

MAKING WAVES

A MARITIME NEWS BRIEF COVERING:

- 1. Maritime Security**
- 2. Maritime Forces**
- 3. Shipping Ports and Ocean Economy**
- 4. Marine Environment**
- 5. Geopolitics**

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CONTENTS

MARITIME SECURITY	2-4
India Navy Rescues Bulk Carrier Crew After Arabian Sea Hijack Attempt	2
French Navy: Publication of the Mica Center's Annual Report on Maritime Security	2
Southeast Asia Reports 19% Rise in Ship Robberies In 2023	3
New Imb Report Reveals Concerning Rise in Maritime Piracy Incidents In 2023	3
Türkiye Spearheads Trilateral Mcm Initiative in The Black Sea	4
MARITIME FORCES	4-5
Dominguez Raises Concern for Seafarers at Un Security Council	4
First Drug Interdiction of The Year for Cmf French-Led Combined Task Force 150	5
Senegal/Mauritania Fisheries Agreements: 500 Licenses Handed Over to Guet Ndar Fishermen	5
SHIPPING, PORTS AND OCEAN ECONOMY	6-7
Ad Ports Group and Red Sea Port Authority Initial 15-Year Concession Agreement to Boost Cruise Tourism in Egypt	6
India To Invest Rs 60,000 Cr in River Cruise Tourism and Green Vessel Development By 2047	6
'Damaging' Port Strikes at Dp World Australia Terminals Extended	7
Polish Shipping Association Joins Ecsa	7
China Hits 50% Of World Shipyard Output In 2023	7
MARINE ENVIRONMENT	8-10
Cop28 Recap: Nations Failed to Reach Consensus on Article 6 For Regulating Carbon Markets	8
The Eu Fisheries Control System Gets a Major Revamp	9
Methanol Overtakes Lng as Alternative Fuel of Choice In 2023	9
January 2024 El Niño Update: For the Birds	9
2023 Was the World's Warmest Year on Record, By Far	10
GEOPOLITICS	10-12
Historic Memorandum of Understanding: Ethiopia Officially Recognises Somaliland and Gains 50-Year Maritime Access	10
Djibouti Code of Conduct – Call for Action on Attacks Against International Shipping in The Red Sea	11
Vantage How Philippines Plans to Checkmate China in Sea Dispute	11
Un Arms Embargo on Somalia Lifted	12
Trade And Geopolitics Behind Plans for Russian Naval Base In Abkhazia	12

MARITIME SECURITY

INDIA NAVY RESCUES BULK CARRIER CREW AFTER ARABIAN SEA HIJACK ATTEMPT

After a vessel sailing from Brazil to Bahrain reported to the UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) agency that almost 6 armed men had boarded the vessel, threatening the crew, the Indian Navy recognised MV Lila Norfolk bulk carrier about 460 nautical miles away from Somalia. The Liberian-flagged carrier had 21 crew, among which 10 were Indian, all of whom were later reported to be safe later. It had carried iron ore when it was under the hijacker's clutches, who are assumed to have left the vessel post the coercive intervention of the Indian Navy. The incidents of hijacking by pirates are believed to be motivated by the US-led anti-piracy missions, who push the focus from the Gulf of Aden to the Red Sea.

Editorial Comment: The Indian Navy took immediate action to rescue the crew of MV Lila Norfolk as a key security provider in the Indian-Ocean region. The reappearance of piracy after a six-year lull is a cause of concern. While India's efforts are commendable, a global response is essential, including knowledge and data sharing as well as multilateral patrols to address the root causes of rising piracy and maritime crime.

Source: [Here](#) 5th January 2024

FRENCH NAVY: PUBLICATION OF THE MICA CENTER'S ANNUAL REPORT ON MARITIME SECURITY

The Maritime Information Cooperation & Awareness Center (MICA Center) published its 5th Annual report on issues of maritime security, consolidating impacts of 2023 geopolitical events that can change the maritime security dynamics worldwide. The MICA Centre, based in Brest and under the French Navy's Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations deals with data-sharing in the maritime security arena. As the maritime sector faces multidimensional threats and geopolitical events lead to stresses in maritime activities, cooperation is solicited. As previously conflict-filled regions like the Gulf of Guinea and Black Sea have seen a decrease in security threats, the attention is diverted towards regions including the Red Sea, the Bab-el-Mandeb and the Gulf of Aden. The maritime sector also struggles due to wars and skirmishes. The trade lanes were supplied forces to safeguard the smooth passage of vessels amidst the issues. Except for the Indian Ocean and the Black Sea, states the report, has witnessed a rise in the number of incidents reported.

Editorial Comment: MICA Center published its 5th Annual Report on maritime security issues. This report acknowledged the mitigation efforts that have been successful in regions like the Gulf

of Guinea and Black Sea, but refocus is now on Red Sea, Bab-el-Mandeb & Gulf of Aden. While there has been some improvement, the trend in other areas appears to be on an upward trajectory and a rising security challenge. The report highlights the importance of collaboration and information sharing in protecting global transportation.

Source: [Here](#) 8th January 2024

SOUTHEAST ASIA REPORTS 19% RISE IN SHIP ROBBERIES IN 2023

According to a report released by a Singaporean maritime oriented institution, in the Southeast Asian region, there is a 19 percent increase in ship robberies in 2023. One in every 100 cases, the robbers were reported to be armed. Further, there was noticed to be looting of spare parts and scrap on marginal scale. There was either no change or a fall in the rate of theft from 2022 in Bangladesh, Malaysia and India, while Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand faced more risks of robbery than before. There were concerning cases of kidnapping of sailors in Sulu-Celebes Seas and a significant increase in such crimes in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore. The Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery (ReCAAP), Information Sharing Centre (ISC) and the ReCAAP Data Visualisation Map and Panel (Re-VAMP) vigorously work towards reimagining maritime security in the region.

Editorial Comment: The rise in ship robberies in Southeast Asian region shows the long-standing security problem on critical water routes. While most cases involve petty larceny, the need for collaborative actions like ReCAAP's Re-VAMP platform will help build a safe coastal environment. The coordinated efforts of the Malaysia and Philippines made sure that no cases of crew kidnappings took place in the Sulu-Celebes Sea by the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) but constant observation, vigilance and resilient methods remains crucial for safeguarding maritime trade and crews.

Source: [Here](#) 10th January 2024

NEW IMB REPORT REVEALS CONCERNING RISE IN MARITIME PIRACY INCIDENTS IN 2023

The Piracy and Armed Robbery Report released by the ICC International Maritime Bureau (IMB) reported an increase of 5 cases of maritime piracy and armed robbery in 2023, then the previous year. The crews taken hostage and kidnapped also saw significant increase. The year witnessed the first successful Somali-based hijacking since 2017. The IMB Director called all stakeholders to pitch in to adopt best practices against such crimes. Further, concerns were raised over hijacking and kidnapping in Gulf of Guinea, Singapore Straits and the Indonesian Archipelago. Incidents of assault and threatening in South American countries like Peru, Brazil and Colombia were also drawn attention to.

Editorial Comment: This report highlights threats of piracy threats along with an increase in crew kidnappings and hostages. Despite some improvements in this region, the dangers of maritime crime continue to pose persistent. Areas such as the Straits of Singapore, Malacca and Indonesian archipelago are also facing serious threats like threatening and holding sailors captive.

There is a need for greater cooperation among the stakeholders as any delay in action will only increase the risks to the seafarers and global shipping.

Source: [Here](#) 11th January 2024

TÜRKIYE SPEARHEADS TRILATERAL MCM INITIATIVE IN THE BLACK SEA

Türkiye, Bulgaria and Romania agreed on measures to counter sea mine activities in the Black Sea. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the three countries, signed in Istanbul, paves way to planning of Mine Countermeasure (MCM) activity, which will initially be carried out in the territorial waters and the exclusive economic zones of the parties involved. The Committee for the Naval Group for Mine Countermeasures in the Black Sea of which the naval chiefs of all three countries are a member, will make appropriate plans to carry out operations four times in an year. The agreement aims to counter the political instability that affects the Black Sea. The host country, Türkiye is reported to have not added any statement regarding the initiative's involvement with NATO allies, despite Romania's assertion that the grouping will support the NATO.

Editorial Comment: The Black Sea Mine agreement led by Türkiye, Romania, and Bulgaria paves the way for cross border cooperation. The cross-border cooperation embodies the principles of the regional ownership of black sea highlighted in Montreux Convention. Türkiye stressed upon the control by littoral states and counter the sea mine threat. However, Romania's mention that the agreement will involve NATO's support was not included in the final agreement.

Source: [Here](#) 12th January 2024

MARITIME FORCES

DOMINGUEZ RAISES CONCERN FOR SEAFARERS AT UN SECURITY COUNCIL

Arsenio Dominguez, Secretary-General of the IMO, speaking at the United Nation Security Council (UNSC) condemned the attacks on ships in the Red Sea. While stressing on the condemnation of such an act, he pressed on the importance of free shipping routes and on the adherence to international maritime law. The Red Sea hosts 15 per cent of the world's ship traffic. Due to the attacks, many shipping companies have rerouted causing disturbances to the normal shipping traffic. The extraordinary meeting of the Djibouti Code of Conduct and its Jeddah Amendment also dealt with the pressing issue. IMO's EU-funded initiatives, IMO, INTERPOL, UNODC, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) focus on coordinated efforts to fight insecurity in the maritime sector. The Secretary-General stressed that the act of war must be halted beyond further escalation.

Editorial Comment: IMO Secretary-General Arsenia Dominguez urged for a swift intervention amid rising attacks on shipping in the Red Sea. This region alone handles 15% of international trade. Around 18 shipping companies have already changed their routes in order to be safe from

these attacks, which results into extending the transit time by 10 days. He also pushed for de-escalation, regional cooperation under the DCoC. He called for efforts to safeguard the seafarers, ensure freedom of navigation and stabilise supply chains.

Source: [Here](#) 3rd January 2024

FIRST DRUG INTERDICTION OF THE YEAR FOR CMF FRENCH-LED COMBINED TASK FORCE 150

A US Coast Guard initiative based under French Combined Task Force 150 captured USD 11 million worth of illegal drugs. It was found on a vessel in the international waters of the Gulf of Oman. Significant quantity of heroin, methamphetamine and negligible amount of cocaine was found to be possessed by the vessel, which was seized and disposed by the Sentinal-class fast response cutter USCGC Emlen Tunnell. The Royal Navy frigate HMS Lancaster had collected data of the concerned vessel and was shared with Emlen Tunnell and the ocean patrol aircraft of France, Wallaby, making the encounter smooth. This was first capture of the year for CTF 150, and is marked as the fruit of collective action by the 39-nation naval cooperation.

Editorial Comment: The recent anti-drug operation and seizure of \$11 million worth of illegal drugs by USCGC Emlen Tunnell under Combined Task Force 150 (CTF 150) reveals the success of international maritime cooperation in combating maritime crime. The 39-nation naval partnership is committed to suspend maritime crime in international waters encompassing one of the world's most important shipping lanes.

Source: [Here](#) 8th January 2024

SENEGAL/MAURITANIA FISHERIES AGREEMENTS: 500 LICENSES HANDED OVER TO GUET NDAR FISHERMEN

The Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy presented 500 fishing licences to St Louis fishermen, all while underlining the significance of upholding the integrity of regulations. The Memorandum of Understanding between Senegal and Mauritania preceding the handing over of the licences which will help the fishermen to catch 50,000 tonnes of pelagic fish. The need to fish safely and by respecting the laws of the sea was emphasised by the representatives from either party. A compensation of 11,135 FCFA was agreed upon in the agreement signed that the fishermen would pay, out of which 6,550 Fcfa borne by the State of Senegal. Other issues such as climate change, turning to traditional fishing and fundings.

Editorial Comment: The authorisation of catching 50,000 tonnes of pelagic fish was given to 500 St Louis fishermen under the Memorandum of Understanding between Senegal and Mauritania. Senegal pledged to provide fish farming trainers in consideration of fishing access. However successful implementation will require lucidity, effective resource management and cooperation between the two parties for regional prosperity.

Source: [Here](#) 10th January 2024

SHIPPING, PORTS AND OCEAN ECONOMY

AD PORTS GROUP AND RED SEA PORT AUTHORITY INITIAL 15-YEAR CONCESSION AGREEMENT TO BOOST CRUISE TOURISM IN EGYPT

AD Ports Group and the Red Sea Port Authority signed an agreement to manage three cruise terminals and renovation of one to enhance cruise tourism in Egypt. The agreement was signed between representatives from both the parties and in the presence of Egypt's Minister of Transport and the ports under consideration include Safaga, Hurghada, and Sharm El Sheikh ports. Spanning over 15 years AD Ports Group will invest USD 3 million and will oversee the cruise operations in the ports. The development follows the agreement between AD Ports Group and RSPA of USD 200 million over 3 years at the Safaga sea port to modernise the port and the opening of Aqaba Cruise Terminal in Jordan by the Group.

Editorial Comment: AD Ports Group signed an agreement with the Red Sea Port Authority in order to bolster the cruise tourism in Egypt. AD group will invest USD 3 million on ports like Safaga, Hurghada, and Sharm El Sheikh which will promise enhanced passenger experience and a comprehensive plan that will strengthen the ties between UAE and Egypt.

Source: [Here](#) 5th January 2024

INDIA TO INVEST RS 60,000 CR IN RIVER CRUISE TOURISM AND GREEN VESSEL DEVELOPMENT BY 2047

During the first Inland Waterways Development Council meeting, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal proposed that there would be an investment of Rs 45,000 crores in river cruises, and Rs 60,000 crores to be allocated also for green vessel development by 2047. The guest capacity will accordingly in the river cruises will increase from 2 lakh to 15 lakh. The government also aims to invest a significant amount in green transport in the decade to come to develop vessels and ferries. The realisation of these projects through a PPP model will generate job opportunities, as per Sonowal, who spoke in a meeting in a cruise vessel on issues such as ecofriendly cruise, private sector involvement and more. The council meeting also released a River Cruise Tourism Roadmap of the year 2047.

Editorial Comment: The Indian government's plan to invest Rs 60,000 crore by 2047 in River Cruise Tourism and Green Vessel Development is a major step towards sustainability in inland waterways transport. This investment will be done by public-private partnership model which in turn will generate thousands of jobs. The release of River Cruise Tourism Roadmap and the Harit

Nauka standards at the first Inland Waterways Development Council meeting highlights the importance of modern waterways.

Source: [Here](#) 9th January 2024

'DAMAGING' PORT STRIKES AT DP WORLD AUSTRALIA TERMINALS EXTENDED

Labourers at the port of Maritime Union of Australia (MUA), demanding better wages and working conditions from the operator DP World since October 2023, took their strike national. The Brisbane, Fremantle, Sydney and Melbourne terminals were impacted by the demand strife. DP World Oceania EVP stated that the strike struck perishable goods like meat and the concerned companies will have to bear the economic losses. According to reports, there has been a loss of A\$1.34 billion since the beginning of the protest. The MUA had previously walked away from negotiations with DP World in December and calls were made to concerned authorities to resolve the matter.

Editorial Comment: The prolonged strike by the labourers of the Maritime Union of Australia reached a national stage causing disruption like spoiled produce and significant financial loss of approximately USD 84 million every week since October. The Brisbane, Fremantle, Sydney and Melbourne terminals were impacted by the demand strife. The strike, according to Shipping Australia CEO Melwyn Noronha, is destructive and harmful and is hurting Australian families.

Source: [Here](#) 9th January 2024

POLISH SHIPPING ASSOCIATION JOINS ECSA

The Polish Shipping Association was invited into the European Community Shipowners' Associations (ECSA) as a full member on January 1, 2024. The Polish Shipping Association includes the Polish Shipowners' Association (ZAP) and the Polish Shipping Companies Association (PZPŻ), who will also be a part of ECSA. The ECSA Secretary welcomes the new organisation which will benefit ECSA in strengthening its knowledge expertise and geographic expanse. The Polish Shipping Association in turn stated their delightedness in being a part of ECSA, which would augment the European shipping sector further.

Editorial Comment: The European Community Shipowners Association welcomed the Polish Shipping Association as a full-time member from January 1, 2024. This step extends the scope of the organization's influence and reach geographically. The European Community Shipowners Association membership will help the Polish shipping by conveying their voice to EU.

Source: [Here](#) 10th January 2024

CHINA HITS 50% OF WORLD SHIPYARD OUTPUT IN 2023

In the global shipbuilding market review 2023, a research company reported that the global shipyard output increased by 10 per cent at 35m CGT. While previously leading countries like South Korea and Japan fell back, China was responsible for half of the world output. While South

Korea led in LNG vessel production, China was the top country to hold market share for bunkers, tankers and containerships. Clarksons Research also stated that alternative fuels accounted for close to 50 per cent of orderbook tonnage. While shipbuilding power continued to fall in 2023, investment saw a sharp increase. Clarksons showed the cause for the investment dilemma as IMO's goal for net zero emissions by the year 2050.

Editorial Comment: With 50% China's output dominance, the LNG specialisation by South Korea along with transition towards alternative fuel ships stamps transformative phase of the 2023 global shipbuilding market. Investment rise by Greek and European owners indicate realignment of global influence. Apart from fostering sustainability, these changes can ensure global trade solidification, movement of industries towards decarbonisation and upcoming future demands.

Source: [Here](#) 15th January 2024

MARINE ENVIRONMENT

COP28 RECAP: NATIONS FAILED TO REACH CONSENSUS ON ARTICLE 6 FOR REGULATING CARBON MARKETS

The Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change met in Dubai, wherein Article 6 of the Paris Agreement was discussed, only to reach no conclusive decisions. Article 6 permits the provision for carbon credits which would have provided leeway to countries working to reach their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC). Despite about 66 percent of countries' intention to avail the carbon credit, agreement could not be reached under the premise that the Article was devoid of regulations pertaining to environment and human rights. The Conference considered three matters, Article 6.2 which permits countries to enter into bilateral agreements, Article 6.4 that mandates a standard market system to examine carbon credits before exchanging and Article 6.8 which allows alternative cooperative ways of achieving climate goals without commercial transactions. The parties however, did not reach consensus on these issues.

Editorial Comment: The Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change did not achieve an agreement on article 6. This further illustrates the continuing difficulty in the pursuit of effective and equitable carbon markets. As much as there was considerable support, there were still fears such as environmental and human rights maltreatment that stalled development. Thus, it can be argued that the inability to reach a consensus shows a need for a compromise for climate action to work.

Source: [Here](#) 8th January 2024

THE EU FISHERIES CONTROL SYSTEM GETS A MAJOR REVAMP

In an attempt to prevent overfishing by both EU vessels and other vessels fishing in EU waters, EU fisheries control regulation was modernised to meet the technological and sustainability standards. The repercussions of any violation would result in EU sanctions, as per the new system that was under discussion for five years. It accommodates regulations to monitor IUU fishing and rapid digitisation in data management, and gives provision to set up vessel tracking systems (VMS) for vessels and a compulsory IT tool CATCH for imported fish products. The revamp gives ample space for stakeholders to adapt to new methods and allows for revisions in 2, 4 and 5 years to cope with the evolving sector.

Editorial Comment: The changes in EU fisheries control marks a leap in the EU's Road towards sustaining fisheries resources. This portrays the EU's drive to fight IUU fishing through the use of advanced tracking and reporting systems. There would be improvements in transparency, but the success of implementation will depend on enforcement of these initiatives. As a result, possible reforms could set the international fishing industry on a path to its sustainable future.

Source: [Here](#) 9th January 2024

METHANOL OVERTAKES LNG AS ALTERNATIVE FUEL OF CHOICE IN 2023

There was observed to be an increase in the use of methanol, four times more than the previous year. The classification society considered 298 projects and studied 1281 vessels whose fuel choice had changed. Container ships are the leading users of methanol, much more than the usage of bulk carriers and cars. The DNV statement details the decrease from the 2022 LNG tally and the increase thereafter owing to various deals. Hydrogen was also observed to be having less influence in the sector. The shift in fuels is viewed as a positive step towards a sustainable future, though more concrete steps is required in the long run.

Editorial Comment: The latest DNV statistics highlights the emerging transition of fuels in shipping into methanol. While this transition is optimistic, it highlights the need for wider fuel supply and better infrastructure to support it. Emphasising solely on transitioning fuels in shipping might delay the immediate action on reducing the emissions. The focus should also be more practical in order to ensure environmental goals by 2030.

Source: [Here](#) 10th January 2024

JANUARY 2024 EL NIÑO UPDATE: FOR THE BIRDS

The El Nino, which started in April-June, was expected to make its presence for a few more months and weaken its strength, despite which the climate change impacts will remain unchanged. Considering various factors, it was observed that the increased air and storms can be attributed to

El Nino's warming waters. Several factors confirm that the pattern that El Nino created is likely to continue. The article also predicted that La Nina will be developed.

Editorial Comment: El Niño is reaching its peak, with important global weather repercussions such as intense storms over the central Pacific and drier conditions in Indonesia. Interactions with the MJO illustrate how relatively short-term patterns can either encourage or disrupt these impacts. And as forecasts suggest La Niña could return by the end of 2024, with its ability to increase Atlantic hurricanes' frequency, close monitoring and preparation will be important.

Source: [Here](#) 11th January 2024

2023 WAS THE WORLD'S WARMEST YEAR ON RECORD, BY FAR

According to NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI), 2023 is marked as the warmest year yet due to which the Antarctic Sea ice coverage fell to a record low. Scientists warn about the temperatures rising further and they identify the solution as developing adequate government policies to bring emissions to zero. The land and ocean temperature in the particular year was 2.12 degrees more than the 20th century, on an average and predictions claim that 2024 will also rank amongst the five warmest years, with a probability of 1% that it will not be so. Parallel studies by NASA, the Copernicus Service and the UK Met Office also testify that 2023 was the warmest year. Further, in 2023, global ocean heat recorded the most value.

Editorial Comment: The year 2023 was the hottest on record, with also a record low in sea ice around Antarctica. These include global temperature rise and the increase in extreme weather events. To mitigate the potential disaster of climate change for our planet immediate attention is required and delaying it would cause greater damage to our resolutions.

Source: [Here](#) 12th January 2024

GEOPOLITICS

HISTORIC MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING: ETHIOPIA OFFICIALLY RECOGNISES SOMALILAND AND GAINS 50-YEAR MARITIME ACCESS

On January 1, 2024, Ethiopia officially recognised Somaliland's sovereignty and the latter granted commercial access to sea to a landlocked Ethiopia for 50 years. In the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), the Republic of Somaliland and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia enables Ethiopia to enter the maritime sector after the 1993 partition of Eritrea. Signed in Addis Ababa between the representatives from both the countries, the MoU stands as base for

the security and economic cooperation between the both. The agreement also adds another layer to the Horn of Africa geopolitics.

Editorial Comment: The MoU signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland is a bold move to address Ethiopia's critical need for sea access. The overdependence on Djibouti can be reduced by partnering on the Berbera Port which will provide alternative trade routes. One of the sections of the agreement also recognised Somaliland as an independent country.

Source: [Here](#) 2nd January 2024

DJIBOUTI CODE OF CONDUCT – CALL FOR ACTION ON ATTACKS AGAINST INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING IN THE RED SEA

The members of the Djibouti Code of Conduct and Jeddah Amendment of it, completely backed the IMO Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Arsenio Dominguez's comment on security issues with regard to the Red Sea crisis. The condemnation of strikes in the region by the Secretary-General and his urging to protect the security of the seafarers was based on the atrocities in the region. He had also pushed the Member States to use the DCoC forum to collectively engage in communication and practise safe seafaring. Following these developments, the DCoC had reemphasised its press release dated 19 December 2023 which encouraged the international stakeholders to practise its recommendations. In accordance with the regulations by DCoC/JA, the Security Council had given impetus to indulge in practises that would be helpful in countering piracy, reinventing naval capabilities, preparing ports to withstand instabilities and restricting weapon distribution to perpetrators. These methods are expected to find appropriate solutions to the persistent problems, if arises in the future.

Editorial Comment: The growing threats to shipping in the Red Sea were addressed by the IMO Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr Arsenio Dominguez. His statement was supported by the members of the Djibouti Code of Conduct and its Jeddah Amendment who assured communication among all countries and to ensure safe navigation of ships. Some of the measures to ensure safety of shipping in Red Sea as mentioned in the press release of DCoC are addressing the resurgence of piracy, increasing maritime presence, implementing self-protection measures in ports and denying to the perpetrators.

Source: [Here](#) 2nd January 2024

VANTAGE | HOW PHILIPPINES PLANS TO CHECKMATE CHINA IN SEA DISPUTE

Responding to the aggressive strategies of China in the South China Sea, including preventing Philippine vessels from free movement and attacking them with weapons, the Philippines has chosen a rather strategic method than a direct confrontation. As part of such an approach, Manila is developing infrastructure in territories claimed by China such as the Second Thomas Shoal, where it has built a shelter for its fishermen to rest and has deployed its military to ensure its

security. Replying to these actions, the Chinese forces have created obstructions in the Philippines vessels movement and food supply to Philippine soldiers. Despite the Chinese cautioning Manila that it wishes to resolve the issue through dialogue, the Philippines has sought support from its partners and has remained strong in its grounds.

Editorial Comment: Amid rising tension between China and Philippines, Philippines decided to take a firm yet strategic stand against China in South China Sea. The open confrontation saw China targeting ships from Manila, blocking their movement and firing cannons. In response to this Philippines is now building a permanent structure to provide shelter to its fishermen. The Philippines is standing firm against the intimidation of China and safeguarding its sovereignty.

Source: [Here](#) 5th January 2024

UN ARMS EMBARGO ON SOMALIA LIFTED

The UN lifted arms embargo on Somalia enables the country to start a fresh fight against al-Shahaab and other armed groups. The embargo was imposed 31 years ago and the representatives of the ATMIS (African Union Transition Mission on Somalia) and AU Special Representative for Somalia appreciated the lifting, stating that it will be a groundbreaking feat in the country's politics. It will also cater to Somalia's vision of modernising its armed forces and in the transition from ATMIS to Somalia Security Forces (SSF). The acquiring of new weapons is opined to be of help in fighting extremist groups in the country, thereby also ensuring border security.

Editorial Comment: After 31 years, the UN arms embargo on Somalia was removed, allowing the nation to combat Al Shabaab more effectively and strategically. The National Army of Somalia will be able to improve its military capabilities by using modern methods of warfare and be better prepared to defend its sovereignty and counter threats from extremist organisations.

Source: [Here](#) 10th January 2024

TRADE AND GEOPOLITICS BEHIND PLANS FOR RUSSIAN NAVAL BASE IN ABKHAZIA

Georgia has raised concerns over Russia's move of deploying its Black Sea Navy in the disputed territory of Abkhazia, wherein Georgia could be impacted further by the Russia-Ukraine war. Abkhazia's separatist front informed about the spreading of the Russian navy in Ochamchire to enhance the defence bandwidth of Russia and Abkhazia. Georgia, bordering Abkhazia has raised concerns over the Russian act, stating it as a security threat directed at Georgia's sovereignty. Russia intends to build infrastructure in and connectivity through the disputed region, which gives a significant edge to the country's defence and its presence in the region. Georgia, though faced by these threats, is observed by the critics as incapable of obstructing Russia's moves.

Editorial Comment: Russia's plan to build a naval base in Abkhazia brings to light significant concerns for Georgia's sovereignty and regional stability. This expansionist tendency threatens black sea trade routes and regional linkages by intensifying Russia's influence in South Caucasus.

Source: [Here](#) 15th January 2024