



MAKING WAVES

A maritime news brief covering:

- MARITIME SECURITY
- MARITIME FORCES
- SHIPPING, PORTS AND OCEAN ECONOMY
- MARITIME ENVIRONMENT
- GEOPOLITICS

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MARITIME SECURITY

INDIA, PHILIPPINES TO UPGRADE DEFENCE PARTNERSHIP; BOOST MARITIME SECURITY

On June 29, India and the Philippines took a significant step towards strengthening their defence partnership by enhancing official level interactions between their defence agencies. This decision was made during the fifth meeting of the Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation (JCBC), where External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Philippine counterpart Enrique A. Manalo, who was on an official visit to India from June 27-30, served as co-chairs.

The two countries agreed to establish a resident Defence Attaché office in Manila, further facilitating communication and collaboration between their defence establishments. Additionally, India extended an offer to provide concessional Line of Credit to the Philippines for the procurement of defence equipment, showcasing its commitment to supporting the Philippines in strengthening its defence capabilities. This development signifies the deepening of defence ties between India and the Philippines, underscoring their shared commitment to regional security and stability. The upgraded official level interaction and the establishment of a Defence Attaché office are expected to enhance cooperation in areas such as defence technology, joint exercises, and information sharing. The concessional Line of Credit offered by India demonstrates its willingness to contribute to the modernization of the Philippines' defence forces, fostering a stronger defence partnership between the two nations.

Source: [Here](#) 30 June, 2023

INDIA, US CAN DEPLOY FORCES TO ENSURE MARITIME SECURITY, FREEDOM OF SKIES: US ENVOY

In his first statement following the state visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Washington, US Ambassador to India, Eric Garcetti, highlighted the potential for both nations to jointly deploy their military forces on a global scale. This collaboration aims to ensure maritime security, safeguard the freedom of skies, and strengthen the defence capabilities of other countries. Ambassador Garcetti also reiterated the ongoing engagement between the United States and India on human rights matters, emphasizing that this dialogue extends to all nations worldwide. During his address at the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi on June 28, Ambassador Garcetti stated, "We will continue to address human rights issues, as we have consistently done, not only in India but in every country across the globe.

"This reaffirmation of cooperation between the United States and India signifies their shared commitment to upholding maritime security and protecting airspace, while also acknowledging the importance of human rights. By deploying their military forces collaboratively, both nations aim to bolster the defence capacity of other countries, fostering stability and peace. The commitment to engage in human rights demonstrates

the significance placed on promoting fundamental values and principles, as well as fostering constructive dialogue on these matters.

Source: [Here](#) 28 June 2023

EUNAVFOR ATALANTA, A MARITIME SECURITY PROVIDER DRIVEN BY THE COMMITMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTING NATIONS

In January 2023, the European Union renewed the mandate of Operation ATALANTA, reaffirming the commitment of EU Member States over the past three years. EUNAVFOR Atalanta has emerged as a key maritime security provider in the Northwestern Indian Ocean, expanding its operational scope to now include the Red Sea. ATALANTA's mission encompasses a wide range of tasks, including combating piracy, safeguarding vulnerable shipping routes, countering drug trafficking, and enforcing the weapons embargo on al-Shabaab. Additionally, the operation engages in monitoring and reporting activities related to illegal fishing, arms embargo implementation in Somalia, and charcoal trafficking. It also focuses on conducting training and operational initiatives with coastal states in the Northwestern Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, with the overarching objective of fostering a sustainable regional maritime security architecture. The renewal of Operation ATALANTA highlights the EU's unwavering commitment to ensuring the safety and stability of crucial maritime zones. By addressing piracy, drugs trafficking, and arms embargoes, ATALANTA plays a vital role in preserving regional security and protecting vital trade routes.

Source: [Here](#) 23 June 2023

INDIA AND AUSTRALIA SHOULD JOIN FORCES TO SUPPORT MARITIME SECURITY IN THE PACIFIC

To enhance India's engagement with Pacific Island countries, it would be advantageous to appoint a dedicated defence adviser to the region, potentially based at the high commission in Suva, Fiji. This strategic move would facilitate closer cooperation and collaboration between India and the Pacific Island nations in defence matters. Like Ricky Ponting's mindset on the cricket field, where he focused on the gaps rather than the fielders, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recognized the untapped potential in the Pacific Island region. His recent visit to Papua New Guinea, coupled with India's growing involvement in the region, demonstrates New Delhi's increasing awareness of the opportunities available. It is worth noting that prior to Modi's visit in 2014, no Indian prime minister had travelled to the Pacific Island region since Indira Gandhi's visit to Fiji in 1981, a span of 33 years. This highlights the significance of Modi's engagement and signals a renewed focus on fostering relationships with Pacific Island countries. In this context, Australia can serve as an effective partner for India, particularly in addressing the maritime security challenges faced by Pacific Island nations. Collaborative efforts between India and Australia can help overcome capacity constraints and bolster the defence capabilities of these countries, contributing to regional stability and security.

Source: [Here](#) 21 June 2023

NATO ESTABLISHES NEW CENTRE TO SAFEGUARD UNDERSEA PIPELINES, CABLES AS CONCERN MOUNTS OVER RUSSIAN SABOTAGE THREAT

In response to mounting concerns over the potential threat of Russian sabotage, NATO has taken decisive action to safeguard undersea pipelines and cables. A new centre has been established by NATO in Northwood, northwest London, as a direct response to the unresolved incident involving the apparent attack on the Nord Stream pipelines and Russia's suspected mapping of critical Western infrastructure in European waters. Led by Lt. Gen. Hans-Werner Wierman and his dedicated unit, the establishment of this centre reflects the evolving nature of the threat. NATO defence ministers have approved the creation of this centre, recognizing the pressing need to address the heightened concerns regarding Russian mapping activities and the possible targeting of undersea cables and vital infrastructure that could disrupt Western societies. The catalyst for NATO's decision was the suspected attack on two Baltic Sea gas pipelines in September. Investigations into these incidents involving the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 pipelines, designed to transport Russian natural gas to Germany, are still underway. The establishment of this new centre underscores NATO's proactive approach to safeguarding critical infrastructure and countering potential threats from adversaries. By strengthening the protection of undersea pipelines and cables, NATO aims to enhance the resilience and security of Western societies against disruptive actions that could have far-reaching consequences. Additionally, it serves as a platform for collaboration, intelligence sharing, and developing strategies to mitigate the evolving threats in the undersea domain.

Source: [Here](#) 17 June 2023

MARITIME FORCES

IN A FIRST, NAVY CHIEF TO VISIT LADAKH TO DRAW MORE YOUTH TO JOIN MARITIME FORCE

In a significant move aimed at expanding the recruitment base and showcasing the diverse opportunities within the maritime force, the Chief of the Indian Navy is set to undertake a groundbreaking visit to Ladakh. This visit marks the first time a Navy chief will travel to the region, emphasizing the Navy's commitment to engaging with youth from diverse backgrounds and regions across the country. The visit to Ladakh by the Navy chief aims to raise awareness about the exciting prospects and career avenues offered by the Indian Navy. It presents a unique opportunity for the local youth to interact directly with the Navy's leadership, gaining insights into the various roles, advancements in technology, and the challenging yet rewarding experiences that come with serving in the maritime force. By reaching out to Ladakh, which is located far from the traditional coastal regions, the Navy aims to attract a wider pool of talent and encourage young individuals from diverse geographical areas to consider a career in the Indian Navy. This initiative aligns with the Navy's vision of fostering a more inclusive and representative force that draws from all regions of the country. The visit also highlights the Navy's recognition of the strategic significance of Ladakh and its role in enhancing national security, not only in

maritime domains but also in regions extending beyond the coastlines. By connecting with the local population, the Navy chief's visit aims to strengthen the bond between Ladakh and the maritime force, creating a sense of pride and ownership among the youth of the region towards the country's defence and security endeavours.

Source: [Here](#) 28 June 2023

IRAN-GCC 'NAVAL ALLIANCES' COULD PUT MARITIME SECURITY AT RISK - OPINION

The recent statement by Iranian Navy Commander Admiral Shahram Irani has ignited a significant and thought-provoking discussion surrounding the formation of a potential naval alliance between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and Iran. This proposal suggests a remarkable shift in dynamics within the region, as it involves key nations such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Iraq, and Iran coming together. Admiral Irani emphasized the growing consensus among regional nations that true security and stability in the area can only be achieved through collaborative efforts and cooperation. His statements underscore the recognition that relying on collective strengths and shared interests is crucial for ensuring a peaceful and prosperous maritime environment. Notably, the admiral's remarks also shed light on a prevailing sentiment within the region—the desire for the withdrawal of unnecessary foreign forces. This indicates a growing belief in the ability of local nations to assume responsibility for their own security, utilizing their own military capabilities and personnel. The formation of a naval alliance between GCC countries and Iran, if realized, has the potential to redefine regional dynamics and contribute to a more harmonious and secure maritime domain. It signifies a shift towards recognizing common interests, resolving conflicts through dialogue, and jointly addressing challenges. Such cooperation could pave the way for enhanced stability, economic development, and stronger regional relationships. While the formation of a naval alliance between GCC countries and Iran remains a topic of debate, the mere discussion of such a possibility reflects a changing narrative in the region, emphasizing the importance of cooperation and shared security. The success of any potential alliance will depend on a willingness to overcome historical differences, build trust, and prioritize collective interests over individual agendas, ultimately fostering an environment of stability and prosperity in the Gulf region.

Source: [Here](#) 21 June 2023

US HOSTS TWO MAJOR MULTILATERAL MARITIME ENGAGEMENT FORUMS IN MIDDLE EAST

The United States recently convened two significant multilateral meetings focused on maritime security in Bahrain on June 25-26. These meetings brought together nearly 200 participants, including senior military officers, diplomats, and representatives from regional partners, to discuss avenues for strengthening collaboration and cooperation at sea. Hosted by the US Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT),

the first meeting involved 90 senior military officers and diplomats from 22 nations, along with representatives from the Gulf Cooperation Council. The discussions centred on the current maritime security landscape and strategies to further enhance maritime security in the region. A joint statement issued on June 26 emphasized the commitment of participants to uphold navigational rights, adhere to international law, and collectively address threats to vessels in critical regional waterways vital to global trade and the world economy. Simultaneously, NAVCENT's naval amphibious task force, Task Force 51/5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, hosted a multilateral maritime engagement conference in Bahrain for the second time this year. This gathering brought together 100 international staff officers from 10 nations, including Bahrain, France, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, and the United States. The discussions primarily aimed to identify future collaborative training opportunities across the Middle East, reinforcing the importance of joint exercises and cooperation among the participating nations. These multilateral meetings demonstrate the United States' commitment to fostering robust maritime security partnerships and collaboration in the region. By convening such gatherings, the US aims to strengthen regional stability, protect global trade routes, and enhance the collective capacity to address maritime security challenges. The discussions and joint initiatives arising from these meetings have the potential to significantly contribute to a safer and more secure maritime environment in the Middle East.

Multilateral meetings like these play a crucial role in strengthening regional partnerships, fostering trust, and promoting cooperation in maritime security efforts. The commitment to upholding international law, protecting navigational rights, and collectively addressing threats underscores the shared responsibility of nations in ensuring the safety and free flow of maritime trade, which is vital for global economic prosperity.

Source: [Here](#) 27 June 2023

COMBINED MARITIME FORCE INTRODUCES NEW GROUP TO TRAIN PARTNER NAVIES IN MIDDLE EAST

The 38-nation Combined Maritime Force (CMF) has established a new group to enhance maritime security training in the Middle East. Combined Task Force 154 (CTF 154) is the fifth CMF segment after CTF 153 was inducted for Red Sea maritime security in April 2022. The latest group was launched to facilitate military training for multinational CMF navies in the region. This approach allows partners to upskill without logistical inconvenience, especially during courses conducted ashore.

Source: [Here](#) 23 May 2023

SHIPPING, PORTS AND OCEAN ECONOMY

SHIPPING INDUSTRY BODY TO MEET MOS SHIPPING SHRIPAD NAIK ON ISSUE OF SHORE LEAVE PERMISSION FOR SEAFARERS AT MUMBAI PORT

The Maritime Association of Shipowners, Ship Managers, and Agents (MASSA), an industry body, has announced its intention to hold a meeting with Minister of State for Shipping, Shripad Naik, to address the issue of shore leave permission for Indian sailors at the Mumbai Port. Shore leave is a vital provision that allows crew members to temporarily disembark from their ships and take a break from their duties. The duration of the leave can vary based on the scheduled port stay of their ships. While the central government grants such permission to seafarers working on ships visiting Jawaharlal Nehru Port, sailors aboard ships docked at the Mumbai Port are currently not granted shore leave. MASSA's initiative highlights the need to ensure equal opportunities for shore leave for Indian sailors, regardless of the port at which their ships are docked. By engaging with the Minister of State for Shipping, the industry body aims to address this disparity and seek a resolution that grants Indian sailors at the Mumbai Port the same rights as their counterparts at other ports.

Source: [Here](#) 24 June 2023

AM/NS INDIA SET TO EXPAND SHIPPING FLEET

ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India Ltd (AM/NS India), a joint venture between ArcelorMittal and Nippon Steel, is set to expand its fleet of Indian flagged ships. The move comes as the steel manufacturer aims to strengthen its supply chain in response to a shortage of Indian registered vessels available for cargo transportation on local routes. AM/NS Shipping & Logistics Pvt Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of AM/NS India, had already acquired two Kamsarmax ships last year for coastal cargo transportation and is now nearing the purchase of two additional vessels from the second-hand market. Ashutosh Mathur, Head of Shipping & Chartering at AM/NS India, highlighted the need for increased fleet capacity due to the limited availability of Indian tonnage in the market. By adding more ships to their fleet, the company aims to enhance its logistical capabilities and ensure a reliable supply chain for its operations. The decision by AM/NS India to expand its Indian flagged fleet underscores the company's commitment to strengthening its presence in the domestic shipping market and addressing the challenges posed by the shortage of Indian registered ships. The move not only supports AM/NS India's efforts to secure a robust supply chain but also contributes to the development of the Indian maritime industry, providing opportunities for growth and employment within the sector.

Source: [Here](#) 19 June 2023

MUMBAI JNPT PORT HOSTS ITS LONGEST-EVER 399-METRE CONTAINER SHIP

The Mumbai Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) recently created a milestone by hosting its longest-ever container ship measuring 399 meters in length. The arrival of this vessel marks a significant achievement for the port, demonstrating its capacity to handle larger ships and accommodating the evolving needs of the shipping industry. The JNPT, located in Mumbai, India, is one of the country's premier ports and plays a vital role in facilitating international trade. The successful berthing of the 399-meter container ship showcases the port's infrastructure capabilities, including its deep draft and modern handling facilities, enabling the handling of larger vessels, and promoting efficient cargo operations. The arrival of such a sizable container ship highlights the growth potential of the Mumbai JNPT Port and its increasing importance as a major maritime hub in the region. It not only enhances the port's capacity to handle larger volumes of cargo but also enhances connectivity and trade opportunities for businesses, contributing to economic growth and development.

The successful berthing of the longest-ever container ship at the Mumbai JNPT Port underscores the port's commitment to adaptability and modernization. It positions the port as a competitive player in the global shipping industry, capable of accommodating larger vessels and meeting the demands of international trade. This achievement reflects the ongoing efforts to bolster India's maritime infrastructure and highlights the importance of ports like JNPT in facilitating trade, promoting economic progress, and strengthening regional connectivity.

Source: [Here](#) 19 June 2023

INDIAN PORTS SAW 2.4%RISE IN TRAFFIC IN THIS YEAR APRIL AND MAY

Indian ports experienced a notable increase in traffic during the months of April and May this year, with a rise of 2.4% compared to the same period in the previous year. This growth in traffic indicates positive momentum and highlights the resilience and continued activity within India's maritime sector. The rise in traffic volume across Indian ports demonstrates the steady recovery and gradual resurgence of trade and economic activities. It signifies increased movement of goods, both in terms of imports and exports, reflecting the revival of various industries and trade sectors. The growth in traffic is a positive development for Indian ports as it not only contributes to the overall economic growth of the country but also underscores the effectiveness of port operations, logistics, and trade facilitation measures. It reflects the collective efforts of port authorities, stakeholders, and the government in promoting a conducive environment for trade and commerce. While challenges and uncertainties persist, the rise in traffic is an encouraging sign for the Indian maritime sector. It indicates a gradual rebound from the disruptions caused by the global pandemic and serves as a testament to the resilience and adaptability of India's port infrastructure and logistics networks. Overall, the increase in traffic volumes during April and May demonstrates a positive trajectory for Indian ports, reflecting the potential for continued growth and contribution to the country's economic recovery and development.

Source: [Here](#) 16 June 2023

MARINE ENVIRONMENT

MARINE BIODIVERSITY GETS A LIFELINE WITH HIGH SEAS TREATY

The United Nations has taken a significant step in safeguarding life in the high seas by formally adopting a historic treaty. This treaty, which addresses the growing threats of pollution, climate change, and overfishing, provides vital environmental protections to the vast two-thirds of the ocean that lie beyond national jurisdictions. The agreement, initially agreed to in principle in March, marks a crucial milestone in extending conservation efforts to previously unregulated areas of the ocean. It introduces measures to establish marine protected areas, providing safe havens for marine life, including fish, plants, and other vulnerable species. Additionally, the treaty enables the implementation of area-based management tools, facilitating more sustainable practices for the management of ocean resources. This adoption of the treaty demonstrates the global recognition of the urgent need to protect and preserve the health of the high seas. By establishing mechanisms for conservation and sustainable management, the international community aims to address the mounting challenges faced by marine ecosystems and work towards a more resilient and balanced future for our oceans.

The adoption of this historic treaty marks a significant stride towards achieving a more comprehensive and effective framework for protecting marine biodiversity and ecosystems in the high seas. With environmental threats to the high seas intensifying, this treaty establishes a crucial foundation for international cooperation and concerted efforts to address the pressing issues of pollution, climate change, and unsustainable fishing practices. It sets the stage for a more sustainable and responsible approach to the management of our shared ocean resources.

Source: [Here](#) 20 June 2023

MARINE ENVIRONMENT AT RISK: SHIP EMISSIONS THREATEN FRAGILE ECOSYSTEMS

A pioneering study led by Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden has unveiled a pressing concern that impacts the marine ecosystem: ship emissions. The research provides crucial insights into the substantial risks posed by the collective emissions of metals and other hazardous substances from ships, which jeopardize the delicate equilibrium of the world's oceans. Particularly alarming is the finding that over 90% of contaminants originate from water discharged by ships' scrubbers. This study underscores the urgency of implementing more stringent regulations to combat the ongoing deterioration of the marine environment. The Chalmers University study highlights the imperative to address ship emissions as a significant environmental issue. The release of metals and other harmful substances into the marine environment through ship exhausts and scrubber discharge poses a serious threat to marine life and the overall health of our oceans. To safeguard the delicate balance of marine ecosystems, it is vital that stricter regulations and effective mitigation measures are implemented to control and reduce these emissions.

The research conducted by Chalmers University of Technology serves as a wake-up call for the shipping industry and policymakers to take immediate action in tackling ship

emissions. Stricter regulations and innovative technologies must be embraced to minimize the discharge of hazardous substances into our oceans. By doing so, we can mitigate the adverse effects on marine ecosystems, preserve biodiversity, and ensure the sustainability of our precious marine resources for future generations.

Source: [Here](#) 19 June 2023

COMFORT PROJECT WARNS OF IRREVERSIBLE DAMAGE TO MARINE ENVIRONMENT

The COMFORT research project has extensively examined the critical junctures at which the escalating levels of CO₂ emissions, warming, and acidification converge with tipping points for oceanic environmental conditions. Tipping points represent pivotal thresholds beyond which systems undergo abrupt and potentially irreversible reorganization. The findings of the study reveal that tipping points have already been surpassed in multiple marine ecosystems, including the North Sea, primarily due to the combined impacts of climate change and overfishing. Warming, acidification, and deoxygenation act as contributing factors that intensify the likelihood of oceans surpassing their tipping points. If marine systems transition from one stable state to another, the consequences may be severe and enduring. Deoxygenation denotes the process of reducing or depleting the oxygen content in a substance such as water, resulting in diminished availability of oxygen for biological processes. The COMFORT research project underscores the urgency of addressing climate change, overfishing, and their interconnected impacts on marine ecosystems. The identification of tipping points in various marine environments serves as a stark warning, emphasizing the need for immediate action to mitigate further damage. By understanding and taking proactive measures to prevent the crossing of tipping points, we can strive to safeguard the health and resilience of our oceans and ensure the well-being of marine life for future generations.

Source: [Here](#) 16 June 2023

TEHRAN TO HOST ROPME SUMMIT ON PROTECTION OF MARINE ENVIRONMENT

The Regional Organization for the Protection of Marine Environment (ROPME), consisting of the eight Persian Gulf coastal countries, will hold its upcoming meeting in Tehran, as announced by Ali Salajegeh, Chief of the Department of Environment. The meeting was discussed during a meeting between Salajegeh and Saif Mohammed Al Zaabi, the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Tehran. Established in Kuwait in 1979, ROPME quickly gained ratification from seven member states, including Iran, Bahrain, Iraq, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. The organization's primary objective is to foster coordination among its member states in safeguarding the marine and coastal environment and ecosystems within the ROPME Sea Area. This includes addressing marine pollution and mitigating stressors that may arise from developmental activities or other factors contributing to environmental change. The decision to hold the ROPME meeting in Tehran underscores the importance of collaboration and regional cooperation in addressing environmental challenges in the Persian Gulf. By convening member states and facilitating discussions, ROPME aims to strengthen collective efforts towards the protection and preservation of the marine environment, promoting sustainable practices and fostering environmental harmony.

Source: [Here](#) 16 June 2023

GEOPOLITICS

DENMARK CELEBRATES PH RELATIONS, REAFFIRMS SOLIDARITY ON MARITIME DISPUTE

In his address, Mellbin urged all nations, particularly those that are signatories to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, to uphold and endorse the ruling of The Hague Tribunal. On July 12, 2023, the Philippines will commemorate the 7th anniversary of this landmark arbitral decision, which was in favor of the Philippines. Alongside political cooperation, the enduring Danish-Philippine relations are further strengthened by a robust economic partnership. The occasion also provided an opportunity to reflect on recent significant milestones in the bilateral ties between Denmark and the Philippines. In addition, the Danish Embassy collaborated with the International Maritime Organization to organize a high-level conference on green shipping. This conference brought together key stakeholders from 22 countries across Asia and the Pacific, emphasizing the importance of sustainable practices in the shipping industry.

The call for nations to respect and support The Hague Tribunal's ruling reflects the significance of upholding international law and promoting peaceful resolution of maritime disputes. The commemoration of the 7th anniversary of the arbitral decision serves as a reminder of the importance of adherence to legal frameworks in ensuring maritime stability and security. Furthermore, the Danish-Philippine relations exemplify how strong political, economic, and environmental partnerships can contribute to the shared prosperity and sustainable development of nations.

Source: [Here](#) 27 June 2023

SAUDI ARABIA PUTS MARITIME SECURITY ON THE TABLE IN TALKS WITH IRAN

The Persian Gulf has long been plagued by concerns surrounding maritime security, particularly in the narrow and strategically significant Strait of Hormuz. Iran has been known to target tankers belonging to other nations during periods of heightened political tension, posing a recurring threat. The most pronounced escalation occurred during the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, where Iranian forces employed drifting sea mines to target Iraqi vessels. Although relative calm has been restored in the waterway, incidents such as boardings and seizures still occur with enough frequency to endanger shipping. However, a significant shift in the geopolitical landscape of the region could soon alter this pattern. In a noteworthy move aimed at reestablishing formal diplomatic relations after years of discord, Saudi Arabia has initiated discussions with Tehran regarding maritime security matters.

This development holds the potential to bring about a notable transformation in the dynamics of maritime security in the Persian Gulf. If successful, these talks could foster a more cooperative approach between regional powers and contribute to a more stable and secure environment for shipping in the Strait of Hormuz. By engaging in dialogue and addressing mutual concerns, Saudi Arabia and Iran can set a positive precedent for regional cooperation and reduce the risk of confrontational incidents at sea.

Source: [Here](#) 19 June 2023

PHL LOOKS TO JAPAN, US ON MARITIME SECURITY SANS ASEAN UNITED FRONT

In addition to strengthening defence cooperation with India, the Philippines is actively pursuing enhanced maritime security partnerships with the United States and Japan. This approach has gained traction due to the lack of a unified stance within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Lucio B. Pitlo III, a research fellow at the Asia-Pacific Pathways to Progress Foundation, highlighted the growing ties between these three countries as a response to the challenges faced by ASEAN in effectively addressing security issues in the region. Pitlo noted that these "minilaterals" offer a pragmatic solution to the difficulties faced by regional organizations like ASEAN in reaching a consensus on security matters. Varying risk assessments, relationships with major powers, and differing levels of influence in security and foreign policy calculations among ASEAN member states make it challenging to establish a unified stance. Within ASEAN, the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, and Malaysia, along with China and Taiwan, hold differing and, in some cases, overlapping territorial claims in the South China Sea. Despite negotiations starting in 2002 after the signing of the non-binding Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, China and ASEAN have yet to finalize a code of conduct for the disputed waterway.

The complexities surrounding territorial disputes in the South China Sea have highlighted the limitations of ASEAN in reaching a unified position. The Philippines' pursuit of stronger maritime security partnerships with the United States and Japan reflects the need for alternative avenues to address regional security concerns. While these developments may have implications for India, the impact would depend on the nature and extent of cooperation between the Philippines, ASEAN, and India in the maritime domain.

Source: [Here](#) 18 June 2023