why we asked that the people should give us time." On the recently launched dredging of the River Niger, Amaechi explained that N100m had been budgeted for the dredging of the project against the N34bn paid by the former administration of President Goodluck Jonathan for the same project.

In his words, "When the River Niger was first approved for dredging by the previous administration, it was approved for N47billion and N34billion was paid to the contractor. Dancers were called in and there was a party. "We are not dredging the River Niger with billions of Naira, we are dredging the River Niger with just N100m. When we flagged it off recently, did you see us dance? Was there a party? I just went to see the Governor and told him that the project will start today and will be finished in one month. "The Governor said he will accompany me, and I said OK. So I asked the Governor to flag it off since its located in his State. "People are wondering how on earth are we going to dredge the River Niger for N100m when the previous government awarded same contracts for N47billion? But we are going to dredge the River Niger using dredgers owned by the National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA). "NIWA has dredgers, but the previous government preferred to give contractors money to dredge the river wit private dredgers while NIWA's dredgers were lying idle somewhere in Port Harcourt. "The NIWA MD told me the agency has dredgers, but its been hired out to somebody in Port Harcourt. So we had dredgers, but the previous administration hired it out to some persons in Port Harcourt, while paying a

contractor billions of Naira to use privately owned dredgers at a very high cost. “I told the NIWA MD that I will look for money to fuel their dredgers, and work has started. That is why we are dredging the River Niger with just N100m.”

In his own address, the host of the event and Managing Director, Vintage Press, Mr. Victor Ifijeh stated that the conference was put together to address the ills in the nation's maritime sector. “We all know the problems of the Nigerian seaports, they have been well documented. Until these problems are adequately addressed, the need for more engagements like the one we are having today cannot be over-emphasised. “We hope this forum can help by instituting a peer-facilitated platform to hold the agencies accountable,” Ifijeh stated.

Source: [www.hellenicshippingnews.com](http://www.hellenicshippingnews.com), 05 May 2017

### **Pakistan Maritime Security arrests 30 Indian fishermen, seizes 5 boats**

The Pakistan Maritime Security (PMSA) on Wednesday arrested 30 Indian fishermen, news agency PTI reported. The arrests come in backdrop of brutal killings of two Indian Jawans across LoC, and is likely to raise prevailing tensions further. The authorities alleged fishermen for allegedly fishing in the country's territorial waters, bringing the total number of Indian fishermen detained this year to 304. A PMSA spokesman said that 30 Indian fishermen were detained and their five boats were seized. The agency later handed over the fisherman to the Docks police for further legal procedures. As per legal procedures, the fishermen will be presented before a judicial magistrate tomorrow and then sent to jail.

PTI reported that PMSA had on April 27 detained 29 Indian fishermen and seized five boats, just a week before today's incident. Last month, PMSA had captured 18 Indian fishermen on April 8th. According to the reports by news agency PTI, 18 Indian fishermen were captured and three boats were also seized off the Gujarat coast. The report said that all the three boats were fishing boats from Porbandar, Okha and Mangrol respectively.

In March also, the PMSA had twice apprehended Indian fishermen. In a similar incident on March 26, the PMSA had arrested 100 Indian fishermen and seized 19 boats while in early March some 85 Indian fishermen were arrested and sent to

jail. On January 27, the agency had captured 60 Indian fishermen and seized 10 boats. The arrests continued even as Pakistan released some 219 Indian fishermen as a goodwill gesture on January 5 and before that released another batch of 220 Indian fishermen on December 25. The fishermen, from both the countries get arrested by maritime agencies due to absence of any proper technology to confirm the coastline border between Pakistan and India.

Source: [www.financialexpress.com](http://www.financialexpress.com), 03 May 2017

### **Right of Innocent Passage for Fishing Vessels: Issues and Challenges**

-R S Vasan

There have been a few recent arrests of Sri Lankan vessels by the Indian Coast Guard while returning after fishing in international waters. Twenty nine fishermen with the vessels were also arrested on 27 April 2017 by Pakistan Maritime Security Agency on charges of trespassing see. Such arrests of fishers from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India by the respective maritime security agencies is a regular feature as fishers continue to seek fishing grounds irrespective of the maritime boundaries.

On 04 April, Kaveesha Putha a 48-foot multi-day fishing vessel with seven fishermen was returning after a month at sea and was arrested by the Indian Coast Guard. The Coast Guard escorted the vessel and the crew to Thootukodi. The vessel and crew were released by the Magistrate after due process of trial. However, the Sri Lankan fishermen claimed that their catch of some 2.2 metric tonnes worth 4.4 million rupees was auctioned off in Tamil Nadu at a much lower price of Rs. 2,00,000 as reported by the Sunday Guardian on 23 Apr 2017 here. As per this report, some 141 Indian mechanised trawlers are in the custody of Sri Lanka and 18 multi-day vessels of Sri Lanka are in the custody of India.

This and other acts of arrest by the Indian Coast Guard has been contested by Sri Lanka, which has brought the attention of India to the provisions of UNCLOS which allow for such passage through the waters of another country. The right to innocent passage is enshrined in article 17 of UNCLOS 1982. Both India and Sri Lanka are signatories to the UNCLOS. The article quoted explicitly allows fishing vessels of both coastal states and even land locked countries to transit through the territorial waters

of another country to reach international waters (High Seas) for fishing as long as the act is not prejudicial to good order, peace or security of the coastal state.

Article 27 of UNCLOS is explicit that “The criminal jurisdiction of the coastal state should not be exercised on board a foreign ship passing through the territorial sea to arrest any person or to conduct any investigation in connection with any crime committed on board the ship during its passage, save only if the consequences of the crime extend to the coastal state,”

From the Indian point of view, regulating the fishing by foreign vessels has been covered by the MZI Act of 1981 and amplifying orders for foreign fishing vessels with specific reference to licensed foreign vessels was issued in 1982 based on the powers conferred in Section 25 of the MZI Act of 1981.

Section 7 of the MZI Act of 1981 is quite clear about the code of conduct for vessels which are not permitted to fish in the Indian EEZ. According to section 7, the fishing gear of such vessels which are transiting the Indian waters should always be stowed in the prescribed manner. There are exceptions for fishing for scientific purposes by foreign vessels as per clause 8 wherein, such vessel could be permitted in writing by the Government of India.

It appears that the clauses applicable in section 9 of the said act may have been used by the Coast Guard in the instances quoted above. This clause specifically allows for inspection by a Coast Guard Officer or another authorized officer of the vessel, the catch the fishing gear and the documents to determine if there have been violations in the maritime zones of India. If it is proved that an offence has been committed, the master of the vessel and the crew could be charged and produced in front of a magistrate. The penalties could be up to ten lakhs under section 10 of the said clause. This is in addition to the cost that could be recovered by auctioning the fish catch and deposited in the Govt Treasury.

From the analysis of the relevant provisions of the UNCLOS and also the Maritime Zones of India Act (1981) it is clear that Sri Lankan vessels or for that matter any fishing vessel of a coastal or a land locked state is authorized to transit through the territorial waters as far as it is clear that the passage is for reaching the fishing grounds in international waters and returning to the port of origin. The Indian Coast Guard is authorized to ensure that the provisions of the UNCLOS are not being violated and this can be done by physical inspection. In the reported incident, since the Sri Lankan

vessels were released by the court, it is inferred that they were using the territorial waters of India

only for transit and were not fishing in the Indian. The Sri Lankan official has averred that this has been the practice for many years and expressed surprise that the Indian Coast Guard has apprehended the vessel.

While the fishing issues in the Palk Bay have different dimensions, the issue of multiday fishing vessels which use the territorial waters for accessing the global commons needs to be managed in a more efficient manner by all the nations in India's neighbourhood. A list of all the multi-day fishing vessels need be exchanged and their schedules shared with the Coast Guards. Continuous tracking of such vessels till they leave the maritime zones of India both to and from the fishing grounds by the MDA architecture will ensure that these deviations are spotted. Also, since the orders are very specific as to the processes by which, the Coast Guard as an inspecting agency can determine whether or not a vessel transiting the Indian waters has violated the provisions of the MZI Act 1981, the occasions on which legitimate multi-day fishing vessels are apprehended should be more an exception than a rule. It appears that this case reported was an exception and the incident should allow the coast guards and the government agencies on both sides to hold further discussions to ensure that such incidents are managed better.

Source: [maritimeindia.org](http://maritimeindia.org), 05 May 2017





### **Mauritius National Coast Guard gets new patrol vessel**

- Erwan de Cherisey

The Mauritius National Coast Guard (NCG) received its second fast patrol vessel (FPV) on 30 April, the vessel's manufacturer, India's state-owned Goa Shipyards Limited (GSL) announced. CGS *Valiant* is the second of two FPVs ordered by Mauritius from GSL, with CGS *Victory* having been handed over in September 2016. The India Import-Export Bank helped fund the USD41 million order. The Mauritius Police Force said that the ship is expected to reach Mauritius in June following its maiden voyage.

GSL said *Valiant* 's keel was laid on 22 May 2015 and the FPV was launched on 2 February 2017, with delivery taking place four months ahead of the original contractual schedule. The vessel is based on GSL's 50 m FPV design that is also in service with the Indian Coast Guard. It is armed with a 30 mm CRN-91 main gun as well as 12.7 mm and 7.62 mm machine guns. The ship has a complement of 35 kt and an endurance of seven days. *Valiant* has three MTU-F 16V4000 M90 diesel engines that power three KAMEWA Type-71SII waterjets. GSL said that the vessel exceeds the 35 kt maximum speed specified in the contract by 2.3 kt. *Valiant* is designed primarily for coastal patrolling and related law enforcement operations, such as counter piracy, drug interdiction, and search and rescue. It will join a fleet of other Indian-made vessels in service with the NCG.

Mauritius and India have a long-standing defence co-operation, with India providing training assistance to Mauritius Police Force, conducting joint patrols with NCG vessels, and facilitating the modernisation of the police and coastguard with loans for the purchase of Indian-made equipment.

Source: [www.janes.com](http://www.janes.com), 08 May 2017



## **Indian Navy to buy vessels from private shipyards in policy change**

- Vivek Raghuvanshi

In a departure from an earlier policy of awarding big-ticket defense programs to state-owned companies on a nomination basis, the Indian Ministry of Defence has decided to source four landing platform docks from private defense companies. "MoD will shortly invite revised commercial bids for purchase of four LPD vessels costing around \$3 billion from two shortlisted private defense companies because the price validity has expired [last month] and government-owned companies have been dropped from the program," according to a senior MoD official.

Under the 2013 tender, only two LPDs were to be built by a domestic private sector company and the remaining two vessels on nomination basis by state-owned company Hindustan Shipyard Limited. Only domestic defense companies Larsen & Toubro and Reliance Defence and Engineering Limited, or RDEL — formerly known as Pipavav Defence and Offshore Engineering — could clear the financial and technical compliance completed last year. Currently no defense company in India can build LPD vessels alone. To execute the LPD program, L&T has teamed with Navantia of Spain while RDEL has forged a partnership with DCNS of France. "The validity date for the tender has expired and the number of extensions that could be asked for from [the] Defence Procurement Procedures (DPP) perspective have also lapsed. Thus, MoD has no option but to ask for a fresh commercial bid," the senior MoD official said.

Welcoming the move to give all four LPD orders to private sector companies, Anil Jai Singh, a defense analyst and retired Indian Navy commodore, said: "Given the full-capacity order book with the government-owned shipyards, it is a welcome and long overdue step to bring the private shipyards into the shipbuilding mainstream with a substantial order which makes it worth their while." Ankur Gupta, a defense analyst with Ernst and Young India, held a similar view. "This is a great opportunity for the Indian private defense companies to receive an order that is comparable in terms of numbers to what the public sector defense companies has been receiving over the past decades." However, one Indian Navy official said the service fears that "private companies could underquote fresh commercial offers in desperation to win the order and eventually not deliver the vessels on time."

In response, the MoD official admitted: "Yes, there is a distinct possibility for such an eventuality." The selected private shipyard will be asked to deliver the first LPD in eight years and subsequently other vessels in a time frame of two years thereafter,

according to the Indian Navy official. The LPD vessel is expected to accommodate 1,430 personnel and be equipped with a point-defense missile system, a close-in weapon system, an anti-torpedo decoy system, a chaff system, and heavy and light machine guns. In addition, helicopters up to 35 tons are expected to be able to operate from the vessel.

The Indian Navy currently operates only one LPD — the former U.S. Navy Austin-class amphibious transport dock Trenton, acquired in 1997 and renamed INS Jalashwa. "The Indian Navy needs the LPDs most urgently to meet the strategic and tactical requirements for protecting the Indian Ocean region island territories and the territorial waters," the Navy official said.

Source: [www.defensenews.com](http://www.defensenews.com), 04 May 2017

### **After 30 years in service, Indian Navy decommissions minesweepers**

Two minesweepers of the Indian Navy -- INS Karwar and INS Kakinada -- were on Tuesday decommissioned after being in service for over 30 years. The two ships were bid adieu at a ceremony in the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai in the presence of Navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba. INS Karwar was the first of the 'Natya' class minesweepers acquired from the erstwhile Soviet Union. The ship was commissioned on July 14, 1986. INS Kakinada was the second of the class and was commissioned on December 23, 1986.

"Both ships have rendered over 30 years of stellar service to the nation. The ships have undertaken countless minesweeping missions using both, the older mechanical sweeps as well as the modern Side-scan SONARS," the Navy said in a statement. With the decommissioning of the two minesweepers, the Navy is now left with a fleet of four Soviet-origin minesweeping ships will also be decommissioned by the end of 2018.

A parliamentary standing committee on defence recently had criticised the government on the issue and asked it to make efforts to fill the gap in the Navy's capability.

Source: [www.hindustantimes.com](http://www.hindustantimes.com), 09 May 2017

## **Titagarh Wagons to build vessels for Navy, ocean tech institute**

Titagarh Wagons, the flagship company of Titagarh Group, has started the construction of two 1,000-tonne fuel barges for the Indian Navy and two coastal research vessels for the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT). The two fuel barges are worth ₹75 crore and will support the famed INS Vikramaditya, Indian Navy's flagship aircraft carrier. The contract size for NOIT vessels is valued at ₹100 crore. The four ships are the first tenders won by Titagarh Wagons post its entry into the ship-building business earlier this year, it said in a press release. The ceremonial event of cutting the first steel plate for these four vessels took place on Tuesday. "By entrusting the construction of these four highly complex and technologically advanced vessels with us, the Indian Navy and NIOT have reposed great faith and trust in Titagarh," Jagdish Prasad Chowdhary, Founder and Executive Chairman, Titagarh Wagons, said.

Source: [www.thehindubusinessline.com](http://www.thehindubusinessline.com), 09 May 2017

## **India, Indonesia navies begin 17-day exercise**

In tune with enhanced bilateral maritime cooperation, the navies of India and Indonesia today began a 17-day coordinated patrol and joint exercise. The joint exercise is being conducted at Port Blair under the aegis of the Andaman and Nicobar Command. "Apart from securing the trade sea route, the coordinated patrol also serves to enhance mutual understanding and interoperability between the two navies," the Indian Navy said in a statement.

The two navies have been carrying out Coordinated Patrols (CORPAT) for over a decade. "The CORPAT reflects the shared concerns between the two countries for a peaceful Indian Ocean for the benefit of the international community," the Navy said. Defence relations between India and Indonesia have been growing steadily with regular joint activities and exchanges of personnel between the armed forces of the two countries.

Under the broad ambit of this strategic partnership, Indonesian Navy (TNI-AL) and the Indian Navy have been carrying out coordinated patrolling twice a year since 2002.

Source: [ndiatoday.intoday.in](http://ndiatoday.intoday.in), 09 May 2017

## **A Chinese Submarine In Indian Ocean has Sri Lanka, India & Pakistan Tied Up in Knots**

- Bobins Abraham

India is keeping a close eye on the Chinese submarine that was denied permission by the Sri Lankan authorities to dock at Colombo. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his visit to the southern neighbour, made sure that it does not slip to the mighty Chinese plan to check India from all corners. The development came on Friday, the same day Indian Prime Minister Narendra landed in Colombo for a state visit. The Yuan-class conventional submarine which is part of the People's Liberation Army-Navy's (PLAN) anti-piracy fleet was "picked up" by Indian Navy's Poseidon-8I long-range maritime patrol aircraft as soon as it crossed the Malacca Strait on April 19-20. According to reports the submarine is still in the Indian Ocean Region and is likely to head towards Karachi port.

Even though the Sri Lankan officials have not given the exact reason for the denial of the docking request, Reuters quoting a senior official reported that Lanka was "unlikely" to agree to China's request to dock the submarine at any time, given India's concerns. Another official told the news agency that the China's request to dock this month had been rejected but that a decision on a further docking had been postponed. "It might happen later," the second official told Reuters, adding that China had requested approval to use the port around May 16 "some time back". The timing of the move is significant as Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe is scheduled to travel to Beijing to hold talks on China's ambitious Maritime Silk Route plan. This is not the first time India has expressed its concern over Chinese ships in its backyard. The last Chinese submarine to dock in Colombo was in October 2014, which triggered an official protest for New Delhi. India has also expressed concern over the Hambantota port project and the Colombo port city project, two massive Chinese-backed infrastructure projects in Sri Lanka signed by the previous Mahinda Rajapaksa government. Rajapaksa had throughout his term in office favoured China, snubbing neighbour India, when it came to infrastructure schemes. India saw the move as the Chinese trying to spread its influence in the southern Indian Ocean. The current Sri Lankan government headed Maithripala Sirisena is seen more pro-India than his predecessor, though he has said that his country welcomes investments from all countries including China.

Source: [www.indiatimes.com](http://www.indiatimes.com), 13 May 2017

## **Pentagon: Russian Su-27 Fighter Flies Close to US Navy Spy Jet Over Black Sea**

A Russian Su-27 fighter jet flew within 20 feet of a US Navy P-8A Poseidon aircraft while on a routine mission over the Black Sea last Tuesday, a Pentagon spokeswoman said Thursday.

US Naval Forces Europe spokeswoman Pamela Kunze said the maneuver was described as safe and professional by the US aircraft's commander, the NBC broadcaster reported.

Kunze said US and Russian ships and planes routinely interact in international waters. These encounters are assessed individually and the majority of them can be called safe and professional, she specified.

Source: [sputniknews.com](http://sputniknews.com), 12May 2017

### **Cargo traffic at 12 major ports up 6% to 56 MT in April**

Boosted by pick up in demand, India's 12 major ports saw cargo traffic increase by 6.27 per cent to 55.75 million tonnes (MT) in April, the first month of the current fiscal. These top ports under the Centre had handled 52.46 MT cargo in April 2016. Increased demand from sectors like iron ore, coking coal and container traffic resulted in higher movement of cargo last month to 55.75 MT, as per the Indian Ports Association. Iron ore traffic volumes were up 40 per cent to 5.37 MT during the month as against 3.82 MT in April 2016 while coking coal volumes surged by 15 per cent to 4.61 MT.

Container traffic was up 9.78 per cent to 7 lakh TEUs (twenty food equivalent units) while POL (petroleum, oil and lubricants) volumes too surged by 7 per cent. Kandla port handled the highest traffic volume at 9.32 MT during April this year followed by Paradip Port at 7.33 MT, JNPT Port at 5.75 MT, Mumbai at 5.33 MT and Visakhapatnam at 4.92 MT, the data revealed. Kolkata Port including Haldia handled 4.23 MT of cargo while Chennai port handled 3.93 MT of cargo. Volume of seaborne cargo is essentially in the nature of derived demand and is mainly shaped by the levels and changes in both the global and domestic activity.

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

Source: [www.moneycontrol.com](http://www.moneycontrol.com), 10 May 2017

### **Dromon Bureau of Shipping (DBS) and Interorient Shipmanagement cooperate on EU MRV Regulation**

Dromon Bureau of Shipping (DBS) has signed an agreement with Interorient Shipmanagement for verification services under Regulation (EU) 2015/757 on the monitoring, reporting and verification of carbon dioxide emissions from maritime transport (known as the EU MRV Regulation). DBS will act as the Verification Body of

Interorient Shipmanagement and will assess the monitoring plans as well as verify the annual emissions reports of the Company's complete fleet. Interorient Shipmanagement has developed in an early stage the monitoring plans for its complete fleet by updating existing management system procedures that combine environmental, health and safety and quality standards Dromon Bureau of Shipping (DBS) is an independent International Classification Society and Verification Body dedicated to provide classification, statutory certification and greenhouse gas validation and verification services to ships and other marine structures, with the objective of protecting the environment and life at sea.

DBS activities consist of the application of Classification Rules and Regulations for the design, construction and operational maintenance of ships as well as marine related structures and the subsequent verification of these Standards. As an accredited Verification Body DBS provides services relating to EU MRV Regulation. DBS is accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) under the ISO 14065 and can provide worldwide services associated to EU MRV Regulation. DBS can offer services relating to the assessment of monitoring plans, verification of the emissions reports and issue the required Document of Compliance (DoC) to each ship. DBS worldwide presence can support on time compliance with the EU-MRV Regulation.

Interorient Shipmanagement was founded in 1979 and today prides itself as being one of the leaders in quality ship management in the shipping industry with a long and successful history. The company's infrastructure of ship management and manning agencies worldwide maintains the highest degree of operational and safety integrity over a managed fleet of more than 100 vessels with over 3,000 employees onboard and ashore. The company places great emphasis on its employees, its human capital, and enjoys a high degree of employee retention and loyalty both in its branch offices and amongst its seafarers. Interorient management experience includes technical, crew and commercial management of various types of vessels, including crude and product tankers, bulkers of all sizes, container vessels, general cargo and offshore support and supply boats. The company also provides a full range of newbuilding services from initial design to final delivery of vessel. Interorient Shipmanagement is an active member of all the primary industry trade associations. Through this active membership the company is able to be proactive in respect to regulatory developments resulting in cost effective compliance for ship owners.

Source: [www.hellenicshippingnews.com](http://www.hellenicshippingnews.com), 11 May 2017



## **ICS Commits Shipping to Ambitious CO2 Reduction Objectives**

At its AGM in Istanbul, the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) agreed to urge the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to adopt some dramatic CO2 reduction objectives – on behalf of the international shipping sector as a whole – in order to match the ambition of the Paris Agreement on climate change. In a submission to IMO Member States, being made in conjunction with other shipping organisations, ICS will propose that IMO should adopt three Aspirational Objectives:

- To maintain international shipping’s annual total CO2 emissions below 2008 levels
- To reduce CO2 emissions per tonne-km, as an average across international shipping, by at least 50% by 2050, compared to 2008
- To reduce international shipping’s total annual CO2 emissions by an agreed percentage by 2050, compared to 2008, as a point on a continuing trajectory of CO2 emissions reduction

Speaking in Istanbul, ICS Chairman, Esben Poulsen, commented:

“It is very important that IMO sends a clear and unambiguous signal to the global community that shipping’s regulators have agreed some ambitious objectives, with numbers and dates, for reducing the sector’s CO2 emissions, in the same way that land-based activity is now covered by government commitments under the Paris Agreement.” ICS wants IMO to remain in control of additional measures to address CO2 reduction by ships and to develop a global solution, rather than risk the danger of market-distorting measures at national or regional level.

“Shipping has a very good story to tell about reducing CO2 but this is difficult to convey so long as there is no clear signal from IMO as to what our collective CO2 reduction objectives should be”, said Mr Poulsen. ICS will suggest that IMO should adopt these objectives as part of the initial IMO CO2 reduction strategy to be agreed in 2018, following the adoption of an IMO Roadmap at the request of the industry in 2016.

Importantly, acknowledging concerns of developing nations about the possible impacts of CO2 reduction for trade and sustainable development, ICS emphasises that any objectives adopted by IMO must not imply any commitment to place a binding cap



on the sector's total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions or on the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of individual ships. "Dramatic CO<sub>2</sub> reductions alongside increasing trade can only be achieved with the development of alternative fossil-free fuels – something which needs to be identified by the IMO strategy" Mr Poulsson emphasised.

He added "The long term future of the industry, like the rest of the world economy, must eventually be fossil fuel free. The trajectory for getting there, not least the development of alternative fuels, could well take us several decades. But this will only be achieved if the industry itself pushes for the adoption by IMO of some suitability ambitious objectives so that all concerned are under no illusion about the scale of the task ahead." The ICS AGM in Istanbul was hosted by the Turkish Chamber of Shipping from 9-11 May. Esben Poulsson (Singapore) was elected ICS Chairman in 2016. For 2017-2018 he will be supported by the following Vice Chairmen: John Adams (Bahamas), Emanuele Grimaldi (Italy), Mark Martecchini (Liberia) and Karin Orsel (Netherlands).

According to the 2014 IMO GHG Study, international shipping emitted 921 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2008. As a result of technical and operational measures, this figure declined by 13% to less than 800 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2012 or 2.2% of the world's total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. In the absence of additional CO<sub>2</sub> reduction measures however, total CO<sub>2</sub> from international shipping is currently projected by IMO to increase above 2008 levels due to additional demand for maritime transport. ICS is the principal global trade association for shipowners. Its member national shipowners' associations, from 37 nations, cover all sectors and trades and over 80% of the world merchant fleet. ICS (together with BIMCO, INTERCARGO and INTERTANKO) will be making a joint submission on behalf of the global shipping industry to the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee, which meets during the first week of July, preceded by a week-long Intersessional Working Group which will begin the development of an IMO strategy for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> from shipping.

Source: [www.hellenicshippingnews.com](http://www.hellenicshippingnews.com), 15 May 2017

### **East Coast ports scramble to accommodate largest container ship**

The largest cargo ship ever to visit ports on the U.S. East Coast is so long the Statue of Liberty and Washington Monument could fit end-to-end along its deck and still leave

room for Big Ben. The COSCO Development arrived Thursday at the Port of Savannah after cruising past dozens of onlookers who cheered and took photos of the mammoth vessel from Savannah's downtown riverfront. Its first East Coast voyage marks a new era for U.S. ports that, despite years spent anticipating the supersized ships, will struggle to accommodate them without major infrastructure improvements. "It takes up the whole river!" Andrew Evans, who served as a ship's officer in the 1960s, exclaimed to his wife as the ship slowly lumbered into view, the cargo containers stacked on its deck towering above trees on the shore. "The largest ships I was on, you could fit 10 of them on that ship," Evans said. "Maybe more."

At 1,200 feet (366 meters) bow-to-stern, the COSCO Development is longer than the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford. It can carry 13,000 cargo containers measuring 20 feet (6 meters) long apiece. That's 30 percent more capacity than the last record-breaking ship that sailed into Savannah last summer. The big ship, flagged out of Hong Kong and owned by China-based COSCO Shipping Lines, is also the largest to pass through the Panama Canal following a major expansion last year. Its arrival on the East Coast shows shippers aren't waiting for the seaports scrambling to deepen their harbors so the larger ships can pass fully loaded at low tide.

The Port of Virginia, where the ship docked earlier this week, is one of only four East Coast ports with the desired 50 feet of depth at low tide. A \$973 million deepening of Savannah's shipping channel started in 2015 but won't be finished for about five more years. The Port of Charleston, South Carolina, where the big ship will head next before returning to Hong Kong, plans to start its own dredging this fall.

Overall, 15 U.S. seaports on the East and Gulf coasts are seeking \$4.6 billion after being authorized by Congress to make room for bigger ships. Only three of those have cleared the permit requirements needed to start digging, said Jim Walker, navigation policy director for the American Association of Port Authorities.

Meanwhile, the largest ships using the Panama Canal must carry lighter loads or wait for higher tides before calling on most U.S. ports on the East Coast. "Maybe it's a warning shot that these U.S. ports need to get these improvements finished," Walker said. "If you're having to light-load ships for this, it costs more." Manuel Benitez, the Panama Canal Authority's deputy administrator, said the surge in ship traffic between the U.S. East Coast and Asia has exceeded expectations since the canal opened its expanded locks last June. The authority initially thought two or three larger ships would pass through each day, he said, but the daily average has been nearly six. The COSCO Development had to make its 39-mile (63 m) trip up the Savannah River at

high tide Thursday morning to ensure it would fit. Its cargo deck was about 80-percent full, said Griff Lynch, executive director of the Georgia Ports Authority.

Lynch said dockworkers using six cranes planned to load and unload about 5,600 total cargo containers — big metal boxes used to ship goods from consumer electronics to frozen chickens — from the giant ship. That’s more than five times the cargo Savannah handles for a typical ship. “It’s everything we’ve talked about for years,” Lynch said. “Now what you’re going to see is one after the other. This is going to become more of the norm.”

Source: [www.hellenicshippingnews.com](http://www.hellenicshippingnews.com), 15 May 2017

### **Sheikh Hasina’s Visit to India: Consolidating Maritime Cooperation**

-Eshita Rudra

The Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina was on a State visit to India from 7-10 April 2017. India and Bangladesh not only share a land border, but also a common maritime boundary with both being littoral countries of Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. Sheikh Hasina’s visit enabled both countries to consolidate cooperation on maritime issues, which was identified during the June 2015 visit of Prime Minister Modi to Bangladesh. Interestingly, this was Sheikh Hasina’s first visit to India after the Modi Government came to power in May 2014. Her last State visit to India took place seven years ago in January 2010.

A very significant development during Sheikh Hasina’s visit has been the conclusion of memoranda of understanding on Defence Cooperation, Defence Line of Credit, as well as cooperation between various defence training institutes of India and Bangladesh. Its significance emerges when seen in the context that the dominant discourse in Bangladesh has perceived India as the threat against which security has to be built.<sup>1</sup> The conclusion of the above MoUs indicates that there is a shift in this narrative, being replaced instead by an environment of trust, goodwill and constructive cooperation. India and Bangladesh have already resolved their maritime boundary dispute; and the leaderships at the highest level in both countries are committed to broaden and deepen maritime cooperation. India’s relations with

Bangladesh is in-fact looked upon as the successful implementation of the Modi government's 'Neighbourhood First' policy.

In the above context, this issue brief spells out the maritime issues discussed by the two governments during Sheikh Hasina's visit to India. However, to put issues in perspective, the essay begins by first briefly discussing the maritime 2 agenda identified during Modi's June 2015 visit to Bangladesh. The essay concludes by identifying the challenges which need to be addressed so that the progress in the bilateral relations is not derailed.

**Modi's June 2015 Visit: Laying the Foundation of Trust** Prime Minister Modi's visit to Bangladesh in June 2015 was preceded by the historic unanimous passage of the of the 100th Constitution Amendment Bill in the Indian Parliament to give effect to the 1974 Land Boundary Agreement and its 2011 Protocol. The instruments of ratification were exchanged between the two governments during the visit. Its significance was brought out by India's Foreign Secretary Jaishankar who said in June 2015, '.....what it has done is, it has really created a climate of confidence, of goodwill, of trust where a lot other initiatives which could have happened, should have happened, can now happen.... there is an enormous sense today of optimism and confidence about the entire relationship'.<sup>2</sup> Earlier, in July 2014, the dispute over the maritime boundary was also resolved.

Modi's visit reflected this positive atmosphere in the 65-point Joint Declaration titled, 'Notun Projonma-Nayi Disha, New Generation-New Direction'. Further, 22 Agreements/MoUs were also concluded. Of these, six agreements/MoUs were related to the maritime sphere. These dealt with blue economy and maritime cooperation in the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean; coastal shipping; inland waterways trade and transit; use of Chittagong and Mongla Ports for movement of goods to and from India; cooperation between the coast guards of the two countries to ensure maritime security and safety, and prevent crimes at sea; and facilitate joint study, project research and cooperation for training and capacity building in oceanography between identified institutions in the two countries.

The coastal shipping service between Bangladesh and India was launched in March 2016 as a follow up of these agreements. On 16 March 2016, the container vessel MV Harbour 1 left Chittagong Port in Bangladesh and reached Krishnapatnam Port on India's east coast on 28 March 2016.<sup>3</sup> This historic journey inaugurated a new chapter of economic cooperation. Earlier, sea connectivity meant that goods had to be first sent to Singapore and Colombo ports and from there it would be sent in 3 smaller vessels

to India and Bangladesh ports. This used to take 30-40 days adding to both time and costs of EXIM trade.

Another important development took place in June 2016 in connection with inland waterways. A Bangladeshi ship from Kolkata carrying 1005 tonnes of steel rods meant for Tripura Governments Rural Development projects reached Ashuganj river port in Bangladesh on 15 June 2016. Bangladeshi trucks then carried the goods from Ashuganj river port to Tripura's Akhura check post. Follow up arrangements were made by the state government of Tripura to deliver the goods from the Akhura check post to different places in the state. This route cut the Kolkata-Agartala distance from 1600 km to 500 km.

In December 2016, senior coast guard officials of India and Bangladesh met in Kolkata and discussed matters regarding maritime safety and security in the Bay of Bengal. It is important to note that as part of capacity building, Indian Coast Guard has been imparting specialist training for Bangladesh Coast Guard personnel on maritime subjects like maritime law, search and rescue, pollution response, boarding operation, helicopter operations and anti-piracy, at their training centre in Kochi since February 2014.

It is observed that Modi's visit laid the foundation for an integrated and holistic maritime agenda. It incorporated cooperation among the coast guards of both the countries to ensure maritime security which is necessary for carrying out coastal shipping and to tap potential of Blue Economy. Most important, as seen in the above section, follow up actions were taken to implement the decisions arrived at. It has specifically helped India access its north-east states, saving time to almost more than half.

#### *Sheikh Hasina's April 2017 Visit:*

Consolidating the Gains The India-Bangladesh Joint Statement of 8 April 2017; and the List of Agreements exchanged during Sheikh Hasina's visit, spells out the broad range of issues discussed. Accordingly, some of the observations made on issues which come under the maritime agenda are as follows:

- The two Prime Ministers expressed satisfaction at the robust bilateral security cooperation that exists between the two countries. In this context, they were appreciative of the signing of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for operationalisation of the MoU on Cooperation between the Coast Guards.

- The projects to be implemented in Bangladesh under the 3rd Line of Credit of US \$ 4.5 billion being given by the Government of India would include port construction and shipping also.
- The leaders emphasised the advantages of sub-regional cooperation in the areas of power, water resources, trade, transit and connectivity for mutual benefit. It was noted that a Trilateral Memorandum of Understanding between Bangladesh, Bhutan and India for Cooperation in the field of hydroelectric power had been worked out and would be signed when the leaders of all the three countries would be present.
- It was noted that the operationalisation of the Coastal Shipping Agreement signed in June 2015 had resulted in the desired objective of improving connectivity and enhancing bilateral trade. As a step further, the Bangladesh Prime Ministers visit resulted in the signing of an MoU and SOPs between the two countries on Passenger and Cruise services on Coastal and Protocol routes.
- The commencement of transshipment of goods through the Ashuganj River Port under the Protocol on Inland Water and Transit and Trade (PIWTT) was appreciated. Both India and Bangladesh called for the speedy construction of the Ashuganj Inland Container Port (ICP) and the inclusion of more ports of call under the PIWTT framework.
- Bangladesh proposed that the Ganges Barrage on the river Padma in Bangladesh should be jointly developed. In this context, a 'Joint Technical Sub Group on Ganges Barrage Project' was established which would look into this issue and suggest the course of action. • Both the leaders complimented Armed forces of both the countries who had rescued a large number of fishermen from both sides by conducting Joint Search and Rescue Operations in the Bay of Bengal. • A MoU was also concluded between the Ministry of Shipping of both the countries with regard to cooperation on Aids of Navigation. 5
- The Ministry of Shipping of both the countries also concluded a MoU on Development of Fairway from Sirajganj to Daikhowa and Ashuganj to Zakiganj on Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route.

The above details clearly bring out that cooperation on maritime issues which began with the Modi visit to Bangladesh was now being consolidated with Sheikh Hasina's visit to India. The institutionalisation of cooperation among the coast guards of the two countries; development of infrastructure connected with making inland waterways effective; commencing movement of passengers on cruise vessels on coastal

and protocol routes and many other measures reflect the trust that has deepened since Modi's visit.

It is also observed that the bilateral relations are however being approached with a sense of realism and difficult issues are not being shunned. Modi reiterated his commitment to find a solution to the lingering issue of sharing of waters of Teesta River. Discussions are also being held on sharing of waters of other rivers too and it can be anticipated that both countries would have to approach the issue with trust. Also, both the countries would be looking forward for the findings of the report of the Joint Technical Sub Group on the Ganges Barrage Project to be built in Bangladesh. It can be safely said that while both the countries have built a relation of trust, the sharing of waters of the common rivers give rise to challenges that they will encounter in future. These issues have the potential to strain the relations unless they are honestly addressed and outcomes are both visible and measurable.

### *The Challenges*

India-Bangladesh relations are being consolidated with a rare vision and trust shown by both Sheikh Hasina and Modi. However, one needs to note that Bangladesh has cordial and constructive relations with China too. There is thus a situation wherein Bangladesh's relations with China are not necessarily directed against India but has its own logic and purpose.

In October 2016, the Chinese President visited Bangladesh, the first by a Chinese head of state in 30 years. The two countries upgraded their relationship from a Comprehensive Partnership of Cooperation to a Strategic Partnership of Cooperation. Both sides also committed to the projects under OBOR (One Belt One Road) Initiative to boost connectivity. 28 development projects with US 21.5 billion in foreign aid were agreed to. Interestingly, on 14 November 2016, Bangladesh navy took delivery of two old refurbished Chinese Type 035G Ming-class diesel electric submarines.<sup>7</sup> Bangladesh is also likely to participate in the 14-15 May 2017 Belt and Road Summit being held in Beijing. The OBOR initiative was first put forward by China in 2013. According to China, the May 2017 Summit will explore ways to address regional and global economic problems, generate fresh energy for interconnected development, and ensure that the Belt and Road Initiative delivers greater benefits to people of the countries involved.<sup>8</sup> India has not endorsed the OBOR initiative.

How will India respond to such developments? India has to increase its cooperative space with Bangladesh on maritime issues of common interest. India and Bangladesh



are both littorals of the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean. There is a global consensus that the centre of economic and political power is shifting to Asia and in this context the Indian Ocean will assume great significance. Half of the world's container ships, one third of the bulk cargo traffic and two thirds of its oil shipments pass through the Indian Ocean. India will need to work closely with like-minded countries like Bangladesh to ensure that maritime security, freedom of navigation; and that adherence to international laws takes place. Thus, the bilateral trust will have to translate to collaborative actions at the regional and international forum on issues maritime. Outcomes play an important role in sustaining the trust in the relations.

One area which needs to be given added focus in India-Bangladesh maritime agenda is cooperation in 'Blue Economy'. This was not given much importance during the April visit of Sheikh Hasina to India. This paper argues that specific projects need to be identified and a road map outlined with regard to implementing Blue Economy so that there will be win-win outcomes. This suggestion is based on the manner in which Bangladesh is prioritising Blue Economy, brought out very eloquently during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's address at the first Leaders' Summit of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) held in Jakarta, Indonesia to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the grouping comprising 21 member states and 7 dialogue partners.<sup>9</sup> The IORA Summit had adopted the Jakarta Concord on 7 March 2017.<sup>10</sup> India is also a member of IORA and was represented at the summit by Vice President Hamid Ansari.<sup>11</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Clearly, India-Bangladesh maritime cooperation has consolidated since the June 2015 visit of Indian Prime Minister Modi to Bangladesh. While Modi's visit to Bangladesh took place in the context of the resolution of land and maritime boundaries; Sheikh Hasina's visit has institutionalised defence cooperation. Both the visits have deepened maritime cooperation with regard inland waterways; coastal shipping; port construction; and cooperation among the coast guards of the two countries. However, in the context of the emphasis Bangladesh is according to Blue Economy in its development agenda, India should focus on cooperation in this area too, with specific time-bound outcomes and concrete deliverables.

Source: [www.maritimeindia.org](http://www.maritimeindia.org), 03 May 2017





## MARINE ENVIRONMENT



### **Caribbean scientists work to limit climate impact on marine environment**

-Zadie Neufville

Caribbean scientists say fishermen are already seeing the effects of climate change, so for a dozen or so years they've been designing systems and strategies to reduce the impacts on the industry. While some work on reef gardens and strategies to repopulate over fished areas, others crunch the data and develop tools designed to prepare the region, raise awareness of climate change issues and provide the information to help leaders make decisions.

In December 2017, the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) secretariat, with funding from the UK government, announced a Climate Report Card to help formulate strategies to lessen the impact of climate change on regional fisheries. The CRFM is trying to ensure that the issue of climate change as it relates to the fisheries sector comes to the fore... because the CARICOM Heads of Government have put fish and fishery products among the priority commodities for CARICOM. It means that things that affect that development are important to us and so climate change is of primary importance," said Peter Murray, the CRFM's Programme Manager for Fisheries and Development. The grouping of small, developing states are 'fortifying' the sectors that rely on the marine environment, or the Blue Economy, to withstand the expected ravages of climate change which scientists say will increase the intensity of hurricanes, droughts, coastal sea level rise and coral bleaching.

In its last report AR5, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported: "Many terrestrial, freshwater and marine species have shifted their geographic ranges, seasonal activities, migration patterns, abundances and species interactions in response to ongoing climate change," patterns that are already being noted by Caribbean fishers.

In an email to IPS, Murray outlined several initiatives across the Caribbean that ,he says are crucial to regional efforts. The Report Card, which has been available since March, will provide the in-depth data governments need to make critical decisions on mitigation and adaptation. It provides information covering ocean processes such as

ocean acidification; extreme events like storms, surges and sea temperature; biodiversity and civil society including fisheries, tourism and settlements.

In addition, the 17-members of the CRFM agreed to incorporate the management of fisheries into their national disaster plans, and signed off on the Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy for the fisheries sector. “It means that anything looking at climate change and potential impacts is important to us,” Murray says. The IPCC’s gloomy projections for world fisheries has been confirmed by a 2015 World Wildlife Fund (WWF) report indicating that for the last 30 years, world fisheries have been in decline due to climate change. In the Caribbean, reduced catches are directly impacting the stability of entire communities and the diets and livelihoods of some of the region’s poorest. Further decline could devastate the economies of some islands. But even as climate change is expected to intensify the effects of warming ocean waters, pelagic species could avoid the Caribbean altogether, bringing even more hardships. So the regional plan is centred on a Common Fisheries Policy that includes effective management, monitoring and enforcement systems and tools to improve risk planning.

In addition to the disaster plan and its other activities, the Community has over time installed a Coral Reef Early Warning System; new data collection protocols; improved computing capacity to crunch climate data; an insurance scheme to increase the resilience of fishing communities and stakeholders; as well as several tools to predict drought and excessive rainfall.

Worldwide, three billion people rely on fish as their major source of protein. The industry provides a livelihood for about 12 per cent of the world’s population and earns approximately 2.9 trillion dollars per year, the WWF reports. With regional production barely registering internationally, the Caribbean is putting all its efforts into preserving the Blue Economy, which the World Bank said earned the region 407 billion dollars in 2012.

In the coming weeks the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, known regionally as the 5Cs, has coordinated and implemented a raft of programmes aimed at building systems that will help the region cope the effects of climate change.

Through collaboration with the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the 5Cs has been setting up an integrated network of climate and biological monitoring stations to strengthen the region’s early warning mechanism. And as the oceans absorb more carbon, the region’s supply of conch and oysters, the mainstay of

some communities, is expected to decline further. In addition, warming sea water is expected to shift migration routes for pelagic fish further north, reducing the supply of available deep sea fish even more. Added to that, competition for the dwindling resources could cause negative impacts of one industry over another. But while scientists seek options, age-old traditions are sometimes still pitted against conservation projects. Take an incident that played out in the waters around St. Vincent and the Grenadines a few weeks ago when whale watchers witnessed the harpooning of two orcas by Vincentian fishermen.

The incident forced Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves to announce the end of what was, until then, a thriving whaling industry in the village of Barouille. For years, government turned a blind eye as fishermen breached regional and international agreements on the preservation of marine species. The continued breaches are also against the Caribbean Community's Common Fisheries Policy that legally binds countries to a series of actions to protect and preserve the marine environment and its creatures.

On April 2, five days after the incident, Gonsalves took to the airwaves to denounce the whaling caused by "greed" and announce pending regulations to end fishing for the mammals. The incident also tarnished the island's otherwise excellent track record at climate proofing its fishing industry. Murray's email on regional activities outlines SVG activities including the incorporation of the regional strategy and action plan and its partnership with several regional and international agencies and organisations to build resilience in the marine sector. Over in the northern Caribbean, traditions are also testing regulations and international agreements. In Jamaica, the Sandals Foundation in association with major supermarket chains has launched a campaign to stop the capture and sale of parrotfish for consumption. Scientists say that protecting the parrot is synonymous with saving the reefs and mitigating the effects of climate change. And further north in the Turks and Caicos, the government is searching for new ways to manage the conch and lobster populations. While trade is regulated, household use of both, sea turtles, and some sharks remain unregulated; and residents are resistant to any restrictions. And while many continue to puzzle about the reasons behind the region's climate readiness, scientists caution that there is no time to ease up. This week they rolled out, among other things, a coastal adaptation project and a public education and awareness (PAE) programme launched on April 26 in Belize City.

The PAE project, named Feel the Change, is funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Project (J-CCCP) public awareness programme. Speaking at the launch, project development

specialist at 5Cs Keith Nichols pointed to the extreme weather events from severe droughts to changes in crop cycles, which have cost the region billions. “Climate change is not just sea level rise and global warming; climate change and climate variability is all around us,” he said.

Source: [www.caribbeanlifeneews.com](http://www.caribbeanlifeneews.com), 02 May 2017

### **Forensic Tools to Track the Sources of Paraffin in the Marine Environment**

Paraffin is omnipresent in our everyday lives: it is used in the waxes covering cheeses, in chewing gum, in skincare products and candles among others. It is transported as a liquid in heated tankers. Small quantities can be discharged at sea as the tankers transporting it are washed down with water, releasing paraffin into the marine environment. In contact with cooler waters, paraffin solidifies and can be seen accumulating along beaches for several kilometres.

In 2014, more than 50 tons washed ashore on the island of Sylt in the North Sea. Varying in size from several millimetres to more than 25cm in diameter, these paraffin deposits pose a threat to local ecosystems and wildlife.

The IAEA Environment Laboratories have worked on petroleum hydrocarbon monitoring for many years and have developed methodologies which can be used to trace the source of hydrocarbons and their derivatives. One method, which can be applied to paraffin, uses chemical biomarkers to identify its chemical signature. The Laboratories have also developed methods using stable carbon isotopes. This nuclear technique examines the specific “fingerprint” of the carbon compounds, and enables investigators to trace the source of spills and improve the reliability of analyses.

“The combination of chemical and isotopic fingerprinting provides a powerful forensic tool which can be used by Member States for legislative purposes” said Imma Tolosa, an organic research scientist at the IAEA Environment Laboratories.

“In the case of a collision or an accidental release, governments need to know where the hydrocarbon or paraffin comes from” added Mrs. Tolosa. These environmental forensic applications allow Member States to better plan remediation activities. Through her work on paraffin, Imma Tolosa has co-authored several reports

as well as a chapter on paraffin wax spill identification by Gas Chromatography – Flame Ionisation Detector (GC-FID) and Gas Chromatography – Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS) which will be published by Elsevier Inc. as part of the book “Oil Spill Environmental Forensics Case Studies” later in 2017. This is an output of a project to develop methodologies to trace oil pollution in marine waters funded by the US through the Peaceful Uses Initiatives (PUI) programme.

The IAEA Environment Laboratories in Monaco hosted the Thirteenth Expert Meeting of the Bonn Agreement Oil Spill Identification Network of Experts (Bonn-OSINet) from 25 to 27 April 2017. The annual meeting brought together organisations from all around the world which work on oil spill identification. This year the participants discussed paraffin, a hydrocarbon by-product which is becoming increasingly prevalent in the marine environment.

Bonn-OSINet was set up in 2005 with the objective of increasing States’ ability to identify oil spills and to develop standards for spill sampling and identification, as well as to develop and validate new methodologies to address accidental releases. The meeting, held this year in Monaco, provided a forum for participants to address some of the gaps in the guidelines regarding new generation oils and paraffin and discuss ways to improve sampling. Participants agreed to organise a round robin exercise focusing on paraffin so relevant laboratories can test and improve their ability to trace the source of this contaminant.

Source: [www.iaea.org](http://www.iaea.org), 05 May 2017

### **Bacteria living in marine sponge produce toxic compounds found in man-made products**

Researchers have discovered for the first time that a common marine sponge hosts bacteria that specialize in the production of toxic compounds nearly identical to man-made fire retardants, a finding that could help scientists better understand the human health implications of these common additives.

The new findings, by scientists at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO) at the University of California, San Diego, moved the research team a step closer to unraveling the mysteries of this powerful group of chemical compounds, known as polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs). The National Science Foundation's (NSF)

Division of Ocean Sciences and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) of the National Institutes of Health jointly funded the research through SIO's Center for Oceans and Human Health. "For many years scientists have been finding clues that suggested nature was making these compounds," said SIO marine chemist Brad Moore, a senior author of the study. "Now that we understand how they are produced in the marine environment, we are exploring why they exist, and the human health concerns associated with them."

The results, which appear in the May issue of the journal *Nature Chemical Biology*, came from a unique collaboration among chemists and biologists at SIO and elsewhere. "This study is a powerful combination of chemical, biological and environmental research," said Henrietta Edmonds of NSF's Division of Ocean Sciences. "It has the potential to help us understand the production, fate and health consequences of natural and pollutant compounds in the marine environment." Manufacturers add PBDEs to foam, textiles, electronics and other products to make them less flammable. These industrial chemicals are powerful endocrine disruptors that mimic the activity of the human body's most active thyroid hormone.

Vinayak Agarwal, a researcher at SIO, picked up a cold case first started nearly 50 years ago by SIO chemist John Faulkner, an early pioneer in the study of natural products from the sea. Agarwal continued Faulkner's investigation into the source of toxic PDBEs, found in large quantities in the world's oceans. "For the first time we were able to conclusively show that genes and enzymes produced in bacteria from sponges are responsible for the production of these compounds toxic to humans," said Agarwal, co-first author of the paper along with Scripps researcher Jessica Blanton.

In 2014, Agarwal and colleagues were the first to discover that unrelated free-living marine bacteria produce the fire retardant compounds naturally. In the new study, researchers employed two modern-day techniques -- genome "mining" and environmental DNA sequencing -- to take the investigation a step farther and identify the specific genes and enzymes involved in the overproduction of the toxic molecules in sponges.

Marine sponges obtain food and oxygen by filtering seawater through the pores and channels in their bodies. This constant flow of water means that these immobile animals host many bacteria, viruses and fungi in their complex microbiomes. The research team collected 18 sponge samples for the study during two research expeditions to Guam. They then isolated the various components in the complex mixture of organisms from the sponge's tissues to identify the specific genes and

enzymes that code for the production of PBDEs. The genome "mining" approach along with metagenomic sequencing gave the scientists a way to connect the natural chemicals produced by organisms back to the enzymes that constructed them. "We care about naturally produced PBDEs because they end up in the food chain," said NIEHS's Frederick Tyson. "Preliminary data from this research team suggest that some naturally occurring PDBEs may be even more toxic than those that are man-made, so we need to develop a better understanding of these compounds." The next step in the investigation is to mine the genes and enzymes in other marine species to find out what other organisms are making similar toxic compounds and why.

Source: [www.nsf.gov](http://www.nsf.gov), 11 May 2017

### **Oxygen levels in Arabian Sea falling, to hit fish growth**

Summary: "The OMZ of the Arabian Sea is the thickest of the three oceanic OMZ. So the warmer and saltier the water, the less dissolved oxygen it contains. The Arabian Sea, encompasses the northwestern sector of the Indian Ocean and covers a total area of around 3,862,000 sq km. "You have to realize that the water at the lower depths is coming from Antarctica. This cold water, which is rich in nutrients, is oxygenated water. Panaji: With the Indian Ocean warming, the Arabian Sea has seen severe depletion of oxygen rich water , sparking concern among scientists and researchers that fish breeding cycles could get affected. Scientists of National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) and National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR) have pointed out that the Arabian Sea has the world's thickest oxygen minimum zone (OMZ) depthwise, which is highly vulnerable to changes in the Indian monsoon wind. OMZ refers to the stretch of seawater where oxygen levels are at the lowest.

Panaji: With the Indian Ocean warming, the Arabian Sea has seen severe depletion of oxygen rich water , sparking concern among scientists and researchers that fish breeding cycles could get affected. Scientists of National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) and National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR) have pointed out that the Arabian Sea has the world's thickest oxygen minimum zone (OMZ) depthwise, which is highly vulnerable to changes in the Indian monsoon wind. OMZ refers to the stretch of seawater where oxygen levels are at the lowest. This zone occurs at depths of about 200m to 1,000m, depending on local circumstances. According to scientists, as the top layer of water in the ocean heats up due to global warming, cooler water brought by under currents from the polar region is prevented from rising. "You



have to realize that the water at the lower depths is coming from Antarctica. This cold water, which is rich in nutrients, is oxygenated water.

If this is suppressed at the depths, and not circulated, then it results in no ventilation in the upper layers of the ocean, which is when fish mortality happens due to lack of oxygen," said director of NCAOR, M Ravichandran. Cold water can hold more dissolved oxygen than warm water, and fresh water can hold more dissolved oxygen than salt water. So the warmer and saltier the water, the less dissolved oxygen it contains. The Arabian Sea, encompasses the northwestern sector of the Indian Ocean and covers a total area of around 3,862,000 sq km. "The OMZ of the Arabian Sea is the thickest of the three oceanic OMZ. The upper few hundred meters of this zone are nearly depleted of oxygen, but non-sulfidic, and still support animal life, possibly as a result of periodic infusion of oxygen," says a study on OMZ of the Arabian Sea by K Banse, S W A Naqvi, P V Narvekar, J R Postel, and D A Jayakumar. Scientists from NIO, NCAOR and other institutes are studying ocean warming and the oxygen content in the water to understand if the phenomenon is cyclical and natural or a recent occurrence due to climate change. "We have an ocean drilling programme where we drill up to two kilometres into the ocean floor to see what the scenario was in the past millions of years and to see how it has changed now," Ravichandran said..

Source: [www.nyoooz.com](http://www.nyoooz.com), 12 May 2017

### **does the Indian Ocean rise and fall?**

-Jacob Koshy

#### *How is global warming affecting oceans?*

There are two broad mechanisms at work. Heat trapped in the atmosphere due to rising sea levels makes water expand and separately, melting ice sheets begin to add water to the world's oceans. Were you to peruse NASA's satellite data on the average rise and fall in sea levels, it shows that the seas on average have risen 85 mm since 1993, adding about 3.5 mm annually.



### *Why is the Indian Ocean peculiar?*

Since 2004, it has been known that the Indian Ocean has been rising particularly rapidly. However, it turned out that this was specific to a smaller stretch called the North Indian Ocean, which consists of the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea and a large part of the Indian Ocean until the 5 degree S latitude. This is an imaginary line cutting through Indonesia, central Africa and Peru. More surprisingly, as a team of oceanographers observed in a report published in the March edition of the peer-reviewed *Climate Dynamics* , the North Indian Ocean sea levels actually dipped between 1993 and 2004, at about 0.3 mm per year, but after 2004, the rise was 6 mm annually. Such a fluctuating trend hasn't been observed for the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean.

### *Why did this happen?*

Unlike the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean, the North Indian Ocean is hemmed in on all sides, except an outlet on the southern side. This influences the rate at which heat is absorbed and flushed out from within the system. According to their calculations, heat was moving out slower after 2004 than during the 1990s. Moreover, wind flows, which led to warm water welling up on the Indian Ocean surface, changed directions every decade and probably influenced sea level patterns.

### *What does this imply?*

This means a rise in average global temperature doesn't mean a concurrent rise in sea levels everywhere. Every year in the last decade has broken temperature records that have held for over a century but researchers associated with this study are willing to wager that North Indian Ocean levels may see a fall over the next decade (like seen between 1993 and 2004). This points to a need for more research to understand the inherent variability of the Indian Ocean. This could help sharpen monsoon forecasts and predicting coastal erosion patterns. Better understanding of sea level undulations could also inform future reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

### *Does this challenge conventional science?*

It doesn't challenge it but certainly complicates it. Researchers use various models to extrapolate future trends on sea level rise and quantify the risk it poses to coastal populations. Several of these model, however, lack the resolution power to capture the vagaries of local climate and it is assumed that what is true for one sea will broadly

apply to the others too. For this study the scientists relied on new data sources--from argo floats and satellite-based measurements — and it indicated numbers at variance from previous measurements, from tide gauges. More micro-level data with improved computing power would mean better local-level forecasts.

Source: [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com), 14 May 2017

## **India Plans automated Ocean Pollution Observations**

-Sahana Ghosh

India is all set to opt for automatic observation of pollution in the ocean to crunch data that will aid the tourism industry and could also come in handy in countering allegations levelled by developed nations against the country being a major polluter, according to a scientist. "We have proposed a completely new project to automatically observe pollution in the ocean and see whether we can mimic that observation using a mathematical model. We will use those observations to understand the processes which are going on in the coastal waters and provide an estimation of the water quality," S.S.C. Shenoi, Director, Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Earth System Science Organisation, told IANS. INCOIS is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES). The proposal is already with the MoES and initial approvals have been given.

Shenoi elaborated on the advantage of having an automated system in the ocean waters, which are known to have absorbed about half of man-made carbon dioxide (emission) over time. "First of all we will know how our waters are changing. These are issues which are always debated and we need correct measurements," Shenoi pointed out. As for the tourism industry flourishing along the Indian coasts, the pollution forecast will assist in deciding a threshold of dumping waste into the waters.

"Then we will be able to provide the forecast of the pollution that will help the tourism industry. Because tourism is picking up it will tell the government regulatory authorities how much we can afford to dump in the sea," he said, adding. To bring this project to fruition, INCOIS will deploy ocean data acquisition systems called automated moorings. Moored ocean buoys provide real-time, continuous, frequent, and accurate observations of marine conditions from the same deep-water location. "We are planning to use automated moorings which will be placed at selected locations

and they will record the data and transmit it to INCOIS on a daily basis. We will collaborate with other institutions as well," said Sheno, also the Director of the National Institute of Ocean Technology. Six devices will be installed along the Indian coastline. "One will be off West Bengal, another one close to Vizag, one along Chennai and three in the Western coast. Each mooring will cost around Rs. 4 crore and for an initial project duration of three years, the total investment will be Rs 160 crore," Sheno said.

The moorings have onboard computer systems and sensors and will offer insights on how different ocean parameters vary with time scales. "The time scale varies from few minutes to few hours (when tides are active) to seasonal and intra-seasonal and annual changes. All these constitute different time scales and all these observations will tell us what are the time scales and what are the most significant changes that are occurring in the coastal waters, regarding any of the parameters. "So the data will help estimate how those parameters look like along the Indian coast," he added.

Source: [www.thenewsminute.com](http://www.thenewsminute.com), 12 May 2017

### **Arctic winds affected by climate change causes drastic changes to polar bears, Marine Life & more**

Climate change is abundant in today's generation. However, some just don't know that Arctic's winds are also affected. Researchers then studied the issues and factors that were affected and stated ways on how people could help.

According to Phys Org, the Canadian Arctic was already ice-free since last August. Sandra Black, a clinical associate professor of zoo and wildlife medicine from UCalgary's Faculty of Science stated that studying narwhals aids her in discovering the climate change's impact of the Arctic's winds on the medium-sized whales.

Black then decided to form a project that pioneers the health index of the narwhals. In which, she said would let her look into the bigger picture of the climate change's impact in the Arctic. The team also wanted to train local people and hunters to gather data.

Radio Canada International also reported that researchers from the University of Alberta had been studying Arctic polar bears for 11 years. The process in order to keep track of the polar bears was mentioned to be done by GPS and satellite imagery. It was

then shared that the polar bears hunt for food through their sense of smell and travel crosswind.

Yet, the climate change occurring in the Arctic was identified to be a factor that the polar bears are finding difficulty in smelling their prey. The study published in the journal Scientific Reports also noted that the melting ice is another problem for the polar bears since they would need to swim further to find ice floes.

"Climate warming, increased marine traffic, industrial development, species range expansions, and other environmental changes are increasingly threatening the health and sustainability of Arctic wildlife species," Susan Kutz, a professor in UCalgary's Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and director of the Alberta Regional Centre of the CWHC stated.

The sustainability of the Arctic's wildlife is at risk due to the environmental change occurring. The event then would lead to the people's reduced availability and accessibility of important food sources. A small weather observatory was also built on the Northwest Passage to let researchers study the conditions in the Arctic Ocean for a long time.

Source: [www.sciencetimes.com/](http://www.sciencetimes.com/), 13 May 2017



### **Gwadar Port to have implications for US, Gulf too:ex-Pak envoy**

-Lalit K Jha

Pakistan's strategic Gwadar Port, being developed by China under a USD 46 billion economic corridor initiative, will have implications not only for India but also for the US, Iran and Gulf region, a former Pakistani envoy to the US has said. "If China is going to take care of this or have its military and naval presence in Gwadar, its implications won't be just about India. It will also put them at the mouth of the Gulf. It will have implications for Iran, it will have implications for the Gulf, other countries. It will have implications for the US and its supply of oil and other trade with the Gulf countries," former Pakistani Ambassador to the US Husain Haqqani has said. Haqqani said that Gwadar was always being conceived by Islamabad as a strategic military base.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is a planned network of roads, railways and energy projects linking southern Pakistan, and the Gwadar Port, to China's restive Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region. As it passes through the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), India has raised objection to the project. "Pakistan doesn't have the resources to have a large Navy base. But then Pakistan's entire strategic outlook is related to India," Haqqani said, adding that that is the reason why Pakistan opposes UN Security Council reform. "It's not because it really objects to adding new members to the permanent members to the Security Council. It doesn't want India to become the permanent Security Council member," he said.

Samir Saran, Vice President of New Delhi-based Observer Research Foundation (ORF) at a round table organised by The Hudson Institute, a top American think-tank said CPEC is a project where politics determines economic considerations. Reiterating India's stand, Saran told the audience that part of the CPEC passes through PoK, which is a violation of India's sovereignty.

At the same time, he warned that the economic aspects of the project would virtually make Pakistan subservient to China. As a result of this, he noted, China's rise will no longer be in the Asia Pacific region. "It could also be in the Indian Ocean, in the Arctic, in the Atlantic Ocean, and in the Mediterranean Sea. Therefore any partnerships

anyone in the world wants to stitch together to now balance and measure this rise will necessarily have to move to the mouth of the Gulf and have to move through the Indian ocean and the rest of the Indian ocean," Saran said.

Saran also said that given its economic strength, Pakistan is unlikely to pay back the financial assistance it is receiving from China. In fact it would have a tough time in paying USD 3 billion in annual repayment to China. And every time Pakistan would be unable to repay it, there would be fresh set of negotiation and the Chinese equity would keep on increasing in Pakistan, he said. "CPEC is more political than it is economic in its very structure, in its very conception," he said.

The CPEC which crosses through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and ends up in the Gwadar port in Balochistan and for which Beijing has promised to pump in more than USD 46 billion is basically "colonising" Pakistan and "rebranding" it as an economic package, argued Prof C Christine Fair from Georgetown University, before a Washington audience last week. Fair, alleged that Pakistan is headed towards becoming a colony of China through CPEC. "CPEC is colonising Pakistan and rebranding it as an economic package," she said during the round table discussion on 'The China Pakistan Economic Corridor: Regional Ramifications', organised by The Hudson Institute.

The discussion on CPEC ahead of the China-sponsored upcoming summit in Beijing issued a warning bell to the major global players and the three experts asserted that this is one project which if completed would tend to pose a major threat to American strategic interest in this part of the world as China does in the disputed South China Sea.

Source: [www.outlookindia.com](http://www.outlookindia.com), 09 May 2017

## **How China Is Using Its Economic Goals to Assert Its Global Influence**

-Matt Ferchen

As China prepares to host a major summit on its high-profile One Belt One Road initiative (OBOR) on May 14 and 15, much of the hype and hyperbole surrounding China's seemingly inevitable rise to Asian—and even global—leadership is certain to

be renewed. For its part, in statements about the “Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation,” as the summit has officially been dubbed, China’s foreign ministry has been at pains to explain that the initiative is first and foremost “an economic cooperation forum . . . and we don’t want to politicize it.”

No region highlights more clearly the tension between the economic and geopolitical impacts of China’s rise than Southeast Asia. In the medium to long run, Chinese-hosted summits and official pronouncements about the self-proclaimed win-win effects of its economic diplomacy will do less to convince its Southeast Asian neighbors and great powers like the United States of China’s benign intentions than will enhanced clarity and accountability surrounding its goals and policy instruments.

In addition to long espousing a Peaceful Development foreign policy designed to reassure both domestic and foreign audiences that China prioritizes economic development, and the domestic and international stability it purportedly underpins, Chinese leaders have recently also aimed to give the impression that China is now the primary backer of the benefits of globalization. Under President Xi Jinping, such general frameworks have been accompanied by an Asia-specific public diplomacy effort to assure China’s neighbors that China seeks to create what it calls a Community of Common Destiny, which is where economic interdependence underpins regional stability and peace. Yet the Chinese Foreign Ministry’s comments about not politicizing the OBOR belie a realization that outside of China many—including some of its Southeast Asian neighbors—see China’s recent promotion of a range of economic initiatives and institutions as part of a broader mercantilist effort to enhance China’s geopolitical and strategic influence in its own neighborhood and far beyond. In short, China’s idealistic, globalization-friendly talk has been met with a strong dose of skepticism from foreign policy and business leaders outside of China who are aware, or wary, of what they view as China’s geoeconomic strategies designed first and foremost to enhance its own national interests.

In the context of Southeast Asia, the clash between the official Chinese win-win diplomacy and propaganda and the very real geopolitical tensions surrounding China’s assertive behavior, especially concerning maritime claims in the South China Sea, highlights the seemingly incompatible perceptions of Chinese economic initiatives in the region. While the OBOR framework seems to largely provide a new veneer to existing trade, investment, financial relationships and infrastructure plans in Southeast Asia, its emphasis on infrastructure development appears focused on overcoming the impression of an increasingly assertive Chinese role by addressing clear development needs especially in the poorer countries in the region. Yet the mere



existence of transportation and energy infrastructure needs in Southeast Asia, and China's willingness to dedicate policies and resources to address those needs, has not so far meant smooth sailing for China-Southeast Asia relations.

Maybe the most prominent, and still unresolved, example of a China-Southeast Asia infrastructure deal that soured was the Mytson Dam project in Myanmar's Kachin State. Myanmar's rejection of the deal marked a turning point in China-Myanmar ties and in Myanmar politics in general. In other Southeast Asian countries a number of high-profile, China-led transportation infrastructure projects have also run into a range of difficulties, often centered on concerns that deals disproportionately favor Chinese interests. For example, in Sri Lanka a change of government led to the renegotiation of a major port project. Meanwhile in Thailand and Indonesia, signature Chinese-led rail projects have faced numerous stop-and-go cycles. Yet for all of these difficulties, many of these deals have either gone forward under new terms or have been mothballed in favor of other projects.

Source: [nationalinterest.org](http://nationalinterest.org), 09 May 2017

### **End 'conspiracy theories' about China, India told**

A commentary in a Chinese newspaper had urged India to build "joint strength across the region" instead of "fanning scepticism toward China". India "seems to have gone too far in its conspiracy theorising", said the commentary in state-run Global Times by one of its reporters, Xiao Xin. The English-language Global Times is known to reflect the thinking in the Chinese Communist Party leadership. The commentary followed an Indian newspaper article stating that China's push for "One Belt and One Road" would bring prosperity only to Beijing while setting a trap for South Asian countries.

"The article only hints at India's excessive nervousness about China's rising clout in the Indian Ocean," the commentary said. "Defamation and conspiracy theories won't be of any help in this regard, and instead they only belittle India itself."

Source: [www.financialexpress.com](http://www.financialexpress.com), 04 may 2017

## **China's 'One Belt, One Road' project causing 'anxiety' in Indian Ocean Region: US**

New Delhi: Admiral Scott Swift, Commander of the US Pacific Fleet, who held extensive talks with Navy Chief Sunil Lanba and Defence Secretary G Mohan Kumar on Friday, categorically said that China's 'One Belt, One Road' project has caused "anxiety" in the region. The top American Naval Commander made it clear that US is not relaxing its position on the South China Sea issue to garner China's support to ease tension in the Korean peninsula. He also said that Trump regime hasn't changed its position on the South China Sea dispute. Use of force and coercion by China in the region cannot be accepted at all, Admiral Scott Swift asserted.

The US Admiral's visit is intended to consolidate the growing defence relations between India and US and also to explore new avenues for naval cooperation. The top Navy officer also discussed the upcoming Malabar Naval exercise with the Indian Navy Chief. Addressing a four-day-long Naval Commanders Conference, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Sunil Lanba said the Indian Navy needs to expand its footprint to be a stabilising force in the Indian Ocean Region. The Navy Chief emphasised on the "need for continued efforts towards modernisation, indigenisation and expanding the Navy's operational footprint so as to be a stabilising force in Indian Ocean Region."

The Indian and the US Navies cooperate with each other in terms of technical training, anti-piracy patrols, Navy to Navy staff talks, bilateral exercises such as MALABAR, as well as interact at various multilateral forums like RIMPAC. Warships from both navies call at each other's ports, which provides excellent opportunity for professional interaction and building 'Bridges of Friendship'

Source: [zeenews.india.com](http://zeenews.india.com), 06 May 2017

## **Dear China, India will never digest OBOR and CPEC**

The reported offer by China's ambassador to India to rename China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and bring New Delhi on board Beijing's 'One Belt, One Road' initiative has generated a whole new debate. While the remarks, made during a closed-door session at New Delhi's military think-tank United Services Institute (USI), have now been removed from the website of the Chinese embassy in India, they did raise several questions in the minds of observers in Pakistan, in India, in China and elsewhere. The key questions being raised are,

firstly, whether the envoy made the offer after due consultations with his ministry back home, and, secondly, whether or not Pakistan was consulted in the matter.

As is well-known, while OBOR as a whole is an inter- and cross-continental plan involving a broad range of infrastructure and other developmental projects, CPEC primarily is a bilateral initiative, though, not exclusive and notwithstanding its regional and global linkages. The two primary partners – Islamabad and Beijing – one hopes, would think and act in sync with each other, in all matters related to CPEC when it comes to the involvement of any other nation, especially a country such as India, as in this case.

OBOR has received mixed responses from governments and societies around the world. Responses depend on how these countries and societies actually view the rise of China, and its newfound global role, as well as the role that China is going to assume in the years ahead, on the back of its economic might. At the same time, responses are also reflective of the overall nature of relations that a country has with China and the resulting feelings of its people towards Chinese people. Furthermore, the responses a country or a society gives to OBOR also depict that country's relationship with the global powers which are competitors of China, notably the US.

It is clear that India has not so far accepted the overall idea of OBOR with an open heart, although at official level New Delhi gives mixed signals that it can also work with China on this grand initiative. The way the Indian finance minister mocked it at an event in Japan last week speaks for itself.

New Delhi is, understandably, staunchly opposed to CPEC passing through Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) region, based on what Indians term “a violation of sovereignty”. The Indians also realise that CPEC is the most important corridor that links ‘the Belt’ in the north to ‘the Road’ in the south and that without CPEC, OBOR becomes a disjointed initiative. So it has been their consideration since 2013, the year OBOR and CPEC were formally unfolded for the public eye, that at the broader level, the OBOR may not be rejected altogether, but such should be the criticism of CPEC that the whole concept of OBOR becomes controversial at the global and regional level.

It has so far been good to note – from a Pakistani perspective – that China does not pay much heed to India's criticism on CPEC and also that now the United Nations' Security Council has also endorsed the vision of OBOR (though not specifically CPEC). Such ‘offers’ by high-ranking Chinese officials, though, give a mixed message for Pakistan – nonetheless, it may be understood as a need to secure India's

participation at the coming Belt and Road Forum in Beijing, on May 14 and 15, where more than 100 countries are participating. However, New Delhi is yet to confirm its participation.

What one cannot ignore is that the feeling in India, as expressed in the prevailing overall discourse, is that OBOR, and specially CPEC, is detrimental to India's core international interests, and thus, steps need to be taken to try to counter, or at least decrease the vitality of, these initiatives. It is by no means about the name, or bilateral character of CPEC.

India's cold shoulder response to Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor, the important South-Asian component of OBOR, is not going unnoticed anywhere. Instead, India has put more focus on Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal road transport agreement to attempt to snub Pakistan (in terms of SAARC) and China (vis-à-vis OBOR) at the same time.

It does not need to be mentioned that to deliberately pinch and antagonize China, Indians are continuously initiating new development projects in Arunachal Pradesh, the northeastern state which China considers a part of Tibet. India also organizes frequent visits of the Dalai Lama to the state, which angers China. This is India's attempts to retaliate against CPEC. Besides, India has been playing with China's conflicts involving nations such as Vietnam, in South China Sea, by signing defence cooperation and oil and gas exploration agreements in waters which are disputed between China and nations of Indochina region.

However, the main point in this regard is India's close and increasing strategic partnership with the US – with maritime cooperation at the core of it – which, among other objectives, also seeks to cement India's dominance of the so-called 'Indian Ocean', and in recent years has primarily been targeted at keeping the Maritime Silk Road part of OBOR under constant joint vigil of New Delhi and Washington D.C. This may turn out to be detrimental for Chinese initiatives and long-term interests.

Modi regime's enhanced focus on Chabahar port in Iran, to compete with and possibly sabotage Gwadar, which is the key port for OBOR; modernization and equipment of a 'Blue Water Navy', to keep a dominance over the high seas of vital significance for China; Project *Mausam* – developing maritime 'cultural' linkages with the countries of the 'Indian Ocean; and the *SagarMala* (the garland of the Ocean) Project that seeks to put in massive investments into India's old and new ports, all are directed at countering and competing with OBOR in more ways than one.

It is quite relevant to mention here that India's designs to sabotage CPEC in Balochistan, GB and elsewhere in Pakistan – with a special cell of RAW reportedly assigned the task – have come to the fore in the past few months. No offer would appease India in such a scenario, if the bigger picture is any guide. It is in no way all about CPEC's passage through GB and its name. Keeping Pakistan under pressure is one thing, the Indian elephant's ambitions against the Chinese dragon go beyond this.

Source: [en.dailypakistan.com.pk](http://en.dailypakistan.com.pk), 15 May 2017

### **India's claim to Pakistani Kashmir a problem for CPEC: Chinese scholar**

India's claim to Pakistan-controlled Kashmir has created problems for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a top Chinese scholar has said. In an interview to IANS, Wang Yiwei, Dean, the Centre for European Studies at Renmin University, said: "Pakistani-dominated Kashmir was not India's." The author of "China Connects the World, What Behind the Belt and Road Initiative" urged India to join the Belt and Road project, whose artery CPEC is opposed by New Delhi. "India says that whole of Kashmir (including the part controlled by Pakistan) belongs to India. This is a Pakistan-dominated area, not India's," Wang told IANS.

"It's a problem (for CPEC)," Wang added at his office on the campus of the red-bricked Renmin University of China. The \$46 billion CPEC has emerged as the latest sore point between India and China, the fastest-growing economies of the world who have had a history of mutual distrust after a brief war in 1962. The CPEC is the most important of all the six routes of China's ambitious Belt and Road project, which envisages to connect Asia with Europe. This particular route, which links China's Kashgar in Xingjiang with Gwadar port in Pakistan's largest province, cuts through Gilgit-Baltistan – part of Kashmir held by Pakistan and claimed by India. Pakistan holds the northern third of Jammu and Kashmir and India the southern two-thirds. New Delhi blames Islamabad for a separatist campaign raging in the Indian part of Kashmir. India says it will "resolutely" oppose the corridor as it is a matter of "sovereignty". "In the 1960s, the Chinese government began to build Karakoram highway linking Xingjiang with Karachi. the Indian government was not against it then," Wang said.

This highway also passes through the disputed region between India and Pakistan, which New Delhi has always considered a security threat. Wang said India was unnecessarily concerned about CPEC, which, he said, was an economic programme.

“This is a project, not a military to contain somebody. You worry about the Indian Ocean. You worry about China’s influence in the Indian Ocean. “India is also worried about the port. They say military ... blah blah blah.” Indian security experts fear after gaining access to Gwadar port, the Chinese will find it easy to sail into the Indian Ocean.

However, China says the project is being implemented only for economic advantages. “If you visit the port, there are hospitals, airport and industrial park. Pakistan has suffered a lot. Every year, 1,000 people die in Karachi due to power shortage. They don’t even have a fan,” Wang said. “India thinks Pakistan is its enemy. You should change the mentality. Pakistan is not your enemy, Pakistan is your brother. You were the same country before.” Asked how the issue of CPEC would be resolved, Wang said: “You should ask Pakistan.” It’s because of the CPEC that India has been non-committal about joining the Belt and Project. Also, New Delhi is highly unlikely to attend the Belt and Road conference in Beijing on May 14-15. “However, we should do something to address India’s concern,” the scholar said. “We want India to join the Belt and Road forum. Belt and Road is a guarantee that it’s a win-win (project). “When you can join Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, why not join this?” Wang asked.

Source: [www.canindia.com](http://www.canindia.com), 11 May 2017

### **India to skip China's mega Belt & Road Initiative; says CPEC & OBOR violates sovereignty**

India will skip China’s two-day mega One Belt One Road (OBOR) or Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) connectivity summit beginning on Sunday view of sovereignty concerns related to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). While there is no official announcement, persons familiar with the issue told ET that India will not take part in the meet, contrary to Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi’s announcement that India will have a representative at the Belt and Road Forum (BRF), a initiative of Chinese President Xi Jinping. “Although Indian leader is not here, India will have a representative,” Wang had told journalists here on April 17 without specifying who would be representing India. Explaining India’s position on CPEC MEA spokesperson Gopal Baglay minced no word when he said, “Connectivity projects must be pursued in a manner that respects sovereignty and territorial integrity...The so-called ‘China-Pakistan Economic Corridor’, which is being projected as the flagship project of the BRI/OBOR, the international community is well aware of India’s position. No country

can accept a project that ignores its core concerns on sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In message to China's unilateral approach, Baglay noted that India is of firm belief that connectivity initiatives must be based on universally recognized international norms, good governance, rule of law, openness, transparency and equality. India did not play ball even as US and Japan agreed to attend the meet. Experts said India's position had send messages even to countries who are attending the meet that Delhi has walked the talk and did not compromise. Experts further explained that neither US nor Japan have challenges to their sovereignty due to OBOR. Persons familiar with BRI and Chinese projects worldwide told ET that Beijing has neo-colonial approach and countries are being forced to mortgage their finances due to loans with has high interest rates . "While few countries were armtwisted to attend the meet few others are attending the meet to get a sense of Chinese designs under OBOR. Beijing did not share a blue print for the initiative," alleged an expert on Sino-Indian affairs. " Expressing similar sentiments Baglay said, "Connectivity initiatives must follow principles of financial responsibility to avoid projects that would create unsustainable debt burden for communities; balanced ecological and environmental protection and preservations standards; transparent assessment of project costs; and skill and technology transfer to help long term running and maintenance of the assets created by local communities."

Baglay further highlighthed India's approach in pursuing connectivity initiatives. "India shares international community's desire for enhancing physical connectivity and believes that it should bring greater economic benefits to all in an equitable and balanced manner. We are working with many countries and international institutions in support of physical and digital connectivity in our own immediate and near neighbourhood." "Expansion and strengthening of connectivity is an integral part of India's economic and diplomatic initiatives. Under the 'Act East' policy, we are pursuing the Trilateral Highway project; under our 'Neighbourhood First' policy we are developing multimodal linkages with Myanmar and Bangladesh; under our 'Go West' strategy, we are engaged with Iran on Chabahar Port and with Iran and other partners in Central Asia on International North South Transport Corridor. BBIN initiative is aimed at enhancing logistics efficiencies in South Asian region. We are also actively considering acceding to TIR Convention." But playing down India's absence at the meeting, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told the media on Friday that the Indian scholars would be attending the meeting. There are reports that four Indian scholars from Delhi and Mumbai are attending meet. India, though, pointed out that guided by its principled position in the matter, it has been urging



China to engage in a meaningful dialogue on its connectivity initiative, 'One Belt, One Road' which was later renamed as 'Belt and Road Initiative'. "We are awaiting a positive response from the Chinese side", pointed out Baglay. Guided by our principled position in the matter, we have been urging China to engage in a meaningful dialogue on its connectivity initiative, 'One Belt, One Road' which was later renamed as 'Belt and Road Initiative'. We are awaiting a positive response from the Chinese side.

The May 14-16 summit, which is expected to strengthen Xi's power base as he gets set to begin his second five-year tenure later this year, will be attended by 28 heads of state and government, including Russian President Vladimir Putin. A number of other countries, including South Korea, France, Germany and UK, have deputed either ministerial or official delegations. While this is the outcome of hectic diplomatic lobbying by China, unlike India, none of the other countries have sovereignty related issues with the One Belt and One Road.

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is expected to take centre stage to highlight its significance as a "game changer" for his country. He is leading perhaps the largest delegation -- four chief ministers and five federal ministers. Besides Sharif, Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe who will be attending the meeting after hosting his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi at home. Sri Lanka has over USD 8 billion Chinese investments. Lanka, however, refused to host Chinese submarine unlike in the past. From Nepal, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Krishna Bahadur Mahara will lead the delegation. Bangladesh and the Maldives will also have official representations. Bhutan has no diplomatic relations with China. India's decision to skip the meeting came after a year of bilateral discord over China's stubborn opposition to India's entry into the NSG and a UN ban against Pakistan-based terrorist group Jaish-e-Muhammad leader Masood Azhar.

In the last few days, China has tried to assuage India's feelings by asserting that the commercial corridor will not have any impact on its stand that the Kashmir issue should be settled by India and Pakistan through dialogue. India's worries over a 3,000 km long project connecting Pakistan's deep-water port Gwadar and China's Xinjiang stem from the fact Gwadar, which was taken over by the Chinese, will become a future naval base. CPEC will be security challenge for India as it has the potential to render Pakistan as the next province of China. The Gwadar port opposite the Mumbai's port housing the Indian Navy's western naval command provides a berth for China in the Arabian Sea and to the Indian Ocean. China has already announced plans to station its marines there as well in Djibouti in Horn of Africa in Indian Ocean. Various other

projects under BRI or OBOR in South and South East Asia have security implications for India as it increases Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean Region.

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