

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 SAYS IRAN NEEDS TO MOVE QUICKLY ON NUCLEAR PROPOSAL

President Trump, departing the UAE, declared that Iran had received a US nuclear proposal and must act swiftly, warning of unspecified consequences should Tehran delay. Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi denied receiving any proposal, reaffirming Iran's position that uranium enrichment for peaceful purposes remained non-negotiable and that any agreement must include full sanctions relief. An Iranian source close to the negotiating team indicated that Oman had received the proposal and would transmit it to Tehran. The exchange reflects the fragile and contested nature of back-channel diplomacy, with Oman's continued role as intermediary offering a measured basis for cautious optimism that dialogue, however strained, remains alive.

Source: [Here](#), May 16, 2026

INDIA CONDEMNS ATTACKS ON SHIPS IN STRAIT OF HORMUZ AT UN

India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Parvathaneni Harish, raised formal concerns at a special UNECOSOC meeting over attacks on commercial vessels in the Strait of Hormuz, declaring the targeting of civilian shipping and crews "unacceptable" and calling for full respect of international law. The statement followed an attack on an India-flagged vessel off Oman on 13 May, in which all 14 crew members were rescued by Omani authorities. At least two other India-flagged vessels have reportedly been attacked since the conflict's escalation. India's increasingly assertive multilateral posture on maritime security reflects the direct and tangible threat the Hormuz crisis now poses to Indian shipping, energy supply chains, and seafarer safety.

Source: [Here](#), May 17, 2026

CHINA COAST GUARD SHIP WITHDRAWS AFTER TENSE STANDOFF WITH TAIWAN NEAR PRATAS ISLANDS

A Chinese coast guard vessel withdrew from waters near Taiwan-controlled Pratas Islands on Sunday following a two-day maritime standoff, during which Taiwanese authorities dispatched a vessel and issued sovereignty warnings via radio. Beijing asserted jurisdiction over the remote atoll whilst Taipei rejected the claim. The incident follows recent Chinese research vessel incursions and a drone overflight in January, reflecting a pattern of escalating grey-zone pressure extending beyond the Taiwan Strait into the broader South China Sea. The Pratas Islands' strategic sensitivity — lightly defended and over 400 km from Taiwan's main island — makes them an increasingly significant flashpoint in the intensifying cross-strait maritime competition.

Source: [Here](#), May 25, 2026

INDONESIA PROVIDES UPDATE ON CREW HELD BY SOMALI PIRATES

Indonesia is actively pursuing the release of four of its nationals among the 16 crew members of MT Honour 25, a petroleum products tanker seized by Somali pirates near Hafun, Puntland on 22 April. The multinational crew comprises Indonesian, Pakistani, Indian, and Myanmar nationals. Indonesia's Foreign Ministry confirmed ongoing coordination with domestic and international stakeholders, expressing cautious optimism over a near-term resolution. The pirate group has reportedly demanded \$3 million in

ransom. The incident underscores the resurgent threat of Somali piracy, particularly as global naval attention remains concentrated on the Strait of Hormuz crisis.

Source: [Here](#), May 20, 2026

US WARNS SHIPS IGNORING ORDERS IN HORMUZ MAY BE TREATED AS THREATS

The Joint Maritime Information Center has issued two critical maritime advisories warning commercial vessels in and around the Strait of Hormuz that non-compliance with US military instructions may result in them being treated as hostile targets subject to proportionate force. NAVCENT has declared military operations north of Oman's Musandam Peninsula, citing Iranian mine-laying activities and illegal control attempts over the waterway. The US blockade of Iranian ports remains in full effect across the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, and North Arabian Sea, with enforcement actions potentially including disabling and destructive fires. The advisories underscore the acute and deteriorating security environment confronting commercial shipping at one of the world's most critical maritime chokepoints.

Source: [Here](#), May 29, 2026

MARITIME FORCES

L&T PARTNERS WITH EXAIL TO OFFER MINE WARFARE SOLUTIONS TO THE INDIAN NAVY

Larsen & Toubro has entered a strategic partnership with France's Exail to deliver an advanced unmanned Mine Counter Measure suite for the Indian Navy's programme to procure 12 MCMVs, valued at approximately \$5 billion. L&T will serve as prime contractor, with Exail providing globally proven MCM technologies incorporating autonomous surface craft, heavyweight autonomous underwater vehicles, and remotely operated vehicles for stand-off mine detection and neutralisation. The partnership assumes heightened significance given Iran's mine-laying activities in the Strait of Hormuz, which have focused global attention on MCM capability gaps. The programme addresses a critical operational void following the decommissioning of India's last minesweeper INS Kozhikode in 2019, marking a decisive step towards restoring India's dedicated mine warfare capability.

Source: [Here](#), May 16, 2026

LAUNCH OF SANGHMITRA, YARD 3039 (NEXT GENERATION OFFSHORE PATROL VESSEL) AT M/s GRSE, KOLKATA

The Indian Navy's Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel Sanghmitra was launched at Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers, Kolkata on 20 May 2026, in the presence of Vice Chief of the Naval Staff Vice Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan. One of eleven NGOPVs being concurrently constructed at GRSE and Goa Shipyard Limited, Sanghmitra is indigenously designed for multi-domain operations encompassing surveillance, search and rescue, offshore asset protection, humanitarian assistance, and anti-piracy missions. Named after the daughter of Emperor Ashoka, the vessel's launch represents a significant milestone in India's indigenous shipbuilding programme, reinforcing the Government's Aatmanirbhar Bharat vision and the Indian Navy's commitment to self-reliant maritime capability development.

Source: [Here](#), May 20, 2026

IOS SAGAR (INS SUNAYNA) RETURNS TO KOCHI AFTER A LANDMARK DEPLOYMENT

INS Sunayna returned to Kochi on 20 May 2026, marking the successful culmination of the IOS SAGAR deployment — one of the most comprehensive multinational naval missions undertaken in the Indian Ocean Region. Flagged off from Mumbai on 2 April, the deployment incorporated personnel from 16 partner nations across port calls at Malé, Phuket, Jakarta, Singapore, Yangon, Chattogram, and Colombo, featuring passage exercises, subject matter expert exchanges, and VBSS operations. Embodying India's MAHASAGAR vision, IOS SAGAR reaffirmed India's credentials as the region's preferred security partner, demonstrating the Indian Navy's sustained commitment to building interoperability, collective maritime capability, and a rules-based order across the Indian Ocean Region.

Source: [Here](#), May 28, 2026

'ITALY, INDIA LAUNCH TASK FORCE ON TERROR FINANCING; MARITIME SECURITY FORMAT SOON: ITALIAN ENVOY

Italy and India have launched a dedicated task force on countering terrorist financing, with Italian Ambassador Antonio Bartoli announcing that both nations will shortly establish a bilateral format on maritime security in support of freedom of navigation. Speaking at the 80th Anniversary Celebration of the Italian Republic, Bartoli highlighted deepening cooperation under the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, including a signed MoU on ports collaboration and digital connectivity initiatives. An MoU for Italian cooperation in developing the National Maritime Heritage Complex at Lothal was also concluded. The maritime security format, combined with IMEC port collaboration, signals a meaningful expansion of the India-Italy strategic partnership into the maritime domain at a consequential moment for global shipping security.

Source: [Here](#), May 30, 2026

INDIAN NAVY BOLSTERS ANTI-SUBMARINE CAPABILITIES TO COUNTER CHINA-PAK 'TWO-FRONT' THREAT: NAVY CHIEF

Indian Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi has affirmed that the Indian Navy has significantly enhanced its anti-submarine warfare, underwater surveillance, and network-centric capabilities to address a potential two-front challenge from China and Pakistan in the Indian Ocean Region. Citing the commissioning of China-built submarines for Pakistan and growing PLA Navy presence in the IOR, Admiral Tripathi characterised the region as having transitioned from an era of cooperation to one of intense competition. Since 2025, the Navy has inducted two submarines and 18 warships, with all 45 ships under construction being built exclusively in Indian shipyards at approximately 80 per cent indigenisation. The Navy's transformation from a buyer's to a builder's navy represents its most consequential strategic shift in recent decades.

Source: [Here](#), May 30, 2026

SHIPPING, PORTS AND OCEAN ECONOMY

EL NINO UNLIKELY TO RESTRICT PANAMA CANAL SHIP TRAFFIC

The Panama Canal Authority has confirmed no transit restrictions are anticipated through 31 December 2026, despite Panama being placed on El Niño alert by national meteorological authorities. Maintaining its schedule of 38 daily transits, the ACP noted that El Niño drought impacts are typically felt the following year, and that preventive water-saving measures implemented since 2024 have strengthened reservoir levels. The development contrasts sharply with 2023, when prolonged drought forced daily transits down

from 38 to 22. Construction of a \$1.6 billion additional reservoir at Rio Indio, scheduled for completion by 2032, is planned to secure the canal's operational viability for the next 50 years.

Source: [Here](#), May 18, 2026

PM MODI MEETS MAERSK CHAIRMAN IN GOTHENBURG; FOCUS ON MARITIME LOGISTICS, PORT INFRASTRUCTURE AND GREEN SHIPPING COOPERATION

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Maersk Chairman Robert Maersk Uggla in Gothenburg, holding discussions on expanding investments across India's maritime, logistics, and infrastructure sectors. Deliberations covered port infrastructure modernisation, multimodal logistics, green shipping, maritime decarbonisation, cleaner fuels, and skilled workforce development. Modi underscored India's emergence as a global manufacturing and logistics hub, highlighting PM Gati Shakti, Sagarmala, and the National Logistics Policy as enabling frameworks, whilst inviting deeper Maersk engagement in India's next infrastructure growth phase. The meeting signals renewed momentum for India-Maersk collaboration across ports, green shipping, and future-ready maritime solutions, reinforcing India's strategic ambition to become a leading global maritime and logistics powerhouse.

Source: [Here](#), May 18, 2026

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TOLL ON SEAFARERS TRAPPED IN THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ

Between 1,500 and 1,600 vessels remain stranded in and around the Strait of Hormuz, affecting over 20,000 seafarers who face sustained psychological pressure from prolonged uncertainty, isolation, security threats, and disrupted crew changes. Dr William Moore of The American Club warns that uncertainty is often more psychologically damaging than physical danger, manifesting in sleep disruption, fatigue, and impaired judgement — directly compounding operational safety risks. Industry guidance and onboard leadership are identified as critical mitigating factors. The crisis underscores that seafarer mental wellbeing must be treated as a core component of maritime risk management, not merely a welfare consideration, particularly as psychological effects persist well beyond the immediate crisis.

Source: [Here](#), May 29, 2026

IPA, CMEC AND JTTRI SIGN MOU TO STRENGTHEN INDIA-JAPAN MARITIME COOPERATION AND RESEARCH COLLABORATION

The Indian Ports Association, Centre for Maritime Economy and Connectivity, and Japan Transport and Tourism Research Institute have signed an MoU to strengthen India-Japan maritime cooperation across ports, maritime economy, logistics, and sustainable maritime development. The agreement establishes a platform for joint research, policy dialogue, capacity building, expert exchanges, and knowledge sharing in port management, maritime trade, and multimodal transport connectivity. The collaboration reflects a shared commitment to evidence-based policymaking and institutional linkage-building to develop resilient, future-ready maritime networks. The MoU further reinforces the growing strategic maritime partnership between India and Japan at a moment of heightened focus on diversified and dependable regional connectivity frameworks.

Source: [Here](#), May 30, 2026

INDIA UNVEILS PORT PERFORMANCE INDEX, MARITIME DIGITAL REFORMS TO BOOST GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

India launched the Logistics Port Performance Index for FY 2024–25 alongside four digital initiatives at JNPA's 37th Foundation Day in Mumbai. Developed under the *Sagar Aankalan* framework, the LPPI benchmarks Indian ports across dry bulk, liquid bulk, and container segments on operational indicators, including vessel turnaround time and container dwell time. Digital initiatives included a 24×7 seafarer grievance redressal module, a ship registration platform, a medical practitioner module, and a Unified Ship Recycling Portal offering credit notes worth 40 per cent of scrap value redeemable against new shipbuilding. JNPA crossed 8 million TEUs in FY26, whilst India's rise to 22nd in the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index reflects measurable progress in maritime competitiveness.

Source: [Here](#), May 30, 2026

MARINE ENVIRONMENT

SCIENTISTS DISCOVER OVER 1,100 NEW MARINE SPECIES

The Nippon Foundation-Nekton Ocean Census has documented 1,121 previously unknown marine species across 13 global expeditions, marking the mission's most significant discovery milestone. Findings ranged from a ghost shark in Australia's Coral Sea at 838 metres depth to a symbiotic worm inhabiting a glass sponge off Japan and a new shrimp species in a Mediterranean Sea cave off Marseille. With up to 90% of marine species still undocumented, the Census has launched NOVA, an open-access platform reducing species documentation timelines from years to days. The findings directly inform the High Seas Biodiversity Treaty and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, underscoring that ocean discovery remains among the most consequential and urgent scientific endeavours of our time.

Source: [Here](#), May 19, 2026

INDIAN OCEAN TUNA REGULATOR EASES YELLOWFIN FISHING CURBS AMID SUSTAINABILITY CONCERNS

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission's annual meeting in the Maldives agreed to ease fishing restrictions on yellowfin tuna following scientific findings that stocks are no longer overfished, setting a total allowable catch of 436,867 metric tonnes for 2027–28 — above the scientific committee's recommended 421,000 metric tonnes. Conservationists warned the TAC risks reversing hard-won recovery gains. The IOTC also established enforceable swordfish catch limits and adopted handling guidelines for manta and devil rays to reduce bycatch mortality. Notably, the IOTC became the first regional fisheries management organisation to adopt binding measures governing its engagement with the High Seas Treaty, marking a significant step towards coherent multilateral ocean governance.

Source: [Here](#), May 22, 2026

TWO HUMPBACK WHALES SET A MIGRATION RECORD: THEY TRAVELED OVER 14,000 KM BETWEEN BRAZIL AND AUSTRALIA

A study published in Royal Society Open Science documents two humpback whales completing record-breaking migrations of over 14,200 kilometres between Brazil and Australia — surpassing the previous record of 13,046 kilometres. Using photo-identification of unique tail patterns across nearly 20,000 photographs spanning decades, researchers confirmed trans-oceanic movements between distinct breeding

populations. The findings suggest greater migratory flexibility than previously understood, potentially driven by oceanographic changes, food availability, or habitat disturbances. Researchers note the journeys may enhance genetic diversity across populations and facilitate the spread of cultural behaviours including whale song. The discovery fundamentally redefines scientific understanding of humpback whale migratory behaviour and oceanic connectivity.

Source: [Here](#), May 24, 2026

HOW ARE DEGRADED CORAL REEFS RESTORED IN INDIA?

India's coral restoration programmes, active across the Gulf of Mannar, Palk Bay, Lakshadweep, Gulf of Kachchh, and Andaman and Nicobar Islands, are demonstrating measurable ecological recovery. In Gulf of Mannar, transplanted coral survival rates reached 55–80%, live coral cover increased sevenfold over 14 years, and fish density surged 21-fold. At Mithapur, Gujarat, rescued coral boulder survival exceeded 95%, with fishermen's catch per unit effort rising tenfold since 2015. India affords corals the highest legal protection under the Wildlife Protection Act. These restoration outcomes offer compelling evidence that sustained, science-led intervention can meaningfully reverse reef degradation, with significant benefits for coastal biodiversity and dependent fishing communities.

Source: [Here](#), May 26, 2026

SEABIRD HABITATS SHRINK AS OCEAN HEATS UP: STUDY

A new study warns that rising ocean temperatures driven by climate change are significantly shrinking suitable habitats for seabirds, forcing species towards cooler waters whilst disrupting critical breeding and foraging zones. Under high-emission scenarios, over 70 per cent of seabird species could experience habitat contraction by the century's end, with tropical and subtropical species particularly vulnerable due to limited alternative habitats. Scientists caution that habitat loss, compounded by overfishing, pollution, and shifting food availability, poses intensifying risks to global seabird populations. As sensitive indicators of ocean health, declining seabird populations serve as a consequential early warning signal of broader marine ecosystem deterioration requiring urgent and coordinated conservation response.

Source: [Here](#), May 26, 2026

GEOPOLITICS

WHY CHINA MIGHT REACT BADLY TO ANY CALL BETWEEN TRUMP AND TAIWAN'S PRESIDENT

President Trump's repeated signals of intent to speak with Taiwan's President Lai Ching-te have drawn sharp warnings from Beijing, which characterised the prospect as sending "wrong signals" to separatist forces and a violation of its core interests. Such a call would be unprecedented for a sitting US president and risks triggering Chinese military exercises around the island, consistent with Beijing's past responses to high-level US-Taiwan engagements. China views Taiwan as its most sensitive sovereignty issue, having never renounced the use of force for reunification. The development, coming shortly after the Trump-Xi summit, underscores the inherent fragility of US-China diplomatic stabilisation and the enduring potential for cross-strait tensions to escalate unpredictably.

Source: [Here](#), 22 May 2026

INDIA-US TRADE DEAL 'WITHIN REACH', RUBIO SIGNALS PROGRESS ON HORMUZ SITUATION

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, on his first visit to India in that capacity, declared that a bilateral trade agreement between Washington and New Delhi was within reach, describing it as "enduring, beneficial and sustainable." A US trade delegation is expected to visit India shortly to advance negotiations. Talks with External Affairs Minister Jaishankar encompassed trade, energy, critical minerals, defence, visa issues, and the situation in West Asia including Strait of Hormuz tensions. Rubio framed recent trade friction as part of a global economic rebalancing rather than India-specific policy. The visit signals a deliberate effort to stabilise and deepen the bilateral partnership at a strategically consequential moment for both nations.

Source: [Here](#), 24 May 2026

TRUMP SAYS HE WILL SOON DECIDE ON IRAN DEAL, DEMANDS REOPENING OF HORMUZ STRAIT

President Trump announced a forthcoming decision on a proposed 60-day ceasefire extension with Iran, whilst significant differences persist between the two sides. Trump's conditions include the immediate, unrestricted reopening of the Strait of Hormuz and Iran's dismantlement of nuclear weapons capability, both of which Tehran has rejected. Iran maintains that strait management is solely an Iranian-Omani matter and that any deal excludes nuclear issues. Kazakhstan has signalled willingness to host Iran's highly enriched uranium stockpile under IAEA oversight. Oil prices fell on news of a potential deal, reflecting the markets' sensitivity to Hormuz normalisation. A durable resolution remains contingent on bridging fundamental differences over sanctions, frozen assets, and nuclear enrichment rights.

Source: [Here](#), 29 May 2026

SOUTH CHINA SEA FLASHPOINT RETURNS AS CHINA AND PHILIPPINES TRADE SIGNALS

China's PLA and coast guard conducted combat-readiness patrols near the disputed Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea, directly following a five-day joint Philippine-US maritime exercise in the same waters. The Philippines reiterated concerns over continuing security threats from Beijing, with Defence Secretary Teodoro noting that territorial challenges persist despite recent US-China summit diplomacy. The developments unfolded on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. China's rejection of the 2016 Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling and its continued assertion of nine-dash line claims underscores the enduring intractability of South China Sea disputes, where grey-zone coercion remains a persistent instrument of strategic signalling.

Source: [Here](#), May 31, 2026