



# MAKING WAVES

A MARITIME NEWS BRIEF COVERING:

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

EDITED BY:

Ms Rashmi Yadav  
Research Associate  
[rsf1.nmf@gmail.com](mailto:rsf1.nmf@gmail.com)

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# MARITIME SECURITY

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## CYBER GROUP DISRUPTS COMMUNICATION NETWORKS OF IRANIAN OIL FLEET

A hacker group, Lab Dookhtegan, disrupted communication networks of 116 Iranian ships operated by NITC and IRISL. The cyberattack severed links to ports, satellites, and between vessels, severely affecting operations amid rising regional tensions. The attack coincided with U.S. military actions targeting Iran-backed Houthi forces in Yemen, amplifying its strategic and political implications.

**Editorial comment:** This incident highlights maritime cyber vulnerabilities and the increasing use of asymmetric tactics in regional conflicts, underscoring the need for robust cybersecurity protocols across critical maritime infrastructure.

**Source:** [Here](#) 19 March 2024

## PORTUGAL INTERCEPTS A SEMI-SUBMERSIBLE VESSEL LOADED WITH COCAINE

Portuguese authorities intercepted a semi-submersible vessel carrying 6.5 tons of cocaine in the Atlantic Ocean, 500 nautical miles south of the Azores. The joint operation, involving European and U.S. agencies, led to five arrests. The €200 million haul represents nearly a quarter of Portugal's 2024 cocaine seizures.

**Editorial comment:** The seizure highlights the increasing sophistication of maritime drug trafficking networks. Enhanced international maritime cooperation remains vital, as semi-submersible vessels pose a significant threat to European coastal security and challenge traditional enforcement capabilities.

**Source:** [Here](#) 25 March 2024

## ISRAELI STRIKE REPORTED AT PORT OF LATAKIA

Israeli airstrikes targeted the coastal city of Latakia, reportedly hitting an arms dump near the port area. Syrian state media confirmed the strikes, noting efforts to prevent casualties. Monitors indicated that munitions depots at the port were targeted, reflecting Israel's strategic interest in disrupting potential arms supplies. The operation highlights the ongoing military involvement in Syria, where Israel seeks to prevent weapons from falling into the hands of hostile groups. The port of Latakia is a critical logistical hub, and such strikes can significantly impact regional trade and security dynamics. The incident underscores the complexities of the conflict and the role of external actors in shaping its trajectory.

**Editorial comment:** This strike highlights Israel's ongoing military actions in Syria, aimed at preventing weapons from falling into the hands of new authorities following the ouster of Bashar

al-Assad. The targeting of Latakia, a strategic port city, underscores the geopolitical tensions in the region and the risks to maritime security. Such actions can disrupt trade and escalate regional conflicts, emphasizing the need for diplomatic efforts to stabilize the area.

Source: [Here](#) 26 March 2025

## CHINA DEPLOYS BOMBERS TO ASSERT SOVEREIGNTY IN SOUTH CHINA SEA

China deployed H-6 bombers near the Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea, in an attempt to assert sovereignty over the disputed atoll. The move coincided with a U.S. Defense Secretary visit to the Philippines, which also claims the shoal. The bombers are equipped with anti-ship and land attack missiles.

**Editorial comment:** China's deployment of bombers in the South China Sea escalates regional tensions and challenges U.S. influence. It underscores China's assertive stance in enforcing territorial claims, raising concerns about freedom of navigation and maritime security. This action necessitates a coordinated response from regional stakeholders to maintain stability and uphold international law.

Source: [Here](#) 26 March 2025

## MISSING CREW REPORTEDLY SAFE AFTER PIRACY ATTACK IN GHANAIAN WATERS

On March 27, 2025, a suspected pirate attack targeted the Ghanaian-registered fishing vessel *Mengxin 1* in Ghanaian waters. Seven armed individuals boarded the vessel, firing warning shots and forcing some crew members to hide in safe areas. After three hours, the attackers departed, leaving the Captain, Chief Mate, and Chief Engineer—all Chinese nationals—missing and feared kidnapped. However, on March 31, the Chinese foreign ministry confirmed that all missing crew members are safe. The vessel is docked at Tema Fishing Harbour, and investigations are ongoing. Regional cooperation under ECOWAS has been activated to address the piracy threat.

**Editorial comment:** The confirmation of the crew's safety is a relief but highlights persistent vulnerabilities in West African maritime security. The Gulf of Guinea remains a piracy hotspot despite regional initiatives like the Yaoundé Architecture. Strengthening naval capabilities and fostering international collaboration are critical to deterring such attacks. Ghana must also expedite measures like acquiring Offshore Patrol Vessels to protect its waters effectively.

Source: [Here](#) 31 March 2025

## MARITIME FORCES

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### FOURTH EU-INDIA MARITIME SECURITY DIALOGUE HELD IN NEW DELHI

India and the EU held their fourth Maritime Security Dialogue on March 21, discussing counter-piracy, smuggling, and protecting critical maritime infrastructure. Both sides emphasized

collaboration to ensure maritime safety in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. The dialogue reflects shared concerns over increasing maritime threats and a commitment to upholding international law.

**Editorial comment:** The India-EU dialogue highlights the importance of multilateral cooperation in addressing maritime security challenges. By focusing on emerging threats, this partnership strengthens global efforts to safeguard critical sea lanes and maintain a rules-based order.

**Source:** [Here](#) 21 March 2025

## INDIA, 10 AFRICAN NATIONS SET FOR FIRST NAVAL JOINT EXERCISE 'AIKEYME' IN APRIL

India launched its maiden Africa India Key Maritime Engagement (AIKEYME) exercise, co-hosted by Tanzania, from April 13 to 18 off Dar es Salaam. The initiative involves ten African nations, including Comoros, Kenya, and Seychelles, alongside India. *INS Sunayna* will conduct joint surveillance of exclusive economic zones and port visits in East Africa. AIKEYME aims to enhance interoperability through anti-piracy drills, search-and-rescue operations, and VBSS (Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure) exercises. This multilateral effort aligns with India's SAGAR vision to strengthen maritime security and counter China's growing influence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

**Editorial comment:** AIKEYME represents a strategic milestone in India's maritime diplomacy, fostering deeper ties with African nations while countering China's expanding footprint in the IOR. By promoting collaborative security measures and capacity-building initiatives, India positions itself as a reliable partner in regional stability and economic growth.

**Source:** [Here](#) 24 March 2024

## INDIAN, FRENCH NAVIES CONCLUDE 23<sup>rd</sup> VARUNA EXERCISE WITH FLEET REVIEW

India and France conducted the bilateral naval exercise Varuna 2025 from March 19 to 22, involving advanced warships and aircraft, including the French Carrier Strike Group and India's *INS Vikrant*. The drills focused on enhancing interoperability in anti-submarine warfare, air defense, and maritime domain awareness. The exercise reaffirmed both nations' commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific.

**Editorial comment:** Varuna 2025 underscores the strategic partnership between India and France in the Indo-Pacific. By fostering operational coordination, the exercise enhances regional stability and counters security challenges posed by assertive powers in the region.

**Source:** [Here](#) 26 March 2025

## **INDIAN ARMED FORCES FLEX JOINT WARFIGHTING MUSCLE IN HIGH-ALTITUDE EXERCISE PRACHAND PRAHAR**

India's Armed Forces conducted Exercise Prachand Prahar in Arunachal Pradesh, near the India-China border. The tri-service exercise involved advanced platforms like UAVs, helicopters, and space-based assets. It simulated future combat scenarios, emphasizing surveillance, AI-driven targeting, and precision strikes. The drill validated joint planning and operational readiness, showcasing India's technological prowess in modern warfare.

**Editorial comment:** Exercise Prachand Prahar highlights India's commitment to enhancing joint warfighting capabilities amidst regional tensions. By integrating multiple domains, the drill reflects India's preparedness for complex conflicts, sending a strong message about its ability to defend strategic frontiers through advanced operations.

**Source:** [Here](#) 27 March 2025

## **IOS SAGAR: INDIAN NAVY TRAINS 44 FOREIGN PERSONNEL IN HIGH-SEAS ADVENTURE**

Under the Indian Ocean Ship Sagar initiative, the Indian Navy is deploying INS Sunayna to the southwestern Indian Ocean Region (IOR) with a combined crew of Indian sailors and 44 personnel from nine Friendly Foreign Countries (FFCs), including Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, and Seychelles. The program includes joint surveillance of exclusive economic zones (EEZs), port calls at strategic locations like Dar es Salaam and Port Louis, and a two-week training capsule at naval schools in Kochi. This initiative aligns with India's SAGAR vision to strengthen maritime security and cooperation in the IOR.

**Editorial comment:** IOS Sagar exemplifies India's efforts in fostering regional maritime cooperation and capacity building. This initiative enhances mutual trust, operational readiness, and collective security while showcasing India's commitment to a stable and inclusive maritime order.

**Source:** [Here](#) 29 March 2025

## **SHIPPING, PORTS AND OCEAN ECONOMY**

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### **INDIAN PORT INDUSTRY TO GROW 4-7 PC OVER NEXT 5 YEARS, SUPPORTED BY RISING IMPORTS, DECLINING FREIGHT COSTS: REPORT**

A report by Motilal Oswal projects that India's port industry will grow at a rate of 4–7% over the next five years, driven by rising imports, declining freight costs, and the normalization of global supply chains. Cargo traffic is expected to grow at an annual rate of 3–6%, with utilization rates

stabilizing at approximately 55%. Key growth areas include petroleum, oil, lubricants (POL), coal, and containerised cargo.

**Editorial Comment:** This projected growth underscores India's strategic emphasis on enhancing its maritime infrastructure. However, to fully realize this potential, investments in port modernisation, hinterland connectivity, and streamlined logistics are imperative.

**Source:** [Here](#) 16 March 2025

## JAPAN, KOREA WOULD STRUGGLE TO FILL VOID OF CHINA SHIPBUILDING, NYK LINE EXEC SAYS

NYK Line CEO Takaya Soga warned that Japan and South Korea lack the capacity to replace China in global shipbuilding, especially amid US efforts to reduce dependence on Chinese-built ships. Japanese shipyards are fully booked until 2028, while South Korean and American yards face financial and infrastructural constraints. China currently dominates 50% of global shipbuilding.

**Editorial Comment:** The US aims to decouple from China in shipbuilding, but without long-term investment and capacity expansion in allied nations, such diversification efforts may disrupt shipping timelines and inflate global maritime costs.

**Source:** [Here](#) 24 March 2025

## KERALA RELEASES 339.28CR FOR VIZHINJAM PORT RAIL CONNECTIVITY

The Kerala government has sanctioned ₹339.28 crore as the first instalment for the ₹1,482 crore underground railway project linking Balaramapuram station to Vizhinjam International Seaport. Funded under the 2024–25 capital investment scheme, the project includes a container yard and connectivity works to be executed by Konkan Railway Corporation Limited. Initial construction activities are set to begin shortly.

**Editorial Comment:** The funding marks a decisive step in enhancing Vizhinjam's multimodal logistics infrastructure. Seamless rail-port integration will not only strengthen Kerala's maritime trade footprint but also improve India's competitiveness in the transshipment sector. Local stakeholder engagement will be vital for its success.

**Source:** [Here](#) 24 March 2025

## INDIA AND SINGAPORE SIGN LOI FOR DEVELOPING GREEN AND DIGITAL SHIPPING CORRIDOR

India and Singapore signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) for a Green and Digital Shipping Corridor (GDSC), focusing on digitalization and decarbonization. This initiative aims to enhance collaboration and accelerate the adoption of zero-emission technologies and digital solutions.

**Editorial Comment:** The GDSC represents a significant step towards sustainable maritime practices. By leveraging digital solutions and green technologies, India and Singapore can set a global standard for environmentally friendly shipping corridors.

Source: [Here](#) 26 March 2025

## GOA MARITIME BOARD ANNOUNCED: BOOST FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

The Goa government has established the Goa Maritime Board to oversee port-led development and formulate a State Maritime Waterways Master Plan. The initiative includes ₹49.41 crore for port infrastructure and ₹10 crore for the Sagarmala project, aiming to develop jetties and enhance maritime safety. However, local communities have raised environmental concerns.

**Editorial Comment:** The Goa Maritime Board's establishment reflects the state's push to enhance maritime infrastructure and boost economic growth. Balancing economic benefits with ecological conservation will be crucial to ensure sustainable development that addresses local concerns.

Source: [Here](#) 28 March 2025

# MARINE ENVIRONMENT

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## PROTECT OUR OCEAN 'TO SOLVE CHALLENGES OF CENTURY'

A study published in *Nature* underscores the critical role of ocean conservation in addressing biodiversity loss, climate change, and food security. Researchers developed a global map identifying priority areas where marine protections could yield the greatest benefits. Currently, only 7% of the ocean is protected, but a growing international movement aims to safeguard at least 30% by 2030.

**Editorial Comment:** Protecting 30% of the ocean by 2030 is an ambitious yet achievable goal that could deliver significant environmental and societal benefits. Success hinges on global cooperation, effective policy implementation, and sustained commitment to marine conservation efforts.

Source: [Here](#) 17 March 2025

## RED CORAL COLONIES SURVIVE A DECADE AFTER BEING TRANSPLANTED IN THE MEDES ISLANDS

A *Science Advances* study reveals that red coral colonies transplanted in Spain's Medes Islands Marine Reserve have thrived a decade later, mirroring natural coral communities. Originally seized from illegal fishing, the corals demonstrate the long-term success of active marine restoration efforts led by the University of Barcelona and ICM-CSIC.

**Editorial Comment:** This success validates coral transplantation as a viable conservation tool. However, sustained impact depends on continued protection, climate resilience, and scaling similar initiatives across vulnerable marine habitats.

Source: [Here](#) 18 March 2025

## HOW DRAMATIC DAILY SWINGS IN OXYGEN SHAPED EARLY ANIMAL LIFE

A study published in *Nature Communications* reveals that early animals faced daily oxygen fluctuations in shallow marine environments during the Cambrian period. These ‘feast-and-famine’ cycles, driven by photosynthesis during the day and respiration at night, created physiological challenges that spurred evolutionary adaptations, contributing to the rapid diversification of animal life.

**Editorial Comment:** This research highlights how environmental stressors can drive evolutionary innovation. Understanding these mechanisms enriches our comprehension of early animal evolution and underscores the importance of environmental factors in shaping biodiversity. Is there a link to future biodiversity, with effects on Climate Change?

Source: [Here](#) 24 March 2025

## STATE OF GLOBAL CLIMATE 2024: CO<sub>2</sub>, SEA LEVELS & OCEAN HEAT HIT RECORD HIGHS

The State of the Global Climate 2024 report by the World Meteorological Organization highlights alarming environmental changes. Carbon Dioxide levels reached their highest in 800,000 years, global sea levels continued to rise rapidly, and ocean heat content surged to new records for the ninth consecutive year, indicating accelerating climate-driven disruptions to marine and coastal systems.

**Editorial Comment:** The WMO's findings underscore a planetary emergency, particularly for oceanic and coastal resilience. For a country like India, where over 170 million people reside in coastal zones, these trends spell grave socio-economic and ecological risks. The report should act as a clarion call for intensifying climate adaptation strategies, especially in vulnerable coastal and marine ecosystems, while reinforcing international cooperation on emission reductions.

Source: [Here](#) 26 March 2025

## LONG-TERM IMPACT AND BIOLOGICAL RECOVERY IN A DEEP-SEA MINING TRACK

A study published in *Nature* reveals that deep-sea mining activities can have detrimental effects on marine biodiversity lasting for decades. Research in the Clarion–Clipperton Zone showed persistent ecological disturbances 45 years after a mining test, raising concerns about the long-term impacts of extracting rare-earth elements from the seabed.

**Editorial Comment:** As nations, including India, explore deep-sea mining to meet the demand for rare-earth elements, this study serves as a cautionary tale. Balancing resource extraction with marine conservation is imperative to prevent irreversible damage to ocean ecosystems.

Source: [Here](#) 26 March 2025

# GEOPOLITICS

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## INDIA, AUSTRALIA REVIEW DEFENCE TIES, FOCUS ON MARITIME AWARENESS

India and Australia convened the ninth edition of their Defence Policy Talks in New Delhi, focusing on enhancing maritime domain awareness, reciprocal information sharing, and collaboration in defense industry and science and technology. The discussions also reviewed outcomes from previous high-level engagements and set priorities for the upcoming 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue in Australia.

**Editorial Comment:** This meeting underscores the deepening strategic partnership between India and Australia, particularly in the maritime domain. By bolstering interoperability and joint initiatives, both nations aim to contribute to a stable and secure Indo-Pacific region amidst evolving geopolitical challenges.

**Source:** [Here](#) 18 March 2025

## WORLD MARITIME WEEK

The World Maritime Week 2025, held from March 19 to 21 in Bilbao, Spain, convened maritime professionals globally to address sectoral challenges and opportunities. The event featured four international congresses: SINAVAL (Naval sector), EUROFISHING (Fishing sector), FUTUREPORT (Port sector), and MARINE ENERGY WEEK (Marine renewable energies), fostering discussions on sustainability and technological advancements in maritime industries.

**Editorial Comment:** World Maritime Week 2025 served as a pivotal platform for international collaboration, emphasizing the maritime sector's role in sustainable development and innovation. The diverse focus areas highlighted the industry's commitment to addressing global challenges through integrated solutions and cross-sector partnerships.

**Source:** [Here](#) 21 March 2025

## THE MAURITIUS-INDIA PARTNERSHIP AND NEW DELHI'S EXPANDING FOOTPRINT IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Mauritius as the chief guest for the country's National Day celebrations, focusing on enhancing strategic ties between the two nations. The visit reaffirmed India's support for Mauritius' sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, including the Diego Garcia base, a key point in maritime security.

**Editorial Comment:** Prime Minister Modi's visit highlights India's growing focus on securing maritime influence in the Indian Ocean, strengthening alliances with strategic partners like Mauritius to counter external threats and safeguard regional stability.

**Source:** [Here](#) 30 March 2025

## INDIA-TAIWAN CONVERGENCE: TOWARDS A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

India and Taiwan are exploring avenues for deeper collaboration, recognizing mutual benefits in economic, technological, and cultural domains. This partnership offers India opportunities for skill development and cross-cultural understanding without posing security risks. Taiwan can leverage India's multilingual talent pool to support its goal of achieving bilingualism by 2030.

**Editorial Comment:** The growing convergence between India and Taiwan reflects a strategic alignment that enhances economic growth and technological advancement. This partnership exemplifies how shared interests can foster cooperation without compromising security concerns.

**Source:** [Here](#) 30 March 2025