INDIAN OCEAN: THE SECURITY ISSUES
INTEGRATED SECURITY: THE SECURITY ISSUES

Maritime Security is an important dimension of India’s bilateral relations with all Indian Ocean Littoral states and through various formal and informal structures currently in place. We look forward to building closer cooperation in the maritime domain, regularize bilateral maritime exercises and strengthen the dialogues between the Navies and the Coast Guards with all Littoral Countries in the Indian Ocean Region. India is part of various multilateral institutions, which are actively debating maritime security issues in the Asia Pacific region.

INTRODUCTION

India’s coasts have always been vulnerable to anti-national activities. Numerous cases of the smuggling of goods, gold, narcotics, explosives, arms and ammunition as well as the infiltration of terrorists into the country through these coasts have been reported over the years. The smuggling of explosives through the Raigad coast in Maharashtra and their use in the 1993 serial blasts in Mumbai, and the infiltration of terrorists through the sea route who carried out the multiple coordinated attacks in Mumbai on 26 November 2008, are the most glaring examples of how vulnerable the country’s coasts are. The Government of India had been aware of the activities that are carried out through the country’s coasts and had been implementing corrective measures from time to time.

1. INDIA’S COASTLINE

India has a coastline of 7,516.6 km. bordering the mainland and the islands with Bay of Bengal in the East, the Indian Ocean on the South and the Arabian Sea on the West. There are nine States viz. Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal and four Union Territories viz. Daman & Diu, Lakshadweep, Puducherry and Andaman & Nicobar Islands situated on the coast. The length of coastline, including islands, in these States and UTs is given in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>State/UT</th>
<th>Length (in km.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>1214.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>652.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>101.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>208.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>569.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>906.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>973.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj’s Address at International Conference on “India and Indian Ocean: Renewing the Maritime Trade and Civilizational Linkages” dated 20.3.2015, p. 3
2 IDSA Monograph no.22, September 2013, Coastal Security; The Indian Experience by Pushpita Das, p.7
2. SECURITY CONCERNS OF THE COAST

The physical proximity of India’s coasts to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Gulf countries adds to its vulnerability. India has been facing cross-border terrorism for decades. However, over the years, with the increased deployment of security forces and surveillance equipment as well as the construction of fences, security along the land borders has been sufficiently tightened. On the other hand, security over the ocean domain with the sea routes remaining poorly guarded.

India’s western coast also lies close to the Gulf countries. The distance between Gujarat and the United Arab Emirates is less than 2,000 kilometres. This nearness had facilitated seaborne trade between India’s western coast and the Gulf as well as the East African countries for centuries. Large wooden boats (also known as dhows) carrying cotton textiles, rice, and leather items used to sail out from the ports of Kutch, Porbandar, Veraval, Jamnagar and Surat in Gujarat to ports in Dubai, Muscat, Somalia and Ethiopia. These trade connections remain operational till today, and presently around 350 dhows operate between Gujarat and the Gulf and African countries.

However, with places such as Dubai becoming a source and destination for smuggled and trafficked items, dhows plying from Dubai to Mumbai and Gujarat got involved in smuggling gold and luxury items, especially during the 1960s and 1970s. In subsequent years, they even started smuggling heroin, hashish, and precursor chemicals out of India to Dubai. This practice continues even today. Although these dhows are registered under the Mercantile Marine Department (MMD), no security agency maintains a database about the owner, crew and their movement.

The eastern Indian seaboard has been increasingly witnessing a steady increase in illegal migration from Bangladesh. Various ‘push and pull’ factors such as poverty,
demographic pressure, religious persecution in Bangladesh, and the promise of better opportunities in India have contributed to this migration. Earlier, almost all of the illegal migration from Bangladesh used to take place into the Northeastern States of India through the poorly guarded land border. But now, with the construction of fences along the land border, sea routes are exploited to enter India\textsuperscript{4}.

Indian coasts are prosperous, and support a dense population residing in numerous big and small towns and cities that dot the coastline. Access to the sea through the major and non-major ports has facilitated the setting up of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) which have resulted in the growth of a number of industrial cities such as: Kandla SEZ in Gujarat; Santacruz Electronics Export Processing Zone SEZ in Maharashtra; Madras Export Processing Zone SEZ in Tamil Nadu; Cochin SEZ in Kerala; Falta SEZ in West Bengal; and Vishakhapatnam SEZ in Andhra Pradesh.

This process of industrialisation along the coast has been further boosted by the import of Crude Oil and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). In the case of Gujarat, the Gulfs of Kutch and Kambhat have emerged as major corridors for importing crude oil for the country. This, in turn, has opened up avenues for the establishment of oil refineries and storage tanks by major oil companies, especially along the Saurashtra coast in Vadinar, Salaya, Sikka and Jamnagar as well as LNG terminals in Hazira and Dahej. Similarly, the import of LNG through various ports in the west coast has led to the planning and construction of a number of terminals at Dabhol, Kochi, Mundra, Ennore, Mangalore and Mundra. In addition, single mooring points (SPM) or single buoy points (SBMs) have been constructed in the seabed from where these oil refineries, storage tanks and LNG terminals receive Oil and Gas.

The discovery of oil and gas in the sea has also led to the development of offshore Oil and Gas platforms in the coastal waters of the country. Along the west coast, the Mumbai offshore basin has the largest oil and gas producing field which includes the fields of Mumbai High, Heera, Neelam and Bassein. The basin produced an average 348,740 barrels of crude oil per day, and 48.19 million standard cubic metres of gas per day. In the eastern seaboard, huge off-shore Oil and Gas reserves have been discovered in the Cauvery and Krishna-Godavari (K-G) basins. In the Cauvery basin, three offshore oil and gas fields have been discovered, and extraction of oil and gas has started.

\textsuperscript{4} op.cit., Coastal Security; The Indian Experience, pp.9-11
The Indian coasts also have a number of strategic installations such as naval bases, nuclear power plants, satellite and missile launching ranges, and ports. The eastern, western, southern, and far eastern naval commands are located in Vishakhapatnam, Mumbai, Kochi, and Port Blair respectively. In addition, India’s largest naval base, with a capability of housing 30 warships, is being built at Karwar along the Karnataka coast. Several nuclear power plants, such as at Tarapur, Kudankulam, Kalpakkam and the proposed plant at Jaitapur have been established close to the sea. Satellite launching and missile testing facilities such as the Satish Dhawan Space Centre and the Wheeler Islands missile facility are also located along the coast. Furthermore, India has 13 major ports such as Kandla, Jawaharlal Nehru, Mangalore, Haldia, etc., which handle 90 per cent of the country’s maritime trade.

These strategic installations are vital for the security, development and prosperity of the country, but they are also high value targets for the terrorists.

3. COASTAL SECURITY SYSTEM

The Government of India is implementing the Coastal Security Scheme in phases with the objective of strengthening infrastructure of Marine Police Force for patrolling and surveillance of coastal areas, particularly shallow areas close to the coast. The Phase-I of the Scheme was implemented with an outlay of Rs. 495 crores for non-recurring expenditure and Rs. 151 crores for recurring expenditure, during the period from 01.04.2005 to 31.03.2011. Under Coastal Security Scheme (Phase-I), the coastal States/Union Territories were provided with 73 Coastal Police Stations(CPSs), 97 Check Posts, 58 Outposts, 30 Barracks, 204 Boats, 153 Jeeps and 312 Motor Cycles. The implementation of the Phase-I of the Scheme has been completed on 31.03.2011.

The Coastal Security Scheme (Phase-II) is presently under implementation which commenced from 01.04.2011 to be completed over a period of five years with an outlay of Rs.1154.91 crore under nonrecurring expenses and Rs.425 crore under recurring expenses. Under Coastal Security Scheme (Phase-II), Coastal States/UTs have been sanctioned with 131 Marine Police Stations, 60 Jetties, 10 Marine Operations Centres, 150 Boats (12 Tons),

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5 Ibid, pp.15-17
6 Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 3803 dated 22.12.2015
10 Boats (5 Tons), 20 (19 mtr.) Boats, 35 RIBs (Rigid Inflatable Boats), 10 Large Vessels, 131 Four Wheelers and 242 Motor Cycles\textsuperscript{7}.

The infrastructure and equipments provided to the Coastal States/Union Territories and their status under both Phase-I & Phase-II of the Coastal Security Scheme are as under:

**Infrastructure and equipments provided to the Coastal States/Union Territories and their status under both Phase-I & Phase-II of the Coastal Security Scheme**

### Phase-I:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Name of State/ UT</th>
<th>Costal Police Stations</th>
<th>Boats/ Vessels</th>
<th>Jeeps</th>
<th>Motor Cycles</th>
<th>Check posts</th>
<th>Outposts</th>
<th>Barracks</th>
<th>Rigid Inflatable Boats</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>101</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>46</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>West Bengal</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Lakshadweep</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Daman &amp; Diu</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>A&amp;N Islands</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>204</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>30</td>
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\textsuperscript{7} *Ibid, p. 2*
Phase II:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>State/UT</th>
<th>Coastal Police Stations</th>
<th>Jetties</th>
<th>Vehicles</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sanctioned</td>
<td>Operational</td>
<td>Constructed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>GUJARAT</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>MAHARASHTRA</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>GOA</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>KARNATAKA</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>KERALA</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>TAMIL NADU</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ANDHRA PRADESH</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>ODISHA</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>WEST BENGAL</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>PUDUCHERRY</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>LAKSHADWEEP</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>DAMAN &amp; DIU</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>A &amp; N ISLANDS</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>131</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*) - Coastal Marine Police, Maharashtra is utilizing the 14 Jetties of Maharashtra Maritime Board (MMB) on full-time basis against the three sanctioned jetties for which a grant of Rs.64.58 lakh has been released to the State Government. Out of 10 Marine Police Operation Centre (MPOC) sanctioned for Andaman & Nicobar Island, 4 are operational and land for 5 has been acquired.

The entire coastal areas of the country have been adequately safeguarded against infiltration. In order to avoid any lapse in the coastal security of the country, the Government reviews and monitors the entire coastal security apparatus through: (1) National Committee for Strengthening Maritime and Coastal Security (NCSMCS) against threats from the Sea is headed by Cabinet Secretary and all stake-holder Ministries and the State Governments are members of this committee which meets once in six months and (2) Steering Committee in Ministry of Home Affairs headed by Secretary (Border Management) consists of all stakeholders, which meets periodically to review the implementation of decisions of NCSMCS and progress of Coastal Security Scheme.

4. COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY PLAN FOR ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS

Andaman & Nicobar Islands Administration has submitted a comprehensive security plan of Andaman & Nicobar Islands after consulting Coast Guard, Navy and other stakeholders, for implementation over a period of 8 years, in three phases viz., 2012-2015,
2015-2017 and 2017-2020. The comprehensive security plan for Andaman & Nicobar Islands has been approved.

5. OTHER INITIATIVES TAKEN TO IMPROVE COASTAL SECURITY

**Joint Coastal security exercises**

Coastal security exercises like 'Sagar Kavach' coordinated by Indian Coast Guard along with Coastal States/UTs and Customs are held every 6 months to improve preparedness of the all coastal States/UTs and other concerned agencies. Such exercises have been very useful in creating synergy. Modalities have been worked out to disseminate the shortcomings and lessons learnt in each exercise for the benefit of all stakeholders. During such exercises, meetings are regularly held with fisherman to sensitize them about all aspects of coastal security. Post 26/11, 105 security exercises have been conducted upto 31.12.2014.

The Ministry of Defence has also created four Joint Operation Centers (JOC) at Mumbai, Visakhapatnam, Kochi and Port Blair which are jointly manned and operated by the Navy and Coast Guard with inputs from the concerned Central and State agencies.

As per Indian Ports Act, 1908, the responsibility of developing a major port is of the Central Government and that of the minor ports, is of the concerned State Government. The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) is providing security in all the major Ports. As non-major ports fall under the jurisdiction of State Governments, the Security of non Major Ports is the responsibility of the respective State Governments.

The recruitment process for 1,000 personnel under Sagar Prahari Bal (SPB) has already been undertaken. The actual positioning of the personnel is aligned with the induction of Fast Interceptor Crafts (FICs). Upto 31.12.2014, 17 Officers and 341 Sailors have been inducted.

It is proposed to establish one Marine Police Training Institute (MPTI) on the West Coast, to be located at Pindara Village, Dist.: Devbhoomi Dwarka, in the State of Gujarat.

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9 India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Annual Report, 2012-13, p.44
10 India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Annual Report, 2014-15, p.44
National Population Register (NPR) ID Cards

There are two types of cards, viz. National Population Register (NPR) ID Cards issued by the Registrar General of India (RGI) for Coastal village population and Fishermen Cards issued to the Fishermen by the Department of Animal Husbandry Dairying & Fisheries, Government of India. The RGI has captured biometric details of 67,50,719 persons of age 18 years and above, and distributed 65,72,523 NPR ID cards as on 31.12.2014. The Department of Animal Husbandry Dairying and Fisheries has produced 11,71,616 Fishermen ID Cards and delivered 11,52,146 cards upto 31.12.2014. The RGI Cards are for the entire coastal population whereas the cards issued by the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries are for the fishermen only\textsuperscript{11}.

Registration of Vessels/Boats

It was decided in June 2009, to have a uniform registration of fishing vessels of less than 20 meter overall lengths. The uniform registration is done under Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 by the States/UTs. All the sailing vessels above 20 meters length are mandatorily required to be fitted with Automatic Identification System (AIS) equipment. If the same is not fitted, then the registration of such vessels on an annual basis will not be done. A total of 1,91,559 fishing vessels have been registered under the new online registration system upto 31.12.2014\textsuperscript{12}.

Tracking System (Transponders) for Boats

The Director General, Shipping has issued two circulars to ensure installation of Automatic Identification System Type B transponders in all types of vessels including fishing vessels of above 20 metres in length.

For the boats less than 20 meters, appropriate technology for installation of tracking system has been identified on the basis of the pilot study in the Ministries National Population Register/Fishermen ID Cards Registration of Vessels/Boats Tracking System (transponders) for Boats of Defence/Shipping. To role out the pilot project for the entire coast, the matter is under active consideration of the Government\textsuperscript{13}.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid
Constitution of State Maritime Boards (SMBs)

As per the Indian Ports Act, 1908, the Ministry of Shipping is responsible for the security of Major Ports, where as the State Governments/State Maritime Boards are responsible for the security of Non-Major Ports. To manage, control and administer the minor ports, it is necessary that the coastal States/UTs to have State Maritime Boards (SMBs).

i). The States of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have already constituted SMBs. While State of West Bengal and UTs of Puducherry, Daman & Diu and Lakshadweep have constituted Maritime Advisory Committees.

ii). The States of Kerala, Odisha and Karnataka are in the process of constitution of SMBs.

iii). Andhra Pradesh, Goa and the Administration of Andaman & Nicobar Islands have to expedite the process for establishment of SMBs14.

6. MARITIME SECURITY IN INDIAN OCEAN

(i) Piracy

Recent times have seen intensification in incidents of piracy on high seas particularly off the coast of Somalia especially in the Gulf of Eden as well as in the region off South-East Asia along with other high risk zones. The act of "Piracy" involves two distinct offences including robbery or hijacking, wherein target of the attack is to capture/harm a maritime vessel or its cargo as well as kidnapping the vessel and its crew and threatening them for payment of ransom15.

International Scenario

Seaborne piracy against ships and vessels remains a significant issue particularly in the waters between the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, off the Somalia coast, and also in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, which are used by over 50,000 commercial ships a year. Piracy off the coast of Somalia has been a threat to international shipping and trade. In view of the economic costs of piracy and its adverse impact on global trade and threat posed to the security of the crew and the seafarers, there has been a coordinated multinational effort to patrol the waters near the Horn of Africa including India and its Navy and Coast Guards.

14 Ibid
15 Standing Committee on External Affairs, 16th Report, July 2012
With the increase in global trade, the maritime security has emerged as a major challenge. The Gulf of Aden which separates Somalia and Yemen and connects the Arabian Sea to the Red Sea has seen a major spurt in attacks by pirates operating from Somalia since 2008. With Indian naval presence in the Gulf of Eden, the problem which were at the time related to Somalia and the Horn of Africa, some of the pirates began to shift their operations eastwards and southwards. This led to some of the pirates operating closer to the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the Western coast of India\(^\text{16}\).

Efforts are being made at international level to deal with the situation both through political and diplomatic means as well as defence cooperation at high seas. The UN Secretary General presented a Report (S/2010/394) to the UN Security Council on 26 July 2010 which identified the various options for an international legal mechanism for prosecution and incarceration of the pirates, including capacity building of regional States to prosecute and imprison pirates, establishment of a Somali court in the country or in another country in the region, establishment of a special chamber or a regional tribunal or an international tribunal either with or without UN participation\(^\text{17}\).

The International Maritime Bureau’s Piracy Reporting Centre (IMBPRC) in its report for the year 2015 (upto 30 September) has stated that in all 154 vessels were boarded, there were 21 attempted attacks and 15 vessels were hijacked. A total of 226 crew were taken hostage, 14 assaulted, 13 injured, 10 kidnapped and 1 killed\(^\text{18}\).

**Present Legal Mechanism regarding Piracy**

The problem of piracy continues to persist but, India does not have a separate domestic legislation on piracy. Prosecution for piracy as a crime has not been included in the Indian Penal Code, 1860 or in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. The provisions of the Indian Penal Code pertaining to armed robbery and the Admiralty jurisdiction of certain courts have been invoked in the past to prosecute pirates apprehended by the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard but in the absence of a clear and unambiguous reference to the offence of maritime piracy in Indian law, problems are being faced in ensuring prosecution of the pirates. Given the increasing incidents of piracy, including within India’s Exclusive Economic Zone, and the increasing number of pirates apprehended by the Indian Naval forces, a need

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\(^\text{16}\) Ibid
\(^\text{17}\) Op.cit. 16th Report
\(^\text{18}\) http://www.iccwbo.org/
was felt for a domestic legislation on piracy which could provide the necessary legal framework within the country for prosecution of persons for piracy related crimes\textsuperscript{19}. Therefore, the Piracy Bill, 2012 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 24.4.2012\textsuperscript{20}.

The proposed Bill was referred to the Standing Committee on External Affairs (15\textsuperscript{th} Lok Sabha) on 3.5.2012 and the Committee submitted its report on 14.8.2012. Subsequently, the Bill was lapsed due to the dissolution of 15\textsuperscript{th} Lok Sabha\textsuperscript{21}.

(ii) South-China Sea Dispute

South-China Sea (SCS) is a multi-party maritime dispute involving China, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan. Of the 3.5 million sq. km. area of the SCS, almost 70 per cent is disputed. At the core of these disputes lie five sets of islands made up of atolls, cays, shoals, reefs and sandbars. These five sets of islands are the Spratlys, Paracels, Scarborough Shoal, Pratas and Macclesfield Bank. Chinese have taken military, administrative and jurisdictional initiatives in recent years to maximise their claims over these islands. The aim is to have better claims over important islands like Paracels (Xisha), Spratlys (Nansha) and Macclesfield Bank (Zhongsha), which are supposed to be resource rich. These Chinese claims and recent initiatives are contested by other South East Asian nations who are parties to the dispute. Outside powers like the USA have also taken an interest, opposing Chinese claims and insisting on freedom of navigation in the SCS. The Chinese have reacted aggressively to American intervention. India is neither a ‘claimant’ nor a party to the maritime dispute in the SCS. Still, the Chinese reservation on India’s commercial project for oil exploration in the SCS has intensified gradually.

China reacted to the three-year agreement between ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) and Petro Vietnam on oil exploration in certain SCS areas in a similar vein. Stating that “China enjoys indisputable sovereignty” over SCS, the Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Jiang Yu added that China’s stand is based on “historical facts” and “international law” and “we hope that the relevant countries refrain from taking unilateral action to complicate and expand the issue.” Dismissing the relevance of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Statement noted that UNCLOS “does not entitle any country to extend its Exclusive

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid
\textsuperscript{20} Verified telephonically from LB-I Branch, Lok Sabha Secretariat
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid
Economic Zone or Continental Shelf to the territory of another country, and it does not restrain or deny a country’s right which is formed in history and abidingly upheld.”

The Indian official position with regard to oil exploration in SCS has been quite consistent and moderate. S.M. Krishna, the then External Affairs Minister, had stated in 2012 that “India supports freedom of navigation and access to resources in accordance with principles of international law.”

In a reply to Unstarred Question in Rajya Sabha on 17.12.2015, the Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs, Shri V.K. Singh, had stated that “Sovereignty over the reefs, islands and adjacent territorial waters in South China Sea is disputed between many countries in the region. India is not a party to this dispute. China has not given precise geographical definition of its claims in the South China Sea. China is a party to United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Premier Li Keqiang, in his speech at the 10th East Asia Summit in Kuala Lumpur on 22 November 2015, said that the countries directly concerned should peacefully settle sovereign and jurisdictional disputes through friendly consultations and negotiations in accordance with universally recognized principles of International Law, including UNCLOS of 1982.

India’s position on South China Sea issue is consistent and has been reiterated bilaterally and in multilateral fora on several occasions. India supports freedom of navigation in international waters while maintaining that sovereignty issues must be resolved peacefully by the countries which are parties to the dispute in accordance with accepted principles of international law, including the United Nations’ Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982. India has also taken note of the 2002 Declaration of Conduct which inter alia states that ‘the Parties undertake to resolve their territorial and jurisdictional disputes by peaceful means, without resorting to threat or use of force.”

CONCLUSION

Review of the coastal security apparatus in the country is a continuous process. A three tier coastal security ring all along our coast is provided by Marine Police, Indian Coast

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22 A Tale of Two Disputes: China's Irrationality and India's Stakes by Rumel Dahiya and Jagannath Panda, IDSA Policy Brief, June 2015, pp. 4-7,
23 Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2090 dated 17.12.2015
24 Ibid
Guard and Indian Navy. The Government has initiated several measures to strengthen Coastal Security, which include improving surveillance mechanism and enhanced patrolling by following an integrated approach. Joint operational exercises are conducted on regular basis among Navy, Coast Guard, Coastal Police, Customs and others for security of coastal areas including island territories. The intelligence mechanism has also been streamlined through the creation of Joint Operation Centers and multi-agency coordination mechanism. Installation of radars covering the country’s entire coastline and islands is also an essential part of this process. 34 radars stations on the mainland have been activated. Coast Guard Stations along the coastline are set up considering the threat perception, vulnerability analysis and presence of other stations in the vicinity. At present 40 Coast Guard Stations along the coastline including 8 stations in Gujarat are functional\(^{25}\).

\(^{25}\) Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No.2285 dated 11.03.2013