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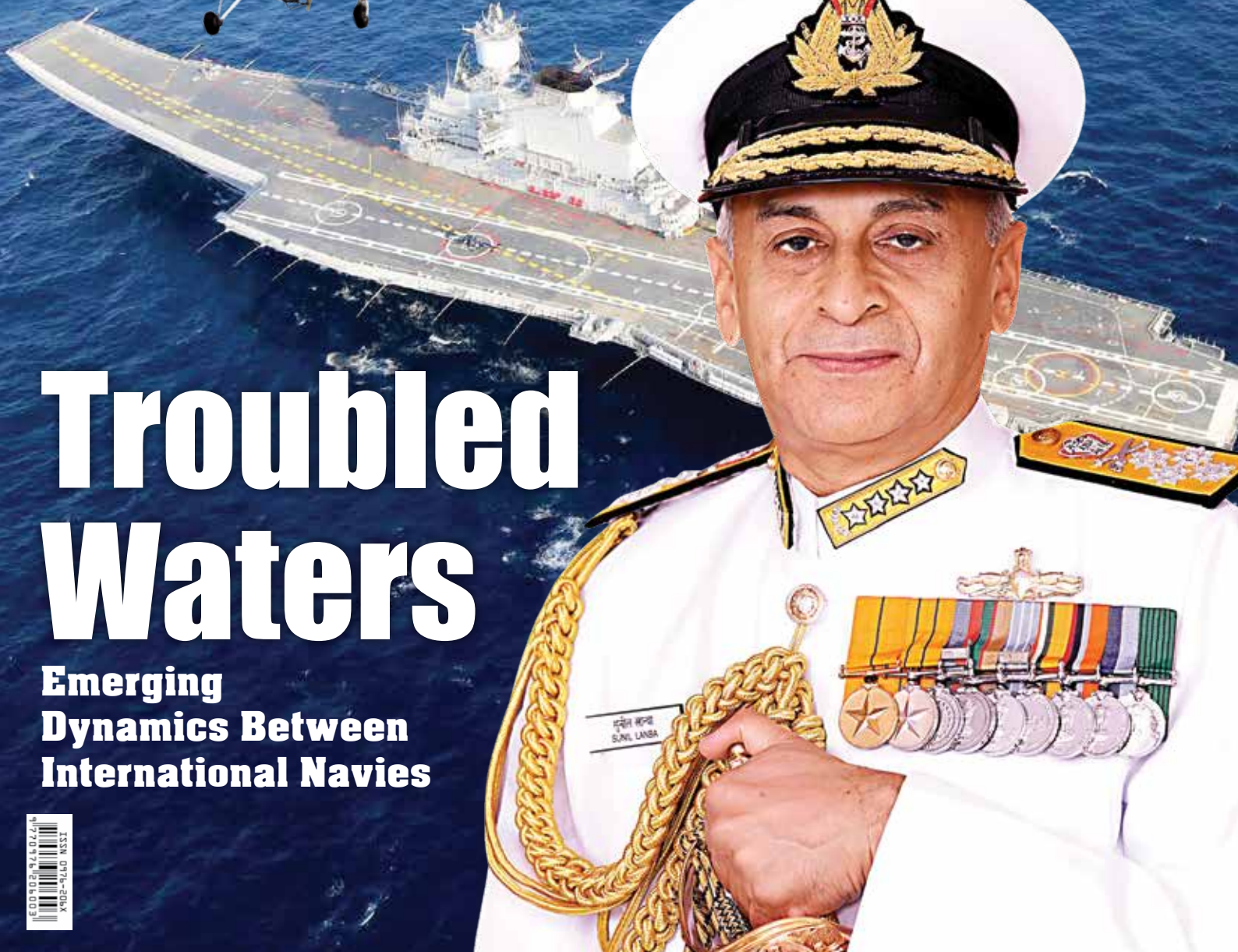
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Dynamics Between
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Global climate change talks are proceeding at a pace not seen in many years. There seems to be a greater earnestness now than there has ever been. Paris and then Marrakech! Eagerness to come to identifiable and implementable goals is the paramount objective. At least so, it appears in public estimation. So when they talk climate and it's changing nature, they invariably focus on to the most apparent aspect of this phenomenon, the oceans and glaciers. While the Himalayan glaciers are losing water rapidly into rivers to which they give birth, the Arctic and Antarctic glaciers are melting fast enough to see rising seas and oceans as the most fundamental climate change problem.

It is in the oceans that the world seems to converge and collide. Global climate change talks expend extraordinary efforts and energies on the warming phenomena and its resultant rise in sea levels and temperatures. They have been discussing it threadbare and seem to find a lot of concern and common ground. So much so that joint action plans are being formulated to be implemented in a time bound manner and within a fixed period. A lot of good words are being uttered and a lot of plans are being made.

All of these plans, however, are getting undone by a fundamental conflict at the sea, the ownership and control of waters that should be treated as commons. From the passage of global trade at record volumes never seen before in the human history to fishing, these commons serve a global good just as the name suggests. But some tend to believe themselves more equal than the others and as a result of which what is common good has less importance than what is regarded as national a pride, prestige and possession.

This is not simply an attack on China's policy *vis-a-vis* the Spratly Islands/Scarborough Reef issue that has Southeast Asia in convulsions. The world will, of course, criticise China for its attitude and actions, all of which are escalatory and antagonistic, rather than being peaceful and participative. It is also about other nations who have tended to mindlessly exploit the oceans, for fish or minerals. There are parts of the seas where the exploitation has reached critical levels. Fish stocks have depleted beyond repair in some cases. And ocean bed mining has reached a point of no return in some others. None of which is healthy for the world, obviously.

The worrisome aspect of all these economic activities is that these have also being going on in areas that cannot in any way be regarded as national boundaries or even the extended economic zone. So, Chinese fishing trawlers are caught off the Atlantic coast of Argentina or oil exploration occurs hundreds of miles offshore from the coast in some other cases. And all of this happens because these activities have some sort of cover, protection, from national navies or coast guard vessels. This is a cause for concern, for national navies to participate in activities that violate the rules of commons can lead to greater complications.

Despite international efforts such complications are happening. Oceanic waters are not placid or peaceful anymore. Chances of an accident or a larger conflict are the highest in the international waters and it's an ever lingering threat. This is really surprising considering the enormous efforts that are being made toward international cooperation amongst various navies. The prime example being of course the Indian Ocean region, the numerous joint exercises and protocols which are in existence here. India is in the midst of most of them, as it should be. For if it aspires to play a greater global role it must fully integrate its own front yard first.

Multinational exercises in the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal, joint patrols in the Straits of Mallaca and the Indian Ocean anti-piracy operations are some of the recurring initiatives that cover the world's most busy sea lanes. The chances of an accident or deliberate action are always there. The choke points of Straits of Hormuz and Mallaca are always vulnerable to a malevolent navy. The Chinese port at Gwadar has been made precisely with that in mind and now there is a new base in Djibouti, China's first explicitly military base outside of its territory. Its geographical location is an explanation enough about the potential for future conflict and the emerging dynamics between international navies.

Manvendra Singh



MISSION

We endeavour to sound **ALERTS** and create **AWARENESS** about the myriad dimensions and manifestations of **DEFENCE** and **SECURITY** in India and around the world.



The power of a King lies in his mighty arms...

Security of the citizens at peace time is very important because State is the only saviour of the men and women who get affected only because of the negligence of the State.

- Chanakya

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CONFLICTS IN OCEAN SPACE



As the world has progressed into prosperity and development, the environment on earth, the sky and the seas have become contaminated by various means and the world's natural resources are dwindling. We all know that for human survival water and air are the most critical elements. The main source of water and increasingly, new discoveries of hydrocarbons and other exotic minerals and metals, are the oceans. Coupled with the rapid depletion of fish stocks around the globe, the deteriorating state of oceans and the frenetic desire to control the seas has nation-states bordering water bodies to become hyper-possessive of their territorial waters and the adjoining Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ). These zones were created by the United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Seas (UNCLOS) several decades ago and have acknowledged legitimacy in geopolitics and exclusive exploitation. The depletion of resources on land has contributed to the exacerbation of conflicts in ocean space.

The oceans are not just the main source of water for mankind but they have minerals, oil, gas and many other costly herbs and spices which are sold at high prices in the world market. It is not that the conflict is only for the water but it is also for the other precious things available in the oceans. Almost all the countries close to the oceans have their naval forces guarding their sea boundaries.

None has churned the waters of the oceans as much as China and its bullying tactics in the Pacific Ocean rim. It has riled Japan, Vietnam, Taiwan, Philippines, Malaysia and India in what has come to be known as the Indo-Pacific salient. Its aggressive search for naval bases in the Indian Ocean littoral is threatening to widen the scope of conflict and tension whenever Chinese exclusivist claims come up hard against the concepts of freedom of the high seas and peaceful mutual use of ocean commons.

Peninsular India is surrounded by seas on three sides and the most important factor is that we have the Himalayas which is the primary source of water on the fourth side and all our rivers flow down to the Indian Ocean. We have, thus, the first right to a vast EEZ in the Indian Ocean. We have seen how the seas were used in the Mumbai attack. Although, our Navy and the Indian Coast Guard Organisation are quite active on the sea boundaries but still Mumbai could happen because the borders are too long and manning every inch is quite impossible. But after the 26/11 attack in Mumbai, we have inducted various technologies to counter any such further attempts to disturb our security.

The Indian Navy is always alert to counter any attempt from the neighbours and so is the Coast Guard committed to maritime security. On the occasion of the Navy Day, this edition is dedicated to the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard. We salute our sailing warriors manning our coastal region and the seas to safeguard us from any impending threat.

We are sure that readers would love to read this edition about the fast-growing pillars of defence of the nation.

Jai Hind!!

Pawan

Pawan Agrawal

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