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Army fires US precision guided Excalibur rounds for first time using M777 howitzers

The firing of the Excalibur rounds took place as part of the army's training procedure. A precision guided kit was also tested

By Shaurya Karanbir Gurung

New Delhi: The Indian Army for the first time fired the US origin precision guided Excalibur ammunition using the M777 Ultra Light Howitzer at Pokhran on Monday, boosting its capability to hit targets with accuracy at long distances inside Pakistan.

The firing of the Excalibur rounds took place as part of the army's training procedure. A precision guided kit, which is attached to a shell to give it accuracy when fired, was also tested. Officials said these were the two types of ammunition fired for the first time to hone the army's skills. The precision guided kit has also been procured from the US.

The firing was also witnessed by senior army leadership. A senior official said that the firing analysis is awaited and should come within the next few days.

The army had inducted the Excalibur rounds in October under the fast track procedure owing to the delegation of financial powers to the Vice Chiefs of the three defence services.

The ammunition can be used in all the existing 155mm calibre artillery guns in the army's inventory. These include the M777s, K-9 Vajra, Dhanush and Bofors. The Excalibur is a 'true precision weapon, impacting at a radial miss distance of less than two meters from the target', the manufacturer, Raytheon, a US defence company said on its website. Having a range of 40km to 50 km, the round provides accurate firing in all weather conditions.

The army has procured two types of Excalibur rounds- one which has an accuracy of hitting up to two metres from the target and the other having it at 20 metres. There are more than 600 rounds of both types in the army's inventory. The round can be exploded in the air or after it penetrates a structure. The ammunition provides the army the capability to hit critical targets across the border in Pakistan. This coupled with new guns such as the M777s and K-9 Vajra builds the army's artillery firepower capabilities against its adversaries.

This comes in the backdrop of regular cross border firing between the armies of India and Pakistan, where the latter uses artillery guns. The ammunition is also being used by US forces.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/default-subsec/defence/army-fires-us-precision-guided-excalibur-rounds-for-first-time-using-m777-howitzers/articleshow/72445299.cms>



अब सेना के गोले का निशाना होगा और सटीक

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■ नई दिल्ली : भारतीय सेना ने पहली बार एक्स कैलिबर गोले का परीक्षण किया। पोखरण फील्ड फायरिंग रेंज में एम -777 की तोप से इसे दागा गया। एक्स कैलिबर एक गाइडेड गोला है। इससे लक्ष्य तक इसके पहुंचने की रेंज और सटीकता दोनों बढ़ जाती है। भारतीय सेना के पास 155 एमएम की पांच तरह की आर्टिलरी गन हैं। इनमें एम -777 के अलावा बोफोर्स, अपग्रेडेड सोल्टम, के-9 वज्रा और धनुष शामिल हैं। एक्स कैलिबर गोले की जरूरत काफी वक्त से महसूस की जा रही थी।



दो तरह के हैं ये गोले : दो तरह के एक्स कैलिबर गोले हैं। एक की सटीकता 1-2 मीटर है। दूसरे की सटीकता करीब 20 मीटर है।

भारत ने खरीदे दोनों ही : भारतीय सेना ने अमेरिका से 1-2 मीटर की सटीकता वाले 100 से ज्यादा राउंड और 500 राउंड 20 मीटर सटीकता वाले एक्स कैलिबर अक्टूबर में खरीदे गए हैं।

Arms sales of top Indian firms drop 6.9%, reveals SIPRI report

The sales fell during the one-year period because of fewer orders from the Indian armed forces, showed the figures published on Monday by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

By Rahul Singh

New Delhi: The combined sales of three Indian companies that figure among the world's 100 top arms suppliers stood at \$5.9 billion in 2018, a drop of 6.9% compared to the previous year, according to the latest data released by a leading Stockholm-based think-tank that tracks the weapons industry.

The sales fell during the one-year period because of fewer orders from the Indian armed forces, showed the figures published on Monday by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). The three Indian companies on SIPRI's list of top 100 global arms firms are Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), the Indian Ordnance Factories and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL); their global ranks last year stood at 38, 56 and 62 respectively. They accounted for 1.4% of the arms sales of the top 100 companies. "All three are state-owned and are dependent on domestic demand. Arms sales by Hindustan Aeronautics and Bharat Electronics increased in 2018 — by 3.5 and 5.9% -- respectively. However, these were offset by a 27% fall in the arms sales of Indian Ordnance Factories," the report said.

"The data indicates that the funds spent on capital programmes by the Indian military, which is the captive customer of these three companies, has come down," said Air Vice Marshal Manmohan Bahadur (retd), additional director general, Centre for Air Power Studies. The overall sales of the defence sector's top 100 companies totalled \$420 billion in 2018, an increase of 4.6%. The top 100 firms exclude Chinese companies "due to the lack of data to make a reliable estimate".

Figures show that the US continues to dominate the defence sector, with the top five spots held by American arms giants - Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, and General Dynamics. "These accounted for \$148 billion and 35% of arms sales in 2018 by the top 100 companies. The total sales of US companies in the ranking amounted to \$246 billion, equivalent to 59% of all arms sales. This is an increase of 7.2% compared with 2017," the report said. Eighty of the top arms producers in 2018 were based in the US, Russia and Europe.

The combined arms sales of the 10 Russian companies stood at \$36.2 billion in 2018, a decrease of 0.4% over the previous year. The Russian share in the total sales dipped from 9.7% in 2017 to 8.6% in 2018. "Arms sales by Almaz-Antey, the largest arms producer in Russia, continued to grow in 2018. This increase was due not only to domestic demand, but also to growth in sales to other countries, particularly of the S-400 air defence system," said Alexandra Kuimova, a researcher for Sipri's arms and military expenditure programme. In October 2018, India ordered five advanced S-400 missile systems worth ~39,000 crore. Arms sales by UK-based companies fell 4.8% to \$35.1 billion but were the highest in Europe. At \$23.2 billion, the sales of French companies were the second-highest in Europe. "The growth in arms sales of the six French companies in the list was mainly the result of a 30% increase in sales by Dassault Aviation," said Diego Lopes da Silva, also a researcher for SIPRI'S arms and military expenditure programme. India ordered 36 Rafale jets from France in September 2016 which are expected to arrive by September 2022.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/arms-sales-of-top-indian-firms-drop-6-9-reveals-sipri-report/story-TKhKjGhrmVaabIJjacPfRI.html>



Tue, 10 Dec 2019

Self-Reliance: Indian Navy's new mantra

By Captain DK Sharma (Retd)

The Indian Navy has always been a champion of indigenisation and has led the three Services when it comes to 'Make in India'. The 'Innovation and Indigenisation' pavilion put up for the Navy Day this year stood out in many respects.

In addition to many start-ups and MSMEs which displayed the sterling indigenisation efforts spearheaded by the Navy, what caught attention was how the naval community itself has come together to solve problems which outside agencies can't or won't solve. These were not limited to minor modifications or innovations which are expected from the users, but indeed world class products which are way ahead of comparable products in the global arena – or some which have no comparable products at all.

Leading the innovation pavilion in the very first stall was Commodore Arun Golaya, a serving Naval officer currently pursuing his doctoral research from TERI School of Advanced Studies. He along with his PhD guide, Dr Yogeshwaran Nithyanandam, displayed an advanced ship detection algorithm which can automatically detect ships even from low-resolution satellite imagery. The software, named 'PALLAVI', is an acronym for 'Precision Algorithm Leveraging Logical Analysis of Varied Inputs'. "It is just a coincidence that my younger daughter's name is Pallavi", said the officer with a mischievous grin.

The software demonstrated was able to extract positions of ships, and even small boats lesser than a single pixel in the image, in a matter of seconds. The unique feature being that even low-resolution wide-swath satellite imagery can be used such that vast ocean spaces can be covered in an instant. Such a system is reportedly currently unparalleled in the world.

Weapons and Electronics Systems Engineering Department (WESEE), the Indian Navy's in-house research arm next displayed many cutting edge products, including indigenous Weapon Control Systems, which have been developed to substitute imports. These have been developed in-house at a fraction of the import costs.

Retired Naval officers, Commanders Chandel and Chandra are heading their own defence start-ups after leaving the Navy. Being well aware of the user requirements, the officers have been able to develop products that the Navy actually needs. On display were advanced conformal antennas, submarine masts, periscopes and spread spectrum communication devices.

"This would enable users to communicate messages and exchange positions using a normal mobile phone even in the absence of mobile connectivity" explained Commander Chandel displaying a device smaller than a few inches. He added that ranges in excess of 40 km have been demonstrated when tracking helicopters using the technology. Implications go much beyond the Navy and the device can easily be used for civil applications – including at the time of natural disasters when mobile connectivity may be affected.

Other Services will benefit as well, especially in remote posts where connectivity is a problem. To enhance the communication range even further, a small tethered drone was demonstrated which can be used to increase the range of the communication device.

Captain Nikunj Parashar, a retired Merchant Navy officer, has manufactured the tethered drone which can fly virtually endlessly as the power supply is fed to the drone using a small cable from the ground. He proudly said that his father had retired from the Indian Navy many years back and that his association with the Navy has continued.

In addition to drones, their firm manufactures fully autonomous unmanned boats and control systems. A unique 'boat-in-a-box' concept can transform any boat for autonomous operations by fitment of a fly-away control kit. In addition to meeting the needs of the Indian Navy, the product has already been exported to many countries.

The Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visited the innovations proudly shown by the Chief of Naval Staff. Self-reliance for self-reliance appears to be the emerging Naval mantra.

<https://bharatshakti.in/self-reliance-indian-navys-new-mantra/>

China at sea: For Delhi, Shiyan incident is a reminder to invest more in maritime scientific research

With Beijing expanding strategic purpose of its marine research to Andamans, Delhi and its partners should coordinate maritime diplomacy

By C. Raja Mohan

Recent reports that the Indian Navy “chased out” a Chinese vessel — Shiyan 1— from the Andaman Sea should draw Delhi’s attention to Beijing’s growing maritime scientific capabilities and its ambitious research agenda for distant waters. Shiyan 1 is operated by the Chinese Academy of Sciences and is part of Beijing’s growing marine research fleet that now stands at about 50 vessels.

Beijing’s expansive investment in marine scientific research is very much part of its rise as a great maritime power and dovetails into its regional strategies. After leveraging marine science diplomacy to good effect in the South China Sea over the last many years, China has begun to extend it to the Indian Ocean. Last year, Shiyan-3 invited Pakistan scientists to join a research expedition in the Arabian Sea. Delhi must expect to see more of this in the Indian Ocean littoral.

At his press conference last week, the Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Karambir Singh confirmed that Shiyan 1 was operating near Port Blair and had neither taken prior permission from India nor did it inform the relevant Indian authorities of its plans. Admiral Singh said “our stand is that if you have to do anything in our region, you notify us or take our permission”. Reacting to the Indian statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing said that China’s research vessel Shiyan 1 was indeed “conducting acoustic propagation experiments and hydrologic environment measurements on the high seas of the Indian Ocean”.

But, Beijing insisted that Shiyan 1, “did not conduct any operations in the Indian EEZ (exclusive economic zone) during the whole process, and only sailed through the Indian EEZ on the way to and from the experimental area”. The foreign office in Beijing added that throughout the ship’s voyage, the Indian navy aircraft followed it with warnings and its crew also replied in accordance with international practice.

The issue is not a technical one about the provisions of the law of the sea. It is about China’s growing maritime scientific ambition. To be sure, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) favours freedom of marine scientific research. It also lets coastal states decide on granting permission for marine scientific research by other entities in their exclusive economic zones.

Beijing is not contesting that provision. It says it is merely asserting its rights. As the foreign ministry in Beijing put it, “China has always exercised the freedom of scientific research on the high seas in accordance with the law and fully respects the jurisdiction of relevant coastal states over their scientific research activities in the waters under their jurisdiction”. Beijing also expressed hope that Delhi will “take a correct view of China’s marine scientific research activities and avoid disturbing normal and lawful maritime activities.”

There are many grey areas in the law of the sea, including on the conduct of maritime scientific research in the waters that other states have sovereign control over. Great powers, rising or incumbent, tend to interpret international law to suit their interests and convenience. Weaker ones have no way of enforcing their rights under UNCLOS. More broadly, it is difficult to separate marine scientific research for peaceful and military purposes.

Shiyan 1 now operates as part of the so-called “national fleet” for marine scientific research. Earlier this decade, China brought together the marine research activities of multiple governmental agencies, ministries and commercial entities like oil companies under one administrative framework. The objective is to minimise duplication, enhance coordination and closely align research with larger maritime goals, civilian and military, set by the party-state.

In the past, China’s marine science research was confined to near seas in the Western Pacific. It now extends to seas all around the world. About half of the marine scientific fleet is reportedly devoted to distant seas. Experts on the Chinese navy identify at least four broad objectives for the national science fleet.

First, to map the sea-bed resources of the world’s oceans. China has internationally sanctioned licences to explore sea-bed mining in a few areas including in the South-western Indian Ocean. Second, to develop large ocean databases that facilitate Chinese naval operations by providing accurate maritime domain awareness. Third, to use its national fleet for science diplomacy that adds to the Chinese toolkit of building productive maritime and naval cooperation with coastal states across the world. It also lets China set the rules for global marine scientific research.

All major naval powers through history have sought to leverage marine scientific research to broader national objectives, both civilian and military. The Indian Navy too has modest marine scientific research capabilities and has deployed them for diplomatic purposes in the Indian Ocean.

Although, it was a late starter in the maritime domain, China now scores over the US, let alone India, in the scale, intensity, and strategic purpose of its marine scientific research programmes. For Delhi, the Shiyan incident is a useful reminder on the need to invest more in maritime scientific research.

While strengthening its own national capabilities, Delhi needs to deepen its scientific cooperation with its partners in the maritime domain. The annual summit with Japan later this week and the dialogue between the foreign and defence ministers of India and the US in Washington next week offer a good opportunity to put maritime scientific research high on the agenda.

While their national structures may not allow the kind of centralised strategic framework that China has put in place, India and its partners, including the US, Japan, Australia and France, should develop mechanisms for collaborative research in maritime scientific domain. India and its partners must also consider better coordination between their respective maritime science diplomacy initiatives in the region. Such partnerships would provide a sound basis for eventual engagement with China on marine scientific research.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/india-china-maritime-diplomacy-indian-navy-chinese-ship-on-indian-water-6158812/>

India, Australia negotiations for military cooperation nearly over

The people said one of the biggest developments in the security dialogue between India and Australia was New Delhi's assumption of a larger role in the Indo-Pacific

By Rezaul H Laskar

New Delhi: India and Australia have almost concluded negotiations on an agreement for reciprocal access to military facilities for logistics support that is expected to be signed during Prime Minister Scott Morrison's visit in January, people familiar with the matter said on Monday.

The proposed Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA) figured in the third "2+2" or combined dialogue of the Indian and Australian foreign and defence secretaries in New Delhi on Monday, the people cited above said.

"It's almost done and there are a few things that need to be worked out by the bureaucracies on both sides. We expect the agreement will be signed during the prime minister's visit in January, when he will address the Raisina Dialogue and hold a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi," said a person who declined to be identified.

The people said one of the biggest developments in the security dialogue between India and Australia was New Delhi's assumption of a larger role in the Indo-Pacific. "There's no downside to this. It will boost cooperation between the two sides in security, defence, counter-terrorism and trade," said a second person who too declined to be named.

With joint exercises and defence cooperation between India and Australia on the upswing, the MLSA will remove the need for protracted negotiations for reciprocal access to logistics support every time a manoeuvre is held, the people said. Monday's dialogue briefly discussed the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan though the Kashmir issue didn't come up, the people said.

Foreign secretary Vijay Gokhale and defence secretary Ajay Kumar led the Indian side, while the Australian delegation was led by their counterparts Frances Adamson and Greg Moriarty.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-australia-negotiations-for-military-cooperation-nearly-over/story-XicsqPJtGnaclD6bs5biVO.html>

हिंद महासागर क्षेत्र में गश्त करेंगे भारत और फ्रांस

नई दिल्ली, (भाषा): फ्रांसीसी नौसेना के एक शीर्ष कमांडर ने सोमवार को कहा कि भारतीय और फ्रांसीसी नौसेनाएं दक्षिणी हिंद महासागर में बड़े पैमाने पर अवैध रूप से मछली पकड़ने पर अंकुश लगाने समेत अपने सामरिक हितों की रक्षा करने के लिए वहां संयुक्त गश्त शुरू करेंगी। हिंद महासागर में तैनात फ्रांसीसी सैन्यबल के संयुक्त कमांडर वाइस एडमिरल डिडियर मालेटेरे ने यह भी कहा कि दोनों नौसेनाएं इस क्षेत्र में संचालन में बेहतर तालमेल के वास्ते गोपनीय सूचनाएं साझा करने के लिए अगले साल के प्रारंभ में एक करार पर दस्तखत करेंगी।

फ्रांसीसी कमांडर ने मीडिया के साथ बातचीत में इस क्षेत्र में चीन द्वारा अपना समुद्री प्रभाव फैलाने को लेकर चिंता प्रकट की। चीन ने श्रीलंका के हंबनटोटा

● फ्रांसीसी सैन्यबल के संयुक्त कमांडर वाइस एडमिरल डिडियर मालेटेरे ने दी जानकारी



बंदरगाह, पाकिस्तान के ग्वादर बंदरगाह में सामरिक अड्डे तथा होर्न ऑफ अफ्रीका के जिबूती में सैन्य इकाई स्थापित की है।

फ्रांसीसी कमांडर ने कहा, 'हम अब दक्षिण हिंद महासागर में संयुक्त गश्त की तैयारी कर रहे हैं। भारत की पी8आई समुद्री निगरानी विमान को तैनात करने

की योजना है।' मालेटेरे ने कहा कि करीब पांच महीने पहले होर्मुज की खाड़ी के दक्षिण में दो टैंकरों पर हमले के बाद भारत ने इस समुद्री मार्ग की रक्षा के लिए वहां अपना एक युद्धपोत तैनात करने का निर्णय लिया था। इसी प्रकार, फ्रांसी सरकार उस क्षेत्र में एक जंगी जहाज स्थायी रूप से तैनात

करेगा। हिंद महासागर में होर्मुज की खाड़ी एक ऐसा अहम क्षेत्र हैं जहां से दुनिया की तेल आपूर्ति का पांचवां हिस्सा गुजरता है।

गोपनीय सूचनाएं साझा करने पर केंद्रित प्रस्तावित भारत फ्रांस संधि के बारे में फ्रांसीसी कमांडर ने कहा कि फ्रांस द्वारा किसी गैर नाटो देश के साथ ऐसा करार करना एक बिरला अवसर होगा। उन्होंने यह भी कहा कि बेल्ट एंड रोड इनिशिएटिव के पीछे चीन का बड़ा सामरिक उद्देश्य है, इससे पता चलता है कि वह इस महत्वाकांक्षी योजना के माध्यम से इस क्षेत्र में अपने आक्रामक रूख को आवरण देने का प्रयास कर रहा है। उन्होंने कहा, 'चीन की अपना अड्डा बनाने की योजना है जैसा कि आप जानते हैं कि श्रीलंका के हंबनटोटा, पाकिस्तान तथा जिबूती में है।'

India & France to start joint patrolling mission of Indian Ocean Region

New Delhi: After holding their biggest-ever Varuna naval exercise off Goa and Djibouti in May, India and France will soon launch a joint naval patrolling mission in the Indian Ocean Region to protect their strategic interests, said a top French military officer on Monday.

The navies from the two countries will also early next year ink a pact to share classified information for better operational cooperation in the region, said vice admiral Didier Malterre, commander of the French joint forces in IOR. “We are preparing to carry out joint patrol in southern Indian Ocean. India is planning to deploy its P-8I (long-range maritime patrol) aircraft,” he said. He also expressed concern over China expanding its maritime influence in the IOR.

Malterre said China had taken to deploying more and more assets in the IOR including destroyers, nuclear submarines and conventional submarines to ostensibly check piracy. “But submarines are not the best tool to fight piracy. So, there is another ambition behind it and we know that, ” he said, indicating China had a bigger strategic aim behind its Belt and Road Initiative and the Hambantota port could well be used for “dual” purposes.

On the proposed India-French pact to facilitate sharing of classified information, he said it would be a rare occasion for his country to have such an arrangement with a non-NATO country. With the two countries sharing the same political objectives in the IOR, the Indian and French navies have expanded the level and scope of their joint exercises to feature aircraft carriers, submarines and amphibious warships on a regular basis.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/india-france-to-start-joint-patrolling-mission-of-indian-ocean-region/articleshow/72449168.cms>

France to ramp up joint patrols and operations with India

In 2020, a P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft of the Indian Navy will go to Reunion Island, a French possession in the Indian Ocean, to conduct joint patrols with French frigates in strategic areas such as the Mozambique Channel

By Rezaul H Laskar

New Delhi: France will ramp up joint patrols and operations with India's armed forces in the Indian Ocean to protect the interests of both countries, counter illegal activities and ensure an international rules-based order, a top French commander said on Monday.

Vice Admiral Didier Maleterre, joint commander of French forces in the Indian Ocean and the United Arab Emirates, indicated that China's presence at a string of civilian and military facilities, including Hambantota in Sri Lanka, Gwadar in Pakistan and Djibouti, has security implications for the Indian Ocean region.

Maleterre, here for discussions with his Indian counterparts, told journalists that besides securing sea lanes of communication used by merchant vessels, it is essential to protect undersea cables, including those in waters off Sri Lanka, which are used for 85% of the worldwide web.

In 2020, a P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft of the Indian Navy will go to Reunion Island, a French possession in the Indian Ocean, to conduct joint patrols with French frigates in strategic areas such as the Mozambique Channel, he said.

The two sides are also looking at joint patrols and operations in the north western Indian Ocean, including the Gulf of Aden, and greater coordination in the Strait of Hormuz, which saw several attacks on tankers this year.

There are also plans for a joint exercise with amphibious assets off the Goa coast next year and a humanitarian assistance and disaster relief exercise in south India in 2021.

"Joint patrols with India is a new concept. We don't have so many assets (in the region) and the agenda for next year will be very important," Maleterre said. France will work with strategic partners such as India, the US and Australia to achieve its "very clear strategic and political objective" that the rules-based order remains intact and is respected, he added.

Maleterre explained France's focus on the Indo-Pacific by citing two factors – the presence of 1.5 million French citizens on island territories, and the country's exclusive economic zone of more than 11 million sq km, the second largest in the world, with 93% or 9 million sq km in the Indo-Pacific.

China, he said, wasn't "hiding anything about its ambitions" behind the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which is a strategy to protect sea lanes of communications and to extend its influence in eastern African countries.

"They have a plan to have bases in Hambantota, Sri Lanka, in Pakistan, in Djibouti and in other sites. For the French, we want the international law and order to be respected," Maleterre said.

Noting that China first deployed its warships in the Indian Ocean in 2008 for the ostensible reason of tackling piracy, he said Beijing had gone on to deploy "more and more assets", including destroyers and conventional and nuclear submarines. "These assets are not the best tool to fight against piracy, there is another ambition behind it, and we know that," he said.

“Part of the cooperation with India is to be able to protect our interests together with the US and Japan and the British,” he said, adding France believes the ports of Hambantota and Gwadar have a “dual use”.

France intends to have a secure link for exchange of classified information between its military headquarters in Abu Dhabi and the Indian Navy in Delhi. “This illustrates the level of confidence in our relationship. It is very rare to have such links with non-NATO countries to exchange classified information,” he said.

“We want to conduct joint operations with India for maritime surveillance and perhaps more sensitive (matters). For that we need classified communications. I know the Indian Navy is working on that. So we have the will, the objective is to be inter-operable with India and we are on the good track,” Maletterre said.

Referring to the importance of undersea communications cables, he warned of covert operations to cut these cables and said this could be a “big nightmare”. Repairs could take up to two or three weeks and during this period, businesses and communications would be affected.

“We talk about commercial flows and tankers, that’s strategic. But all the internet under the sea is a very strategic matter and we need to protect our cables as well,” he said.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/france-to-ramp-up-joint-patrols-and-operations-with-india/story-BIJr70sMRC5kacDUy2pn4I.html>

Thailand to track submarine transferred to Myanmar by Indian Navy

Myanmar's acquisition comes amid a flurry of submarine activity in the Bay of Bengal

The deputy chief of the Royal Thai Navy has said his country will monitor Myanmar's use of a diesel-electric submarine being transferred by the Indian Navy. The ship is the first submarine that will enter Myanmar military service.

Vice Admiral Prachachart Sirisawat told the *Bangkok Post* on Monday that the Kilo class submarine "is scheduled to start operations from December 24" with Myanmar.

The *Bangkok Post* reported that the command of the Royal Thai Navy that oversees the Andaman Sea has been ordered to keep a watch over the activities of the Myanmar Navy submarine.

Myanmar plans to use its submarine for "security and protection of its maritime interests", Prachachart told the *Bangkok Post*. Prachachart claimed Myanmar was "going to increase its military efficiency", referring to negotiations with Russia to buy more Kilo class submarines.

The Kilo class submarine India is transferring to Myanmar is the erstwhile INS Sindhuvir, a ship sold by the Soviet Union in 1988. The INS Sindhuvir was refurbished by Hindustan Shipyard Limited in Visakhapatnam. India and Myanmar had agreed to train personnel for the new submarine fleet at the submarine training base at Visakhapatnam.

The *Times of India* reported on Monday that the Myanmar Navy would use the Sindhuvir primarily as a training platform from March-April 2020.

Myanmar's acquisition of a submarine from India comes amid a flurry of submarine activity in the Bay of Bengal. Both Bangladesh and Thailand have, in recent years, signed up to buy submarines from Beijing. This is in addition to continuing Chinese forays.

In 2016, Bangladesh took delivery of its first submarines—two ageing Ming class vessels that were purchased in 2013 at a cost of \$203 million. Bangladesh is also building a base at Cox's Bazar for the submarine fleet, with China expected to assist in its construction.

In 2017, the Royal Thai Navy signed \$390 million contract with a Chinese shipyard to buy a S-26T class diesel-electric submarine, a new-generation vessel. The Royal Thai Navy is seeking funds to buy two more S-26T submarines.

While economic ties between Thailand and Myanmar have improved, maritime boundary disputes and activities of Karen rebels on their border have strained ties occasionally.

<https://www.theweek.in/news/world/2019/12/09/thailand-to-track-submarine-transferred-to-myanmar-to-indian-navy.html>