



# MAKING WAVES

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### **Navy Info fusion Centre soon to improve maritime security**

The Indian Navy is all set to open an international Information Fusion Centre (IFC) for Indian Ocean Region (IOR) aiming to improve maritime security in the region, said Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba here on Tuesday. The centre will be a separate platform for the members of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), he said, while interacting with reporters on the sidelines of the IONS 10th anniversary seminar at the Lulu Bolgatty International Convention Centre in Kochi. “We have the approval from the Government of India to get in touch with a number of nations on technical agreement on exchanging information on white-shipping. We have signed agreements with 18 countries and operationalised 11 of them, where online information exchange on white-shipping has started. All this is put together in the Navy’s Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC) at Gurugram. To start with, we are going to set up the IFC as an adjunct to the IMAC where we will share information virtually with like-minded countries and once we have infrastructure in place we will invite other countries” Lanba said.

The IONS, which was launched in 2008, seeks to increase maritime cooperation among the navies of the IOR. White-shipping refers to commercial shipping. Dismissing the allegations that the Navy has not been responsive in helping the fishermen in distress during the Cyclone Ockhi and the mid-sea collision in which five people died and seven went missing, the Navy Chief said the Navy has done its best.

“During Ockhi, the Navy and the Coast Guard picked up hundreds of fishermen under severe weather conditions. We went out of the way and continued search and rescue operations for more than 40 days. In the case of mid-sea collision, we conducted search for days together. We deployed underwater survey vessels to find the sunken boat, but could not find it. We presume the missing fishermen were caught in the sunken boat,” he said. Responding to a question on initiatives taken by India to overcome growing Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean, Lanba said a mission-based deployment of Indian Naval ships has been undertaken in “our areas of interests”.

Prominent mission-based ship deployments have been made in the Gulf of Aden and other areas including Andaman Sea, Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal and southern and central parts of the Indian Ocean. Besides this, patrolling by aircraft is also being carried out regularly, he said. “We monitor the movement of all ships including PLA and Chinese Navy,” Lanba said.

Source: [www.newindianexpress.com](http://www.newindianexpress.com), 14 November 2018

### **What are the cornerstones of Pakistan’s maritime security strategy?**

Rashid Nazir Choudhary

Preservation and maintenance of stable maritime order, in the Indian Ocean particularly in the Arabian Sea, is one of the cornerstones of Pakistan’s maritime security strategy. This means that our adversaries, both conventional and unconventional, remain deterred from harming our maritime interests; and assure our friendly countries that we would be reliable partners for keeping the sea conducive for maritime economic activities.

Realization of this end necessitates well-equipped, well-trained and well-adaptive maritime force. Adaptation to a fluid security milieu requires a military force to be responsive, dependable and highly resilient. Achieving these markers of combat potential can only be done through simulations, exercises and war games. Besides numerous paper and computer-based military simulations, Pakistan Navy conducts the Ex Sea spark every two years. The Indian Ocean particularly in the Arabian Sea, is one of the cornerstones of Pakistan’s maritime security strategy. Principal objective of the exercise is to evaluate the Navy’s readiness for war across the spectrum of conflict against both conventional and unconventional adversaries. It is also meant to validate operational concepts and test emergent changes in the Navy’s tactical doctrine. Pakistan Navy, being a potent and combat ready multi-dimensional force, assesses, refines and demonstrates its war preparedness through the conduct of maritime exercises in North Arabian Sea and along Pakistan Coast from Jiwani to Sir Creek.

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## **Pirates Attack LNG Carrier in Gulf of Guinea**

On November 6, pirates pursued and fired on an unnamed LNG tanker in the Gulf of Guinea. At about 0600 hours UTC, nine pirates in a speedboat approached the vessel at a position about 30 nm southwest of Bonny, Nigeria, an oil and gas production hub in the Niger River Delta. The attackers opened fire on the vessel and made several attempts to get close, but the master sped up and took evasive maneuvers. The pirates ultimately abandoned the attack and departed. According to maritime security firm AKE, LNG carriers' double-walled, insulated tanks are not vulnerable to small arms fire. The ICC IMB reports that the vessel and crew are safe.

Piracy is unfortunately common in the Gulf of Guinea, especially off the coast of the Niger River Delta. Kidnap-for-ransom is the most common type of attack, and according to Oceans Beyond Piracy, 100 seafarers were kidnapped in the waters off the Gulf of Guinea last year. Last month, pirates abducted 11 crewmembers from the container ship *Pomerania Sky* as she was headed for the port of Onne, Nigeria. Those abducted included eight from Poland, two Filipinos and a Ukrainian. Nine crew members remained on board the vessel and brought her safely into port.

In September, pirates kidnapped 12 crewmembers from the Swiss bulk carrier *Glarus* in Nigerian waters. The vessel was carrying wheat between Lagos and Port Harcourt in the Niger Delta, and the attack happened about 45 nm southwest of Bonny Island. The pirates reportedly used long ladders and cut the razor wire on deck to gain access to the vessel.

Source: [www.maritime-executive.com](http://www.maritime-executive.com), 12 November 2018

## **Kenya Tightens Maritime Security With New Coast Guard Services**

Martin Mwita

Nairobi — Kenya has moved a notch higher in efforts to protect its territorial waters with the formation of the Coast Guard Service unit. To kick start operations of the department, President Uhuru Kenyatta has appointed former Kenya Navy veteran Brigadier Vincent Naisho Loonena to spearhead the unit. Loonena takes up the new job after an illustrious career of over 20 years within the Kenya Defence Forces. His last post was the Managing Director Defence Forces Medical Insurance Scheme, a

position in which he has served for four months. He makes history as the first ever Director General of the Kenya Coast Guard Service ( in an acting capacity). President Kenyatta is expected to formally launched the Kenya Coast Guard Service on November 29, at Liwatoni in Mombasa. The Kenya Coast Guard Service was established by The Coast Guard Service Act 2018, and was operationalized on October 22, 2018, when the Cabinet Secretary Interior and Coordination of National Government Dr. Fred Matiang'I gazetted the law. The Kenya Coast Guard Service Act also puts in place the Coast Guard Service Council, which is the apex governance body of the Service. Chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, the Council comprises multi-agency security teams and Cabinet Secretaries, including Amb. Raychelle Omamo (Defence), Keriako Tobiko (Environment and Forestry) and James Macharia (Transport, Infrastructure, Housing & Urban Development). Other members are Chief of the Kenya Defence Forces, Gen. Samson Mwathethe, the Inspector General of the National Police Service, Joseph Boinett, the Attorney General, Paul Kihara Kariuki, and representatives from the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Fisheries among others.

#### *What it means to the country*

Kenya now joins a group of elite African countries with highly specialized service guarding territorial waters. It is estimated that the country loses at least US\$100 million in revenue annually due to illegal and criminal activities at sea, and the Coast Guard Service is expected to keep the seashores safe from aggression and illegal commercial activities. Precisely, it will be responsible for protecting the country's waters against dumping of harmful wastes and pollutants, search and rescue services, and the arrest of illegal fishermen. The highly specialized Service will be headquartered at Liwatoni in Mombasa, but it will have a strong presence at the Mombasa, Lamu, and Kisumu ports. The launch of the Coast Guard Service comes at a critical moment when Kenya is preparing to host the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference scheduled for 26th to 29th November 2018. "The country thus takes pride in its place in the international discourse on maritime security and safety," the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government said in a statement. The evolving maritime security challenges all over the world have seen criminals use the sea as corridors for committing transnational organized crimes such as terror attacks, piracy, and drug and human trafficking among others. Having a Coast Guard department means Kenya is now ready to take on these crimes head-on, a move that will help address maritime challenges not only at her coastline, but the entire region.

The Coast Guard Service also will provide insights into the development and implementation of international maritime security policies. Ocean waters under Kenya's jurisdiction cover about 128,015km squared and a distance of 200 nautical miles offshore, while navigable inland waterways cover approximately 10,700 square kilometers. This is slightly more than the total land surface area of 31 out of the 47 counties. This area of the sea and inland waters is what constitutes Kenya's maritime domain. The maritime industry drives 92 per cent of the country's international trade.

Source: [allafrica.com](http://allafrica.com), 15 Nov 2018

### **Quad countries to focus on maritime security**

Regional coalition known as the 'Quad', the quadrilateral formation includes Japan, India, United States and Australia. All four nations have common grounds regarding free maritime trade and security. The idea was first initiated by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007 with the support of Vice President Dick Cheney of the US, Prime Minister John Howard of Australia and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India. According to sources, the US believes the Quad is one of the elements of its larger Indo-Pacific strategy for free trade, ahead of the expansion of China in the region, while it also thinks that the quadrilateral should eventually evolve into a ministerial-level dialogue with a strong military aspect.

Nonetheless, US understands that India for the time being, remains opposed to any militarization of the Quad, which was revived after a decade as a joint secretary-level dialogue in November 2017, with its second meeting being held in June this year. India has also made it clear that the US should not mix the Indo-Pacific with the Quad, as ASEAN plays a significant role in this area.

What is more, US considers Quad an opportunity for like-minded countries to share notes and collaborate on projects of mutual interest. All four countries share a vision of an open and free Indo-Pacific. Each is involved in development and economic projects as well as in promoting maritime domain awareness and maritime security.

Furthermore, there are many reasons for this quadrilateral dialogue as the security of major ports and sea routes of the Indo-Pacific plays an important role to the global seaborne trade.

Source: [safety4sea.com](http://safety4sea.com), 08 November 2018

## **Thailand explores buying coastal radars, patrol vessels from India**

- Rezaul H Laskar

Thailand is looking at the acquisition of coastal radars and patrol vessels from India as the two sides ramp up cooperation in maritime security, Thai ambassador Chutintorn Gongsakdi said on Tuesday. Defence cooperation between the two countries currently includes joint exercises, training of personnel at each other's military training institutions and exchange of visits. Naval cooperation has emerged as a "growth area" in bilateral military ties, Gongsakdi said. "The Thai Navy is interested in coastal radars," he said, indicating the two sides were close to a decision. He declined to go into details of the matter. The Thai Navy, he added, was also interested in Indian-made patrol vessels.

Following the 2008 Mumbai attacks, which were carried out by Pakistani terrorists who approached India's financial hub by sea, New Delhi revamped its coastal defences, and state-run Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) has done considerable work in developing coastal surveillance radars. Though India doesn't have an established track record as a supplier of major defence hardware, Gongsakdi noted South East Asian countries were looking for "good alternatives" to Western gear that come at the "right price". Gongsakdi said several measures are being considered by both sides to boost military and naval cooperation. "The things that are on the table are the Thailand-Singapore-India joint naval exercises, the joint patrol in the Malacca Strait and full participation status (for India) in the Cobra Gold exercise," he said. The trilateral joint patrol was proposed by India and Singapore, he said, adding he was hopeful of a "positive" response from Thailand.

In 2016, India participated for the first time as an observer in Cobra Gold, the largest annual wargame in the Asia-Pacific region that is held in Thailand. A 14-member Indian team will join the next edition of the exercise in February. "In Thailand, we feel India is pursuing engagement with Thailand more than in the past, and this is specifically in the maritime area," Gongsakdi said. "I've noticed that the relation between the navies is stronger." Constantino Xavier, a fellow at Brookings India, a research group, said South East nations were interested in deeper security relations

with India, especially in the maritime domain, but were “increasingly feeling pressure from China”. “Often, they realise the importance of a balancing game as they are increasingly economically entangled with China,” he said. “The logic of security cooperation between India and South East Asia is important, but no substitute to economic inter-dependence between the two regions.”

Source: [www.hindustantimes.com](http://www.hindustantimes.com), 14 November 2018

### **INS Arihant is welcome, but India is far short of Chinese nuclear submarine capability**

India’s announcement of a maritime nuclear strike capability Monday comes in the midst of increasing submarine activity in its neighbourhood. The *INS Arihant*, nuclear-powered and able to launch nuclear missiles, has just returned from its first deterrence patrol — a Cold War-era practice where nuclear-armed submarines are deployed in waters from where they can fire on the adversary if attacked. Since the Chinese deployment of a nuclear submarine in 2013 for so-called ‘anti-piracy missions’ off the east coast of Africa, there has been a firming of belief in New Delhi that development of the ‘nuclear triad’ — a stated policy for more than 30 years — must be treated with urgency. Like India, China also professes a ‘no first strike’ policy in its nuclear doctrine. It believes that its maritime capability to launch nuclear weapons complements its variants of land-based road and rail-launched strategic missiles.

#### *Chinese and Pakistani capability*

Despite Monday’s announcement, Indian naval capabilities fall short of Chinese asset-building in terms of numbers. Yet, China’s vulnerability is that most of its energy (oil) supplies have to traverse busy sea lanes of communication close to India from West Asia and Africa. India is also keeping a close eye on China’s support to the Pakistan Navy. There are reports that China has offered to build eight submarines, in addition to assisting in the naval facility at Gwadar, and the activity over the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The Pakistan Navy is estimated to have about 10 submarines, of which five French-origin Agosta 90B class (Khalid class) conventional boats are assessed by Indian Navy sources to be fully operational. The Chinese People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) is estimated to have four Jin-class SSBNs (ballistic missile submarines) plus nine SSNs (nuclear-powered submarines).

It is estimated to be maintaining a fleet of 40-plus diesel-electric submarines. However, it is beset with maintenance issues and many of the boats have to be docked months for overhauls, according to a think-tank [study](#). India has 14 conventional submarines, half-a-dozen of which are now going through upgrades of different kinds. Plus, it has the *INS Chakra* SSN on a 10-year lease from Russia, and now the *Arihant*. At least two more of the *Arihant* class are in the works. But India's progress on long-range submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) is a secret, with little or no information put out officially. A variant of the Sagarika missile that arms the *Arihant* is estimated to have a range of 750 km. The Chinese JL-2 missiles that arm its Jin-class SSBNs are said to have a range upwards of 4,000 miles (over 6,400 kms). In addition, India is building a new base on the east coast, called Project Varsha, which will harbour its strategic boats in pens in a hillside about 50 km south of the Eastern Naval Command headquarters in Visakhapatnam.

#### *Far short of traditional powers*

In terms of sheer numbers, the Asian powers are far behind the US in sustaining a large fleet of submarines — both 'boomers' (as SSBNs are called) and SSNs. The US is estimated to be maintaining 14 'boomers', Russia 12, and the UK and France four each. Different estimates put China's number of SSBNs between four and seven. All navies maintain a shroud of secrecy on their submarine fleet, especially around the nuclear boats. The numbers are approximate and collated from different studies by the International Institute of Strategic Studies, the Carnegie-Tsinghua Centre on Global Policy and the Federation of American Scientists. In addition, the US is estimated to have 60-odd SSNs, Russia 33 and the UK 11.

Source: [theprint.in](http://theprint.in), 06 November 2018

#### **Indian and Singapore navies begin SIMBEX 2018 at Port Blair**

The 25th edition of the Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX) has started at Port Blair in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India. SIMBEX 2018 will be represented by several Indian Navy vessels, which include the Ranvir-class destroyer, INS Ranvijay, and two Project 17 multirole stealth frigates. Other Indian Navy assets involved are Project 28 anti-submarine warfare corvette INS Kadmatt and the Project 25A missile corvette INS Kirch, in addition to the P8I long-range maritime patrol and

ASW aircraft, Seaking 42C and Chetak utility helicopters. Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) vessels participating in the exercise include two Formidable-class stealth frigates, RSS Formidable and RSS Steadfast, as well as a littoral mission vessel RSS Unity, and a deepsea rescue vehicle (DSRV) Swift Rescue. The RSN will also be represented by a Fokker F50 maritime reconnaissance aircraft, S70B helicopters and Scan Eagle unmanned aerial systems. Being conducted until 21 November, SIMBEX 2018 will be carried out in two harbour phases at Port Blair and Visakhapatnam respectively, which will each be followed by a sea phase. The exercise's first sea phase is slated to be performed in the Andaman Sea, while the second sea phase will be in the Bay of Bengal. This year's event will include a wide range of at-sea activities such as live-weapon drills including multiple missile firings, heavy-weight torpedo (HWT) and medium-range gun / anti-submarine rocket firings, and advanced ASW exercises.

It will also perform other submarine rescue demonstrations, integrated surface and anti-air warfare (AAW) missions, unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) operations, and cross-deck helicopter flying. Started as a basic ASW exercise in 1994, SIMBEX has now evolved to complex maritime combat drills, which include missile and torpedo firings and shore-based intensive professional exchanges.

Source: [www.naval-technology.com](http://www.naval-technology.com), 12 November 2018

## **India seeks to buy US helicopters worth Rs 13,500 crore**

- Rajat Pandit

NEW DELHI: With the US waiver for India's acquisition of the Russian S-400 Triumf missile systems hanging in the balance, New Delhi has kicked off the formal process for yet another mega defence deal with Washington as a sweetener for the Trump administration. The NDA government on Thursday issued the "letter of request" to the US government for the Rs 13,500 crore acquisition of 24 naval multi-role MH-60 'Romeo' helicopters, armed with torpedoes and missiles for potent anti-submarine warfare capabilities, said top sources.

The induction of these heavy-duty choppers in the 2020-2024 timeframe will come as a shot in the arm for the Indian Navy, whose warships are virtually bereft of such helicopters at a time when Chinese nuclear and diesel-electric submarines are making regular forays into the Indian Ocean Region. The government-to-

government deal for the MH-60 choppers, manufactured by Sikorsky-Lockheed Martin, under the US foreign military sales programme is likely to be inked within a year. The US has already notched military sales worth \$17 billion to India since 2007, even overtaking Russia for three to four years during the last decade. The FMS route is considered much swifter and cleaner than the cumbersome global tender process, which takes several years and is often derailed by allegations of corruption in India. India has brought most of its weapon systems from the US, like the C-17 Globemaster-III strategic airlifters, C-130J “Super Hercules” planes and M-777 ultralight howitzers, through FMS programme. Acquisition of new multi-role helicopters has been pending for well over a decade, with the Navy identifying them along with submarines and minesweepers as the top three “critical operational necessities” for it. The 140-warship force has just about a dozen old Sea King and 10 Kamov-28 anti-submarine warfare helicopters. The preliminary “acceptance of necessity” for the MH-60 choppers and the \$1 billion acquisition of the American National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System-II (NASAMS-II), slated for deployment as a missile shield for New Delhi, was accorded by the Nirmala Sitharaman-led Defence Acquisitions Council just before the inaugural “two-plus-two” dialogue between India and the US here on September 6. Both US defence secretary Jim Mattis and secretary of state Mike Pompeo have strongly argued India’s case for a “national security waiver” under CAATSA (Countering America’s Adversaries through Sanctions Act), which seeks to prevent countries from buying Russian weapons or Iranian oil, for its \$5.43 billion S-400 missile deal. But the final call still has to be taken by President Donald Trump, who will need a transactional quid pro quo in terms of a major Indian defence deal as well as India’s strategic commitment to progressively reduce its dependence on Russian weapon systems.

The US, of course, is in contention for more Indian defence deals. Washington, for instance, is aggressively hawking its F/A-18 or F-16 fighter production line for the IAF’s over \$20 billion “Make in India” competition for 114 jets as well as the Navy’s quest for 57 carrier-capable fighters. India and the US are also in advanced talks for 22 armed Predator-B or weaponised Sea Guardian drones. Then, after the first 24 multi-role helicopters, the Navy also has long-term “Make in India” projects for another 123 such choppers as well as 111 armed light utility choppers.

Source: [m.timesofindia.com](http://m.timesofindia.com), 16 November 2018

## **First Nuclear Deterrence Patrol Marks Major Step for Indian Submarine Force**

When Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced earlier this month that the Indian Navy had completed its first sea-based nuclear deterrent patrol it was more of a statement of intent than a demonstration of a new capability. The Indian Navy's new ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) INS *Arihant* was the boomer that completed the month-long deterrent patrol. Whilst this is not insignificant – it is the first country outside of the five members of the U.N. Security Council to develop this capability – it also shows how far away India is to achieve its goal of joining the other great powers in establishing a credible sea-based deterrent.

Only the U.S., U.K., France and Russia can sustain continuous-at-sea deterrent patrols, which provides continuous launch capability of a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) by maintaining at least one SSBN on station at any one time that could fire a nuclear missile. A continuous patrol requires a minimum of four SSBNs. The patrol as a statement will have more effect in diplomatic circles than in military ones. India wants to join the club of countries that can support a sea-based deterrent and eventually achieve a continuous at-sea nuclear deterrent. It also means India will have the ability to launch all three air, land and sea-based types of nuclear weapons and a more robust second strike capability. “The Indians have long desired a nuclear triad that’ll allow it to deter erstwhile adversaries namely Pakistan and China,” Collin Koh Swee Lean, from the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) in Singapore told USNI News. “The quest for sea-based nuclear deterrent is based on at least the theory that a submarine-launched strategic offensive missile constitutes a highly secure capability by virtue of the characteristics of a nuclear-powered submarine, compared to air and land-based systems which could be taken out.”

*Arihant*'s design is based on Russia's Akula-class submarine and it was commissioned in 2016. Displacing 6,000 tons, the boat was built under India's Advanced Technology Vessel (ATV) programme that was confirmed in 1998 although it took other forms before this. The IN has operated the 8,000-ton nuclear-powered attack submarine (SSN) INS *Chakra* (former K-152 *Nerpa*), which it has leased from Russia for 10 years starting in 2012 following extensive sea trials. This has informed the operation of *Arihant*.

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### **Economic trends in Indo-Bangla relations**

India is the second-largest trading partner of Bangladesh. Though exports are increasing to India gradually, imports from India are increasing faster than exports.

#### *Trade linkage*

In 2017-18, exports to India increased by 30%, whereas imports from India increased by 40%. The trade deficit is \$7.75 billion, which is 42% higher than the previous year. This trade deficit between Bangladesh and India, historically tilted towards the latter, has been an issue of discontent between India-Bangladesh bilateral trade. Indian leaders have indicated that New Delhi will strive to reduce the imbalance, and India has already taken some steps in this regard. For example, New Delhi has removed 47 Bangladeshi products from the negative list of imports in order to allow duty-free access of those products in the Indian market. India has also provided duty-free access to Bangladesh on all tariff lines except tobacco and alcohol under South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) since 2011. Removing various tariff and non-tariff barriers on exports from Bangladesh by Indian authorities is the key to reduce the trade gap between the two neighbouring countries. Anti-dumping duties, countervailing duties, negative product lists, and other trade barriers imposed by India are actually hurting Bangladeshi exports to India.

#### *Financial assistance from India*

India has extended three lines of credits (LOCs) to Bangladesh in the last eight years amounting \$8bn in total. This makes Bangladesh the largest recipient of LOC funds from India. Bangladesh has offered three SEZs for Indian investors, and seeks substantial investment from Indian investors in these three Indian economic zones, namely, Mongla, Bheramara, and Mirsarai to broaden its export base. Total Indian investment proposals in Bangladesh registered with the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) exceeded \$3bn. Indian foreign direct investment (FDI) in Bangladesh reached \$95.41m in 2016-17, which was the seventh highest investment in Bangladesh.

### *Power and energy co-operation*

Power and energy sector cooperation has become another hallmark of India-Bangladesh relations. In 2016, export of power from Tripura to Bangladesh, and export of internet bandwidth from Bangladesh to Tripura started. Bangladesh is currently importing about 660MW of power from India. The 1,320MW coal-fired Maitree thermal power plant, a 50-50 joint venture between India and Bangladesh, is being developed at Rampal.

Recently, 500MW power transfer from West Bengal's Baharampur grid to Kushtia's Bheramara has started via video conference by the two prime ministers. The two leaders also inaugurated the construction of the first Bangladesh-India Friendship Pipeline between Siliguri in West Bengal and Parbatipur in Dinajpur to supply diesel to Bangladesh. The diesel is currently transported through a cross-border train from Numaligarh refinery in Assam.

India-Bangladesh economic relations have certainly achieved major heights during Sheikh Hasina's government. Though political issues like Teesta water sharing, India's claim of illegal migration of Bangladeshi people in Assam, border killings, and many more issues still remain unresolved, strong economic relationships between the neighbouring countries is much needed for the development of both countries in this age of globalization.

Source:[www.dhakatribune.com](http://www.dhakatribune.com), 5 November 2018

### **Inland waterway in Amaravati to have three terminals**

The land allocation for three inland water transportation terminals under Inland Waterways Project were finalised by the State government. The lands were identified at Muktyala and Ibrahimpatnam in Krishna district and Harischandrapuram in Guntur district and they would be constructed for inland water ways to Amaravati capital. The State government expedited navigation plans to Amaravati capital city including operation of cargo vessels and tourism cruises. It identified 8.57 acres at Muktyala, 4.62 acres at Harischandrapuram and 5.5 acres at Ibrahimpatnam. The land will be acquired under land pooling system and would be handed over to Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI). The three terminals will be constructed with permanent structures and those are important to shift materials from Jaggayyapet to Amaravati for capital city construction. Majority of cement companies are located in the surroundings of Jaggayyapet in Krishna district. Cement can be transported by

avoiding traffic snarls towards Vijayawada city for reaching Amaravati capital. One vessel can carry 1,000 tonnes of cement at a time which is equal to transport capacity of 30 lorries. Moreover, the cost is 50 per cent less comparatively to road transport way. The pollution and traffic difficulties can be avoided in the shifting of materials to capital city. According to plans, the cargo vessels will be operated for transporting cement, iron, bricks, granite and other materials for the needs of Amaravati capital construction. As per the estimates, two lakh to 10 lakh bags of cement is required on daily basis for the construction purposes including needs of private companies in the capital. On the other hand, the huge quantity of fly ash is available from power generation unit of Narla Tata Rao Thermal Power Station at Kondapalli. The cement companies can get fly ash to use in the manufacture of cement through inland waterway mode. Similarly, the concrete and other materials will be shifted to capital city at the Ferry of Ibrahimpatnam in Krishna district through Krishna river.

Meanwhile, the higher officials committee chaired by Chief Secretary Anil Chandra Punetha took decision on Friday to allot land of three acres for construction of housing project to the employees of Inland Waterways Authority of India also along with land allocation for terminals.

Source: [www.thehansindia.com](http://www.thehansindia.com), 03 November 2018

### **US exempts India from certain sanctions for Chabahar port development**

The United States has exempted India from imposition of certain sanctions for the development of the strategically-located Chabahar Port in Iran, along with the construction of the railway line connecting it with Afghanistan, a State Department spokesperson said. The decision by the Trump administration, which a day earlier imposed the toughest ever sanctions on Iran and is very restrictive in giving exemptions, is seen as a recognition by Washington of India's major role in the development of the port on the Gulf of Oman, which is of immense strategic importance for the reconstruction of war-torn Afghanistan. "After extensive consideration, the Secretary (of State) has provided for an exception from imposition of certain sanctions under the Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act of 2012, with respect to the development of Chabahar Port, construction of an associated railway and for shipment of non-sanctionable goods through the port for Afghanistan's

use, as well as the country's continued imports of Iranian petroleum products," a State Department spokesperson told PTI.

The US on Monday imposed "the toughest ever" sanctions on a defiant Iran aimed at altering the Iranian regime's "behaviour". The sanctions cover Iran's banking and energy sectors and reinstate penalties for countries and companies in Europe, Asia and elsewhere that do not halt Iranian oil imports. However, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that eight countries -- India, China, Italy, Greece, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Turkey -- were temporarily allowed to continue buying Iranian oil as they showed "significant reduction" in oil purchase from the Persian Gulf country. To a question on the fate of Chabahar Port after the US reimposed all its sanctions on Iran, the spokesperson said, "This exception relates to reconstruction assistance and economic development for Afghanistan. These activities are vital for the ongoing support of Afghanistan's growth and humanitarian relief." In May 2016, India, Iran and Afghanistan inked a pact which entailed establishment of Transit and Transport Corridor among the three countries using Chabahar Port as one of the regional hubs for sea transportation in Iran, besides multi-modal transport of goods and passengers across the three nations.

#### *Gateway to trade opportunities*

The port in the Sistan-Balochistan province on the energy-rich nation's southern coast is easily accessible from India's western coast and is increasingly seen as a counter to Pakistan's Gwadar Port, which is being developed with Chinese investment and is located at a distance of around 80 kms from Chabahar. The Chabahar Port is considered a gateway to golden opportunities for trade by India, Iran and Afghanistan with central Asian countries besides ramping up trade among the three countries after Pakistan denied transit access to India. Pompeo's decision to give India exemption from imposition of certain sanctions for the development of the port is driven by the South Asian strategy, which was announced by President Donald Trump in August. It states that India has a major role in bringing peace and development in Afghanistan. "The president's South Asia strategy underscores our ongoing support of Afghanistan's economic growth and development as well as our close partnership with India," the state department spokesperson said. "We seek to build on our close relationships with both the countries as we execute a policy of maximum pressure to change the Iranian regime's destabilising policies in the region and beyond," the spokesperson added.

### *Right move, say US experts*

Reacting to the Trump administration's decision, US experts said it was a "right move".

"Trump administration made the right move by exempting India for the development of the Chabahar port," Jeff Smith of the Heritage Foundation told PTI. India, Smith argued, "made a convincing case" that its principal interest in the port was to develop alternative infrastructure links to Afghanistan that bypass Pakistan, which also serves the US national security interests. "Delhi also made clear that it does not support Iran's destabilizing activities in the Middle East or an Iranian nuclear weapons program, and that any involvement in Chabahar will not advance those two agenda," he said. Smith said, Delhi credibly argued that if it were to abandon development efforts at Chabahar the void would most likely be filled by others, including China. "Combined with the importance, this administration places on developing good ties with India, there was a compelling geopolitical case to be made for a waiver," he said. Aparna Pande of Houston Institute think-tank said that to give an exemption to India's development of Chabahar port was a welcome decision that comes on the heels of the US granting India - along with a few others - a waiver and temporarily allowing these countries to import oil in reduced quantities from Iran. "Both these decisions demonstrate that the Trump administration values the deep strategic relationship with India. It understands India's national security interests. Where Chabahar is critical to India's access to and assistance towards ensuring a stable Afghanistan, India's energy needs require a basket of energy suppliers," Pande said. Rick Rossow of the Center for Strategic and International Studies said: "Chabahar's role to transport key logistics to Afghanistan will continue to grow over time. So this waiver is squarely aligned with the US interests," he said.

Source: [www.thehindubusinessline.com](http://www.thehindubusinessline.com), 07 November 2018

### **Major ports cargo traffic up 5.31% to 403 million tonnes in April-October**

India's 12 major ports witnessed a 5.31 per cent rise in cargo traffic at 403.39 million tonnes (MT) during April-October of the current fiscal, the Indian Ports Association (IPA) data showed. These top ports had handled 383.05 MT cargo during the corresponding seven-month period of the last fiscal. The growth in the cargo traffic was mainly attributed to increase in handling of coal, mainly coking coal, containers

and petroleum, oil and lubricants (POL). Among the 12 major ports, Kamarajar Port (erstwhile Ennore) recorded the highest growth in traffic during the April-October period with an increase of 20.42 per cent, followed by Cochin Port 13 per cent, Paradip Port 11.22 per cent, Kolkata Port (including Haldia) 8.65 per cent and Deendayal Port (erstwhile Kandla Port) 8.46 per cent. Jawahar Lal Nehru Port (JNPT) recorded 6.93 per cent growth, Vishakhapatnam port recorded a 5.58 per cent rise in cargo traffic, New Mangalore 3.56 per cent and Chennai 3.11 per cent.

However, VO Chidambaranar, Mumbai and Mormugao have recorded negative growth during the period. In terms of maximum cargo volume, Deendayal Port handled 68.47 MT cargo, followed by Paradip's 62.03 MT and JNPT Port at 40.54 MT. There are 12 major ports under the control of the Centre besides 187 minor/intermediate ports under the jurisdiction of states along the 7,517 km long coastline of the country. The 12 major ports - Deendayal Port, Mumbai Port, JNPT Port, Mormugao Port, New Mangalore Port, Cochin Port, Chennai Port, Kamarajar Port, V O Chidambarnar Port, Visakhapatna Port, Paradip Port and Kolkata Port (including Haldia Port) handled - approximately 61 per cent of the country's total cargo traffic.

Source: [economictimes.indiatimes.com](http://economictimes.indiatimes.com), 11 November 2018

### **Building terminals is key to India's goal of establishing viable logistics hubs – Gujarat State sets the pace**

- Manik Mehta

Indian shipping experts have long recognized that building terminals and shipping infrastructure is key to India's foreign trade; they are convinced that logistics constitutes the backbone of a nation's economic activity. India's Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu, who has been saying that India is headed to become a \$ 5 trillion economy, underscored during a recent event in New Delhi that the Indian Government's policy of making the logistics sector as part of a comprehensive plan – a "proper integrated plan", as he put it – will boost exports.

Indian states are, meanwhile, scrambling to improve their existing shipping infrastructure by either modernizing or expanding the existing facilities. Gujarat, in

Western India, is already leading the Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) Index, which serves as a logistics chart and indicates the efficiency of logistical services needed for encouraging exports and economic growth. Other Indian states that closely follow Gujarat are Punjab (2), Andhra Pradesh (3), Karnataka (4) and Maharashtra (5). The LEADS chart, created by the Commerce Ministry, is similar to the World Bank's biannual Logistics Performance Index (LPI) which ranked India 35<sup>th</sup> among 160 countries in 2016, up from 54 in 2014. Many of the Indian states are, meanwhile, setting up industry-specific terminals. With a voracious appetite for oil and gas, India is trying to add a new tranche of liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals, for example, to the existing facilities. The setting up of LNG terminals does make business sense, considering that India is the world's fourth-largest LNG importer. While the 19.22 million tonnes purchased in 2017 were a mere 1.3% increase over the previous year's total, import volumes in 2018 have again risen sharply.

Imports for April-July 2018 reached 7.46 million tonnes, a 20.3% jump on the same period a year earlier. Indeed, Dahej, the largest of the country's four import terminals with an annual LNG 15 million tonnes capacity, has been running at over 100% so far in 2018. Though the four receiving terminals are located on India's west coast, the country will have at least half a dozen new import terminals over the next few years. The 5 million tonne per year Mundra terminal is Gujarat's third LNG receiving facility. The Gujarat State Petroleum Corp (GSPC) presently owns a 75% stake in the project and the private Adani Group 25%. GSPC is reportedly interested in selling a part of its stake. Besides the new LNG terminal and the facilities for handling just about every other conceivable type of cargo, Mundra is also set to commission a new liquefied propane gas (LPG) import terminal before the year end with an annual capacity of 1.35 million tonnes.

Mundra port is located in the Northern Gulf of Kutch, and connected with major maritime routes and also with rail, road, air and pipelines. This makes it a preferred gateway for west-bound cargo. The port has been designed to handle all types of cargo, including containers, dry bulk, break bulk, liquid cargo and automobiles. Mundra Port has a capacity to handle 338 million metric tonnes (MMT) of cargo per annum – the largest amongst all operational ports in India. Arvind Agarwal, the additional chief secretary (finance) in the Gujarat state government, who recently led a business delegation to the U.S. to court investors and also seek partnerships between U.S. companies and Gujarat based corporations, said in an interview with the *American Journal of Transportation* at the Indian consulate general in New York, that Gujarat accounted for 17% of India's industrial output though it had only 5% of India's

population. “Gujarat has become India’s automobile hub ... indeed, it (Gujarat) is the leading state for the manufacture of a range of products, including biopharma, gems, textiles, machinery and, of course, automobiles and other sophisticated products,” Agarwal maintained, adding the growing exports of these products was propelling the maritime trade. Much of India’s maritime trade passes through Gujarat,” he said. Gujarat is organizing the “Vibrant Gujarat 2019 - 9<sup>th</sup> Global Summit” from January 18 to 20, 2019 in Gandhinagar, emphasizing trade and business with India. “The event will be attended by (Indian) Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The focus will be on industry, trade and business, and also building up an efficiently-run infrastructure,” Agarwal said. John Chambers, Chairman of US-India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF), is reportedly leading a high-level delegation of top corporate representatives to the summit. The U.S. was a “partner country” in the 2005 and 2017 summits.

According to a report called “Ports & Maritime Industry of Gujarat – the Gateway to India”, Indian ports currently have capacity of 1359 million metric tonnes per annum, which, according to government projects, will increase to 3130 million metric tonnes per annum by 2020. Total investment in Indian ports is expected to reach US\$43.03 billion by 2020. Until the fiscal year 2016-17, India’s seaborne cargo traffic grew at an average rate of 5.7% in last ten years. Dry cargo contributed to major share of traffic handled. Ports and maritime sector received cumulative foreign direct investment of US\$ 1.64 billion. Gujarat, which was the first Indian state to invite the private sector to participate in port development, was also the first Indian state to set up a dedicated chemical terminal – Dahej – while its Mundra port has the highest throughput in the country. Ports in Gujarat collectively handled around 40% of the total Indian maritime cargo, Gujarat Government sources claim.

According to Agarwal, the Gujarat Government attaches the “high priority” to port infrastructure development since the state’s foreign sea trade is “poised to grow further” in the future. He also referred to the Sagarmala Program, India’s gigantic transport and logistics project with a whopping investment of some US\$ 120 billion earmarked for creating new mega ports, modernization of India’s existing ports, development of 14 coastal employment zones (CEZs) and coast employment units, enhancement of port connectivity through road, rail, multi-modal logistics parks, pipelines and waterways, including establishing port terminals. The Indian Government believes that the program would increase exports by US\$ 110 billion. “The Indian Government’s Sagarmala program is of vital importance for Gujarat because the state has the largest coastline ... it has major ports such as Kandla, Mundhra,

Pipavav, Dahej, Hazira, etc. Gujarat also has a large number of jetties (private ports). We already have three LNG terminals and a fourth one will be coming ..." Agarwal said.

adding that Gujarat is "very clear" about developing its shipping infrastructure because that is the "backbone of foreign trade".

Source: [www.ajot.com](http://www.ajot.com),



## MARINE ENVIRONMENT



### **Gov't to urge companies to curb use of microplastics**

TOKYO (Kyodo) -- The Environment Ministry said Wednesday it plans to urge companies to reduce the use of microplastics, amid heightened global concern over marine pollution. Under its updated policy that the ministry plans to compile by year-end, companies would be asked to curb the use of microbeads used in facewash and toothpaste. Restaurants and shops would also be asked to refrain from using plastic bags and straws. The ministry unveiled the draft of the revised policy at a meeting of a panel of experts on Wednesday, with one of the members emphasizing the difficulty of tackling the waste after it ends up in the ocean. "It's almost impossible to retrieve microplastics from the ocean," the member said.

The draft also called on fishermen to ensure they do not abandon plastic fishing gear in the sea. Countries are grappling with increasing amounts of plastic waste that degrades into small pieces when exposed to ultraviolet light and abrasion. Pieces measuring less than five millimeters in length are called microplastics. As the impact of such plastic waste on the marine ecosystem has yet to be fully determined, the Japanese government plans to carry out research on the issue, according to the draft. The basic policy lays out the roles of the government and local municipalities in dealing with waste drifting ashore as well as measures to curb waste generation together with the private sector. The existing policy, approved by the Cabinet in 2010, made no reference to microplastics countermeasures. The Environment Ministry has decided to include the issue in the upcoming revision amid growing awareness of the issue.

Source: [mainichi.jp](http://mainichi.jp), 08 November 2018

### **Ministry to urge firms to cut use of microplastics amid marine pollution crisis**

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“It’s almost impossible to retrieve microplastics from the ocean,” one of the experts noted. The draft also called on fishermen to ensure they do not abandon plastic fishing gear in the sea. Countries are grappling with increasing amounts of plastic waste that degrades into small pieces when exposed to ultraviolet light and abrasion. Pieces measuring less than 5 mm in length are called microplastics. As the impact of such plastic waste on the marine ecosystem has yet to be fully determined, the government plans to carry out research on the issue, according to the draft. The basic policy lays out the roles of the government and municipalities in dealing with waste that drifts ashore, as well as measures to curb waste generation together with the private sector. The existing policy, approved by the Cabinet in 2010, made no reference to microplastics countermeasures. The Environment Ministry has decided to include measures in the upcoming revision amid growing awareness of the issue. Problems posed by marine plastic debris will also be discussed at next week’s East Asia Summit in Singapore.

Leaders or deputies from 18 countries — 10 Southeast Asian Nations, the United States, Japan, China, India, Russia, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand — will issue a statement on cooperating to combat marine plastic debris, official sources said Wednesday. They are expected to pledge at the Nov. 15 summit to take steps that will include exploring the possibility of adopting a regional action plan on preventing and reducing marine plastic debris. Other measures include improving capacity-building, encouraging international collaboration and promoting development of national action plans. The amount of plastic waste entering the ocean has reached crisis levels, with an estimated 8 million tons leaking into the ocean every year. More than half of it comes from just five Asian countries — China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam — according to a 2015 study.

Source: [www.japantimes.co](http://www.japantimes.co), 08 November 2018

## **Shoppers should pay 40p for plastic 'bags for life' - which usually cost 10p - to cut pollution, say green campaigners**

- Jake Hurfurt

Stores have been urged to make their plastic bags much more expensive to cut pollution. Green campaigners want shops to charge around 40p for 'bags for life' – which usually cost 10p – to reflect their environmental impact. Many stores have been phasing out flimsier single-use bags since the government introduced a 5p levy on them in favour of the thicker, reusable versions. Researchers estimate the thicker bags need to be used between four and six times before they make up for the extra plastic needed to make them compared to single-use bags. But green activists are worried that the bags for life are so inexpensive that shoppers will discard them after only a couple of uses. Dr Laura Foster, head of pollution at the Marine Conservation Association, called for the stronger bags to have a higher price tag to reflect how many times they need to be used. She said: 'We would like to see a price along the lines of 40p to reflect the carbon footprint relative to a single-use plastic bag.'

Although she ultimately wants to stop people buying bags altogether, she thinks raising the price for heavier carriers will also educate consumers about the need to use them repeatedly to offset the higher environmental impact of making them. Over the past two years, supermarkets including Tesco and Sainsbury's have scrapped their single-use bags for heavier ones. Marks and Spencer has become the latest company to phase out the 5p bags in favour of the bag-for-life versions, made from recycled plastic. The introduction of the 5p charge in 2015 led to an 86 per cent reduction in the number of carrier bags used, taking 13 billion plastic bags out of circulation in two years.

Source: [www.dailymail.co.uk](http://www.dailymail.co.uk), 10 November 2018

## **Ocean Pollution: A fight worth a splash**

The audacious challenge is part of a partnership between the International Canoe Federation (ICF), the IOC and UN Environment's Clean Seas initiative, the aim of which is to increase global awareness of marine pollution and implement measures that address gaps in waste management. Two previous attempts to conquer the river have failed so far – including one by Mike Dawson himself. Leading an international expedition of canoeists, Dawson will navigate the treacherous rapids of the Kwanza – Africa's fourth largest river – which features some of Africa's most remote gorges,

dropping around 30m per kilometre. They will be followed by a film crew who will be capturing footage of the expedition to create a feature-length documentary, thereby raising global awareness of the impacts of pollution and showcasing Angola's natural and cultural diversity. "My paddling expeditions have provided me with a unique opportunity to witness and enjoy the most beautiful rivers and places on the planet," said Dawson. "At the same time, they showed me first-hand how we are polluting and destroying our environment. We need to encourage change. There's nothing more heart-breaking than paddling down a pristine remote waterway and discovering a ton of pollution." According to the United Nations, about 13 million tonnes of plastic end up in our oceans every year. Recognizing this challenge, the ICF is looking at progressive initiatives to ensure that canoe sports worldwide are environmentally sustainable. By being a change-maker in this area, the ICF hopes to encourage other International Federations to join the campaign. "We are extremely happy to be partnering with Mike and the ICF to create awareness about the challenge of marine pollution," said Michelle Lemaitre, IOC Head of Sustainability. "The IOC is strongly committed to driving meaningful action across the Olympic Movement, and actions like this one are a fantastic way to leverage the Movement's power and reach. The ICF is one of nine International Federations that have signed up to the Clean Seas initiative so far, and we hope that many more International Federations will follow suit."

Source: [www.olympic.org](http://www.olympic.org), 12 November 2018

### **IMO adopts action plan on Marine Litter**

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has adopted an action plan to improve current regulations and roll out new measures to reduce marine plastic litter generated by ships. The plan has identified a number of measures to achieve its goal, including a planned study on marine plastic litter from ships, exploration of port reception facility availability and adequacy, and encouraging the reporting of fishing gear loss. It also aims to strengthen international cooperation, particularly the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and UN Environment, as well as improve public awareness.

In a statement, IMO said: "The Action Plan notes that marine plastic litter enters the marine environment as a result of a wide range of land and sea-based activities. "Marine plastic litter negatively impacts on activities such as tourism, fisheries and

shipping.” IMO is expected to regularly review and, if required, update the new action plan. The organisation’s existing International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) regulation prohibits dumping plastics into the sea and mandates the governments to guarantee the availability of adequate port reception facilities to receive ship waste. IMO’s London Convention and Protocol is designed to only allow the dumping of permitted materials, including the ones generated from dredging. However, these materials are required to be evaluated before dumping to ensure harmful materials such as plastics are not released into the sea.

Source: [www.ship-technology.com](http://www.ship-technology.com), 01 November 2018



### **South China Sea: Beijing hopes for maritime accord with Asean neighbours in three years**

- Catherine Wong

China aims to complete negotiations on a code of conduct for the disputed South China Sea region within three years as Beijing pursues a stable relationship with its neighbours. Premier Li Keqiang made the commitment on Tuesday in Singapore before attending the annual summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean). Li said a peaceful and stable international environment was crucial for Beijing to improve ties and reach free trade deals with its neighbours, adding that China hoped to conclude negotiations for a comprehensive regional economic partnership trade deal next year. The premier also said that a code of conduct between China and other claimant countries – which China hoped would be successfully negotiated in the next three years – would be conducive to maintaining and sustaining peace in the region. “As the development of the South China Sea has stabilised now, we hope to make use of this opportunity to push for concrete progress of the code,” he said. “China and Asean countries will benefit in that process, it will also be conducive to free trade and go on to serve the interests of other parties.”

The Asean summit takes place as tensions between China and the United States run high and as both jockey for influence in the region. Locked in a trade war with the United States, China is aiming to reach trade deals with the bloc. American and Chinese vessels have also had near collisions in the South China Sea. US National Security Adviser John Bolton said on Tuesday that the US objected to China’s unilateral military steps in the disputed waters. Calls for a binding code of conduct surfaced in 1995 when China occupied Mischief Reef, a maritime feature claimed by the Philippines. China did not agree to start talks until 1999, and subsequent negotiations led to a non-binding declaration of conduct in 2002.

Collin Koh, a maritime security expert at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, said there was still a long way to go before the code of conduct was concluded as some Asean states were debating whether it should be legally binding.

“And it’ll appear that some, if not all, Asean member states have come to moderate their own expectations of the code,” he said. “The single draft negotiating text contains many proposed provisions, and since the talks will involve so many players, it’ll surely take time. In fact, I will not be surprised if they eventually take more than three years.”

Source: [www.scmp.com](http://www.scmp.com), 13 November 2018

## **Bringing Vietnam Into the ‘Free and Open Indo-Pacific’**

- Joshua Kurlantzick

For many Southeast Asian states, the Trump White House’s new strategy for the region, the Free and Open Indo-Pacific concept, is a hard idea to sell — at least right now. The strategy vows to promote a rules-based security and economic order in Asia, while also encouraging closer cooperation among regional U.S. partners. But the concept has been questioned by even close U.S. partners like Singapore, which has not yet expressed clear support for the idea.

Many Southeast Asian states fear looking like they are building a coalition against China. But others simply appear unready to sign up for an idea at a time when the White House has sent multiple worrying signals to Southeast Asia. The White House’s trade strategy, for instance, has at times targeted Southeast Asian states. In democracies like Indonesia and Malaysia, U.S. indifference to human rights alienates some local leaders. Overall, the administration’s erratic approach to policy-making has undermined Southeast Asians’ confidence in the United States’ president. Due to the White House’s nationalist tone and inconsistent approach to Southeast Asia, some Southeast Asian states have begun to accept China’s growing regional power. Still, some Southeast Asian states fear aspects of China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), worry about Beijing’s approach to the South China Sea, and resent Chinese influence in their domestic politics. Many Southeast Asian states remain uneasy with the idea of China becoming the region’s preeminent power.

For the Trump administration to restore Southeast Asian states’ trust in the United States as an indispensable external actor, and to convince them to sign onto the Free and Open Indo Pacific idea, it needs to show that tough policies are not just designed to favor the United States but also can benefit Southeast Asia. It can do so in Vietnam. There, Trump’s tough rhetoric on trade and security jibes with sentiment in the country, and he seems to have popular support, although this is always tough to

measure in an authoritarian state. Vietnamese leaders are intensely worried about China's trade practices, and Vietnam is the Southeast Asian state most actively defending its interests in the South China Sea. Leaders in Hanoi recognize that though working with Washington risks provoking Beijing, China is already trying to intimidate Vietnam. And Hanoi is already essentially putting into effect aspects of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy, such as bolstering security cooperation with important U.S. partners.

### *U.S.-Vietnam Convergences*

In addition to welcoming investment, Vietnamese leaders also share U.S. concerns about China's trade practices. Despite some trade tensions with Washington, Vietnamese leaders appear willing to work with the White House on a tough but fair Asia-Pacific trade policy that addresses China's trade practices, while accepting that China will remain an enormous driver of regional trade. While Hanoi has not abandoned the desire for multilateral trade liberalization, it appears possibly willing to launch bilateral trade negotiations with Washington, after a possible bilateral investment treaty is finished.

Vietnam's leaders, meanwhile, have continued to tilt toward the United States while also pursuing security relationships with medium-sized Asian powers. Vietnamese leaders understand that they cannot hope to match China's militarization of the South China Sea, but Hanoi seeks to deter Beijing from thinking of attacking Vietnam, or from totally dominating the South China Sea. Moving closer to the United States, Australia, India, and Japan, among others, helps Vietnam achieve this goal. On security issues, the Trump administration has continued Obama's approach of building closer ties with Vietnam, while also rhetorically shifting to a more confrontational approach toward China. The fact that the White House has downgraded human rights and democracy as priorities in U.S. foreign policy may alienate democrats in places like Malaysia but probably has made improving U.S.-Vietnam strategic ties easier.

Vietnam meanwhile has faced growing Chinese pressure on many fronts. In the past two years, China has squeezed Vietnam to give up claims on oil and gas in disputed areas of the South China Sea. Vietnam's oil exports have dropped by around 40 percent since 2015, as Beijing has worked to prevent Hanoi from new exploration in the South China Sea. Vietnamese leaders also have become increasingly alarmed by the placement of missiles on Chinese installations in the South China Sea, and at other

Chinese efforts to consolidate gains in disputed waters. The Vietnamese public has pushed Hanoi away from Beijing. The Vietnamese government is authoritarian, but it is not totalitarian, and it has to respond to public sentiment to some extent. On multiple occasions in the past five years, large anti-China protests have broken out in Vietnam, including in June 2018.

Vietnam's approach to regional security tracks many of the goals of the Trump administration's Free and Open Indo-Pacific, although Hanoi does not necessarily score highly on the program's goal of open markets and respect for the rule of law domestically. Indeed, of all the Southeast Asian states (other than city-state Singapore), Vietnam has shown the fewest illusions about the implications of China's rise, and the greatest willingness to employ tough, sophisticated strategies to prevent Chinese dominance of the South China Sea and the region more generally. Vietnamese leaders are thus the most natural fit in Southeast Asia for working with the Trump administration on both strategic and economic issues. Hanoi is, in its own way, helping build a "networked security architecture" of regional powers that will defend sovereignty, freedom from coercion, and freedom of navigation. Three of the states that Vietnam is courting are also part of an informal regional partnership called the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or "Quad": Australia, India, and Japan.

In addition, Vietnamese leaders have recently explicitly echoed concepts of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy. In a speech to an Indian think tank in March 2018, senior defense analyst and Asia expert Derek Grossman notes, Vietnam's then-president, the late Tran Dai Quang, referred to Vietnam's desire for an "Indo-Asia-Pacific" security concept and "signal[ed] Hanoi's willingness to accept [the] concept most strongly pushed by the United States that partners must work together across regions to balance and deter Beijing's activities."

### *Vietnam as a Model Case for U.S. Policy*

For the White House to show Southeast Asian states that its tough strategic and economic approach is going to benefit not only the United States, it will need to convince Southeast Asian countries of several points. It will need to assure them that the United States has staying power in Asia, and that the Trump administration's view of the region, set forth in the Free and Open Indo-Pacific idea, values Southeast Asia itself. It further needs to assure Southeast Asian countries that although China's rise should not and cannot be stopped, the United States can offer viable options for helping Southeast Asian countries push back if China uses economic and strategic

coercion. Washington also needs to assure countries that in promoting a rules-based order on security and trade, the Trump administration will apply rules fairly and based on evidence — rather than issuing condemnations of countries based upon spurious charges, like the idea that states running trade surpluses with the United States are somehow taking advantage of Washington.

Vietnam is the ideal place for the Trump administration to model its hard-edged strategy for South and Southeast Asia, and show countries the concept could be in their interests too. For one, Washington and Hanoi can boost bilateral ties to strategic partnership status. As Carlyle Thayer has noted, the current status of a comprehensive partnership is vague and did not come with clear steps the two sides could take to bolster ties. A strategic partnership would be a clearly-defined bilateral relationship in which both sides would treat each other as close partners, almost allies.

The two countries also could increase port calls and other measures to demonstrate that the U.S.-Vietnam security relationship can deter Chinese actions in the South China Sea. This action would involve making the U.S. aircraft carrier port call in Vietnam an annual event, and ensuring that Hanoi participates in each iteration of the biennial Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) multinational joint exercises. Washington also should invite Vietnam to join the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue. As Tom Corben of the University of Sydney notes, the four Quad members already have “striven to upgrade bilateral strategic relations with Vietnam through conducting joint military exercises, port visits, extending lines of defense credit, and donating or selling naval assets to improve Hanoi’s maritime security capacity.” Vietnam is already a kind of discreet partner of the Quad, given its close security ties with all Quad members. Formally joining the dialogue would give Vietnam a bigger say in regional security and send a signal that Washington increasingly sees Hanoi as a security partner on the level of other Quad members. It also would show Southeast Asia that the Quad can include Southeast Asian states as equal partners

The two states also should launch talks on a bilateral free trade agreement. Although Vietnam’s leaders were major proponents of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and were disappointed when Washington dropped out of the TPP, Hanoi’s top officials, generally, are realists who seek any options to improve trade ties. The Trump administration should, by the end of the first quarter of 2019, try to conclude a much-delayed bilateral investment treaty with Vietnam, and then possibly begin trade talks with Vietnam, while also launching bilateral trade talks with other Southeast Asian

states; exploratory talks already are in the works with the Philippines on a bilateral deal.

Hanoi and Washington also should do no harm to people-to-people contacts, which have been critical to U.S.-Vietnam rapprochement both in the years before renormalization of diplomatic ties in 1995, and the time since. Now, a White House plan to deport thousands of Vietnamese who arrived in the United States before 1995, and were protected under a 2008 U.S.-Vietnam immigration accord, could poison people-to-people relations. The Trump administration should halt plans to deport Vietnamese nationals who came to the United States prior to 1995. It also should stop plans for tightening student visa regulations, including for Vietnamese nationals; educational contacts are critical to U.S.-Vietnam people-to-people ties.

Finally, Vietnam and the United States should make clear that, despite their closer relationship, both countries will cooperate with China when it plays by regional rules and norms. Neither the United States nor Vietnam can prevent China from becoming a more powerful regional and global actor. On some important regional issues, like public health, China often has played a very helpful leadership role, and can do even more in a void of U.S. leadership. While the Trump administration aims to limit Beijing's ambitions in the South China Sea and within the domestic affairs of other states in Asia, it should accept that Southeast Asian countries have to work with China on a wide array of issues. On issues where Beijing is becoming a trusted, responsible leader, Washington and Hanoi should accommodate its growing power. Doing so would simply reflect reality — the United States and its partners cannot prevent China from becoming far more influential in Southeast Asia.

### *Bringing Vietnam into the Free and Open Indo-Pacific*

Building a closer U.S.-Vietnam relationship would benefit both Washington and Hanoi and send a signal to other Southeast Asian states that the Trump administration's regional policies are not zero-sum. Upgraded ties with Vietnam, based on the ideas set forth in the Free and Open Indo-Pacific concept, would demonstrate that the White House has a clear regional policy that can actually take into account Southeast Asian states' strategic viewpoints as well.

Using Vietnam as a model for how Trump administration policies can benefit Southeast Asia, the United States could mend its deteriorating links with the Philippines and Thailand, and reinforce ties with Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore,

three countries that are increasingly skeptical of China's regional strategic aims. The Philippines and Thailand are probably uninterested in any approach that alienates China, but could be open to closer ties with the United States if they saw Vietnam benefit from them. If states see that the White House's harder approach to Asia could actually be in their interests, they may be convinced to support the Free and Open Indo-Pacific concept.

Source: [thediplomat.com](http://thediplomat.com), 15 November 2018

### **Eye on China? India-Indonesia navies to have first-ever bilateral exercise Samudra Shakti**

- Huma Siddiqui

As India is concerned about the security of the sea lanes of communication in the larger Indo-Pacific, Indonesia on the other had concerns about Chinese maritime activities near the Natuna islands. In line with government's 'Act East Policy' INS Rana at Surabaya will participate in the first ever Indian Navy – Indonesian Navy Bilateral Exercise 'Samudra Shakti'. The India-Indonesia relations has been elevated to 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership' earlier this year when Prime Minister Narendra Modi had visited that country. Besides the maritime security, defence co-operation has been a significant pillar in this partnership. As Indian Ocean littoral neighbours, both countries have been working towards deepening their military ties. Indian Naval assets have been increasingly deployed to address maritime concerns of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

INS Rana of the Eastern Fleet based at Visakhapatnam under the Eastern Naval Command is on deployment to South East Asia and arrived at the port of Surabaya to participate in the inaugural exercise between the two navies starting Nov 12-18 'Samudra Shakti'. According to the official spokesperson of the Indian Navy Capt DK Sharma, "The aim of the exercise is to strengthen bilateral relations, expand maritime co-operation, enhance interoperability and exchange best practices." The exercise has started with a Harbour Phase encompassing planning and briefing on various activities, professional interactions, cross deck visits, sports fixtures and social interactions. Then from Nov 16 it would progress to a Sea Phase scheduled and would include operations such as Joint Manoeuvres, Helicopter Operations, Surface Warfare exercise, ASW exercise and Anti Piracy exercises.

The visit of the ship seeks to promote India's solidarity with Indonesia towards ensuring good order in the maritime domain and to strengthen existing bonds between the navies of the two nations. As part of its Strategic Relations, India has offered to train sailors from Indonesia in submarine operations in an effort to boost maritime security cooperation. Leaders of both countries want their countries to emerge as major maritime powers to ensure a stable maritime order in the region, as India is concerned about the security of the sea lanes of communication in the larger Indo-Pacific, Indonesia on the other had concerns about Chinese maritime activities near the Natuna islands.

Source: [www.financialexpress.com](http://www.financialexpress.com), 13 November 2018

### **Abe goes on tour to pitch 'free and open' Indo-Pacific**

- Yukio Tajima

TOKYO -- Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe seeks to spread his vision for a "free and open Indo-Pacific" as he tours the region starting Wednesday, urging cooperation among like-minded countries to enhance maritime security and promote free trade. His goal, which is shared with the U.S., is to create a framework for countries on the Indian and Pacific oceans to advance common ideals like the rule of law and the market economy, mostly through cooperation on maritime security.

As Abe visits Singapore and Papua New Guinea and Australia, he will also hold bilateral talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin and will explore a chance for a brief talk with South Korean President Moon Jae-in. "The prime minister will seek collaboration on regional issues like North Korea and turning the vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific into reality, and send a strong message to the international community," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told reporters Tuesday. Abe's first stop will be Singapore, to attend the East Asia Summit with members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, as well as the U.S., China and South Korea. He will call on attendees to abide by U.N. sanctions against North Korea to push Pyongyang to denuclearize, and will express his concern over Beijing's militarization in the South China Sea.

The prime minister will then attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Papua New Guinea, where he will push the creation of a free-trade framework in the region. He is also stressing the importance of transparent and financially sound infrastructure investment, hoping to create new guidelines to prevent countries from being drawn into debt traps by China's Belt and Road infrastructure initiative. In

between the two conferences, Abe will travel to northern Australia on Friday for his first summit with Prime Minister Scott Morrison since the latter took office in August. The two leaders will affirm their commitment to the "free and open" Indo-Pacific goal. He will also attend a ceremony for the Ichthys liquefied natural gas project there led by Japanese oil developer Impex, which will start operations soon.

In the meeting with Putin on Wednesday, Abe hopes to score progress on the territorial dispute. In September, Putin suggested that the countries sign a peace treaty without preconditions. Abe, who believes they must first resolve the dispute over a set of islets known as the Northern Territories in Japan and the Southern Kurils in Russia, nonetheless welcomed Putin's desire for a peace treaty. Abe is not scheduled for a one-on-one sitdown with Moon. But the two leaders could have an informal chat on recent tensions over workers forced to work for Japanese companies during World War II.

Source: [asia.nikkei.com](http://asia.nikkei.com), 14 November 2018

### **10 years to find solution for the South China Sea (SCS)**

The topic on the South China Sea has been presented by Capt. (Dr) Gurpreet S Khurana, Executive Director of the National Maritime Foundation, at the 10th International Conference on the South China Sea. From 8-11 Nov 18.

Not surprisingly, he came across with India's "Act East" policy, as well as the new context in the Indo-pacific strategy that the media has been referring to over the years.

*"President Duterte's biggest difference with his predecessor administration is the willingness to confront, both legally and spiritually."*<sup>13288</sup>

*GS Jay Batongbacal*

*After 10 years, what is the South China Sea?*

The conference was entitled "South China Sea: Cooperation for Regional Security and Development" organized by the Diplomatic Academy, the East Sea Research Support Fund and the Vietnam Lawyers Association.

This year's event was particularly relevant as it was the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary since a scientific conference on the South China Sea was launched, with contributions from within the country as well as international experts. Scholars have thus made a summative presentation, reviewing the 10 years of the South China Sea story in the most pertinent manner.

There have been a lot of changes in government policies of the countries during this time, leading to finding solutions for the South China Sea that will be realized in the due course of time. Like India, US President Donald Trump has shown a more active stance on freedom of navigation and countering China's claims to the South China Sea.

Dr. Patrick Cronin, Senior Advisor and Senior Director of the Asia-Pacific Security Program at the Center for American Studies, said today that the United States is determined to increase competition with China; President Trump promotes ties with allies and partners in Southeast Asia, balancing both free-trade activities and investment in the capabilities of partners. But even more strongly, President Trump's policies have been in continuity with the administration of President Barack Obama.

In the opposite direction, the change in government has led to more or less an adjustment in the approaches. The Philippines, for example, is one of the most disputed and hardest-hit states in the South China Sea.

Professor Jay Batongbacal, director of the Institute of Maritime and Maritime Law, University of the Philippines, said: "Over the last 10 years we have experienced many governments, leading to many different approaches.

So we have a problem of policy continuity with China and the South China Sea. President Duterte is currently in the process of compromising, based on the pragmatism of balancing national and economic interests. "

### *Convergence of views*

"Studies on the South China Sea play an important role in raising awareness, not only for the public but also for policymakers." According to Associate Professor Nguyen Vu Tung, Director of the Institute of Foreign Affairs. Vietnam.

However, Prof. Tung admitted that academics could not solve the deadlock problem in the South China Sea due to the "warping" (Sic) of time. "The proudest success in the past

10 years is that we have made a tremendous amount of research on the South China Sea at all levels and areas.

But regardless of social awareness, the contribution of recommendation to policy makers and academics can only provide a perspective and solutions. Policymakers need to select the right solutions. Most of the time, there is always a certain degree of curvature. "

Deepening this issue in the context of the negotiation of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC), Prof. Nguyen Vu Tung said that the research identified the key point in deadlock negotiations: zoning What the COC covered, the legally binding issue and the implementation process. But fundamentally, countries still can not agree on pertinent geographical facts as China continues to claim illegal land on the "nine-dashed line."

In addressing the "nine-dashed line," the Philippines's 2016 lawsuit is likely to be a catalyst. But reversing the "warping" (Sic), it is clear that the Philippine President Duterte's administration has chosen a different approach. "At present, the Duterte administration is more concerned with gaining economic benefits from China ... so whatever changes are coming, they will still have to deal with the conflict by bilateral and silent measures. "- Professor Batongbacal told Tuoi Tre.

Source: [tuoitre.vn](http://tuoitre.vn) 09 November 2018