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# Indian Ocean Watch

*A Monthly Newsletter on the Indian Ocean Region*



**idsa**

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## **Editor**

Ruchita Beri

## **Contributors**

Saurabh Mishra

Nachiket Khadkiwala

Smriti Rajan

**This Newsletter tracks developments in the following countries of the Indian Ocean region**

Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

## **Disclaimer**

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

The month of March was full of activities in the Indian Ocean region. There were several significant developments. India deployed two of its long-range maritime surveillance aircrafts in the Indian Ocean to quicken the search and rescue operation of the missing Malaysian aircraft MH 370. There was news of an ASEAN-wide joint maritime security exercise planned in 2015. The Kenyan Ports Authority dismissed reports that two illegal ships called at one of its ports. Two Chinese warships venturing into the Indian waters were barred by the Indian Coast Guards. Seychelles and Mauritius joined the India, Sri Lanka and Maldives trilateral for maritime security in the Indian Ocean region. The sixth session of the Indo-US dialogue to strengthen maritime security was also held recently.

On the economic scene, India assured Bangladesh for additional 100 MW power supply. The ninth round of India-Bangladesh trade talks were held in Dacca. A Double taxation avoidance agreement was signed between Seychelles and Kenya.

On the environmental and disaster risk front, Bangladesh claimed that it suffers about US\$ 2.2 billion annual losses due to climate change inflicted by other countries. A UN report says that climate change is increasing risks of India going to war. Indonesian Navy was preparing an ASEAN draft SOP for disaster relief. Cape Town was named the Global Earth Hour Capital 2014. In an interesting development, UK climate change envoy warned South Africa against the ill effects of hydraulic fracturing in water-stressed areas. Seventeen countries collaborated in a six-day disaster management exercise in the South China Sea. It was also predicted that there are increased chances of an EL-Nino in 2014.

Hope the readers will find the issue useful.

**Ruchita Beri**

**Editor**

## MARITIME SECURITY

### Australia plans for spending US\$2.7 billion on drones

To buy a fleet of giant high-tech unmanned drones to aid patrol the nation's borders, monitoring energy infrastructure and attempts to enter the country illegally, Australia has revealed plans to spend US\$ 2.7 billion. The Triton Unmanned Aerial Vehicles would be based in the southern city of Adelaide. These aircrafts will work closely with other existing and future Australian defence assets to patrol Australia's vast ocean territory, and to secure its ocean resources, including energy resources off northern Australia. It will unprecedentedly increase Australia's maritime surveillance capability. The drones can also be used for detecting illegal fishing and asylum-seekers. Australia has the responsibility of monitoring about 11 percent of the world's Oceans and therefore the move is justified by the government for an effective surveillance.<sup>1</sup>

### About half of the Australian patrol boats confine to the port

Pertaining to structural cracks, nearly half of the Australian navy patrol boats have been confined to port. But the government asserts that its Operation Sovereign Borders is continuing as normal. Six of the 14-strong Armidale fleet was forced to retreat to the port in Darwin as large cracks were discovered in them. Scott Morrison, Australia's Immigration Minister, assured that the military-run operation remains unaffected by the problem. It was also informed that "appropriate assets" were being used to keep the operations effective. Operation Sovereign Borders started to prevent asylum-

seekers to enter into the Australian borders and the policy seems to be working with no arrivals in the last more than two months.<sup>2</sup>

### Australia chairs the IONS

The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) chairmanship was handed over to Australia Navy by the South African Navy at the opening of IONS 2014 in Perth. The IONS consists of world navies whose nations share boundaries with the Indian Ocean. It was established in 2008 and includes more than 35 attendees and 23 member nations from four regional sub-groups known as the South Asian Littorals, West Asian Littorals, East African Littorals and South East Asian and Australian Littorals. The naval forces of countries that have strategic interest in Indian Ocean are also invited for this biennial event. The participating naval forces will discuss various concerns affecting the Indian Ocean with special emphasis on protecting the ability to trade in the Indian Ocean maritime economy.<sup>3</sup>

### After Myanmar, Bangladesh's PM hopes to win maritime-boundary case against India

Jubilant Bangladesh's Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, hopes to win the maritime-boundary case against India, after the country's victory over Myanmar. She has called upon the naval forces to acquire more efficiency for safeguarding the national territorial waters. With the settlement of the 38-year-long dispute with Myanmar, Bangladesh received legal rights over 200 nautical miles in the Bay of Bengal. She also informed that the process for setting up the largest naval base at Rabanabad in Patuakhali has already started. She stressed at the need

<sup>1</sup> "Australia to spend \$2.7 billion on surveillance drones", *Jakarta Globe*, March 13, 2014, at <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/international/australia-spend-2-7-billion-surveillance-drones/>

<sup>2</sup> "Nearly half of Australia's asylum patrol boats out of service", *Jakarta Globe*, March 4, 2014, at <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/nearly-half-of-australias-asylum-patrol-boats-out-of-service/>

<sup>3</sup> "Royal Australian Navy Chairs Indian Ocean Symposium", *Marinelink.com*, March 26, 2014, at <http://www.marinelink.com/news/australian-chairs-indian366019.aspx>



of a modern and balanced three-dimensional naval force to safeguard the country's maritime boundary despite the current financial constraint.<sup>4</sup>

### **India turns down Chinese request to search its backyard**

With the widening of the search for the lost Malaysian airline in the month of March, China requested India for a permission to deploy its four naval vessels in the waters of the Andaman Sea for search. But India turned down the offer to search its backyard by citing its own extensive search efforts already underway in the region. Although the search for MH370 is undoubtedly an entirely humanitarian exercise and cooperative unprecedentedly, it has also served to demonstrate the new capabilities of the rapidly modernising navies of Asia. The Chinese and Indian experts feel that the search has underlined the often ignored maritime aspect of India-China relations. As China under President Xi Jinping plans 'going west' and India 'looks east', their navies are bound to interact more in the Indian and Pacific oceans.<sup>5</sup>

### **Deployment of Indian aircrafts in the IO to facilitate the MH370 search operation**

India has deployed two of its long-range maritime surveillance aircrafts in the Indian Ocean, namely, P8-I Poseidon of the Indian Navy and C-130J Super Hercules of the Indian Air Force, to quicken the Search and Rescue operation of the missing Malaysian aircraft. As an addition to the six warships and five maritime surveillance aircrafts deployed earlier, the two new aircrafts were allotted for their respective search areas by the Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC). The participation of India in the International

Search and Rescue operation has increased, with the Indian crew being warmly received and briefed by the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) Base in Subang. India has extended its full support and has pledged to undertake any mission assigned by the ARCC.<sup>6</sup>

### **Two Chinese warships venturing into the Indian waters were barred by the Indian Coast Guards**

According to a top government source, two Chinese Navy frigates moving inside 100 nautical miles of Indian waters were barred from entering further into the Indian maritime territory by the Indian Coast Guards and Naval patrolling vessels. This happened before China's request to the Indian officials for allowing Chinese warships to venture into the Indian waters, which has resulted in taking up this matter towards protest against the Chinese government, as stated by a navy officer. The Coastal Guards and Navy have objection to let the Chinese warships enter their area, fearing that their military assets placed along the Andaman Sea, which are strategically important for maritime security, could be exposed to China.<sup>7</sup>

### **Indo-US dialogue to strengthen maritime security and expand regional trade**

At the sixth session of the US-India East Asia Consultations, officials from the US and Indian fronts discussed a wide range of issues on maritime security, nuclear proliferation and expansion of regional trade in the Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor and beyond. The Session began with the top US officials conveying their condolences for the crew who were killed during the crash of the newly deployed C-130J Super Hercules aircraft. The sad reminder, as noted by the Indian and US delegations, called for a series of conversations

<sup>4</sup> "PM hopes to win legal battle against India too", *Daily Sun*, March 2, 2014, at [http://www.daily-sun.com/details\\_yes\\_02-03-2014\\_PM-hopes-to-win-legal-battle-against-India-too\\_781\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1.html](http://www.daily-sun.com/details_yes_02-03-2014_PM-hopes-to-win-legal-battle-against-India-too_781_1_1_1_1.html)

<sup>5</sup> "India turns down Chinese offer to search its backyard", *India Defence*, March 24, at <http://indiandefence.com/threads/in-indian-ocean-waters-india-china-show-maritime-provess.44553/>

<sup>6</sup> "Indian aircraft join search operations for missing plane", *The Times of India*, March 23, 2014, at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Indian-aircraft-join-search-operations-for-missing-plane/articleshow/32547400.cms>

<sup>7</sup> "dna special: Chinese ships intrude 100 nautical miles into Indian waters", *dnaindia.com*, March 26, 2014, at <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-dna-special-chinese-ships-intrude-100-nautical-miles-into-indian-waters-1972168>

ranging from the meeting between William Burns, the Deputy Secretary of State and S. Jaishankar, Ambassador to US to the Indian delegation's meeting with Glyn Davies, Special Representative of the Secretary of State for North Korea Policy. Prior to these, the Deputy Spokesperson of the State Department, Marie Harf, said that US is working with India on several matters, while paying close attention to what is happening in India.<sup>8</sup>

### **Indonesian military plans for more strength in the South China Sea**

Indonesian officials, on March 12, acknowledged that China is claiming part of Indonesia's Riau Islands as its own territory. The issue can have serious repercussions for security situation in the South China Sea. Air Commodore Fahu Zaini, a member of the Indonesian defense strategy unit at the office of the coordinating minister for political, legal and security affairs, said that China circumscribes parts of the Natuna Islands within the nine-dash line. The newly issued passports by the Chinese government also image the nine-dash line. Perceiving a threat from China to the Indonesian territorial integrity, its navy is trying to strengthen itself and flex some muscles in the nearby waters. Indonesia considers that the social cohesion in the outer areas of its territory, especially in the disputed area, is vital for their security. General Moeldoko, the chief of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) visited China to meet his Chinese counterpart to affirm Indonesia's commitment to stability in the South China Sea. He informed that he had also asked the heads of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force to put together a formula to strengthen the military force in Natuna.<sup>9</sup>

### **Illegal fishing rampant on water off southern coast of West Java**

Waters of the southern coast of West Java have become

an illegal fishing haven for foreign vessels, said Indonesian Marine Resources and Fishery Control director general Syahrin Abdurrahman. The region is abundant in high quality fish breed and other marine wealth. It is quite difficult for Indonesia to tap these resources due to the lack of equipments required in the process. The area requires close supervision due to its location in the Indian Ocean. The Ocean, by nature, makes the area difficult to be controlled and the Indonesians, to sail farther out, have to wait until big waves subside. Syahrin lamented that Indonesia has only 20 ships for the supervision of all of its maritime territory, although more than 90 would be the ideal for the same job. The Indonesians cannot go into these waters during the high waves and the foreign fishing vessels enter at the same time to plunder Indonesia's marine wealth. Indonesia fears that illegal fishing in the region will adversely affect the local fishermen who rely on the same resources.<sup>10</sup>

### **ASEAN-wide joint maritime security exercise planned in 2015**

The chiefs of defence of the Association for South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries agreed to conduct a joint maritime security exercise in the Strait of Malacca in 2015. The event would be a distinct break from the ASEAN practice of avoiding collective ASEAN-wide security exercise. The ASEAN, through the planned exercise, wants to give a signal to the extraregional powers about its intention to play a collective role in the region. The timing of the planned event is important as it is currently struggling to present a united front vis-à-vis China to negotiate an agreement on a code of conduct in the South China Sea. The Association wants to maintain its centrality rather than getting split into camps on the line of US-China contest in the region. In the bigger picture, members are trying to avoid being split by the US-China contest for their

<sup>8</sup> "India, US discuss security, nuclear proliferation, trade", *IBN Live*, March 29, 2014, at <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/india-us-discuss-security-nuclear-proliferation-trade/461060-2.html>

<sup>9</sup> "Indonesia's military flexes muscle as S. China Sea dispute looms", *Jakarta Globe*, March 13, 2014, at <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/indonesia-military-flexes-muscle-s-china-sea-dispute-looms/>

<sup>10</sup> "Illegal fishing rampant on water off southern coast of West Java" *The Jakarta Post*, March 5, 2014, at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/03/05/illegal-fishing-rampant-waters-southern-coast-west-java.html>

“hearts and minds”. It is now trying to transform itself into a “political-security community” by 2015.<sup>11</sup>

### **KPA dismisses reports that illegal ships called at Kenyan port**

The reports that two ships wanted by the Interpol for illegal fishing and human trafficking called at Kenyan port have been dismissed by the Kenya Ports Authority (KPA). There were reports that two Indonesian ships - MV Samdera Pacific and Berkat Menjala - arrived at the Kilindini harbour on February 4, and docked at the Mbaraki wharf for provisions. According to some reports, the ships are on the Interpol’s purple list of wanted ships. Suspected sailors working aboard the vessels are believed to be under instructions from an international syndicate of maritime commercial criminals dealing with human trafficking and illegal fishing. However, the KPA stated that the two vessels never called at the port as alleged; and the vessels have been denied entry into the Kenyan waters. The authority termed the reports about the vessels as “misleading”.<sup>12</sup>

### **Seychelles Coastguards trained in seamanship on Dutch warship**

Seventeen trainees from the Seychelles Coast Guard received training in seamanship on board HNLMS Evertsen, a Dutch warship, operating under Nato Ocean Shield Task Force 508. This is was a 27-days training programme jointly developed by the Coast Guard and EUCAP Nestor for new trainees. International partners like the Operation Ocean Shield also supported the programme. The programme provides the Coast Guards with essential skills and the capabilities they need to function efficiently. The training included how to use deck equipment such as ropes,

anchors, chains, and winches as well as on how to moor and unmoor a vessel.<sup>13</sup>

### **Seychelles transfers another batch of nine convicted Somali pirates to Puntland**

Nine prisoners, convicted Somali pirates, were transferred back to Puntland authorities by Seychelles. They will serve the rest of their sentences in the Garowe prison. The transfer was organised by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). This was the second successful transfer of prisoners by the Seychelles authorities within the last week of March 2014. There, after the handover, still remain 14 Somali prisoners convicted of piracy and 23 on remand with Seychelles authorities. Seychelles, till date, has handed over 87 convicted Somali pirates to Somaliland and Puntland. It is to note that the pirates, who decide to be transferred, agree to abandon their right to appeal. The authorities claim that the pirates do it voluntarily after a proper legal counseling.<sup>14</sup>

### **Seychelles delegation attends maritime security meeting in New Delhi**

Seychelles, on March 6, attended the third Maritime Security and Cooperation Meeting held in New Delhi. Ambassador Maurice Loustau-Lalanne, Seychelles’ principal secretary for Foreign Affairs, headed the delegation. Seychelles and Mauritius were invited by India and Sri Lanka in 2011 to join them in an effort to consolidate the current cooperative tasks and explore future possibilities for the same. Mr. Maurice stated in the meeting that the threats to the security of the waterways in the Indian Ocean region cannot be countered in isolation by any of them. Both “traditional and non-traditional threats are posing serious challenges

<sup>11</sup> “Planned joint maritime security exercise shows Asean can lead”, *South China Morning Post*, March 24, 2014, at <http://www.scmp.com/comment/article/1456157/planned-joint-maritime-security-exercise-shows-asean-can-lead>

<sup>12</sup> “KPA denies illegal ship docked in”, *The Star*, March 21, at <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-159713/kpa-denies-illegal-ship-docked>

<sup>13</sup> “Coastguard trainees get seamanship skills”, *Seychelles Nation*, March 26, 2014, at <http://www.nation.sc/article.html?id=241131>

<sup>14</sup> “Nine convicted Somali pirates transferred to Puntland”, *Seychelles Nation*, March 31, 2014, at <http://www.nation.sc/article.html?id=241181>

to the security, stability and sustainability of the region. Some of the areas requiring concerted efforts are maritime piracy, drug trafficking, terrorism, natural disasters and environmental issues.<sup>15</sup>

### **Inclusion of Seychelles and Mauritius in the Trilateral IO security group**

The addition of two island nations, namely Seychelles and Mauritius to the existing Trilateral Indian Ocean Region (IOR) Security Grouping comprising of India, Sri Lanka and Maldives, was concluded at the third NSA level meeting. During the Trilateral meeting, wherein Seychelles and Mauritius were invited as guest participants, the National Security Advisor Shiv Shankar Menon stated that both the island nations have showed interest in taking part in future discussions, in view of which the next meeting is to be held in Mauritius. Observing “piracy” to be one of the major concerns in the IOR, Shiv Shankar Menon said that the issue cannot be dealt by a single country and has to be tackled with multilateral cooperation. During the meeting, progress in the implementation of various activities was discussed by the participants, also highlighting new areas of cooperation such as hydrography; training on board; search operations; Indian sail training ships; exchanges between think tanks; and joint activities, as stated.<sup>16</sup>

### **Only SA and Mozambique remain in Operation Copper**

After the withdrawal of Tanzania from Operation Copper, the mission to provide maritime security and prevent piracy in the Mozambique Channel is now a bilateral operation between South Africa and Mozambique. Tanzania withdrew from the operation

some 18 months ago. The Operation was set up on the initiative of South Africa to patrol the Mozambique Channel in cooperation with Mozambique and Tanzania during the height of piracy. Somali pirates had begun attacking vessels in the waters between Africa and Madagascar. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed by South Africa and two other Southern African Development Community (SADC) members Mozambique and Tanzania to maintain an anti-piracy watch. Frigates, offshore patrol vessels and maritime surveillance aircraft have been deployed to Mozambican waters since then. However, Joy Peter, the South African defence minister’s spokesperson, said the agreement between Mozambique, Tanzania and South Africa was still in place.<sup>17</sup>

### **Bay Class Patrol vessel given to Sri Lanka by Australia**

The Sri Lankan Navy has been given the first of the two Bay Class patrol vessels of Australia, to help the Sri Lankan Navy in preventing smuggling in the Indian Ocean. At a ceremony held in Cairns, Australia on 29<sup>th</sup> March, the Sri Lankan Navy Commander Vice Admiral Jayanath Colombage received the first Australian Bay Class patrol vessel. Prior to this, the Australian Prime Minister, Tony Abbot announced in November 2013 that two Bay Class Patrol boats will be given to Sri Lanka in order to boost the Navy’s efforts in preventing smuggling. The vessel covering a large area of the Indian Ocean, would function effectively in Sri Lankan Search and Rescue area. This gesture by Australia signifies the commitment of both the countries in tightening maritime security, by combating the act of smuggling together.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> “Seychelles at maritime security meeting in New Delhi”, *Seychelles Nation*, March 13, 2014, at <http://www.nation.sc/article.html?id=240996>

<sup>16</sup> “Trilateral Indian Ocean Security Grouping set to expand”, *The New Indian Express*, March 6, 2014, at <http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/Trilateral-Indian-Ocean-Security-Grouping-Set-to-Expand/2014/03/06/article2094252.ece#.UxjrYvldXfI>

<sup>17</sup> “Only SA and Mozambique remain in Operation Copper”, *RP Defence*, March 20, 2014, at <http://rpdefense.over-blog.com/tag/Mozambique%20Channel/>

<sup>18</sup> “Australia delivers first Bay Class patrol vessel to Sri Lanka”, *ColomboPage.com*, March 31, 2014, at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_14A/Mar31\\_1396290238CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_14A/Mar31_1396290238CH.php)



### 17 Sri Lankan fishermen released by the Indian Coast Guard

After the Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa ordered for an immediate release of all 98 Indian fishermen and their boats which were detained by the Sri Lankan authorities, the Indian Coast Guard relieved 17 Sri Lankan fishermen and their boats at the International Maritime Boundary. As per the Sri Lankan President's order, 19 fishermen of Tamil Nadu along with their boats were sent to the Indian Coast Guard. This calls for further discussions between the fishermen of both sides.<sup>19</sup>

### US Navy expands Bahrain base for arrival of new Littoral Combat Ships

The United States Navy has gone for a US\$580 million base expansion in Bahrain that includes modifications to accommodate the US Navy's new littoral combat ships (LCS). The new LCS will be operational in the Arabian Gulf by 2018. Speaking to Defence News at the Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition (DIMDEX), Vice-Admiral John Miller, the commander of the 5th Fleet and the US Naval Forces Central Command said that the new LCS will serve the needs of US Navy and the region till the middle of the century. The infrastructure expansion by the US Navy highlights that it plans to continue its presence in the region, although in a coalition environment, Vice-Admiral Miller said. The new LCS is designed for

operations in near-shore environments although it is capable of open-ocean operations as well, according to the US Navy. It is designed to defeat asymmetric anti-access threats, such as mines, quiet diesel submarines and fast surface craft. The LCS class consists of two variants, Freedom and Independence. The Freedom variant team is led by Lockheed Martin. The Independence variant team is being led by General Dynamics, Bath Iron Works and Austal USA.<sup>20</sup>

### Chinese scholars called for close ties between India & China during the launch of "Blue Book"

On the occasion of releasing a second "Blue Book" on IOR, Chinese scholars expressed that China and India should strengthen their relations, looking forward for building a new type of "great power relationship", while keeping aside their major differences. The Editor in Chief of the "Blue Book", Cuiping Zhu, who is the Deputy Director of the Research Institute of Indian Ocean economies, opined that India is the first important country in the Indian Ocean and China respects the Indian geo-political and geo-economic interests in the IOR. Cuiping Zhu expressed the need for security cooperation between India and China, to deal with common issues of piracy and safeguarding trade routes. Recently, the Chinese President Xi Jinping told the Indian Ambassador Ashok K Kantha that nourishing good relations with India is his "historic mission".<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> "Indian Coast Guard to hand over 17 Sri Lankan fishermen", *ColomboPage.com*, March 31, 2014, at [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_14A/Mar31\\_1396278982CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_14A/Mar31_1396278982CH.php)

<sup>20</sup> "US Navy to boost long-term Gulf operation", *Indian Defence*, March 30, 2014, at <http://indiandefence.com/threads/us-navy-to-boost-long-term-gulf-operations.44998/>

<sup>21</sup> "Chinese think tanks call for close Sino-India ties", *Business Standard*, March 27, 2014, at [http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/chinese-thinktanks-call-for-close-sino-india-ties-114032701105\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/chinese-thinktanks-call-for-close-sino-india-ties-114032701105_1.html)

## ECONOMIC COOPERATION

### International tender to be floated in Bangladesh for building SEZ

The Bangladesh government will soon float an international tender for bids from both local and international private developers to develop infrastructure inside planned Special Economic Zones (SEZ) and hi-tech parks. Bangladesh aspires to achieve a middle-income status by taking such steps. The government of Bangladesh with the advice of the World Bank had initiated the Private Sector Development Support Project (PSDSP) for building such economic zones and hi-tech (information technology) parks as strategic instruments for attracting domestic and foreign investment. The government hopes for creation of jobs and acceleration of economic growth by utilising untapped potential through these steps.<sup>22</sup>

### Ban on hilsa fish export not to be lifted by Bangladesh

To ensure a smooth supply of the silver delicacy in local markets, the Bangladesh government stated that it has no immediate plans to lift the ban on the export of hilsa imposed in 2012. The ban on exporting the national fish will also help reduce its local market prices. The statement came despite incessant lobbying by Indian businesses for the removal of the ban on the export. Hilsa is in high demand in India, particularly in the state of West Bengal. Several years ago, on the cost of straining its relations with India and the Middle Eastern countries, Bangladesh had launched a campaign to protect hilsa, its most precious but dwindling aqua resource. The effort resulted in an indefinite ban on

export of hilsa from July 2012. Official data show an increase in hilsa catch due to the ban.<sup>23</sup>

### Bangladesh adopts visa-on-arrival policy for UAE citizens

Bangladesh government has decided to grant visas on arrival to the UAE nationals. Each year, about 1,000 Emiratis travel to Bangladesh. The government, from the initiative, hopes an increase in the number of Emiratis and will improve the people-to-people contacts between both the countries. The Bangladesh consulate and the embassy in the UAE would still issue visas on request. Bangladesh imports crude oil and other petroleum products while it exports textiles, clothing, fish, vegetables and steel products. An increase in the bilateral trade between the two countries is expected after the new development. Emiratis are one of the major foreign investors in Bangladesh. They are involved in charities and cultural activities within Bangladesh.<sup>24</sup>

### 9<sup>th</sup> round of India-Bangladesh trade talks held

The 9<sup>th</sup> round of the two-day India-Bangladesh trade talks were held in Dacca on March 12-13, 2014. The talks aimed at removing the bottlenecks between the two countries to promote bilateral trade by reviewing the current status. These talks are officially held under the framework of the bilateral trade agreement between the two countries. The trade deficit for Bangladesh with India has become a political issue within the country. In 2012-13, officially, Bangladesh could export goods worth only US\$563 million to India while it imported goods worth US\$4.2 billion. The unofficial import by

<sup>22</sup> “Bangladesh to float international tender for building SEZ”, *Daily Sun*, March 6, 2014, at [http://www.daily-sun.com/details\\_yes\\_06-03-2014\\_Int%E2%80%99l-tender-soon-to-build-special-economic-zones\\_785\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_0.html](http://www.daily-sun.com/details_yes_06-03-2014_Int%E2%80%99l-tender-soon-to-build-special-economic-zones_785_1_1_1_0.html)

<sup>23</sup> “Ban on hilsa fish export not to be lifted by Bangladesh”, *The Hindu*, March 6, 2014, at <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/bangladesh-not-to-lift-ban-on-export-of-hilsa-fish/article5755514.ece>

<sup>24</sup> “Bangladesh grants Emiratis visa-on-arrival travel”, *The National*, March 25, 2014, at <http://www.thenational.ae/uae/tourism/bangladesh-grants-emiratis-visa-on-arrival-travel>

Bangladesh is estimated to be 1.5 times the official trade. A clear commitment at the highest political level is evident in both the countries to remove tariff and non-tariff barriers for Bangladesh. The talks included the issue among other possibilities to improve bilateral trade.<sup>25</sup>

### **India assures Bangladesh for additional power supply of 100 MW**

India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh assured his Bangladeshi counterpart that his country would give additional 100 MW electricity to her country's grid. He termed Bangladesh as close and time-tested friendly neighbour. The electricity would be supplied from the state of Tripura in India. He also suggested that India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan can jointly set up hydroelectric plants to solve the growing power crisis in the region. Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina thanked Dr. Manmohan Singh for placing the Land Boundary Agreement Bill in Indian parliament which she hoped would be approved by the Lok Sabha solving long standing issue between the countries. She also hoped to see more positive and effective steps from the Indian government on the Teesta Water sharing issue.<sup>26</sup>

### **Indonesia to start implementing the blue economy concept soon**

Indonesia will soon start implementing the blue economy concept in East Lombok and Central Lombok regencies in the province of West Nusa Tenggara (NTB). The Blue Economy Implementation Program, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), is expected to create 77,700 new jobs and to generate an income

of US\$114.88 million per year. By 2018, an integrated upstream and downstream development programme covering tuna fisheries, marine tourism, aquaculture, pearl industry, salt industry, ecosystem services with eco-friendly sustainable energy and other infrastructure, including a capacity-building programme, is scheduled to be completed to be showcased to the world. The programme will start in the year 2014. Indonesia feels that it is high time to take a leading role to bring up the importance of marine, sea and ocean resources with its blue economy concept at the table during the next negotiating period of the post-2015 development agenda on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>27</sup>

### **Malaysian minister calls its businessmen to see towards Mauritius**

Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, International Trade and Industry Minister, Malaysia, called that the Malaysian businessmen should tap into the opportunities in Mauritius. The total trade between the two countries is about US\$93 million and the balance of trade is in favour of Malaysia as it imports worth just about US\$10 million. Although the total trade is small, there is much business potential to be explored. The minister noted the strategic importance of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean. He was quite impressed with the fact that despite its small size and population of merely 1.3 million, the country has succeeded in diversifying its economy. Mr. Mustapa was on a state visit to Mauritius that aimed at improving bilateral ties between the two countries. The two countries can also mutually benefit each other in the field of education as Mauritius wants to send its students to Malaysia while Malaysia aspires to become a regional education hub.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> "Bangladesh-India trade talks", *The Daily Star*, March 26, 2014, at <http://www.thedailystar.net/bangladesh-india-trade-talks-17218>

<sup>26</sup> "India to give Bangladesh additional 100mw power", *Daily Sun*, March 5, 2014, at [http://www.daily-sun.com/details\\_yes\\_05-03-2014\\_India-to-give-Bangladesh-additional-100mw-power\\_784\\_1\\_2\\_1\\_4.html](http://www.daily-sun.com/details_yes_05-03-2014_India-to-give-Bangladesh-additional-100mw-power_784_1_2_1_4.html)

<sup>27</sup> "Blue economy for marine resource development", *The Jakarta Post*, March 20, 2014, at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/03/20/blue-economy-marine-resource-development.html>

<sup>28</sup> "Mauritius full of potential on services and tourism, investors told", *The Star*, March 12, 2014, at <http://www.thestar.com.my/Business/Business-News/2014/03/12/Mauritius-full-of-potential-Islands-big-on-services-and-tourism-Mustapa-tells-investors/>

### **Seychelles to explore for the possibilities of medical tourism in Sri Lanka**

Tourist destinations of Sri Lanka are visited by thousands of tourists every year. The country is ready to cooperate with Seychelles with its expertise in fields like education, maritime affairs, legal affairs and agriculture. The Seychelles-Sri Lanka business forum organised by the Seychelles Investment Board has led to a surge in the business prospects and opportunities between the two countries. Seychelles is looking to explore the immense possibilities for medical tourism in Sri Lanka. The island has world-class hospitals with most advanced technology in health care, diagnosis and treatments. They provide high standard medical services and the doctors keep upgrading their skills. As it has now become cheaper and easier to travel to Sri Lanka, the people of Seychelles may benefit from the facilities.<sup>29</sup>

### **Seychelles and Kenya to benefit by jointly promoting 'Africa brand' of tourism**

During the visit of the Foreign Minister of Seychelles to Kenya, tourism cooperation was the major point of discussion. The countries, in addition to collaborating to promote a dual destination concept, do feel the need for an enhanced African Union level cooperation to strengthen the 'Africa brand' tourism. After the African Union Tourism Working Group meeting in Seychelles from March 13-14, the two countries have resolved to pursue tourism as a means of development. They are also looking for joint marketing of their tourist destinations in packages. It was also discussed that an increase in the number of Kenya Airways flights to Seychelles will also help harness the potential. The two sides remain hopeful due to the level of current interest and new developments regarding tourism in the Seychelles-Kenya bilateral relations.<sup>30</sup>

### **Double taxation avoidance agreement signed between Seychelles and Kenya**

Seychelles and Kenya have signed a double taxation avoidance agreement (DTAA) on March 17, 2014. They have also strengthened their trade framework for better opportunities in future. The agreement is being considered as a landmark achievement in the bilateral relationship of the two countries. They hope that it will prove as a means to create environment for their investors for mutual trade and investment more frequently and easily. The two sides hope that the agreement along with the current visa exemption system will help tenfold the bilateral trade flow. The process for the agreement was technically initiated in 2011. With the development of Kenya's special free trade zone, there will be a huge potential for the use of the DTAA to connect Seychelles and Kenya and also to provide access to the wider Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (Comesa) region. Seychelles would also help in accessing the countries of the Far East.<sup>31</sup>

### **Fishing infrastructure in Seychelles toured by Tanzanian delegation**

In a hope of sharing experiences, strengthening bonds and improving communication with the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Seychelles Fishing Authority, a delegation of technical experts from Tanzania was on a study tour in Seychelles. The experts are from the Tanzania Deep Sea Fishing Authority, the Ministry of Finance and the Tanzanian Revenues Authority. A visit to the Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA) where they shared experiences of coastal seas, exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and high seas fisheries administration and management was organised during the two-day tour. The delegation was much interested in Seychelles' ways of surveillance of the exclusive economic zone and

<sup>29</sup> "Seychelles and Sri Lanka to explore medical tourism", *Seychelles Nation*, March 21, 2014, at <http://www.nation.sc/article.html?id=241082>

<sup>30</sup> "Seychelles and Kenya join to promote African Tourism", *Seychelles Nation*, March 22, 2014, at <http://www.nation.sc/article.html?id=241096>

<sup>31</sup> "Seychelles signs double taxation avoidance agreement with Kenya", *Seychelles Nation*, March 24, 2014, at <http://www.nation.sc/article.html?id=241107>



interceptions of IUU (illegal, unreported and unregulated) fishing by fishers from other jurisdictions. The visit took place on a time when Seychelles is working to promote blue economy. The delegation also discussed issues related to Fisheries Partnership Agreements (FPAs) and sustainable fishing, good practices with regard to management of the coastal areas to avoid poaching.<sup>32</sup>

### Japanese grant for Zanzibar fishers

For the development of the Malindi fish landing and marketing facilities, Japan has granted US\$8.5 million to the Zanzibar government. Landing quays are supposed to be built by using the money. This will result in the safe accommodation of about 400 fishing boats on the island. Besides helping in fishing management programs, the funds will also help construct a fish market and provide equipments that would allow smooth operations for around 6,000 people. These developments will lead to a stable supply of better quality fish to the people of Zanzibar. The funds will also help ensure halting of the illegal fishing practices which will later translate into better and modern fishing methods protecting environment and ensuring good income to the fishers.<sup>33</sup>

### India's Shipping Ministry has pushed to foster growth in the maritime sector

Shipping Minister G.K. Vasan announced that the Shipping Ministry has facilitated 88 new projects worth Rs. 42,953 crores in the last four years, with Rs. 21,000 crores being invested in 30 projects this year, fulfilling the target set by the PMO for the Port sector. Highlighting the achievements of the Shipping Ministry in adopting several policy initiatives in terms of tariff structure; security clearances; and environmental

clearances for various projects, Mr. Vasan stated that the capacity of major ports has increased from 575 million tonnes in 2009 to 800 million tonnes at present, with 36 terminals in public-private partnership (PPP) being in operation currently. In addition to these emerging new projects, the Indian Maritime University has been enhanced with improved maritime education, with three new campuses being established in Kerala, Gujarat and Puducherry.<sup>34</sup>

### Sri Lanka's GDP grows at the rate of 7.3 per cent

The data released by the Census and Statistics Department revealed that the GDP of Sri Lanka grew from 6.3 percent in 2012 to 7.3 per cent in 2013. The industry sector showed an increase of 9.9 per cent year-on-year (YoY), with 10.7 percent growth in gem mining and 11.6 per cent growth in the other categories of mining. With textile and apparels showing an increase of 8.9 per cent YoY, 7.5 per cent of growth has been recorded in the manufacturing sub-sector. The other areas witnessing growth are service sector with an increase of 6.9 per cent; export and domestic trade blooming at 6.7 per cent YoY and 6.9 per cent YoY respectively; transport and communication at 9.4 per cent YoY; tea sector growing at 6.5 per cent over the quarter and rubber recording an increase of 18.7 YoY. Other than these, there has been a decline in the growth of the agricultural sector, forestry and fishing at 10.4 per cent. The fourth quarter of 2013 demonstrated rapid growth in the GDP. Manufacturing rose at 11.9 per cent YoY with factories growing at 12.1 per cent. The growth in service sector was seen at 6.5 per cent with export and import increasing to 20.3 per cent and 1.8 per cent respectively; and the hotel industry displaying growth of 7.1 per cent YoY.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> "Tanzanian delegation visits Seychelles' fishing infrastructure", *Seychelles Nation*, March 6, 2014, at <http://www.nation.sc/article.html?id=240916>

<sup>33</sup> "Zanzibar fishers get Japanese aid", *East African Business Week*, March 17, 2014, at <http://www.busiweek.com/index1.php?Ctp=2&pI=789&pLv=3&srI=%2089&spI=&cI=25>

<sup>34</sup> "Shipping Ministry approves 88 projects in 4 years: G.K. Vasan", *Daily Shipping Times*, March 3, 2014, at [http://www.dailyshippingtimes.com/news-upload/upload/fullnews.php?fn\\_id=6823](http://www.dailyshippingtimes.com/news-upload/upload/fullnews.php?fn_id=6823)

<sup>35</sup> "Economy grows 7.3% in 2013", *Daily Mirror*, March 18, 2014, at <http://www.dailymirror.lk/business/economy/44614-economy-grows-73-in-2013-.html>

### Shrimp Farming Industry standards finalized

The shrimp farming industry has achieved a milestone as Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) has finalized shrimp farming standards created by the Shrimp Aquaculture Dialogue following seven years of development. The Shrimp Aquaculture Dialogue brought various stakeholders in shrimp farming sector including experts, scientists and NGO's on a single forum for deliberations with the aim of creating a standard that sets out a series of robust requirements to address the key environmental and social impacts of the industry. The Shrimp Aquaculture Dialogue has produced a global standard that focuses on addressing

seven key areas of adverse impact. The ASC certification will aid shrimp farmers to decrease adverse impacts on the environment and local communities by preserving wetlands and mangroves; addressing the transfer of viruses and reducing disease; bringing cleaner water and ensuring the sustainable use of water; ensuring the responsible use of feed; and addressing biodiversity issues. The standard also defines the guidelines covering the rights of employees and local communities, ensuring ASC certified shrimp is produced in a responsible social setting. China is the world major shrimp aquaculture producer followed by Thailand, Indonesia, India, Vietnam, Brazil, Ecuador and Bangladesh.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> "Farmed shrimp standard finalized", *Fish Information and Services*, March 28, 2014, at <http://www.fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?monthyear=&day=28&id=67475&l=e&special=0&ndb=0>

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS/ DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

### US\$ 2.2 billion annual losses to Bangladesh due to climate change

AHM Mustafa Kamal, the planning minister of Bangladesh, speaking at the closing ceremony of the Poverty, Environment and Climate Mainstreaming Project, stated that his country is losing about US\$2.2 billion to natural disasters annually. The minister lamented that although the adverse effect of climate change on Bangladesh is caused by the actions of others, it is for them to find ways to mitigate the losses and assess them in monetary terms. Climate change is the most vulnerable area for sustainable development, and effective expertise should be employed to handle all the natural disaster issues. The US\$1 million project, financed by the UNDP, began in July 2010 aimed at assessing the climate change impact on the country's poverty alleviation activities and their inclusion into national planning and budgeting processes. The project underscored social and economic analysis of climate change on agriculture, transport, water, gender and poverty issues. Pauline Tamesis, the UNDP Country Director, said that local institutionalisation and assessment of fiscal aspect of climate change are necessary for economic emancipation and sustainable development of the poor and it is the local people of Bangladesh who are supposed to institutionalise the processes to mitigate sufferings caused by natural disasters.<sup>37</sup>

### UN report says climate change increasing risks of war

The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its report assessing impacts of climate change on human health, settlements and natural resources warned

that Asia is facing the brunt of climate change. In future, due to the expected severe stress on water resources and food-grain production, there is an increased possibility of armed conflict among India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and China. The report says that if no measures are taken to curb the ill-effects of global warming, the worst is yet to come. If the annual mean temperature rises by 1 degree Celsius compared to pre-industrialization level, India may lose up to 1.7 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that will hit poor the most. In case steps are not taken to control the rising temperature, extreme weather events like 2013 flash floods in Uttarakhand and cyclone Phailin in the Indian state of Odisha are also predicted by the report. It also warns that climate change is already becoming a determining factor in the national security policies of states and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has been working to arrive for a global climate deal by 2015.<sup>38</sup>

### Memories of Tsunami push the Indian government to connect better with Andaman & Nicobar Islands

The Indian government's proposition to spend around Rs. 800 crores for the setting up of an underwater cable link to connect all the nine major islands of Andaman and Nicobar will be implemented by the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation Limited with technical expertise provided by the Department of Telecommunications, through the Ministry of Home Affairs. Connecting the islands will improve communication and connectivity with Andaman and Nicobar, which is seen as an important strategic initiative for India towards disaster management in the area. Keeping in mind the highly

<sup>37</sup> "Climate change costs Bangladesh \$2.2 b", *The Daily Star*, March 28, 2014, at <http://www.thedailystar.net/climate-change-costs-bangladesh-2-2b-17571>

<sup>38</sup> "Climate change may lead India to war: UN report", *Kashmir Watch*, March 31, 2014, at <http://kashmirwatch.com/news.php/2014/03/31/climate-change-may-lead-india-to-war-un-report.html>

devastating 2004 Tsunami along India's eastern maritime boundary off the Andaman coast, the former secretary in the Ministry of external Affairs, N. Ravi, quoted that better communication link is "an absolute necessity", signifying the importance of Andaman and Nicobar Islands to the Indian maritime community.<sup>39</sup>

### Jayalalithaa not in support of the Sethusamudram Project

Tamil Nadu CM Jayalalithaa opined that the Sethusamudram Project could harm the marine environment and would affect the livelihood of the fishermen. She stated that the fishing community has always expressed concern over the flora and fauna in the region, affecting the livelihood of coral reefs. She further stressed that the Sethu Channel, which is located north off Tuticorin, would not be beneficial for the vessels leaving the Port towards the countries of Southern Europe, Central East Asia and South East Asia, connecting the west coast and east coast.<sup>40</sup>

### Indonesian Navy prepares ASEAN draft SOP for disaster relief

A standard operating procedures (SOP) draft for disaster relief activities carried out by the military is being prepared by Indonesia. It will be expected to become the SOP for ASEAN militaries in carrying out disaster relief activities. The SOP is currently being field tested at the 2014 Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo (MNEK) in the waters of the Anambas Islands, Batam and Natuna in Riau Islands province. After the evaluation, the SOP is supposed to be submitted to the Indonesian Military [TNI] chief by the Indonesian

Navy. The draft would ultimately put on the table for discussion during the ASEAN Defence Minister Meeting (ADMM) by the Indonesian Defence Minister. The existence of such a protocol would be good for the ASEAN both internally and multinationally.<sup>41</sup>

### Smartphone disaster information system launched at Yogyakarta

The wide-view disaster information prediction system known as W-DIPS has been jointly launched by Indonesia's Yogyakarta's Gadjah Mada University (UGM) and Japan's Osaka University. This smartphone disaster information application provides real-time information to help conduct disaster management according to real needs and conditions. The launch is a pilot project and W-DIPS is the first such application in Indonesia. If the experiment is successful, the application will be developed and launched all across Indonesia. W-DIPS is a smartphone-based application that is downloadable from the Google Playstore. The initial target is to get 10 percent of Yogyakarta's population used to this application.<sup>42</sup>

### Collaboration of 17 countries in a six-day disaster management routine

As a method of disaster management, navies from 17 countries took part in a six-day joint exercise in the South China Sea, in order to improve their efforts in dealing with natural disasters. This exercise involving 4,885 navy personnel from 10 member countries of ASEAN along with seven of its dialogue partners, would facilitate improved international assistance and coordination in a more systematic manner, as expressed

<sup>39</sup> "Govt plans to spend Rs.800 cr on undersea cable link to Andamans", *livemint*, March 25, 2014, at <http://www.livemint.com/Industry/HGctxIysmysPUyzcZEoS0L/Govt-plans-to-spend-800-cr-on-undersea-cable-link-to-Andama.html>

<sup>40</sup> "Jayalalithaa calls Sethusamudram project useless; slams DMK", *The Hindu*, March 30, 2014, at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/jayalalithaa-calls-sethusamudram-project-useless-slams-dmk/article5848804.ece>

<sup>41</sup> "RI prepares military protocols for disaster relief", *The Jakarta Post*, March 30, 2014, at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/03/30/ri-prepares-military-protocols-disaster-relief.html>

<sup>42</sup> "Disaster information system launched at UGM", *The Jakarta Post*, March 5, 2014, at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/03/05/disaster-information-system-launched-ugm.html>



by Djoko Suyanto, the Indonesian coordinating minister for political, legal and security affairs. Those participating as observers included Australia, Netherlands, Spain, UN, EU and the ASEAN Secretariat. Looking back at the 2004 Tsunami wherein international assistance lacked proper coordination and organization, Lt. Col. Agus Cahyono, spokesperson for the Western Fleet of the Indonesian Navy, said that the exercise would provide advance knowledge on disaster management for all the navies and also harmonize several regional, national and international protocols.<sup>43</sup>

### **Mozambique passes bill on disaster management**

A government bill on disaster management has been passed by the Assembly of the Republic, Mozambican Parliament unanimously. The purpose of the bill, as stated in the parliament, is to establish a legal regime for disaster management covering prevention, mitigation of the destructive effects of disasters, rescue, assistance and the reconstruction and recovery of affected areas. The government, by this bill, hopes to consolidate the best practices and experiences in disaster management. The bill formalises and institutionalises much of the existing practices in disaster management, planning and forecast. Construction of building houses in the high risk areas has been banned. It also entitles people living in the risk areas for special attention from the state and they have been given the right to safe evacuation in the event of a disaster. The authorities can also resort to the use of force in case people in these areas do not comply with the evacuation orders.<sup>44</sup>

### **Devastated Western Indian Ocean reefs may relive through coral cultivation**

In the hope of replacing destroyed reefs in the western Indian Ocean, marine scientists in the Seychelles are

propagating and replanting corals more resistant and resilient to bleaching. Claude Reveret and Sarah Frias-Torres of Nature Seychelles lead a scuba-divers team down to the ocean floor around Praslin and the nearby Cousin Island Special Reserve for an underwater gardening project focused on cultivating corals resilient to the stress caused by warming water. It is to be noted that warming waters have led to the collapse of coral reef systems in the western Indian Ocean. The large-scale devastation of coral reefs has led Seychelles to increased erosion and loss of fisheries. Mauritius, Comoros, Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya and Somalia are also affected by the menace of dying coral reefs. The restoration project in Seychelles funded by the US Agency for International Development with US\$700,000 began in 2010.<sup>45</sup>

### **South African Abalone threatened to extinction**

Members of global criminal network are scouring the rocks for abalone to meet the insatiable demand from Asia for the gourmet mollusk in South Africa. The species is now on the edge of extinction. Although the poachers fear of being caught either by coastguards or great white sharks, they take a risk for the glittering prizes on offer for the catch. Abalone, also termed as “white gold” due to its pearly flesh, is in great demand in the trendy restaurants in Hong Kong and China. One kilogram of the flesh can fetch up to £254 in the South African black market, and about three times that in Asia. Abalone from South Africa is considered to be among the best, although they are also found in the waters off New Zealand, Australia, Japan and the west coast of the United States. Abalone is also fished in Japan, New Zealand, Australia, Oman, Mexico and South Africa, where license holders can take no more than a limit. TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring group, estimates that the illegal harvests are way more than the local population of the mollusc, which takes

<sup>43</sup> “17 countries join naval exercise for disaster preparation”, *globalpost*, March 29, 2014, at <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/kyodo-news-international/140329/17-countries-join-naval-exercise-disaster-preparation>

<sup>44</sup> “Assembly passes law on disaster management”, *All Africa*, March 27, 2014, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201403280894.html>

<sup>45</sup> “Coral cultivation offers hope to devastated Western Indian Ocean reefs”, *Thomson Reuters Foundation*, March 29, 2014 at <http://www.trust.org/item/20140328224703-b3pan/?source=search>

nearly a decade to reach maturity. The situation is so bad that the government may have to impose a blanket ban on both recreational as well as commercial abalone fishing.<sup>46</sup>

### Cape Town named Global Earth Hour Capital

Cape Town has been named as the Global Earth Hour Capital 2014. It beat over 160 cities from 14 countries in the competition. The Global Earth Hour City Challenge was announced before the Earth Hour event by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The WWF-South Africa stated that the city “stood out as a role model for the global South with a showcase of green programmes and actions other cities can replicate”. The city also demonstrates that the strategies to reduce carbon development and the fight against climate change can also help tackle other developmental issues such as food, energy and water security. It was also praised for “pioneering actions” like a solar water-heating programme, good progress in increasing energy efficiency and community engagement on sustainability issues. The other finalists with Cape Town in the challenge included Copenhagen, Seoul, Chicago, Mexico City, and Stockholm. However, the competition did not label the cities as having achieved full sustainability.<sup>47</sup>

### UK climate change envoy warns South Africa against ills of fracking

Sir David King, the UK special representative on climate change, warned South Africa against approving hydraulic fracturing in water-stressed areas. He was on a tour of the country to engage it on climate change issues and look for more opportunities of cooperation.

He said that the chemicals and water used in fracking contain radioactive particles and chemicals that pollute groundwater creating serious risk in the water-stressed areas like Karoo in South Africa. Karoo has shale gas resources that are estimated to be enough to eliminate South African energy shortages. Sir King’s statement has come in the context of South African President Jacob Zuma’s statement in February which indicated a possibility of South Africa’s shift towards shale gas which could be a game changer for both Karoo region as well as the South African economy. The process of fracking is opposed in general by the environmental organisations in South Africa arguing that the benefits of the process are outweighed by adverse environmental impacts, especially groundwater contamination.<sup>48</sup>

### Tanzania to face more malaria prevalence with global warming

As parasite-bearing mosquitoes move to higher altitudes with global warming, Tanzania is expected to be among the countries where millions more people will be exposed to malaria. A US journal Science study indicates towards upcoming perils of climate change that will make tropical highland areas in Africa, Asia and central and southern America more vulnerable. According to the study, in Ethiopia alone, a one-degree-Celsius increase in temperature will lift the area where malaria can occur by 150 metres. About six to nine million people who live in this height band will become vulnerable to the disease. The prevalence of the disease is likely to be more intense at the lower altitudes where it is already present.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup> “Asia’s abalone fever feared wiping out the gourmet mollusc in South Africa”, *The Star*, March 26, 2014, at <http://www.thestar.com.my/News/World/2014/03/26/Asias-abalone-fever-feared-wiping-out-the-gourmet-mollusc-in-South-Africa/>

<sup>47</sup> “Cape Town named Global Earth Hour Capital”, *SouthAfrica.info*, March 31, 2014, at <http://www.southafrica.info/about/sustainable/earth-hour-310314a.htm#.U1ZSeKIwaVY>

<sup>48</sup> “UK envoy warns South Africa against fracking in water-scarce areas”, *acquaNOW.info*, March 31, 2014, at [http://www.ooskanews.com/story/2014/03/uk-envoy-warns-south-africa-against-fracking-water-scarce-areas\\_159967](http://www.ooskanews.com/story/2014/03/uk-envoy-warns-south-africa-against-fracking-water-scarce-areas_159967)

<sup>49</sup> “Global warming compounds malaria prevalence rate”, *Daily News Online*, March 9, 2014, at <http://dailynews.co.tz/index.php/local-news/28971-global-warming-compounds-malaria-prevalence-rate>

### The chances of EL-Nino in 2014 increases

According to Australian Bureau of Meteorology's latest climate model survey, the tropical Pacific is likely to warm in the coming months, with most models showing sea surface temperatures reaching El Nino thresholds during the southern hemisphere winter. With the release of latest data, the probability of a moderately

strong El Nino Pacific Ocean warming event taking place later this year appears to have increased. El-Nino phenomenon often, but not always, leads to lower than normal rainfall across large parts of southern and inland eastern Australia during the second half of the year. Day time temperatures also tend to be above normal in southern Australia.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> "All indicators suggest El-Nino likely in 2014 Says BOM", *climatescience.com*, March 25, 2014, at <http://www.reportingclimatescience.com/news-stories/article/all-indicators-suggest-el-nino-likely-in-2014-says-bom.html>

## About the IDSA

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The Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) is a non-partisan, autonomous body dedicated to objective research and policy relevant studies on all aspects of defence and security. Its mission is to promote national and international security through the generation and dissemination of knowledge on defence and security-related issues.

The Africa, Latin America, Caribbean & UN Centre of IDSA focuses on understanding developments in the African and the Indian Ocean Region. The Centre also endeavours to analyse India's engagement with Latin American countries, particularly in forums such as the IBSA and BRICS. In addition, the Centre carries out research on the broader theme of India and the United Nations.

This newsletter, compiled by the IDSA covers the recent developments in the fields of maritime security, economic cooperation and environmental concerns/ disaster risk management in the various countries of the Indian Ocean region.



No.1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg,  
Delhi Cantt., New Delhi - 110 010  
Tel. (91-11) 2671-7983 Fax.(91-11) 2615 4191  
E-mail: [contactus@idsa.in](mailto:contactus@idsa.in) Website: <http://www.idsa.in>