



## Editorial

It is a matter of great satisfaction for the Editorial Team that the *Maritime Affairs* (MA) readership continues to grow as the journal evolves. Wide perspectives, diligent research, perceptive insights and incisive analyses ought to form the bedrock of any professional journal. The MA aspires not only to measure up on this scale, but also to consolidate its brand through these attributes.

The latter half of the year has been busy and therefore, a highly productive period for the Foundation. We had the usual series of Round Tables, mutually beneficial interactions with other think tanks, lectures by distinguished speakers and participation in national and international seminars. On the larger canvas, the world had its share of excitement during the period which saw re-assessments and re-alignments in the flexi-nodal world order as the US first pivoted and then rebalanced in the Indo-Pacific region; reassessed Afghanistan, Syria and Iran; the EU sought to create a regional security role for itself in the IOR – even as it bailed out its constituents' economies and everybody else tried to reshape and finetune national positions to deal with the challenges of China as stirred up in the South China Sea.

The current winter edition of the MA covers this tumultuous period with articles which span the domains of defence, economics and technology – with themes ranging from military accretion to new inductions to emerging trends in environment management. The attempt has been to present to the reader a sample of the eclectic mosaic around us.

In his article “Defence of Japan: Decision Makers and Trends”, Jithin George postulates that security and defence issues continue to evoke considerable debate and controversies in Japan. He is of the opinion that while many studies have examined

Japan's economic, trade, and security policies; Japan's defence decision making process has not been adequately analyzed.

Amit Singh seeks to tie up some of the many loose threads of Indo-Myanmar relationships in his paper titled "Emerging Trends in India-Myanmar Relations". Against the backdrop of India's broader "Look East" framework, he critically evaluates New Delhi's Myanmar policy and the associated socio-economic and politico-cultural spin-offs. He also discusses Myanmar's democratisation process, its impact on the region and the role of the Indian Diaspora in influencing the bilateral relations of India and Myanmar.

"Weather caprice" forms the theme of Ajay Bohtan's article "Environment Manipulation: Force Multiplier in a Maritime Operation". The author looks at ways in which the weather can be utilised by military planners to achieve their aim. He dwells upon the various factors influencing weather conditions and the manner in which they can affect maritime operational planning.

The challenges of cyber security in today's world, which is increasingly dependent upon computers, are examined by Sanjay Poduval in his article titled "Contours of Security in Cyberspace". Highlighting the feature of modern warfare – wherein the enemy leaves no signs of egress and ingress, his essay acts as a timely caution against web based threats.

Kamlesh Agnihotri, in his article "The Chinese Navy's Submarine Arm: Lynchpin of 'Active Defence'", critically evaluates the PLA(N)'s underwater assets. He brings out the imperative of the Chinese People's Liberation Army establishing the strategic idea of offensive-defense operations, in order to win local wars in the future. The author surmises that the PLA (Navy) would vigorously develop long-range strike weapons in the future – to maximize effectiveness of combined offense-defence operations.

Bilateral maritime engagement forms the subject of analysis in Sudesh Rani's paper entitled "Indo-US Maritime Co-operation: Challenges and Prospects". Her study spans the whole range of outstanding issues between the two sides, including technology transfers, defence trade, strategic agreements, and operational interactions.

This edition also includes two book reviews. The first is by Arun Prakash who has reviewed the book "The Rise of the Indian Navy" by Dr Harsh Pant. The second review is by Rikeesh Sharma of the book "India and New Zealand in a Rising Asia:

Issues and Perspectives” edited by Professor Man Mohini Kaul and Dr Vibhanshu Shekhar.

Overall, the issue has tried to put together a basket of articles on some of the contemporary issues which I hope will add value to the ongoing debate. I am also hopeful that these will invite comments from the fellow strategic community members that would enrich their substance. And, as always, the Editorial Team would welcome suggestions and comments to further improve the quality of the journal.

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