

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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MARITIME SECURITY

TRUMP SHELVED 'PROJECT FREEDOM' AFTER SAUDIS REFUSED USE OF BASES AND AIRSPACE

On 4 May 2026, US President Donald Trump announced 'Operation Project Freedom' — a US Navy mission to escort merchant ships safely out of the Persian Gulf through the Strait of Hormuz. Trump declared the operation had begun 'the next morning,' 4 May. Iran's military immediately warned the US to 'keep out of Hormuz', and the UAE and Oman reported intercepting Iranian ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and drones the same day. Iranian state media claimed the IRGC Navy fired two missiles, hitting an American naval frigate in the Strait. By 6 May, Trump abruptly paused Project Freedom citing 'great progress' toward a 'complete and final agreement' with Iran. The pause followed Saudi Arabia's withdrawal of US military access to Prince Sultan Air Base and Saudi airspace — a protest by Riyadh against Trump's decision to launch the operation without consultation. The episode exposed deep fissures even within the US-allied coalition.

Source: [Here](#), May 07, 2026

UK TO CONTRIBUTE DRONES, JETS AND WARSHIP TO MULTINATIONAL MISSION TO SECURE THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ

In May 2026, the United Kingdom announced the deployment of drones, fighter aircraft, and a Royal Navy warship to join an international defensive mission protecting commercial shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. British officials described the deployment as aimed at maintaining freedom of navigation amid escalating regional instability. The announcement followed a 50-nation conference hosted by the UK in late April to develop a coordinated plan for reopening the strait. The UK deployment mirrors its earlier role in Operation Poseidon Archer in the Red Sea (January 2024), and signals growing European willingness to commit military assets to the crisis despite earlier reluctance. A 19 March joint statement condemning Iran's de facto closure of the strait, initially signed by seven nations including Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, and the UK, had by May been endorsed by 36 countries.

Source: [Here](#), May 12, 2026

IRAN NOW DEFINES STRAIT OF HORMUZ AS FAR LARGER ZONE, IRGC OFFICER SAYS

In a dramatic escalation in May 2026, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy formally announced it had redefined the Strait of Hormuz as a 'vast operational area.' According to IRGC official Mohammad Akbarzadeh, the strait is no longer viewed as the narrow 39-km maritime corridor between the islands of Hormuz and Hengam, but as a broader strategic zone extending from the Iranian port city of Jask to Siri Island — a dramatically wider definition that encompasses most of the entrance to the Persian Gulf. The move effectively claims Iranian sovereign authority over a significantly larger section of international waters, raising fundamental questions under UNCLOS, Hague Convention VIII, and customary international law. Legal experts at Just Security described it as a direct violation of the UNCLOS transit passage regime, noting that even Iran's non-ratification of UNCLOS does not exempt it from the treaty's reflection of customary law.

Source: [Here](#), May 13, 2026

RISK4SEA PSI MAY 2026: CONTAINER SEGMENT REMAINS IN “CRITICAL RISK ZONE”

RISK4SEA's May 2026 Port State Control Stress Index reveals a marked divergence across fleet segments. Container vessels remain in the "Critical Risk Zone" at PSI-9, with detentions up 112% above baseline, driven by fire safety and SMS deficiencies concentrated in Far East ports. Bulkers at PSI-8 face elevated structural and fire-safety enforcement pressure, particularly in Chinese ports. Tankers and General Cargo vessels show improvement at PSI-2, though aging tonnage remains vulnerable. The index reinforces that PSC enforcement operates as a dynamic climate system, and ship managers across all segments are urged to sustain rigorous pre-arrival preparedness and deficiency monitoring protocols.

Source: [Here](#), May 14, 2026

MARITIME FORCES

INDIA CONDUCTS FIRST SALVO LAUNCH OF NEW NASM-SR MISSILE

DRDO and the Indian Navy successfully conducted the maiden salvo launch of the Naval Anti-Ship Missile-Short Range on 29 April, firing two missiles in quick succession from a Sea King Mk.42B helicopter over the Bay of Bengal. The 375 kg, 55 km-range missile demonstrated waterline hit capability and features a terminal IIR seeker and 100 kg multi-EFP warhead. Produced by Adani Defence & Aerospace, NASM-SR will complement BrahMos and forthcoming medium-range systems across naval helicopters, C-295 maritime patrol aircraft, and MQ-9B drones. Indian Air Force representation at the trial suggests potential cross-service integration, significantly broadening the missile's operational and strategic utility.

Source: [Here](#), May 01, 2026

INDIA WILL SHAPE THE BATTLEFIELD IF CHALLENGED AGAIN: ARMED FORCES ON OPERATION SINDOOR

On the first anniversary of Operation Sindoor, senior Indian military officials reaffirmed that the May 2025 tri-service operation — launched in retaliation for the Pahalgam terror attack — has fundamentally altered the regional security calculus, with no terror sanctuary inside Pakistan deemed safe. The Indian Air Force destroyed nine terrorist camps and struck eleven Pakistani airfields, neutralising thirteen aircraft. Vice-Admiral Pramod highlighted the naval contribution, noting that indigenous platforms including INS Vikrant and Kolkata-class destroyers performed creditably, whilst India's precision strike capability exposed the limitations of Pakistan's nuclear deterrence narrative. Operation Sindoor's enduring strategic legacy lies in demonstrating India's resolve and capacity to conduct calibrated, multi-domain responses to cross-border terrorism.

Source: [Here](#), May 07, 2026

VIETNAM SLATED TO ORDER BRAHMOS AND NAVAL VESSELS FROM INDIA

Vietnam is set to procure three to four Offshore Patrol Vessels, 14 high-speed patrol boats, and potentially BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles from India under a \$500 million line of credit. Projects worth \$300 million have been identified, with the remaining \$200 million earmarked for ship upgrades, submarine batteries, and MRO support for Vietnam's Su-30 fighters and Kilo-class submarines. Vietnam would become India's first major OPV export customer, with technology transfer likely for a portion of

the build. The prospective BrahMos deal, combined with expanding naval cooperation, underscores the deepening strategic maritime partnership between India and Vietnam as both nations navigate an increasingly contested Indo-Pacific environment.

Source: [Here](#), May 09, 2026

IOS SAGAR DEPARTS CHATTOGRAM AFTER SUCCESSFUL PORT CALL IN BANGLADESH

Indian Navy's INS Sunayna, deployed under the Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR initiative, departed Chattogram, Bangladesh, on 10 May 2026 after a successful port call marked by professional engagements and maritime cooperation exercises. The visit — a high-profile expression of India's MAHASAGAR framework — included professional exchanges between the multinational crew and Bangladeshi naval officials, maritime domain awareness discussions, and community outreach activities. The IOS SAGAR initiative, which places naval personnel from 16 nations aboard a single Indian vessel, has now completed port calls across multiple IOR nations, building operational familiarity and diplomatic goodwill simultaneously. The Chattogram visit gains added significance given India-Bangladesh maritime boundary management interests in the Bay of Bengal, and reinforces India's role as the IOR's preferred security partner.

Source: [Here](#), May 12, 2026

INDIA AND OMAN DEEPEN MARITIME COOPERATION THROUGH HIGH-LEVEL BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS

India's Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways convened a hybrid meeting with an Omani delegation to advance bilateral cooperation across port development, multimodal logistics, warehousing, and supply chain integration. Discussions encompassed shipping connectivity, digital logistics solutions, private sector participation in logistics parks, and green maritime initiatives. Both sides acknowledged the longstanding India-Oman maritime relationship and its growing strategic importance within the Indian Ocean Region. The engagement reflects India's broader effort to deepen maritime economic partnerships with Gulf nations, reinforcing resilient trade corridors and investment linkages at a moment when regional supply chain vulnerabilities have been brought into sharp strategic relief.

Source: [Here](#), May 12, 2026

SHIPPING, PORTS AND OCEAN ECONOMY

IRAN FORMALISES HORMUZ SHIP APPROVALS AND TRANSIT TOLLS

Iran's Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman Administration (PGSA) distributed to the shipping industry a formal document — comprising over 40 questions — that vessels must complete before being permitted to transit the Strait of Hormuz. The questionnaire demands vessel name, IMO number, any previous names, country of origin and destination, nationalities of registered owners, operators, and crew, and detailed cargo information. The form must be submitted by email to the Iranian authorities before transit. Shipping lawyers and P&I clubs described the protocol as Iran formalising what had previously been an ad hoc and opaque 'toll booth' system, making it part of an emerging standard operating procedure. Lloyd's List's Richard Meade noted that the new requirements 'look similar to questions already being asked' but represent Iran's attempt to 'normalise its authority over transits' — a shift with profound implications for international maritime law.

Source: [Here](#), May 08, 2026

SCI PROFIT MORE THAN DOUBLES TO ₹405 CRORE IN Q4 FY26

The Shipping Corporation of India reported a record standalone net profit of ₹405 crore for Q4 FY26, more than doubling the ₹164 crore recorded in the corresponding quarter of FY25. Total income for the quarter reached ₹1,449 crore, whilst full-year FY26 net profit stood at ₹1,128 crore. The improved performance was driven by stronger earnings across tanker, liner, and bulk carrier segments, enhanced fleet utilisation, and strategic cost optimisation. SCI's record results, achieved amid India's broader maritime expansion drive, signal growing commercial momentum and reinforce the strategic case for sustained investment in indigenous shipping capacity and fleet modernisation.

Source: [Here](#), May 09, 2026

INDIA LAUNCHES \$1.5 BILLION BMIP TO SHIELD SHIPPING AND TRADE

India has launched the Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool, a \$1.5 billion facility backed by a government guarantee of \$1.4 billion, designed to protect Indian vessels operating on international and high-risk routes. Managed by GIC Re, the pool brings together Indian insurers to collectively underwrite maritime risks, handling claims up to \$100 million independently, with government support for larger liabilities. The initiative directly addresses rising insurance costs driven by West Asia tensions and sanctions-related coverage gaps. BMIP represents a decisive step towards maritime financial sovereignty, ensuring continuity of Indian shipping operations across volatile trade corridors whilst reducing dependence on international insurance markets.

Source: [Here](#), May 12, 2026

PHARMACEUTICAL EXPORTERS TO BENEFIT FROM MAERSK'S FIRST DEDICATED REEFER RAIL SERVICE FROM HYDERABAD TO MUMBAI

Maersk and CONCOR have launched a dedicated weekly refrigerated rail corridor connecting Hyderabad's pharmaceutical manufacturing cluster to Nhava Sheva port, providing temperature-controlled, end-to-end cold chain logistics under a single-window arrangement. The service, operating 40-foot reefer containers on a fixed schedule, targets export lanes across North America, Latin America, and Europe. The shift from road to rail is projected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 3,000 tonnes annually. The corridor addresses a critical logistics gap for India's pharmaceutical export sector and establishes a scalable model for integrating sustainable multimodal connectivity with port-led trade infrastructure, strengthening India's overall export competitiveness.

Source: [Here](#), May 12, 2026

LANDMARK MOU SIGNED FOR INDIA'S FIRST MEGA GREENFIELD SHIPYARD AT THOOTHUKUDI

A landmark tripartite MoU has been signed between HD Korea Shipbuilding & Offshore Engineering, NSHIP-TN, and *Sagarmala* Finance Corporation for India's first Mega Greenfield Shipyard at *Thoothukudi*, Tamil Nadu, with an envisaged annual capacity of 2.5 million GT. Formalised under the India-South Korea maritime cooperation framework VOYAGES during the Korean President's state visit, the project is expected to generate 15,000 direct jobs and catalyse a broader maritime industrial ecosystem encompassing ancillary manufacturing and green shipbuilding technologies. Aligned with Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047, the *Thoothukudi* facility represents a transformative milestone in India's credible pursuit of top-five global shipbuilding nation status.

Source: [Here](#), May 14, 2026

MARINE ENVIRONMENT

ARCTIC DEEP-SEA EXPEDITION SET TO LIVESTREAM UNEXPLORED OCEAN ECOSYSTEMS

Greenpeace has launched the Deep Arctic Expedition, a month-long scientific mission departing Ireland on 8 May, to explore uncharted seamounts and hydrothermal vent fields at depths of up to 3,000 metres in Arctic waters previously opened for deep-sea mining by the Norwegian government before being halted in 2024. Scientists will document biodiversity hotspots rich in cobalt, nickel, copper, and rare-earth elements — resources increasingly targeted by the nascent deep-sea mining industry. Findings will be presented to policymakers in Bergen on 8 June. The expedition represents a timely scientific intervention, grounding future regulatory decisions on deep-sea resource exploitation in empirical evidence rather than commercial interest alone.

Source: [Here](#), May 06, 2026

SCIENTISTS SAY THIS ALGAE COULD REMOVE MICROPLASTICS FROM DRINKING WATER

Researchers at the University of Missouri have developed a genetically engineered strain of algae capable of capturing microplastics from contaminated water. By introducing limonene — a natural hydrophobic oil — into the algae, microplastics adhere to the algae's surface, forming clumps that sink and can be collected. The modified algae simultaneously absorb excess nutrients from wastewater. Researchers aim to further recycle collected plastics into bioplastic materials, addressing pollution, wastewater treatment, and circular economy objectives simultaneously. Though currently at early stages, the technology holds considerable promise for integration into existing wastewater treatment infrastructure, offering a scalable biological solution to one of the most pervasive marine pollution challenges of our time.

Source: [Here](#), May 12, 2026

EMPEROR PENGUINS CAUGHT IN ANTARCTIC GEOPOLITICAL CROSSFIRE

The 48th Antarctic Summit in Hiroshima convened 29 nations amid heightened geopolitical tensions, following a Russian seismic survey revealing an estimated 511 billion barrels of oil in the Weddell Sea. Emperor penguins, recently reclassified as Endangered, face diplomatic deadlock over a proposed Specially Protected Species designation requiring unanimous consent — with China and Russia historically blocking such measures, ostensibly to avoid precedents restricting resource exploitation. Simultaneously, Antarctic tourism surpassed 120,000 visitors last year, placing additional ecological pressure on nesting habitats. The summit's proceedings underscore the deepening tension between Antarctica's treaty mandate as a natural reserve devoted to peace and science, and the accelerating competition for its vast untapped resources.

Source: [Here](#), May 13, 2026

EXPERTS CALL FOR INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK TO CURB ILLEGAL MARINE WILDLIFE TRADE

A national capacity-building workshop jointly organised by CMFRI, the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, and WWF-India in Kochi has called for an integrated conservation framework combining scientific research, stronger enforcement, and community engagement to combat illegal marine wildlife trade. The workshop, attended by 27 enforcement officials from west coast states and Lakshadweep, noted that India recorded 17 shark derivative seizure incidents between 2010 and 2022, with Tamil Nadu accounting for 65 per cent of cases. Experts stressed that species identification, inter-agency coordination, and meaningful dialogue with fishing communities are essential to effective enforcement, underscoring that marine conservation must be approached as both an ecological and a livelihood concern.

Source: [Here](#), May 13, 2026

AUTONOMOUS UNDERWATER ROBOT DISCOVERS HIDDEN CORAL REEF HOTSPOTS

Researchers at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution have developed CUREE, an autonomous underwater robot capable of mapping coral reef biodiversity hotspots at centimetre-scale precision by integrating visual and acoustic sensing in real time. Field trials in the US Virgin Islands demonstrated fish densities nearly 25 times higher near identified hotspots, with acoustic data confirming elevated biological activity across wider areas. Unlike traditional diver surveys, CUREE operates autonomously for extended periods across larger areas. As coral reefs, supporting roughly a quarter of all marine species despite occupying less than 0.01% of the ocean, face mounting climate stress, autonomous systems such as CUREE offer a transformative capability for targeted, evidence-based marine conservation and ecosystem monitoring.

Source: [Here](#), May 14, 2026

GEOPOLITICS

‘TURBULENT AND DANGEROUS’: HOW SHIPPING IS THE NEW GLOBAL BATTLEGROUND

The escalating militarisation of maritime chokepoints — from the Strait of Hormuz and Panama Canal to the South China Sea and Red Sea — signals a dangerous erosion of the rules-based maritime order that has underpinned over \$25 trillion in annual global trade. Tit-for-tat vessel seizures, naval blockades, politically motivated port detentions, and Indonesia's briefly floated Malacca toll proposal reflect a broader shift from universally applied navigational norms towards power-driven, transactional access regimes. Rising insurance premiums, rerouting costs, and operational uncertainty compound the economic impact. The central risk, experts warn, lies in the precedent being set, as multiple states simultaneously test maritime boundaries through selective enforcement and coercive permissioning of international straits.

Source: [Here](#), 01 May 2026

RUSSIA AND UKRAINE CONFIRM THREE-DAY CEASEFIRE FROM 9 MAY

United States President Donald Trump announced a three-day ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine from 9 to 11 May 2026, encompassing a suspension of all kinetic activity and a mutual exchange of 1,000 prisoners of war from each side. Both Ukrainian President Zelenskyy and the Kremlin confirmed the

arrangement. The ceasefire coincided with Russia's annual Victory Day celebrations on 9 May, for which Moscow had previously declared a unilateral two-day pause. Whilst Trump expressed hope the truce marked "the beginning of the end" of the conflict, both sides have previously accused each other of violating earlier ceasefires, tempering expectations for any durable or immediate breakthrough towards a negotiated settlement.

Source: [Here](#), 09 May 2026

WEST ASIA WAR: PEACE CANNOT BE PIECEMEAL, SAYS JAISHANKAR AT BRICS MEET

The West Asia conflict and Strait of Hormuz blockade dominated the opening day of the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi, with heated exchanges between Iranian and UAE representatives underscoring deep divisions within the expanded grouping. Iran's Foreign Minister urged BRICS to condemn US-Israeli military action, whilst India's External Affairs Minister Jaishankar called for solidarity, respect for international law, and practical multilateral approaches to navigating geopolitical disruptions. Consensus remained elusive given the UAE's grievances over Iranian strikes on its infrastructure. India's carefully calibrated position — balancing relations with both Tehran and Abu Dhabi whilst flagging maritime stability concerns — reflects the acute diplomatic complexity confronting New Delhi in the current regional crisis.

Source: [Here](#), 14 May 2026

JAISHANKAR HOLDS TALKS WITH RUSSIA'S LAVROV; TRADE, GEOPOLITICS TOP AGENDA

On the sidelines of the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi, External Affairs Minister Jaishankar held productive bilateral talks with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov, covering energy, trade, connectivity, and science and technology cooperation under the India-Russia Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership. Discussions also encompassed the West Asia crisis and the Ukraine conflict. Jaishankar underscored India's shared interest with Russia in strengthening multipolarity and greater de-risking amid volatile global conditions. As BRICS chair, India is hosting the foreign ministerial conclave ahead of the September leaders' summit, with the expanded grouping now representing approximately 40 per cent of global GDP and 26 per cent of global trade, underscoring its growing strategic and economic significance.

Source: [Here](#), 13 May 2026

THE TRUMP-XI BEIJING SUMMIT: TACTICAL MANEUVERS IN AN ENDURING STRATEGIC RIVALRY

President Trump's May 2026 state visit to Beijing unfolds against the backdrop of the Strait of Hormuz conflict, surging energy prices, and US domestic political pressures ahead of the November midterms. The summit's formal agenda encompasses trade commitments, Chinese diplomatic engagement on the Iran-Hormuz crisis, and stability in Taiwan. Intelligence assessments and think tank analyses suggest that limited tactical understandings, rather than a fundamental realignment, are the likely outcome, given deep-seated structural mistrust. China seeks tariff predictability and economic breathing room, whilst Washington pursues visible economic deliverables. The summit ultimately represents managed competition rather than reconciliation, with the Hormuz crisis serving as both an immediate pressure point and a broader test of US-China competitive coexistence.

Source: [Here](#), 14 May 2026