



SAGARDHARA

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MUSINGS OF MONSOON MARITIME SERIES

MMI - India and UNCLOS: Historical Background, Engagement with International Maritime Laws and its interaction with domestic Laws

MMII - Leadership Lessons of Indian Naval Icons - Adm RL Pereira and other Luminaries

MMIII - Ancient Indian Military Maritime Expeditions

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Director's Desk

It is with immense pride that I present you the latest edition of our Newsletter “Sagardhara” for the year 2023, a publication that truly embodies the rich legacy, insights, and forward-looking spirit of Maritime History Society. Also, This magazine is more than a collection of articles, it's a testament to the dedication, expertise, and historical pride that defines our maritime community.

This edition is filled with invaluable contributions from distinguished authors and researchers. The first lecture titled “India and UNCLOS: Historical Background, Engagement with International Maritime Laws and its interaction with domestic Laws was presented by Dr Pooja Bhatt. In her talk, the speaker discussed the Indian perspective on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), its historical significance, and its influence on India's maritime laws.

The second lecture of the Monsoon Musing was delivered by Cmde (Dr) Srikant Kesnur, VSM (Retd) on the “Leadership Lessons of Indian Naval Icons - Adm RL Pereira and other Luminaries”. This talk provided deep insights into the leadership lessons from our naval icon Adm RL Pereira, sharing anecdotes and reflections that inspire. Cmde Srikant Kesnur (Retd), in his talk highlighted the significant influence, leadership qualities, and deep commitment to the Navy and the nation. The speaker highlighted upon the need for broader recognition of naval heroes beyond just a few notable figures.

The final lecture of the series was by Mr. Venkatesh Rangan on Ancient Indian Military Maritime Expeditions which took us on a journey back to the Chola and Chalukyan naval campaigns, offering a perspective that underlines the depth of India's maritime heritage.

Despite having a limited strength, MHS is undertaking major projects like National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC), Lothal, Nausena Vatika Museum at Lucknow, setting up maritime museum at Port Blair and collaboration with Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation to include Naval dockyard, Ballard Bunder Museum in Mumbai Darshan Ho-Ho bus route.

I am confident that Sagardhara 2023 will not only serve as an inspiration to all who read it but will also strengthen our collective resolve to build on our proud heritage. Let this edition be a reminder of our shared mission and a catalyst for continued excellence in every endeavour.

Monsoon Musing I

India and UNCLOS: Historical Background, Engagement with International Maritime Laws and its interaction with domestic Laws

Dr. Pooja Bhatt

I am quite honoured and humbled to be here and speaking to you on UNCLOS. It's like preaching to a choir, however, I am going to take the next half an hour to 40 minutes of your time to tell an Indian perspective or my own perspective on UNCLOS and how it deals with India's own domestic laws on maritime issues.

But before I start, I have to mention that I am humbled more so because the location, INHS Aswini is something also dear to me because I, myself, am a daughter of a nursing officer and I think my mother would be very proud today to see her daughter speaking in a, military hospital auditorium and on an issue of, military and defence.

Before I start, I would like to give some disclaimers, there would be three of them. First of all, I am not a maritime lawyer, I am a maritime scholar. I study defence and strategic studies with quite interest and it has been a long time interaction within defence issues.

So, whatever I am going to speak about today is my appreciation of the fact that anything that we do in the maritime domain in terms of defence policies cannot be read without maritime laws. With that idea and view, I started studying international maritime laws and domestic maritime laws. And now I see that people here are already engaging in UNCLOS and various aspects of it and if we have any hydrographers or anyone from that branch who has interacted in/on UNCLOS, it would be a great honour to interact with you after this session is over and I would love to know your views about this presentation.

Second disclaimer is this presentation is a part of my larger project that I am looking for in the future about India and UNCLOS. So, there are certain parts of the projects, slides, which are not complete and our interaction here would help me complete those entire pictures.

And last disclaimer would be that while I am speaking throughout the slides, I will leave out certain strands here and there, in a hope that towards the end of it, I will bring them all together to make a larger picture of India and UNCLOS.

So, the purpose of this talk is to familiarise us, as a maritime community, about the importance and relevance, and these two are separate words. Importance and relevance of International Maritime Laws and also highlight that India was not only engaged in shaping UNCLOS, 1982 over the decades, but also its own domestic laws were shaped by it. Maritime domain is governed by certain laws and as seafarers and marine community, it is our responsibility to educate ourselves and familiarise ourselves with the issues and provisions covered by this law.

So, my structure of the talk looks like this. First, I will cover the Origin of UNCLOS I, II, III because UNCLOS 1982 is the third part of it, as most of you would know. Then the second part would be talking about India's own contribution in the making of the convention. Then, how India's own domestic laws were framed by it and shaped by it. Next I shall come to share two more incidents which were quite recent but they both also highlight why international maritime laws and India's own maritime laws should be

read more carefully by everyone who is a seafaring, within the seafaring community and anyone who's trying to understand maritime issues. Lastly, there are some issues between UNCLOS and MZI Act of India and I would like to highlight them here because I believe that more people will think on these issues, more solutions we might arrive at, and these remain still unresolved, and I will end with final thoughts.

What was at the heart of UNCLOS negotiations and why did it start?

Fisheries.

Around 1940s-50s, a lot of countries were fighting amongst themselves to gain more and more claim on the maritime domain because beyond the 3-mile zone, within the maritime domain, rest of the waters were governed by the freedom of the seas. So, anyone with the right wherewithal, with a distinct fleet could, encroach the waters in the high seas, and there were a lot of cases going on in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. Few of them, I have mentioned here, Anglo Norwegian Fisheries Case, 1935, which actually led to a lot of international laws later. Another case is the North Sea Continental Shelf Case, which brought out another aspect of maritime domain, which was the undersea- underwater

resources that were available and how countries, in future, were going to fight for it and that started somewhere in 1960s and 70s, between Germany and Norway when they started fighting that who would have the continental shelf, which was basically a run for fisheries and a run for resources which led to these negotiations because the rich countries of the world, the developed countries of the world had the wherewithal with all, the losers were the developing and underdeveloped countries. With that kind of understanding, the countries of the world came together to bring about a convention, where not only the developed countries were considered, but also the voice of the developing and underdeveloped world was also considered.

Meanwhile, the world was fighting on fisheries and resources, here in India we had our own fights going on. So, before we got independence under the British India, we had several fisheries acts and laws going on between kingdoms, because the initial 1897 act, I have to mention about Arthashastra also, because it is very important to understand that Chanakya mentions that the coastal state would have certain limit of, you know, maritime domain under its jurisdiction and I have paraphrased the entire thing, to say that the coastal state can have some fishing

rights over it. The Arthashastra never mentions the limit of that delimitation, but it does mention the rights of coastal states in the maritime domain.

Coming forward to British India, 1897 was the first time that British India understood that we need to bring the fisheries factor within the jurisdiction and then the Indian Fisheries Act came up in 1897. Same act was carried forward in 1935, when the Government India Act came and it was decided that the 3-mile rule which was followed all over the world, based on the Cannon Shot Rule and we all know here that a cannon shot had a maximum limit of 3 miles and that was the reason why, countries, coastal countries had jurisdiction over the water for only 3 miles. So, that was kept as the 3-mile limit under the Government of India 1935 Act.

So, the entire game was at that time going behind the fisheries and resources in the maritime domain and this led to adoption of Article 297 of Indian Constitution which was implemented in 1945, that said, "All lands, minerals and other things of value underlying the ocean within the territorial waters of India shall vest in the Union and be held for the purposes of the Union." And let me remind you that at the time, the limit was only three nautical miles, it was around the 1960s the

limits were revised up to 6 nautical miles in the maritime domain.

Coming to UNCLOS, 1958, the rich and the poor countries came together and finally they agreed on four conventions, and these are important conventions and that is why I wanted to spell it out for you. First is the Convention On The Territorial Sea And Contiguous Zone that came into force and still the territorial limits were not decided, that is, the zone was mentioned but nothing much was said about it.

Second convention that came into function was the Convention On The Continental Shelf. It was led by the developing countries because they wanted to explore and exploit the resources of the continental shelf and it was totally a developing world idea.

Third convention that came into picture was Convention On The High Seas, where they said that what is beyond the territorial waters would be considered as the High seas and it would be free for all to be used, free for all to use was the idea for which High seas were contemplated.

Last was again, Fishing and Conservation Living Resources In The High Seas was another reason why the fourth convention came into picture. So, the idea of saying all this is you can make it out that this is

completely a first world idea of seeing how waters should be governed and how it should benefit them. Understandably, India did not become a party to any of the conventions in 1958.

Second time, in the 1960s, the negotiations started again, and it was basically turned unsuccessful because none of the conditions were fulfilled. Countries wanted the limitations of territorial waters to be fixed, high seas to be clarified better, but none of them were achieved. And the second convention was basically a dud.

The negotiations for UNCLOS III started somewhere in 1970 and this was the first time that India and the developing world come onboard to decide on the rulings of how the negotiations would be done and this, as an Indian I am proud to say that in UNCLOS III, India has been sole running voice for the global south since then. Most of the conventions that UNCLOS III adopted, and I will be talking more about it, the conventions adopted in 1982 were voiced very strongly by Indian representatives at the UNCLOS. So, it's a very proud moment to say that. India was a solid member for UNCLOS III. Finally, after 11 sessions between 1973 to 1982 and several abstention and everything the UNCLOS III was adopted in 1982. However, there were still developed countries like

the US, UK, Germany and some other countries like Turkey, Venezuela that had some maritime claims and rights during that time that did not sign the convention. However, it was very well received by the developing and the underdeveloped countries of the world and most of them became party to it.

UNCLOS as you know, it is a constitution of the seas. It is a massive document. It is very well written. I will be talking about it more and it has 320 articles, covering a whole range of maritime issues that we see on an everyday basis during our interaction in the maritime domain. And it was during UNCLOS III that the 200-mile nautical zone, EEZ, concept came for the first time.

Before I move forward, I have to talk about India's own contribution to the negotiations, as the Indian Navy's contribution. Apart from the big member team that was present every year for the negotiations during the next eleven sessions in UNCLOS III, two names I could right now find out were Rear Admiral Francis Fraser, who was the chief hydrographer. He started when he was a Commodore and then he retired as a Rear Admiral. And similarly, Cmde. O. P. Sharma, who was a JAG in the Indian Navy. They were two of the most important voices when it came to voicing India's requirements. So, before I

move forward, I thought it would be only wise to talk a little bit more about both of these personalities.

Because I understand that the senior members of the Indian navy are still aware of these names and their involvement in the UNCLOS. It is for the benefit of the newer generation and the younger public that I would want to talk more about R. Adm. Francis Fraser and Cmde. O. P. Sharma.

So, R. Adm. Frank Fraser had considerable experience in the Indian Navy before he became a Hydrographic Surveyor in 1949. As a Lieutenant he was appointed in IN surveying ship investigator in 1950. Then, later on he was also attached with the Royal Navy surveying ships, Frankman, he went on to becoming Hydrographic Surveying Officer in Indian Navy Surveying Ship Sutlej, and an Investigator again and finally he became Executive Officer in INS Ranjit, where he was also heading the surveying missions.

He had a meritorious service, and he was highly awarded. He was awarded AVSM in 1972, he was also given Padma Shri in 1982 for his prestigious services to the nation. But the most important thing is he was elected as the president of the Directing Committee in the International Hydrographic Bureau in Monte Carlo in 1982, where he was heading the Directing Committee for

the next five years. This is the obituary that I found, sadly, from International Hydrographic Review, Monaco and I did not find it mentioned, at least open sources in India. So, I thought it is worthwhile to mention his name and his contribution in this talk and this project. R. Adm. Francis Fraser died of a cardiac arrest in Delhi on April 1st, 1990, after a brief illness.

Now, Cmde. O. P. Sharma, he was the first Judge Advocate General in the Indian Navy and reputed by the Government of India as the member of Indian Delegation in the third UN Conference on the Laws of the Sea. He attended all the sessions between 1975 to 1982. And when the UN Convention was formally adopted, he retired as a Rear Admiral and was decorated with a Crescent of India, which is AVSM and VSM. One of the most important contributions is, he fought for India's maximum interest. He regularly talks in the talks and speeches and sessions at UNCLOS. He used to talk about why and how the Government of India had the right to restrict what we call the Freedom of Navigation in the Exclusive Economic Zone of the country to ensure peace and security of the country, given the geopolitical atmosphere of that time. But all these provisions were rejected during the negotiations of the final draft of UNCLOS because

the USA and certain other countries did not like it. And that is when Adm. O. P. Sharma argued, and it is famously said that *"India had an obligation to modify its relevant domestic legislations after India formally ratified the treaty."* I think that gave a thought of ratifying domestic laws to suit our India's own interests.

So finally when in 1982 UNCLOS was adopted and what it did was what the free seas were beyond the territorial waters, it divided them by maritime domain into nine big zones. We have internal waters, territorial waters, EEZ. So, this map should be helpful, but then beyond the territorial waters, we have Exclusive Economy Contiguous Zone, for 12 nautical miles, Exclusive Economic Zone for 200 nautical miles, beyond that we have high seas and also the undersea domain was demarcated by the UNCLOS from territorial water onwards, you have the Continental Shelf up to 200 nautical miles, give and take till 350 nautical miles for uncertain technical reason. Beyond that the water beneath the High Seas is called the Area. Why I am mentioning these names is because all of these zones are now governed by different laws. So, the area is governed by the International Seabed Authority, we have all heard about it. The Continental Shelf is governed by the Convention on the

Legality of Continental Shelf (CLCS). These are all domains are now governed- the maritime domain in terms is no more ungovernable. All these zones have their own legislations, which we as maritime scholars and, you know, seafarers should be aware of.

It also provided for Archipelagic Waters and Sea Lanes; Straits used for International Navigation. So, these were 9 zones those were that is now mentioned in UNCLOS and any issue pertaining to these 9 zones, we can pick up UNCLOS or open up our laptops, you know, download UNCLOS manual and we can see that each of

these issues can be addressed using UNCLOS convention. Apart from that what UNCLOS does as Director of MHS had also rightly mentioned. It does two things: it establishes the legal status of the maritime domain and their zones and also gives the coastal states some rights over certain domains, such as the territorial waters, as good as under India's own jurisdiction, we have our own sovereignty over it, however, when we move towards Contiguous Zone and beyond, India has sovereign rights. So, there is a difference between sovereignty and sovereign rights, and it is very important that we are aware of it. When it comes to the Contiguous Zone one of the things to be

considered is that India has complete jurisdiction only on four issues: custom, fiscal, immigration and sanitary. Apart from that, all issues of the Contiguous Zones are treated as good as the High Seas and it is on the jurisdiction of the coastal states, how they want to govern it. This as a point is important because, this is a strand that I can pull apart later on to discuss, how India can use this clause in its own favour.

Then we are talking about these laws being applicable not just on commercial vessels but also on warships in certain conditions. Also, the definition of warship is given in UNCLOS. Any vessel cannot be termed as a warship, there has to be a certain condition that a ship has to fulfil to be called a warship. Why this is important is because when I bring up this case study, that fact becomes very relevant. It also provides privileges and immunities to the coastal states and their seafarers in terms of when it comes to settlement of disputes. What is more important, I want to highlight here are two issues about the emerging new and emerging issues in the maritime domain. Now we are talking a lot about submarine cables, the protection of submarine pipelines, maritime scientific research, piracy, protection of maritime environment, development of artificial islands. These are the

issues we are seeing right now, and these are the issues already addressed in the 1982 UNCLOS. So, if we find any legalities in these issues right now, we can very well go back to UNCLOS 1982, and we might find most of the solutions within it. Another important thing that UNCLOS also brought through was how these resources like fisheries and minerals were governed. There is a special section in the UNCLOS, which demarcates the coastal states, the land locked states, the developing countries and how they want to govern, how they should govern the maritime resources, how much they can keep, how much they can, how much should donate it back for the larger good of the world. So that kind of equitable justification was done under UNCLOS and its very important because most it is most of the developed countries such as Germany and others which hold most of the patent when it comes to undersea technologies and undersea, wherewithal that they have, and deputing countries end up generally getting nothing. So, it's very important that UNCLOS also envisioned at that time how these underdeveloped countries and developing countries would be getting the part of undersea resources and fisheries to their favour in the coming years.

I also briefly mentioned the Archipelagic state and it was a

revolutionary concept which was pushed by Indonesia, that you all would know, during that time because Indonesia did not see itself as having a clear baseline. So, they just wanted to gain more and more waters under its jurisdiction, basically, so that they can cover as much water as they can because of the spread of Indonesia as an island. So, Archipelagic basically started as a concept for Indonesia and the countries which are following it. But before becoming an archipelagic, there is a technical justification, that UNCLOS also says that a country has to provide before it starts claiming itself as Archipelagic. Because there has to be a ratio of 9:1 of water to land ratio and if it fulfils that kind of ratio in its territorial zone, the country can claim itself as an archipelagic state. So, this concept is now used by some other countries to justify their own baselines.

In this regard, contribution of great, K. M. Panikkar has to be mentioned here, that it was very, forthseeing of him in 1950s and 60s, when he said *"the distinct water fishing fleets had the rights to take the resources of the developing coastal states to augment the calorie and protein intake of their already well-fed population."* This shows two things, not only that he considered that the developed countries are eating away the protein and

resources of the developing countries by overfishing, but he also made it a point that distinct fishing fleets were a thing that time and its only going to get worse; and we are seeing it right now.

What was India's own contribution again to the UNCLOS.

So, beyond establishing EEZ and establishment of EEZ is a *sui generis* case. EEZ is neither territorial waters nor high seas. It does not fall in any of the categories. Coastal states have 200 nautical miles for certain resource exploration for themselves, but the rest of the portion has to be treated as high seas. So, countries cannot control at all, and it was purely done from the protection point of view, fisheries and explorations point of view. So, economy and security were two of the driving factors why the EEZ concept came into consideration. And it was Kenya, out of all the countries in the world, that suggested that we should have waters beyond the territorial zone to, to fulfil our fisheries and resources needs. Because it is those waters, Exclusive Economic Zone waters where the distinctly efficient fleets are coming and taking away our resources, and India, for once, was the loudest voice in the room to support Kenya that EEZ should come into existence and India in subsequent sessions kept fighting

for that cause. It also led to the formation of the Continental Shelf Convention and International Seabed Authority (ISA) Convention. India said, "look, if the high seas are there then good, but we need a body to govern these areas. We cannot treat them just like high seas, so the developed countries can take it away. So, with that idea, there are bodies that cover both the Continental Shelf and the International Seabed Authority covers the seabed area, and India was the country that actually pushed for that idea.

Apart from that, not only the global south is being represented by India, India also represents landlocked states. India realised that in South Asia, as many- at least in Asia, we have as many as landlocked countries, as many as coastal and we have neighbours which have their needs towards a coastal side. So, it's only fair to give them some kind of rights and some kind of access, something that is said to be global commons. Additionally, if it's global commons, the coastal states should also have certain rights. So, with that kind of idea, India also introduced the Rights of Coastal States and Landlocked States. Lastly, India also fought, literally fought tooth and nail to get state control over two three issues. One was pollution because it realised that ships and fleets would

come and pollute the waters in the countries and coastal states. Second issue it fought for was the India's-coastal states' right over the maritime scientific research in the coastal area because at that time we did not have the wherewithal. Some of the members, in the delegation including Mr. Panikkar, they realised that future is something India is looking towards and in the future, we might have the wherewithal to, you know, extract resources in our own coastal areas, and that's why we should have a Marine Research Zones for the coastal states. And third was having artificial islands in the EEZ.

These were 2-3 main issues that India fought tooth and nail. However, I have to also mention that the 200 nautical mile zone is arbitrary. There is no legal technical justification why we have 200 nautical miles. The developing countries were happy having only 100 nautical mile zones, for some reason, I think it was, nobody knows what happened behind the doors. But the discussions that we read in their archives or paper, they say that it was the developing countries that wanted, 200 nautical miles as, developed countries I mean, as the EEZ. So, nobody knows why we have a 200 nautical mile EEZ, but we have it now.

Next, I want to talk about how India's own domestic laws were

shaped by it. So, why India was involved in the negotiations-UNCLOS negotiations from the early 1950s and 60s, it felt during the negotiations that we ourselves lacked certain domestic laws. We do not have domestic maritime laws and when UNCLOS would come into picture, we might use a lot. I think, that was the idea to see in the negotiation globally, that Indian delegation thought that it would be a worthwhile thing to revise our domestic laws but still being governed by the Government of India Act, 1935, 3 and then 6 nautical miles territorial water zone.

So, the first thing that was done in 1972, was to bring the Territorial Sea, Continental Shelf, Exclusive Economic Zone and Other Maritime Zones Act, which is also famously known as Maritime Zones of India Act, 1972 and it was later revised in 1981 to bring in the Fisheries clause again. So, to bring in the causes of the fishermen community and their rights over the waters so, it was the first act that India produced. What is important about this MZI act is that certain clauses which though were adopted in 1972 and 10 years later the UNCLOS came into picture, India did mirror most of those clauses. So, we have territorial waters up to 12 nautical miles, we have Contiguous zone for another 12 nautical miles, we have EEZ up to 200 nautical miles and High Seas

beyond it. So, all those things were mirrored in the MZI act.

Second thing is we realized that we have not done enough for the EEZ basically. So, in 1977, we brought out the Economic Zone Act, where we defined what Economic Exclusive India's Exclusive Economic Zone would look like and there were certain provisions provided in that. I have already spoken about the Fisheries act, 1981, that was a way to 1982 MZI Act. Then, fast forward to three decades- four decades, we still don't have any maritime related legislation coming up and we understand that there was less of maritime consciousness, we were more bothered about the territorial adversities that we had. However, during that time, we started facing a lot of issues in terms of piracy, in terms of plugging, so it was high time we had certain domestic laws that addressed that. So, while Coastguard Act was there since 1978 and its duty was to ensure and enforce this MZI Act in maritime zones of India, another revision was brought in it in 2019. And this empowers coastguard with more powers on certain issues in the maritime domain. Next act which came into picture, which was quite recent, was the Anti-Maritime Piracy Act and I will also talk about it a bit more.

So, this is the Gazette 2019 of the Coast Guard Act, where before this coast guard did not have rights to, you know, apprehend the pirates and, you know, the illegal activities on the sea because they had limited powers and they had to go through certain other Indian Act, Arms Act, Passport act and something else. So, they did not, per say, have some kind of power to go aboard and do the searching. And it was in 2019 Act, that this VBSS, that you all will know, that Visit, Board, Search and Seize powers were given exclusively to the Coastguard within the Indian EEZ to catch hold of any pirates and apprehend them and bring them to the court of law. So, this power was given to coast guard.

Now, this act is very important to say, because some of us are aware that mostly armed robbery and piracy is taken one thing, but technically, UNCLOS says these are two different things. Armed robberies are the activities of theft and loss of property, life and everything happening within the territorial waters of the country or coastal state, so it is a limitation. However, Piracy happens in the High Seas. So, piracy is an act in the high seas and Armed robberies is an act in territorial waters. What was happening was India was facing a lot of issues because of that because then what happens to EEZ, what

happens to security of EEZ, who is empowered to secure that. With that kind of idea, Anti Maritime Piracy Bill ensured that the law enforcement agencies, Indian Navy, Coast Guard, Marine Police get certain kind of rights to, apprehend the pirates and other illegal activities within the EEZ of India. This is even more important because it is first time it also added the clause that the state can imprison those pirates, people for life, give them death sentence also and any kind of aiding is also fine and holding fear of imprisonment is also there.

This kind of provision is for the first time given in the UNCLOS. And these laws are applicable for IN and CG to any kind of pirates of any nationality. The nationality clause, which is used by the international community, that the person is of our nationality, and he is in high seas, you cannot, apprehend them that no longer exists. Then as India we can say that our laws say that Indian Navy, Coast Guard or Marine police can take people of any nationality in the EEZ, found doing any kind of illegal activities.

Now, these are two cases I want to bring. First is *Enrica Lexie* case that you all are aware of that happened in 2012. So, for the background again I will just run to the merchant vessel Enrica Lexie opened unprovoked firing at St. Anthony which was a small fishing

boat at 20.5 nautical mile in the Indian coast, which is the Contiguous zone of India. So, Indian Coast Guard actually compelled Enrica Lexie to come to Indian coast then Italian marines, there were two marines who opened the fire, they were reprimanded for homicide. Now, what happened again, the game starts here, it was not Indian waters, it was not EEZ, it was Contiguous zone. Problem is UNCLOS says very bare minimum, it is very small article about Contiguous Zone, that it lies from coast to 24 nautical miles that's it, it does not say anything more. However, MZI Act mentions that the Central Government can make certain kind of laws, i.e., custom, fiscal, sanitary and immigration.

Apart from that one more clause that was there was the security of India. So, taking that clause Indian government could have acted basically to apprehend those, you know, crew marines and drug peddlers. However, Italian court basically said, India has no jurisdiction because beyond territorial waters it is high seas and therefore, India can't try those Italian Marines in India. In this regard, I would also want to highlight one very important thing and I also think everyone should take it back with them and they should go back and think about it that when it comes to issue to one and more states have

their jurisdiction such as Contiguous zone and beyond, prescriptive jurisdiction can take place, it is jurisdiction of state- also with prescriptive jurisdiction we have five principles basically, that- if there is *territory* of coastal state or *nationality* of coastal state or national interest of the coastal state or there is a physical custody of the offender or personality or nationality of the offender. So, there are 4-5 issues that the jurisdiction gives us and empowers the coastal state to apply this kind of law. So, therefore, when the Italian marines were sent back, Supreme Court made a very interesting statement and said Kerala state cannot apprehend these and tie these Italian Marines because it is Indian waters and not Kerala waters. But it is the jurisdiction of states that- which leads to the legislative, judicial and administrative competence of the state and corresponding to their authority to prescribe, adjudicate and enforce. In other words, its just jurisdiction does not only mean that you have legislative rights and administrative rights. So, India has those rights over coastal states, but it is the authority to prescribe, adjudicate and enforce those rights that makes you half the jurisdiction of the course. So, in other words, it was back on the government's face that we have the authority, we have the laws, we just could not enforce our laws, and this is something

every one of us should go back and reflect on it, that how we have cases within our jurisdiction, we have laws available, its just the disconnect between the two that we are not acting upon it or enforcing our own jurisdiction.

Second case in this regard I will talk about is the *Seaman Guard Ohio Arms Transfer Case*, 2013. It was a case of floating armory; I am sure most of you are aware of, but I will speak for the benefit of others, I will speak about, floating armory refers to a vessel that has the facility to store small wars and military ammunition, etc. and usually it is operated beyond the territorial waters of the coastal state. It can be owned by a private company, it can be owned by a private contractor, anything and also very few laws are there that govern these floating armories, but UNCLOS has provided some provisions with that background I will talk about this. So, in 2013, we had this Seaman Guard Ohio Ship in Indian waters, they were in the pretext of carrying, you know, weapons for Anti-Piracy, the multinational crew members 6 British Former Soldiers, 14 Estonians, 3 Ukrainian, 12 Indians, different nationalities. So, Tamil Nadu police actually booked them and put them under various acts; Arms Act, Passport Act. It still did not use MZI Act, it did not use any other Indian Act and then the case was too weak

to be carried forward and then, you know, the entire crew members were acquitted in 2017 and even the basic Rs 3000 fine that they were supposed to pay, that was also acquitted, so, they were left. Whereas, I am again mentioning, MZI Act says that if an act is happening within your Contiguous Zone, within your own waters, you can make security laws, you can enforce those security laws. So, we lack it again there and again we could have used UNCLOS again to our favor. Either because political or technical and even lack knowledge towards the case, that we lost it.

This is my second last slide and then I will be done with the talk. There are certain unresolved issues between UNCLOS and MZI Act, I would like to talk about that also.

So, first is the issue of Straight baseline, this is something looked at with very hooded vision. Because Straight Baseline has been controversial as ever, we all know that baselines are basically calculated from the low watermark area from the coast onwards, but we all know that land borders are different from maritime borders. We cannot calculate maritime borders as we calculate land borders. So, most of the coastal states have boundaries which are jagged, which have fringing islands or small landforms throughout their entire coastline. So, it's not very easy to

draw a coastline. So, a lot of countries where they find the coastline to bulging or fringing, they draw state coastlines and, they calculate their territorial waters, their contiguous zone, EEZ accordingly. Why this important, because the moment we shift the baseline, you will lose millions and millions of nautical miles of EEZ and territorial waters. So, that becomes a very touchy issue for countries, even for India.

UNCLOS provides certain clear, you know, demarcation technical reasons about how these baselines are to be given. India has not considered them, though we have submitted our Straight Baselines in 2009 and other countries are not happy with it and India is looking into it, that is something for another day. But Straight Baselines definitely remain an issue of tension between the developing countries and India and as to how we are calculating our baselines and EEZ.

Second issue is of Internal Waters, this is again important because MZI Act does not cater for Internal waters, it is only UNCLOS that provides that what the Internal Waters should be, how should it be legislated, who should have the authority, of course the coastal state. But India for some reason, while making MZI Act did not ever consider internal waters and out of

which we have a lot of Internal Water issues. So, that is also a very contentious issue within India also that who will govern the Internal Waters; is it the Marine Police, is it the Coast Guard, Navy cannot do it. So, if at all crime happens, and crime as in petty crime like trafficking, terrorism who is going to cover all that. So, that remain an issue between within India and between also UNCLOS and developing countries and India.

Third issue I will be talking about, that I have already spoken about is the Armed Robbery and Piracy, that how these are two different technical terms we generally conflate, but it should be seen with very much caution at least in the maritime domain that armed robbery is not piracy and UNCLOS has laws for both Piracy and Armed robbery separately.

The fourth issue is the issue of High Seas that how MZI Act does not still cater for High Seas. It was made in 1972, again but the MZI Act does not talk about any Indian right over EEZ, that time we maybe never thought that High Sea would be something India would be interested in, but I think it is high about time we start thinking that if something happens in the high seas, how a coastal state like India should act on its high seas that also another issue that we need to think and ponder more upon.

So, these are my final thoughts, that India has had a great role in shaping UNCLOS and not only India represented its own voice very well, also represented the Global South and other underdeveloped and developing countries. So, I think that has been India's biggest contribution to UNCLOS.

Second is as we have now discussed, the maritime domain is no longer ungoverned. Every now and then we see new cases coming up, South China Sea and East China Sea are few of them. There are lot more cases all over the world, where countries are fighting for resources, for maritime domain delimitation and other issues. So, countries should start looking at their maritime international laws as well as domestic laws.

Third, should domestic laws be seen in conflating laws because when it comes to conflation between the two, it is the international law that will prevail. If there is an issue where domestic law is also there and international law is also there, it would be the international law only that would be given preference. So, in that regard how is India supposed to act, should act when there is conflicting international law. Should we co-opt, should we cooperate? So, a domain of issues and whole lot of thinking that has to go behind those issues. And, issues we can

talk about piracy, we can talk about emerging issues, we talk about it and every issue we can talk about how international laws see them, how domestic laws see them, and how we should, bring a common line between these two.

Another thought is how our India's law enforcement agencies see UNCLOS, is only for Indian navy to see UNCLOS as its important tool, because Indian Navy goes to High Seas and is it not Coast guard, is it not Marine Police. So, who are the relevant law enforcement agencies, how they should see these laws, is another point that needs to be thought more often in certain police conferences and talks.

Next issue is about the current and emerging issues, as we speak every day, we pick up a newspaper or a new maritime domain issue, we have those answers in UNCLOS. I would urge you, each one of you, to just download it on your laptops, if you don't want to buy a copy, and you can find any issue that is coming up in maritime domain, you can find an answer to that in UNCLOS. So, why are we not using it.

Next is, UNCLOS also empowers a coastal state to get into multilateral and bilateral

agreements, when it sees that most countries don't have the wehrewithal to do it on their own. So, it's not just the developed countries it is addressing, it is also addressing the poor countries of South Asia who cannot do anything on their own on this issue. International Maritime law provides them, empowers them that much to get into arrangements among themselves. So, in that way you also get an international legitimacy to your causes, when you work together on certain issues. There are so many things we can talk about it during Q & A.

Lastly, my final point is there are vast possibilities of research, of talk, you know, of thinking, in terms of legal, operational aspects of UNCLOS and I think we need to start thinking about how we want to use UNCLOS to our own favour.

And with this, I would want to thank you. This is the cover of my book. If somebody is interested, they might want to read this. With this I rest my case and if I am able to, you know, enthuse even about 1/4 of the minds here about UNCLOS, and international maritime laws, local maritime laws, i'll be happy about it. If we have any questions, queries, some discussion, I will be happy to be a part of it. Thank you!

Monsoon Musing II

Leadership Lessons of Indian Naval Icons - Adm RL Pereira and other Luminaries.

Cmde (Dr) Srikant Kesnur, VSM (Retd)

First of all, thanks to Western Naval Command and to the Maritime History Society for inviting me to deliver this talk. In many ways, my maritime history journey began at MHS, or with MHS more than 30 years ago when I was one of the young officers who were nominated to attend such talks. You are compulsively Shanghaied from your ship and sent, and it was one such talk that like of course, I was always interested in history. But one such talk made me more curious about the maritime aspect and so many other things. So I have always described myself as a faithful foot soldier of the Maritime History Society, because, over the last 30 years, beginning with several curators, and above all the distinguished Admiral Awati and Adm Nadkarni there are lots of interactions that happened with them, so I'm so thrilled, but more than thrilled I believe it's my honour and privilege to be able to give this talk and have some exchanges, so I will begin, ladies

and gentlemen, with what I call a 3 caveats and 2 Drivers.

The first caveat is everything that I say is my opinion only. This is not the opinion of the Maritime History Society or of the Indian Navy. It's of course informed by my experiences and by my interactions, but right, wrong, imperfect, these are my views.

The second, when I use phrases or nicknames or affectionate terms, or as, as people would say, or calling Ronnie or Foggy or Mickey or something like that for us in your office, it's not with any disrespect. If I don't use their rank with this prefix, it's not with any disrespect. It is in fact, with the highest respect and affection. I believe that they have transcended the need for having ranks as their prefixes, that they stand by themselves for what they did. So I mean no disrespect when I use and what are called Daak Nam in Bengali? I also seek the intelligence of senior officers,

veterans and flag officers here because it's possible that you know a lot of what I'm saying. And it's also possible that you have seen it differently, but considering the profile of the largely young audience, I'm going to pitch the ball to them. So please, I seek your intelligence.

The 3rd caveat is the most important ladies and gentlemen and it is this that - Writing or making an opinion in history is often about the most difficult thing, because you can be accused of bias, you can be accused of selectivity, you can be accused of not having enough sources, and in military history particularly, it's even more difficult in Indian military history because there are no great primary sources that you have to rely on, you often rely on oral sources, You rely on written stuff; much of that is hagiography. This so so there is there is a problem if you have to unpack history at a very serious level in Indian naval history and in military history as a whole, and within that if you have to choose a small slice of life and talk about leaders and leadership and you have to fit all that in 45 minutes to one hour. Please remember that any sort of gradual analysis is not possible. Also remember that, I will wipe away or the other be biased, be selective, leave out something, not cover

something, and most importantly, these are value judgments and value judgments can go wrong. I'll be happy to be critiqued for that. In fact, it would indicate to me that people are getting interested in the subject. So please bring them all. Let your arrows fly during the question answers. I'll be very, very happy about that. So these are the 3 caveats that I start off with and what are the 2 drivers?

These are the 2 drivers that like I said are largely of my life, what has inspired me with his property but my life interests have revolved around 3 subjects. History, media, and popular culture. So, You know, that has obsessed me all along, that is the lens with which I view things, that is the way I try to analyse aspects in life, and that is the outlook and perspective I take of things that are happening around me. So therefore, it was natural to fit naval history into those lenses of, say, public culture and media and history, and see how it is taught, learned, absorbed. So that was the first time, the second one - and this is interesting, was this great puzzle in my mind. You see the. Indian Navy has done excellently well when it comes to bringing out formal history. We brought out 7 volumes of formal history covering the entire time from, you know, 1947 to 2020. Very good. But when

it comes to informal popular history, when it comes to the study of heroes, when it comes to the study of various other ways in which the Navy can catch the imagination of people, we are nowhere there. We take our tab of silent service far too seriously. No. So this is a country. If you take a quiz, everyone will tell you who was the Navy chief, who was the Army chief in 71 War. but nobody will tell you who was the Navy chief in 71 war. So we have a problem here and I will be telling various aspects of the problem and I myself saw that as a young officer on board on SNF and doing my watchkeeping, I was discouraged from reading naval history book or discouraged from reading the first, the first edition of Quarterdeck. And I was fascinated by that. But I was shooed out of the wardroom because of watchkeeping Don't frequent SNFs at least in those days . So it was it was funny to me that you have been discouraged from studying on your own history and to me, that's the kind of riddle I have sort of straddled through lots of my life. I still can't explain. So the driver of this talk is this, that there is no doubt that Ronnie was huge, he was iconic. But Ronnie will be the last man himself to claim that he was the only leader in the Navy and yet today, when you talk about the Navy outside, recently when I did the

conversation on SAM monitor and Ronnie some people request, '*Sir bas karo. Kitna bologe Ronnie ke baremein. Aisa lag raha hai navy aur koi nahi hai*'. So it seems that in 75 years the Navy has produced 2 heroes in Ronnie Pereira and Captain Mulla and done one action in the attack of karachi. That's all that the general public knows about what the Indian Navy has done. Now, if you actually study, you say but what the hell? So many other things have happened. So many other things have happened. Someone has made it possible. Who are those people? So that is going to be my theme for today. But we will begin with Ronnie. Obviously it is his centenary year and we need to talk about them.

And this is who is Paddy. This is Professor Padmanabhan, my maths teacher in NDA. Someone whom I hold as my great guru, my inspiration. And when I told him that I'm giving a talk on Ronnie, talk about Ronnie, he sent this. He is a 90 plus old man. And he said I got up from my chair, but accept my salute to Ronnie and share this with others. Now, ladies and gentlemen, Professor Padmanabhan was in NDA, and he says nicely that I used to be called Pads or Paddy by Ronnie, which is why I've used that name Paddy. So why does a professor, he is you

know, a classic Tambaram, nerdy, studious maths professor probably, would be far away from a chain smoking flamboyant, full throated laughter Ronnie Pereira. Yet what is it that attracted these 2 people? What is it that made professor Padmanabhan love Ronnie?

And that, ladies and gentlemen, illustrating that to talk about the different ways in which this gentleman, Admiral Ronnie Pereira, our 10th Navy chief. Now the skeletal framework most of you are aware of, he was the Navy chief from 1979 to 1982 from 1st March 79 to 28 Feb 82 commissioned in 1943, born on May 23, commissioned at 43, saw a bit of war action of small ships. Thereafter he commanded Kuthar and INS Delhi was Deputy Commandant at NDA, made a lot of difference to lots of people, then went to be Eastern Fleet Commander then came in as C-in-C Southern Naval Area, Western Naval Command, Vice Chief Naval Staff and finally became the Chief of Navy. But that's just the skeletal framework. It's the sort of boxes that any officer on his way up tick. What are the core features? Why was this man the biggest inspiration? Why did an opinion poll in 1989 ranked where almost all young officers in the Navy said he is our inspiration 7 years after Ronnie had retired?

You know, so that is what we got to see. There must be some answer to that. Why? Now the answer. Look, I didn't meet Ronnie. I never met Ronnie. I never interacted with him. So I get my data from books and articles about him from what other people have told about him. The closest I have got to Ronnie is a long session with Bhaskar Sen. BR Sen was his Flag Lt when Sen, Late Commodore BR Sen was CSO in Goa and was commanding the Vindhyagiri. So we spent a long time together and a little bit of and interaction with Colonel Chatterjee, the son of Monty Chatterjee, who was the secretary to Ronnie when he was the chief. But that's obviously not enough. So we got to go with what we have and from what I studied, there are 3 or 4 things and I asked a lot of people, including Admiral Awati, about Ronnie. And even recently, Captain Mohan Ram about Ronnie's deep, absolute, almost fanatical love for nation and Navy. And maybe it was not triumph or was not a jingoistic kind of love. It was a deep love, particularly for the Navy. I mean, it's the sort of love that if you removed Ronnie from the Navy, or from the fauj, he would have felt very, very lost. The highest sense of moral probity and financial integrity and extremely austere. And actually Adm Awati himself, a great icon, told me that Ronnie was impossibly austere. So

these are some of the things that sort of define Ronnie and extremely, I think, personality. Tall, handsome, very good looking, you know. Deep baritone in the way he spoke. I believe when he laughed, everyone talks about his deep throated laughter as though you know when Barbosa describes it as 1000 stars, sort of exploring together. So that was in many ways, did he have weaknesses? You bet he had, he had a lot of weaknesses, and I think he accepted some of them himself. He's very short tempered would fly of the handle, he had a very very colourful vocabulary it would be a strict no no use today he had rather conventional view on many things which would be politically incorrect today. Most importantly people say that he was *thoda bahut* given because of his instinctiveness *wo jo thoda bolte hai kaan ka kachcha* that he used to be occasionally *kaan ka kachcha* but I think the good part of Ronnie was he himself would accept what are the problems with me. He would often do a debrief of his own ship handling, how he did things, what he did. What are the other aspects? He was a very dotty fighter. He has had an accident in the early 50s aboard one of the ships where he had taken gunnery students for a class and you know there had been a misfire in the clearing of the misfire drill there

was a cook up explosion and his entire left hand in fact he had a crooked left elbow throughout his career for that period he almost smashed had if it would not have been for the civil surgeon he might have had to amputate that hand. Then he has tuberculosis in the late 50s as the commander of EXO Delhi. He was in the sanatorium for a long time, almost a year and came back. He had a motorcycle accident, a scooter accident after his retirement, a big one in Bangalore, a smaller one in Wellington and then towards the end of his life he was you know afflicted by cancer. In each of these he fought he was a very doughty fighter, he came back you know his first reaction when he had that I told you politically incorrect when he had that explosion in the gun his first reaction was to lean back against the bulkhead and ask for a cigarette you know so so that was Ronnie in many ways but now very interestingly for young officers and sailors Ronnie didn't have a glamorous path to his service career. You know if you see his things in world war also he fought on what are the called the expendables you know the MDAs the small ships equivalent of STPs SU even probably smaller than that his whole career was that thereafter much of it he did only one foreign tenure, his long G in UK, he was not NA anywhere he

did not go as Flag Lieutenant, Staff Officer, he didn't do any glamorous courses. He was I mean he came to Delhi first as an EXO or as a Squadron Gunnery officer. His appointments were staff officer gunnery, drafting commander you know EXO Angre the sort of jobs which might be regarded as unsexy. But how he came through all and how he consistently performed and i think that's some a very very important i mean he did it because he, i mean he felt bad when he did his long G and he came and he was not put on a ship. He made an application that I want to go on a ship, but he worked very hard as a staff officer gunnery. So these are some important aspects about him. Huge amount of care, concern for shipmates, i think he was known for the compassion that he showed to people, he was known for that. That huge amount of care that he took, there are several incidents where he would reach out to Pereira who was childless. They used to address most people, young officers as such, cadets in NDA sons. So there was a kind of you know, a fatherly or maternal paternal instinct that would come up when they saw the people and there are many incidents, even when punished people in NDA or something it was to reform and not to relegate them as as. He often led by example whenever had to

be done in NDA it would be then all over he was omnipresent. On the ship he was omnipresent. If some paint scheme had to be illustrated he would tell the seaman *aisa paint karna hai aisa nahi*. You know so there were things he did with seamanship he was a field man, he hated desk job, he was out there in front and, and he was a great sportsperson. Very navy level hockey player, fantastic golf player good swimmer, he was very very good with sports and indeed too was his wife Phyllis.

He had ladies and gentleman avery unique code of conduct, often he would come in just give all his pilotage money to young officers, or you know in NDA punish a guy but ensure that when he comes back there is a *khana peena* lemonade everything. So it was, it was, you know it was like okay one hand I dole you punishments on the other hand I invite you home. You know he was that sort of a person, a very unique code. At the same he himself admitted he was not tech-savvy, yeah not at all, he did not understand too much of technology, he was not very great with file work, he was not very good if you ask Capt. Mohan Ram he will say he was very not very good with dealing with bureaucrats but that's a different issue. You know he'a not certainly not a

reputed ship handler though he tried his best. I mean in those days ship handling was a very very important thing. Having said that I think you know given the constraints of time what was his life legacy and we need to understand that. It is wrong to pigeon hole him and say that because he was an inspirational leader, infact as a chief and elsewhere he was bent on consolidation as his biographer brings out, he wanted to make sure, at the end of the day every chief wants to make sure that they have a good fighting navy during their watch while also preparing for the future. Administratively the AFNHB happened during his time he gave a push for it. The biggest aspect which we all sort of thank ourselves today, entitled rations, Pereira fought for it, he fought hugely, he fought the establishment, he convinced the prime minister and he also fought counterviews that said we must get it in money instead of kind and he was a great person for saying ki oh cash will depreciate value will depreciate some bureaucrat will shut that wall so keep it in kind and i think history has borne him out much better. He had a big role to play in enhancement of accommodation, his, his fanatical insistence that young officers wear helmet often he would chase people catch them punish them for

not wearing helmet so that has resulted today i think in helmets being ubiquitous across the Navy its a rule everyone follows and i think it's for the better we all realise it. Operationally the intake, intake in which I served for memorable almost three years was created during his time. He had that you know great bent of mind for tactical gunnery aspect so weapon analysis, the fleet analysis unit became wow, a lot of despite being not a man who understood or who loved technology he gave huge amount of support to the APSOH project and we will hear what Paulraj has to say, sea bird project owes a great deal to him and the procurement of sea harriers and the NTW submarines when he wanted to move away from the Russians towards, towards the west owes a little bit to him. There too he made some mistakes, he was late, he was not enthusiastic about nuclear submarine and i think that that probably history will bear out that he was probably whatever his reasons that maybe he was wrong in retrospect he was not too enthusiastic about getting involved in the integrated missile development project he thought it was a DRDO track to take, to ploy, to take more people from the Navy, and and you know deprive him of a few more people, so he was not too enthusiastic, maybe maybe history would judge him to

be a little in error then. But above all I think his unique brand was the force of his personality, the force of his personality which would come through wherever he was, he was someone immediately, you could not be indifferent to him, you could, you could never be indifferent to him. You are attracted, you sometimes were afraid but, you could not say that you would not notice such a person. He had a way of compelling or demanding attention of everyone present around him.

There lots of examples galore and I don't want to you know take all of the talk with that you'd have to come to part two but examples as i say everyone has a Ronnie story and that's interesting, you know you talk to anyone and they say, and the two books while they contain a lot they still don't contain so many Ronnie stories and maybe many people know but because there are young people here I will bring out two or three instances. One is Omkar in the early eighties he had appointment with prime minister Indira Gandhi *toh wo ja rahe the raste pe unhone dekha ki ek* there is one young man with a old person on his shoulder walking on the road and in pain, the old man was in pain so he stopped his car he enquire the old man say, the young man says my father is old he has to be taken

to the hospital but I have no money to take a rickshaw let alone an ambulance so Ronnie takes the two drives them both against the protest of his flag lieutenant who says you have an appointment with the prime minister and remember Indira Gandhi was an imperious person as such and so so Ronnie goes gets that admitted to AIIMS says look after them uses the force of his uniform and then goes to the prime minister's house. Now we don't know what happened after that there is a little bit of you know a fairytale story about he telling I like my eggs sunny side up but that I think is a bit of an exaggeration. But whatever it is he, he sort of you know put stand for what was right or what he felt right at the time and nevermind if he had to go late for an appointment to prime minister. Shows lots of courage and compassion. The second thing and this would interest *ye instance hai INS Delhi ka boat pulling team purana INS Delhi, un dino Delhi, Mysore aircraft carrier Vikrant ka bohot competition hota tha* for boat pulling regatta and it used to happen in Kochi. So in 1967 Ronnie is commanding Delhi, in 1967 Delhi wins the regatta, comfortably. So he wants to win again in 1968 and the first two races Delhi wins so its on the way to getting the cork. In the third race, in the third race there is a problem, delhi sailors come first

but this is an engine room and miscellaneous crew, they have unfortunately rode in the wrong race, which means it was a crew which rode in the wrong group. So from being first they were disqualified which means your entire points go away and you have no crew left for the next race which was supposed to be their race, so the story goes that Ronnie goes down, they are watching it from mysore he goes down the quarter deck of Mysore to the cackle of Mysore soldiers so Hugh and Colin Gantzer describe in the book on the Delhi but he goes in his boat tells something to the sailors of Delhi, one does not know what he does, Ronnie says I just told them the honour of Delhi's in your hand, now the same crew, *ladies and gentlemen aap jaante hai ki ek baar boat puri hone ke baad kitna aapka pura energy drain hota hai, wahi team wapas jaati hai dobara race karne ke liye fourth race me aur wo phir first aati hai*, so they beat a fresh team of other ships and come first again and that is really huge. You know Adm. Adhar Chatterjee is there the chief of naval staff and he gives the cork to Ronnie and says this is a great national leader. Chatterjee was very very of course impressed by Ronnie and so did Ronnie regard Chatterjee as his role model, so so these are some great stories of how I mean imagine

coming coming first the second time over again. NDA there are many many stories gentlemen ladies of him arranging movies but the most important thing was as I say he would give punishments for reform so once when he came to know *ki* someone is getting relegated because of his punishment immediately called it off would say scratch them off the official record. So often he would save people who were being relegated and he didn't mind a challenge, *ek baar unhone squadron me gaye unko ye karna tha check karna tha*, one smart cadet immediately who was being caught came out wore a khaki this one put a cap behaved that he was a civilian bearer of the orderly, Ronnie caught him, you know he said that's a smart trick but I'll let you go because you are smart in your thinking. Now these are some of the things that was very very unique to Ronnie. Commodore Paulraj told me a very very interesting story about Ronnie and this is after his retirement. Paulraj said that look what Ronnie did for encouragement to APSOH is well known but after Ronnie had retired and Paulraj was still serving Paulraj went to meet him, Paulraj went to meet him in his house in Bangalore 'At Last'. So when he went by scooter and when Ronnie found out, mind you Ronnie after retirement himself had a cooter he

had no savings for a car or anything like that, so Paulraj when he went to his house and Ronnie found he had come without in a scooter you know he sent him back saying *ki* you're a important scientist you are too important a man to be risking your life on scooter, he hailed an auto rickshaw, Paulraj didn't have money he gave the money to the auto rickshaw guy and sent Paulraj. So when asked how do i get my scooter back he said dont worry next day Ronnie lands up at Paulraj's house with another guy to return his scooter and Ronnie has come on his scooter. So you know, this is, this is Paulraj told me himself, it is there in the book but he told me himself last year when I met him yesterday but these are remarkable you know as he did I think Commander Mike Bhada told me an interesting story in playing golf in DSSE that how when in the fourth ball they bet Pereira and took money from him, the army DS who was with them didn't believe it because in the army you don't take money from your senior officers, you know so so these were some very very interesting things about Ronnie and i think you can fill up a whole book what he did and what he didn't. But we must also acknowledge Phyllis his better half did, great lady, someone who was always by his side, someone equally talented, someone just as

compassionate I think Ronnie would be half the person he was without Phyllis, we can't, unfortunately constraints of time don't allow us to talk too much.

But this is what Cmde Paulraj said about Ronnie, in the 2015, Pereira memorial talk, now ladies and gentlemen I want you all to note one thing, Cmde Paulraj is a professor in Stanford, he doesn't need Navy. Yet why does he say, a world famous scientist say I'm proud to have served in the Indian Navy, why does he say great deal of pride and satisfaction, and do we feel the same sense of pride and satisfaction about our navy which is my Part two of my theme, and this part two is how do we conceive our navy? What do we think the navies do? Do you think we defend boundaries as some civilian people would say or media people would say defend the coastline, do we think it affects maritime interest as many experts would say, look at what two, i mean here is someone saying the US Navy preserves the international liberal order, here is someone saying the US Navy is responsible for the greatest increase in global prosperity, now unless we start thinking of navies that, unless we have a sense of destiny of what navies can do, i think we miss the woods for trees in the sight. Now funnily enough

our Navy has, my study of history tells me has done that and I'll do a quick 5 mins slideshow about various things before talking about our leaders. This is a very famous historical photograph, three prime ministers and one ship INS Delhi June 1950 when Panditji went to Indonesia. Of course he didn't make the statement at that time he said it at some other time. Look at what Sardar Patel says, Sardar Patel in fact, incidentally it is a misnomer that Indira Gandhi was the first lady to have sailed on the old INS Delhi, it was Sardar's daughter Maniben who begged Indira Gandhi by a month, she sailed with Sardar in the May 1950. So Patel also says we need a strong Navy. Very very interesting for a guy I found it very very fascinating, a political leader born out of freedom movement he is stilling the Charkha on the fort castle of Delhi and these area these two young Navy officers watching him with fascination wondering *ye kya ho raha hai*. Now this was the interface between the Navy and the Nation. There was a political will, I'm cutting it down there are lots of other quotes I have of Panikkar, of Mikki Roy, despite that what happened ladies and gentlemen the Navy suffered from budgetary constraints, Navy did not get priority, you know our national outlook was continental, and yet,

and yet what is fascinating is that the Navy has actually grown. There is a book called 'India grows at night' by Gurucharan Das where he talks of how India has grown at night despite government rules and bottlenecks and bureaucrats and what is called regulatory cholesterol and all that because he says essential Indian entrepreneurial skills for India are up. It is much the same way I would argue over the Indian Navy and this is exactly what Harsh Pant says, the maritime dimension did not figure and yet despite that the Indian Navy was largely successful. How were we successful? Someone must've done something right? Who is that something?

Now look at this we are all very proud last September when Vikrant was commissioned. Building an aircraft carrier is the holy grail of ship building, but when did our aircraft carrier journey start ? In 1961, 1961 is fourteen years after your independence. You have a sloop navy till independence what audacity of thought was there that our planner said will become a carrier navy. Now there are interesting things when we got the aircraft carrier, right, we sent our crew there mountbatten tells Adm Katari that look you guys don't have experience about aircraft carrier operations why don't you

take a British captain till you go to Bombay and then he hands over to the Indian captain Peter PS Mahindroo, and when Katari tells that to Peter Mahindroo, Mahindroo tells sir with the highest regard there can be only one captain onboard a ship and hats off to Katari that he accepts and respects that opinion. This when nobody and nobody had experience of carrier operation in the Indian Navy apart from a few who had seen a bit of that in World War II. Now what happens and listen to what Adm. John Treacher and then he is a commander, he is the only Britisher he was with commander Air on HMIS Victoria and he is known to the Indian Navy. he says he says good things about everyone, Peter Mahindroo, about YN Singh, the camaraderie, about flyers Balbeer Low, GG Gupta, and he showers praise on Stan dawson the navigating officer. He says look what a fantastic job the man did. And he tells interesting incidents, this is the Britisher saying the first time I go and tell the captain, look when I say I am ready to launch the aircraft at so and so time, you must have the ship facing the wind at so and so time. He says Mahindroo heard me out said okay. He says two days later the ship was facing the right place when I did launch the aircraft in time he came and told me next time when I have the

ship ready please remember to launch your aircraft in time. Now this is attitude, this is being gutsy ladies and gentlemen, this was the first aircraft carrier captain. So if you are able today to build aircraft carriers its because you started operating aircraft carriers. Look at other countries who have the same experiment, Thailand, Brazil they didn't really make it, so there must be something good about us right.

Sixty-five war we were denied a piece of action right? Adm Nanda told next opportunity comes we will make a bonfire. Look at how the Navy grew between 65 and 71. Look at what Adm Chatterjee said in 68 when you know when British went west of Suez. Chatterjee was pulled up by his own defence minister Swaran Singh But his story has borne Chatterjee, today when we say we are the first responder or the preferred security partner its exactly what Chaterjee was saying except that he was saying it in the language of that day.

Therefore if we had a ringside seat in the surrender ceremony with Krishnan there it was because Navy did a lot during the interwar years and elsewhere. I also am flashing this picture ladies and gentlemen *isme ek quiz question hai jo* that officer who is peering next to major general Jacob, the one who is gap officer,

any idea who he is ? One flight lieutenant Krishnamurthy who flew General Arora to the surrender ceremony from Calcutta and legend has it that Arora didn't have a pen to sign so he borrowed the pen of Krishnamurthy which was used for the surrender certificate. Wing Commander Krishnamurthy stays here in Powai and you'll be happy to know his son is a serving Navy officer posted as DS in Wellington. So these are good Navy quiz pieces. So so why I'm telling you now you come to the late 80s, your involvement in Op Pawan, your involvement in the Male, immediately gets you the Super India and Super India as military power there's an indigenous Godavari class ship, not the aircraft carrier. So those guys know what is the currency of path.

Another 30 years later, I mean I love it when Tarangini a sailing ship goes to London, 75 years of Independence, we are actually telling the British that you know 500 years you came to our land in sailing ships now we send sailing ships to you and for good measure the planners made sure that Tarangini visited Lisbon too you know. So there is there must be I mean I don't know a design default, the Navy seems to be doing rather well. They are also providing public good through

information fusion systems. Now if we're doing all that and I am trying to say ladies and gentlemen that this is a continuous, it's not about you know what leader, one Navy chief, one party, then there must be some leader who must've done extraordinarily well.

What is this factor of leadership? And I believe that there's lots to talk about that but I limit myself so there are different kinds of leaders, heroes and icons, and I'm not touching on adventurers, explorers and sports persons because the Navy has produced a huge amount of them. I mean recently you know, what I'm trying to tell ladies and gentlemen I'm trying to say this is a Navy that's produced a world class scientist. It is a Navy that's built an aircraft carrier. This is a Navy whose officers top all the courses that go abroad. This is a Navy which has produced a sailor who has come second in the Golden Globe race. These other competitors were not necessarily ex-Navy officers. So now I'm not doing the Mehul Karthikshaw, I'm not the PRO of the Navy. But I just see that there is an interesting trend here, and this is the trend of a navy that's doing well. So, who is then responsible for the Navy then having done well? So I've only taken the top two-three categories. This gentleman was the first

Gallantry award winner of the Navy- the Topass, Ashoka Chakra third class comes to Shaurya Chakra equivalent now. In 1952, a young lad from Mathura and there's an interesting sociological tale here you know, an uneducated person comes on board Delhi, from Mathura, landlocked but great swimmer, he rescues 10 people when the ship is docked in Kolkata, and this man he he you know looking through his documents is fascinating. He retired in '59, joined the central excise service later and in 1980s he was writing back to the Navy saying please send a certificate of my service because I believe it counts towards pension, so some things don't change but, but the interesting part is this, look, isn't this a fantastic tale. This is the Navy's first gallantry award winner.

So, Chiefs, and I believe each of these Chiefs needs independent study by themselves but we don't have the time. You know each of them, I've written in detail about Admiral Adhar Chatterji he is he is personally my favourite because he was a huge thinking person intellectual, but each of these, Admiral Katari setting standards and ensuring that the Navy that was just born had to have a certain cosmopolitan attitude, get over the problems of partition, get over the problems of you know, the Naval Uprising, start

afresh all over again. Admiral Soman the great advocate for indigenisation. Chatterji the man who lost his voice as we say he was the first 4 star admiral, thinker, doer. Nanda, nanda the man who bombed Karachi, now why I must, I must spend some time on Admiral Nanda is this ladies and gentlemen let us accept that some of the things that happened after his retirement cast a shadow on his legacy. I have it is beyond my terms of remit to judge on the merits of those controversies, so for the record he's been exonerated or whatever by the court but there is no doubt that they sort of cast a shadow over his legacy. But does that mean that we in the Navy sort of don't acknowledge the huge role he did as the Admiral who led us in '71 war. I mean he was the only sort of guy who could've got that as Sandeep Unnithan describes him he's a Big Mac guy. Here was you know Captain Mohan Ram says only Nanda could've done it given the clearance for the aircraft carrier to be deployed. The Karachi attack was his idea, you know, Operation X, deploying the commandos was his idea. Then too of course he did mistakes I mean submariners do have a peeve that he had rather restrictive terms of engagement in the '71 war for them. But I'm suggesting that you know this is a man who

needs greater acknowledgement and people often talk of Ronnie's and Nanda's two opposite ends of the spectrum, because one was absolutely austere the other was flamboyant, you know you'd not talk of them in the same breadth. But listen, it was Nanda who sees merits in Ronnie, it was Nanda's report on the ACR of Ronnie who says he is consistently good. It's Nanda as DCNS who writes a good report on Ronnie as DCPT. It's Nanda as a CNC who makes Ronnie the incharge of the PFRBR in 1969. He knows, Nanda knows where to pick up talent. It's Nanda as CNS who picks Ronnie as the Eastern Fleet Commander. So their personalities may have been very different but i think they go to give the, the due to all of these people, all of them, Cursetji the first hydrographer, the man down below with that eagle nose we did a centenary ceremony for, Stan Dawson another remarkable character, I just spoke about him, the seabird and INA owes much. So I'm not talking about serving naval officers ladies and gentlemen because you need have certain remove from time, I dont want to sort of talk about serving and still serving.

Other chiefs we have we're fortunate to have Admiral Shekhawat with us here today, you know. So all of them have done

some wonderful work. Admiral Arun Prakash who brought lots of changes in many of the things we're working on. So constraints of time precludes me from touching upon all of them so I will talk about these four or five people. Incidentally i must tell you a story about Admiral Shekhawat and now because he's here it just came to me, that he, he is a very well Renaissance man, he writes very well, you must see his interview in the quarterdeck of '95-'96 or even the foreword to the Admiral I knew, Bhalla's book has been written by him a month before, but the nicest story I heard from him was from an airforce officer called AVM Manmohan Bahandur who says that I flew Admiral Shekhawat whilst in the hills and he's a helicopter pilot who has done extensive time in CHN and Manmohan Bahadur says I started to tell Admiral Shekhawat about the hill features here and there, you know, and after a while I came to know that he has climbed many of the hills in this region and he knows more about these peaks than I do so I shut myself up. So these are some remarkable stories that we hear from many other people and he just came to me when I saw it so I'm pretty.

But some of these very interesting characters ladies and gentlemen Admiral Krishnan DSC,

the top left guy, remarkable World War II DSC, I regard Krishnan as the Sagat Singh of the Indian army of the Indian Navy. He is probably our great campaign leader, he was there in World War II, winning a DSC, he is there in Junagadh with the army troops, he is there in '61 in liberation of Diu, he is there in '71 as a CNC East drawing the guards, he's making all those plans, and I think it was a *jugalbandi* in between Nanda and Krishnan, that, that too, again Krishnan was not the sort of guy you would put on the same weighing scale as Pereira, right, Krishnan had his own style but I think remarkably and Admiral Awati tells me that Krishnan was the most brilliant officer that he had sort of met. So then there is ofcourse Awati himself, the man who was responsible for sailing, today's successes of Abhilash and other people owe to him, Dilip Donde, MHS is entirely sort of his, he's the father figure.

Captain Mulla you all know, right, we have a hall dedicated after him. Please do read an exchange of correspondence between Mulla's daughter about her father going down, written some years ago in the Indian Express and the open letter reply by Commander Alan Rodrigues or Captain Alan Rodrigues, who said, explained why did your father go

down. It's remarkable, I think MHS should reprint that in one of your Sagardhara publications.

Paulraj great scientist, now ex-NDA and why we must claim his success, he himself proposes thankful to the Navy but because his scientific journey starts with devising an indigenous sonar and then he goes on to do many other things later and then today he is he is the father of MIMO technology which is the heart of smartphones so if today the whole world is using smartphones they must thank an Indian Navy ex-NDA electrical officer Commodore right, but do we look at it that way.

Mikki Roy the aviator submariner, first observer of the country who is the father of the nuclear submarine program, I mean it might be an exaggeration to call him the Indian recover but look this he was an aviator, he was DNI, you know and classic DNI as Sandeep Unnithan says a man who would not trust his own shadow. The perfect man to be a DNI during war, but then he is a thinker and Mikki Roy brings in all of his thinking later, he is the father of the ATV project which in turn gives birth to the nuclear submarine.

And then of course Raja Menon I'll talk about him in a bit. So now I'm flashing some of the

names ladies and gentlemen please many of these would be great enlightenment to you some names may be known, I have described them as Pioneers and Generation 1.5. The Pioneers I regard as those who were commissioned during war, pre-war, before 40s usually. The other 1.5 were took part in war commissioned in the early or mid 40s, and the Generation 2 I take as, as from Nadkarni onwards who were commissioned from 1950, and then the independent India.

So we need to do a study but many of them remarkable, VEC Barboza, just as austere as Ronnie, lived a most frugal life. He was called *masterji* and Barboza refuses, refuses to take over from Ronnie as chief when there are intimation sent to him that we, you know the political dispensation didn't want Ronnie, can, message was sent to Barboza can you take over as a chief, he says no, I'll be the next to resign. So these were some very remarkable characters that's what I'm trying to tell you. We can't, we can't, you know like I said MHS will have to call me back for many more lectures again to be able to do, to talk of all of these people. So I have made a list of all the doers and achievers, and Rao sir and Shekhawat sir this list was made before you came so it has

nothing to do with you being in the audience today, but look at, I mean see subra-manya the submarine, the first submariner of the country. The first submariner, you must regard that man like you'd regard Neil Armstrong, right, he must have a hero status. He passed away a month and a half ago. On the day he passed away that Goofy Paintal and Sulochana Ruby Myers passed away, I have no disrespect towards these people, but the papers were full with these two people having passed away. What about India's first submariner, wasn't his contribution, and ask any submariner he'll tell you, having subra-manya, as he liked his named to be called was a hard task master, he was temperamental but he gave his life to the submarine arm. So point is ladies and gentlemen, this is not a perfect list. Ashaji will tell that there are very few technical officers she has, she had you know pulled me up once for that and I agree because I haven't studied enough, technical officers haven't written enough, now but the thing is incomplete as the list is and nobody's saying they were great, you know some of them had imperfect family lives, some of them didn't achieve greatness in career, some of them you know probably had some health issues, but I'm just putting in a list of various people who contributed in

different fields. Look at something with maritime education and advocacy and im putting in lots of people's name there because if you complain the Navy of today has probably 25-30 PHDs against 1 or 2 fifty years ago. Now that, that talks of a Navy that's doing very well in the field of knowledge production or influencers or advocacy and recent names Firdaus Mughal and Kuntal Vadhwa are young officers who showed bravery, put their lives on line unfortunately both of them passed away but it shows what I'm trying to say is this is continuous. In technical please note I've put Ahluwalia, AS Ahluwalia aviator, you may have, you may have views on his contribution but i believe it was three ex-officers Ahluwalia, MVA Neel Kumar and Wandakal who in many ways made the Navy's network centric warfare before it was taken.

So we may differ on this but my point ladies and gentlemen is that, that this is a Navy that had a lots of people who've done lots of things and this picture of Abhilash Tomy being given a full frontal hug by the Navy Chief tells you about the connect, you know and please note that there were lots of you know slight WhatsApp gossip going around when Tomy was doing is that Navy's not supporting him, his Navy's not supporting him,

today's tweet by Tomy, today, he says don't I mean he says someone tried to say he's a boy from Kerala, he says look the credit for this should go to the Indian Navy, he has tweeted today.

So I recently, last couple of minutes, I recently spoke to an Admiral, my contemporary who is hard to please and extremely cynical who I thought doesn't like Navy. So i wanted the devil's advocate view from him and he surprised me by saying this, you know he writes in Hindi but I corrected some part but he says, '*agar humare sabhi system ya senoirs kharab hote toh ye kaise hua*' He's talking of all this, all of these and mind you ladies and gentlemen i have seen this in my 36 years, fire fighting for example, safety issues, military diplomacy, I've seent that get so much better in my time, and this is not I'm not getting paid by the navy to say good things about, so this is not anything, this is frankly a study of Navy history and my experiences that says things are getting better.

So often we have to do something called 'walk the talk' but there are some times when as a big navy you have to talk the walk and there are several times the Indian Navy has done that. It has done that when I told you that Peter Mahindroo told Katari that there can be only one captain on a

ship it has done that when Admiral Katari sends that favourite signal-capture me a Portuguese frigate please, now which was the Portuguese Frigate captured it was Alphonso de Albuquerque. This was the man who set up the Portuguese Empire in India so when you capture and hit a ship by that name, you've scored more than a victory. You've put a symbolic death knell into colonialism, but you must see that sort of symbolism. It was similarly said by a lots of other people, it was said by, by you know, I believe that that when we had more island issues with Bangladesh, one of the Petyas, of the ships that went and one of the Bangladeshi ships said watchout Indian Navy ship on the wrong area, your navigation seems to be erratic and the Indian Navy ship replied it says that our navigation may or may not be erratic but our gunnery is perfect. Or during Kargil war when one of the, you know defence attache is all Mysore commissioning during Kargil war, defence attaches were called and defence attache of friendly country was also there, he walks past he says very good, good to see all ships are in harbour, you know, trying to say all is peaceful, and the PRO so everyone has to have that attitude, the PRO said yes very much the ships are in harbour but you will notice that the submarines are out.

So these are the sort of things you must the sense of, of Admiral MJ Singh as the fleet commander replying to the American or British whatever when they were asked in West in the North Arabian Sea, good morning Indian Navy how long have you been here and the Indian Navy's reply was we have been here before Christ, what about you. So you must, my point is you must have that sense of destiny, sense of being Tigers so to say and none showed this better than two examples I take before I end of Vikrant, one was by Capt. Swaraj Prakash, morning of 4th December, remember we remember 4th December for the attacks on Karachi, morning of 4th December we launched the attacks from, on what was the East Pakistan GG Gupta taking off the first flight at about 10 o'clock in the morning. At that point of time there was a submarine alert, so the other ships Kamorta and Beas and Brahmaputra were sent to hunt for the submarine and the aircraft carrier was left with Kamrati and Kamrati had no sonar I think Mike Bhada is here he will be able to bear it out but they were told, now now you have a problem is it you have a submarine threat you dont knowwhether you should launch and i understand that swaraj prakash was told by a lot of people including the Chief staff that about it we'll come back later see the

result of the submarine thing, the submarine action was happening some distance away and this what sawraj prakash said the FOO of that time Commander Vyas says i have not heard more sweeter or better things in my life than what Swaraj Prakash said then.

The last instance i have not put here *ye bhi Vikrant me hua tha aur ye '71 war me Adm Rao sahab ne ye instance bhi bataya hai humare talk recent quarterdeck me bhi aya hai-* 71 war engine room the boiler room of Vikrant right so Naval Chief *aaye hai Admiral Nanda , inspect kar rahe hai to wo dekh rahe hai* and remember Vikrant was limping then it had to be given a morale boost and people were doing their job and none more than the engine room department to get it ready for the walk and Nanda is very smart he goes down to the engine room to check get a pulse and he speaks to the boiler room POME and not this is human psychology and you gotta hand it to Nanda he doesnt say ki aapka system kaisa hai, acha chalo ye batao ye kaam karta hai ki nahi, he says kaise ho theek ho chitthi aa rahi hai ? haan sahab chitthi aa rahi hai he says

kya likhti hai gharwali okay and look at the reply of this boiler room pome of INS Vikrant in 71 war that gentleman says likhti hai daka jaoge to malmal leke ana. Now how can you fight the Navy which has this sort of morale ladies and gentlemen so my viewpoint is when you talk of a big navy mindset it is not about accommodation and this and that that is good it is about feeling that you can opt to a big navy but i believe that many wh are sitting here particularly veterans have brought us to this state of being a good navy a big name and it is for the rest of ou to take it further but i have not the slightest of this doesn't mean that we have not made mistakes this doesn't mean that we have not done anything wrong this doesn't mean like i said my time constraints do not enable me to talk about what were the weak areas we could discuss that at some other time but on the whole I think the Indian Navy has acquitted itself very well and that's my study as a history Maven. So thank you ever so much we shoot darts we shoot arrows these are my contact details twitter handles. Thank you for your presence.

Monsoon Musing III

Ancient Indian Military Maritime Expeditions

Mr Venkatesh Rangan

Good Evening everyone, I'm thankful to the Maritime History Society for inviting me to this talk and also all the distinguished dignitaries here of Western Naval Command who have taken the time for this session. The Sanskrit Shloka from an inscription called Praya Prashasti answers the very critical question 'How does the Small King become a World Emperor 'A Chakravarti' ? So far this verse says that a small king needs to have four prerequisites.

1. He needs to be like Dhanaga (Lord Kubera) share economic prosperity.

2. He needs to be like Lord Indra and share political stability

3. He needs to be like Antakasya (Dharma), have a sense of justice.

4. For economic prosperity, political stability, for a sense of justice he needs to ultimately be like Lord Varuna the Lord of Ocean he needs to secure a maritime frontier he needs to secure a rule based order Global commons which is the Ocean.

It is only by being Varuna along with Dhanaga, Indra and Antakasya can he actually become a world emperor. It is this cultural ethos where establishing and preserving orders in our ocean is

critical for economic and political stability, this cultural ethos which spurred the military maritime expedition of our Ancient Indian Dynasty.

Generally history textbooks or any mainstream history books will tell you that the exception of the Cholas generally India did not have blue water military naval tradition. Wrong, that's what my research proposes because in my book I have mentioned no less than eleven military naval expedition, military maritime expeditions. These are to various places :- Persian Gulf, Red Sea, South China Sea and various parts of Indian Ocean. Today I'll be selecting two of these expedition that is the Chola Naval Campaign to Southeast Asia at 1025 AD and to the Chalukyan Naval strike in the Al - Faw Peninsula Iraq 630-637 AD. So I'll be selecting these two expeditions and I'll go deep into the tactical and strategic features of these operations. We'll go battle by battle, inscription by inscription and text by text to actually study these campaigns.

Let's start with the Chola Military Campaign. So who were the Cholas? One thousand years ago most of Bharatvarsha, which is an Indian landmass, was dominated by one dynasty called Chola Dynasty. The capital of Chola Dynasty is Thanjavur which

is in Tamil Nadu but got spread all across Bharat for eg:- not only regions of South India but also included Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Bengal, modern day Bangladesh, parts of Jharkhand, parts of Bihar. So right from the river Ganga in the north east to the Southern point of Sri Lanka in the South that was the extent of the Chola Empire. The Paramaras of Malwa in Madhya Pradesh and the Yadava's of Kannauj of Uttar Pradesh were allies of the Cholas. So in short about 1025 AD there was one person who could be called as the Emperor of the Bharat, it was 'Rajendra Chola'. He was the Emperor of the Chola Empire. His opponent in the campaign was King of Malaya, Indonesia called Sangrama Vijjyotungavarma, this king belonged to the Dynasty called 'Shailendra'. Why was this South East Asian dynasty hostile Chola? We need to understand the Geo-Political landscape of these years.

Around 1021 AD the Shailendra's arose in Java and Subhadra. They spread all across Western Indonesia towards Malaysia, Southern Thailand and Burma. They formed an alliance with the Mons of Southern Burma and they established No war tax with Annamites in Vietnam. So Vietnam, Burma, parts of Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia

were totally part of the Shailendra Empire. The entire trade route between east and west, between China, Japan, Korea on one side and Bharat and through the Middle East Europe on other side, passed through this geography what we called as key maritime choke point Malacca Strait, Sunda Strait and Isthmus of Kra all of them under one single empire.

As per Chinese and Arabic sources, the Chinese source called Zhu Fan Zhi and from Arabic sources called Al-Masudi, Ibn Rosteh, Ibn Sulaiman as per all these people, the Shailendra imposed raw monopolistic power rather imposed ruthless monopolistic power. What did they do?

1. Nationalised industries eg – sandalwood. Sandalwood was the key export item from the Bharat to markets of China, Japan etc, but the Shailendra king said from today only those enterprises supported from the Shailendra empire by the Government can trade sandalwood. Only ships from Malaysia, Indonesia can export sandalwood so it was a sheer loss to the Indian economy in this aspect.

2. The Shailendra banned direct violence between east and west. As per Al Masoodi before the Shailendra, the ships from India

Subcontinent or Arabia put voyage all away upto China but once the Shailendra became powerful they said all the ships should disembark in a Malaya Port in Kadaram, Kedah and Kaleh in Malaysia, in Indonesia from there all the goods to be transhipped on to the local Malaysia or Indonesian ships which will led them to China. So very clearly a monopolistic power was established. According to Zhu Fan Zhi Chinese text any ship or foreign ship who violated his law was attacked and put on fire by the Shailendra Navy. So any Indian Ship which did not disembark on the designated port on the islands of Indonesia or Malaysia they would be attacked, casualties would be suffered so there was a lot of discrimination that followed. As per the Song Island, the Shailendra actively lobbied the Chinese in the Song port in China to ban preferential access to Indian merchants. So the Indian merchants guilds called as Ainnurruvar (the five hundred) had certain rights such as setting up a permanent port in Cantem, having lower tax etc. The Shailendra lobbied hard and all the preferential access ended. The entire access to the Chinese market which is a very lucrative market suddenly became null and void. Finally as per Ibn Rosteh the Shailendra emperor started boasting that he is more powerful

than any of the other dynasties of the Indies. So he said the Cholas, the Parmaras etc. we are the most powerful people. So very clearly by 1025 AD Shailendra empire provoking the total fight, he was directly challenging the economic influence of Indian content, he was directly attacking the geo-political prestige of the Indian empire. Now at this precise moment where there was so much of hostility Rajendra Chola got an Ambassador from a place called 'Kambhuja' which is Cambodia. Cambodia is an inland or landlocked country. They wanted access to the sea so they started expanding. Now in the west Kambhuja started expanding towards the Isthmus of Kras. The small peninsular there, the thinnest part of the Malay Peninsula is called Isthmus of Kra. They started expanding to that place in order to get a share from east west trade but Shailendra counter attacked them and surrounded on the three sides - the Mons on one side, the Vietnamese on one side and the Malayan on the southern side. So he was completely surrounded. So as per Karandi copper plate inscriptions the ambassador of Cambodia went to Rajendra Chola in India and told him "Please protect my 'AtmaLakshmi' - protect my Atmasamman. I am nearly in threat of being wiped out please help me" and so the enemy's enemy is our friend. So Rajendra

Chola form an alliance with Kambhujya empire. Around 1021 AD the geo-political aspect was as follows: Song empire sympathetic towards the Shailendra, the Shailendra forming an alliance with Mons of Burma and Vietnamese, the Chola Empire forming an alliance with the Kambhujya kingdom. Now obviously the Chola had to respond because it was a direct attack on India. Before that let's see what are the warships and weaponry used by Cholas.

Now in my analysis I have combined a Tamil inscription called 'Barus Inscription' along with the Sanskrit text written by a friend of Rajendra Chola. This friend of Rajendra Chola was called Parmara Bhoj and this text is called 'Yukti-Kalpataru'. In 'Yukti-Kalpataru' we have a detailed study of ship building. 'Yukti-Kalpataru' not only distinguishes between ocean-going ships and coastal ships, very importantly it distinguishes between military warships and merchant ships. 'Rann Kale Dahanatyaye Agramandira' that means Rann - battlefield, Kale - Time (ships used during the time of Battle). Now in today's Navy we have different classes of warships. We have Destroyers, Frigates and Missile corvettes, LPD's etc. With each type of ship we have classes like the Delhi class of destroyers,

the Brahmaputra class of destroyers. Similarly 'Yukti-Kalpataru' classifies ships into design and types of ships. Broadly two basic types of design 'Dirgha' and 'Unnata'. 'Dirgha' means the emphasis more on the heights, 'Unnata' means breadth - depending on the tonnage, weaponry, depending on the crew complement. In a Tamil inscriptions you have generic terms used for ocean going ships is Marakkalam. I have compared Marakkalam with Vishesh ships of 'Yukti - Kalpataru', that's the assumption I have made. A brief on these ships, they were timber based sail ships made of hardwood, rosewood, and some parts babool. Hulls not held with iron nails, Sewn or hull held with materials other than irons, wooden planks laid over their ends, we have four mast ships mentioned in Yukti-Kalpataru but most of the Chola Warships have 2 or 3 masted ships. They even had Multi Deck boats and Landing boats for beach frontiers/ amphibious assaults. Now looking at all these sources together and looking at Parmara Bhoja's own opinion and what were the best warships, we can identify three mainstay warships of the Chola period. Dirgha Beginni - these are the frontline warships, the destroyers of the Chola period. Dimensions are 264 feet in length, 33 feet in breadth, 25.5 feet in height, around

500 tonnage, could accommodate crew complement + armed troopers 300-500. So these were the ships not just used for naval blockage but for transporting expeditionary forces.

3 masted ships - weaponry included archers, Nafa tools - flamethrowers, Naracha shepani (using this term from Raghuvamsa) - indicates group of arrows/ spears fire-tipped which are pulled by a catapult, Bhendipalak - stones smeared in explosive materials thrown through slings. So these are the frontline warships. Mid sized assault ships called Unnata Urddhva - 48 feet in length, 24 feet in breadth, 24 feet in height. These dimensions are from 'Yukti Kalpataru', crew complement + armed troopers was around 50-100, 200 ton, 2 mast ships, archers and flamethrowers were the weapons on the boat. The smallest ship, small yet lethal called - Dhirgha Dirghika as per Parmara Bhoja used for coastal raids. Ships are tugged with larger ships. They are mostly long kinds of big boats but they are let loose when used for specific surgical commando operations launched in certain coastal areas. Operational war plan as per German historian Hermann Kulke Rajendra Chola took at least a decade to plan for this massive naval campaign. Around 1014-1016 AD an

intelligent gathering operation was sent to South East Asia. The Chola sent a trade delegation to China on the way; they had to stop at the ports of Indonesia and Malaysia. So under the cover of a trade delegation to all these places, the German historian Hermann Kulke states that they actually gathered intelligence in these areas. Recce was carried out. Basic strong holds of these of Shailendra, the maritime stronghold, where were their fleets based, how many disbursed etc. In 1017 AD as per Thiruvallangadu copper plate inscription a probing attack was launched by the Chola ship Kadaram of Malaysia which was the principal capital of the Shailendra empire. We don't know the actual result of it. Around 1025 AD the Chola had good intelligence of what exactly the enemy had. I'll be describing the exact operations based on foreign sources, primarily the Thanjavur inscription (1030 AD), a Malay annal called Saraja Malayu, Javanese text called 'Nagarakritagama', Karandi copper plate inscription and Tamil text called 'Kalingattuparani' and other secondary sources. Based on these sources what was the operational war plan. This was a theatre level operation; this was not a naval raid, not a one port attack. Now to understand the operation and how they divide we

have to understand the strength of the Shailendra. What are the deployments of the Shailendras? The central force proves that the concentration of the Shailendras was not Malaya because they are facing the Kambuja empire that's why the offensive position. In south, at Sumatra the vassal of Shailendra, vassals are autonomous kingdoms which are under the suzerainty of Shailendra. Largest kingdom is called 'Jambi' does not have very good relation with Kadaram. The important point is the Navy of Shailendra is decentralised and distributed so you don't have it fleet wise like one port or two port or three ports or three bases etc. There are small squadrons or small divisions in fact flotillas kept in different points along the coast hidden by rocky caves, hidden by lagoons. What is the reason for this? As per Zhu Fan Zhi the Chinese text anytime an enemy attack the main port of the Shailendra, the Shailendra immediately adopted the defensive posture so there were many defensive wars. Now the enemy thinks there's a very small squadron out there but immediately multiple squadrons which are hidden in various creeks assembled there and attacked the particular largest formation. The only counter attack can be by launching near sequential multiple raids on multiple ports. The vyuha

launched by the Chola was horn formation or pincer. So effectively three naval fleets with five task forces divided into five battle spaces are called five sectors. The southern pincer goes to the Sumatra crossing all the way to modern day Singapore, Malaysia and land based expedition which marches straight to South of Kedah in Malaysia. At the same time the northern pincer goes to Isthmus of Kra then goes down to southern Thailand and approaches Kadaram from the North. That is why it is called Sringatatavyuha or the horn formation. But this is not enough. In north of Burma the Mons if we do not have diversionary attacks to the mons the mons will attack the flanks so there needs to be diversionary raid - an aggressive posture maintained at the north so the Mons are diverted. Similarly Champa, Vietnam forces are amast near the Cambodian border so they have to be distracted and got to the coast. So a diversionary raid has to be planned near Champa. Finally we have to secure the 6 degree channel, a very important channel near the Nicobar island and Banda Aceh in north Sumatra where most of our supply lines could be threatened these days. So effectively speaking about the massive operation as per Sri Lankan historian **Malatunga (sic)** along with Indian historian R.K

Majoomdar and R.K Mukherjee if all their theories are looked together there are 3 launchpads from the Indian and Sri Lankan/ South East Asian Coast for this. Launchpad no.1 was Nagapatnam Tamil Nadu, Launch pad no. 2 Bengal delta Orissa coast and the third as per Sri Lankan historian was near Trincomalee. So three launchpads, three major fleets, 5 task forces and that's the operation war plan was. So let us go sector by sector as per the Thanjavur inscriptions the first verse of Thanjavur inscriptions says the Chola crossed the rolling seas. Immediately let's start with the southern pincer the Chola made landfall in three places: Pannai north Sumatra , in Jambi, Palembang in Southern Sumatra. The numbering happened according to Thanjavur inscription. Now the numbering was done when the victory was first achieved. So even though the Chola made the landfall in north Sumatra first they won victory earliest in south Subhadra only. This was because the most ferocious resistance to the Chola attack was there in the Malacca strait. When Cholas attacked ferociously on entire Shailendra Navy thought that North and Central Sumatra was threatened and that's why the entire focus was out there. Now when the focus was there at fighting, a small squadron

escaped and reached the southern Sumatran region of Palembang. Now how can they reach up till there without being intercepted? There are two theories: No.1- the kingdom of Jambi which lies south of the Straits that did not have very good relation with Kadaran central kingdom so there was some kind of a less than enthusiastic attitude between them to stop the attackers, No.2 - one Chola squadron went south of Indonesian island and attack the Sunda strait personally I don't agree with that view but whatever said and done ultimately the first victory what Chola got is the southern part. Now this part was left undefended. Why was it not defended? Because of the strategic value. The Shailendra didn't consider the place to be a very strategic point but it had psychological value. This place was called 'Srivijaya'. For 300 years the kings of Indonesia were crowned there. So by attacking the place the Cholas wanted to make a psychological impact. They wanted to break the will of the enemy. The Srivijaya port is located 105km inland through a navigable river called river Musi. So one class of Chola ships, the Unnata Urddhva went to the canal and actually captured this place. As per Thanjavur inscriptions there were no battle fought here but they symbolically raised their flag here at the place

called jewel gate where the coronation happened. No.2 the place called Panei had a lot of rivers and canals but none of them were navigable. So the Cholas had to make a beach assault. They actually had landing boats to enter a beach and cross a river. As per Thanjavur inscription the infantry went to beach and crossed the river then they did not need much assistance and captured the place. Radha Kumud Mukerjee's book called 'Indian Shipping' mentions a sculpture according to which an actual land attack by Indian mariners on the beachfront was carried out. The sculpture showcases the landing being carried out on both sides and the archers on the main ship giving coverfire. No.3 the Mallyur of Jambi was relatively a mountainous area in middle Sumatra. As per Thanjavur inscriptions the Shailendra retreated onto a hilltop and the Cholas actually had to capture. These are the actual ruins in Jambi, Sumatra, now if we look at the hill features of Jambi region the highest mountain of Sumatra is in South but North of Jambi about 110 km of coast there are a small range of hills which have the height of 438 metres. So when the battle happened the chola soldiers had to actually climb the mountains. Now once it was done, the chola forces secured Sumatara the southern

part of Malacca strait. As per Malay annal called Saraja Malayu, Raja Shulan or Rajendra Chola crossed the Teamsek straits in modern day Singapore and set up a base out there. Now to the surprise they found that Teamsek Straits or modern Singapore is totally empty. Why was it empty? Because the Shailendra army made a tactical withdrawal. The gap between Lingii and Teamsek is 250 km. The Shailendra army retreated till Lingii because this place is geographically well suited for a defence.

If we see on the eastern side there is a mountain range with average elevation of 4000 feet and west is the sea, the Malacca Straits. The Shailendra were reinforced by the sea and hence they went closer to the western coast where they could be reinforced. The Chola Navy at that particular point in time could not establish sea dominance. There are 3 main objectives of Chola navy in this period, objective no.1 establishment of blockade in western side of Malay peninsula, objective no.2 eliminate the threat of Shailendra navy, and objective no.3 was to enable expeditionary forces to make landfall to launch amphibious operations i.e., to enter land and attack land targets from infantry. The third objective was achieved. Objective No.1. to

dominate the western Malay peninsula and objective No 2. points to eliminate the threat of the Shailendra navy were not yet achieved and precisely why the Shailendra army could withdraw in good order to the western coast. The Shailendra put very strong defence in a place called 'Lingii' which is modern day Sarangnabg in Malaysia. This place in Malay annals was a wooden fort but the battle was so fierce that the wooden fort was destroyed. The Shailendra force retreated further northwestwards to a place called Ilangashoka. We still have the ruins of the fort now. This fort has lot of lagoons which acted as national defence. As per the Thanjavur inscriptions this was an undoubted fierce and ferocious battle till the Malay peninsula as we don't have any indication in Thanjavur inscription of any other ferocious battle. For the first time compact casualties started appearing when the chola forces started attacking western Malaya peninsula and this was because the sea control was not fully established. Finally the Shailendra forces withdraw to a rainforest area called 'Dingding river valley' and they have a base over there called the Ganganagara'. Now this was completely Criss cross by rivers, complete rainforest typical 'guerrilla force territory' heavy fighting happened here. As per the

Malay annals the entire base of Ganganagara is identified and put to fire by Chola forces. Now a lot of casualties happened during this process and the chola force realised that we need to change our strategies and we need to completely eliminate the Shailendra navy. Now when the heavy fighting was happening in the southern Malay peninsula what happening in the north? In the North the cholas forces first met the landfall at the place called Merilimbangam near Isthmus of Kra. The Shailendra forces make a retreat across the peninsula from Kamalanka to Madaimalingam. This place is called Bay of Bandon. It is an access point of south China but the cholas could not chase them. The cholas had to go from Kamalanka to Takua Pa because they needed to secure the western coast and the entire Isthmus of Kra is controlled if one had control over these two points. So they both placed at Takkolam then they attack bay of Bandon where they make a cross peninsular march where there is multiple attack and fierce battle. Shailendra retreat to a place called Mayirudungam where they actually retreat as per the Thanjavur inscription to an island and island fortress off the coast where as per the Thanjavur inscription the sea formed a moat but the sea artillery of Cholas finally got captured. I talked about

Mevilimbangam which was the first point the landfall was made. This place in Thanjavur inscription has a very long defence wall, rocky capes. So even small type walls built over these rocky capes can be a good time defence. Talaittakolam was captured without any resistance on the western side. It has a very beautiful coastline. Then we talk about the cross peninsular march bay of Bandon. 'Madamalingam' - the rocky outcrops where much of the fierce battles were fought. So you can see the heavy fighting going on the northern side of Malaya peninsula and southern side of the Malay peninsula. On the other hand there was a diversionary attack made on Burma which I have talked about earlier. The gulf of Martaban as per Thanjavur inscriptions this place called 'Mappaplam' having abundant deep water as defence, they had a lot of tidal flats but the chief officer of chola of navy wanted to distract the Burmese which was done to a great extent because Mons could launch a flanking attack on the chola forces. A daring operation was conducted in Vietnam where annamites were forced to retreat to the coast. In the Vietnam retreat the king of Cambodia 'Suryavarman' whom we found mentioned in the Karandi copper plate inscription, the king of Cambodia moves his forces to the

western front and puts pressure on the Shailendra in the north so the Shailendra could not intersect the chola for the south. As per Thanjavur inscription 'Valaippanduru' champa in south Vietnam passed through cultivated land and jungle to attack the enemy. A huge casualties suffered by chola forces and what was the reason for that? The reason was one place of Shailendra on north Sumatara called Lamri and in Tamil Ilamuridesam. Now why Ilamuridesam is important because the Lamri it has the key base which could monitor six degree channel. Lamri is based in north Sumatra. There is a 90 km gap in Andaman and Nicobar Island and north Sumatra. So this Lamri is strongly held by the Shailendra which protected them from Cholas and also they could make flanking attacks on the Cholas. So Lamri had to be attacked. As per Thanjavur battle it was do or die battle. The entire Lamri base had to be eliminated. As per Thanjavur inscription Ilamuridesam a vehement attack was made after huge efforts this base was completely eliminated. Completely secured a six degree channel, the Chola also crossed the channel and landed at a place called as 'Manakkavaram' or Nicobar. Nicobar island was also secured by its continuously happening strategic events. So once the six

degree channel was secured sea control was established. The Shailendra Navy was highly silenced and a blockade was launched around the Kedah Coast/ Kadaram Coast. The final battle of Kadaram for which by the end of this campaign Kadaram is surrounded in the north by the northern pincer and in the south by the southern pincer, the naval blockade by the sea. There are three references which actually tell us what actually happened. I'll start with the Thanjavur inscription. So 'Sangrama Vijayottungavarman' the king of Shailendra knew that his game was up. It was his last stand. So he ordered his elephant corps to march out and attack the land forces. As per the Kalingattuparani the Tamil text, the Chola counter attacked with their own elephants. Now the question is how did the Cholas bring elephants? Were they tamed in Malaya peninsula itself or Cambodians gave them elephants or the elephants all the way came from India right up till Malaysia? We don't know. But as per Kalingattuparani the counter attack by Chola elephants was strong and Shailendra elephants were defeated. After this heavy quarter by quarter fighting the Thanjavur inscription the 'Vidyadhara Torana' the 'war gate' explicitly mentioned. This was a gate where military parades were in the hands of the

Shailendra empire. So this means that the fighting went on till there. As per the inscription of Virarajendra the descendant of Rajendra Chola fighting was so intense that the entire Kadaram was burnt into the ground 'Lanka Dahana' like the Lanka was burnt, Kadaram was burnt. So that was intense fighting but at the end the result is clear: the entire Shailendra empire was defeated. 'Sangrama Vijayottungavarman' as per Malaya annals made complete submission/ surrender. As per historian Tansen Sen and Hermann Kulke the victory of Chola was so complete and so comprehensive that for three years after his campaign not a single south-east Asian country sent a trading ship or trading mission to China so they were so scared to come out of their houses or to the sea such was a sensation. 14 different ports all across southeast Asia were under attack. Expeditionary forces, naval blockade and coastal raids this was Indian history's largest naval sea control and largest sea domination operation ever launched. 100 years after this the Chola dominated the eastern waters. As per the Barus inscription of Sumatra in 1088 AD combine military commercial colonies were established in Barus which is in Sumatra where were 'Nagarshresthi' and 'Nagarsenapati'.

The second expedition on Chalukyan Strike in Iraq at Al-Faw in 620 AD – 640 AD there was a very powerful king in Bharat called Chalukyan Pulakesin II or Pulakesin Parmeshwara. His capital was Vatapi in Karnataka. He was the most powerful king in Bharat. He defeated Harshavardhana of north and Mahendravarman Pallava of Kanchipuram. So effectively he was a person who was undefeated in 620 AD - 640 AD. The Arabic sources called him Shahniushahi-Al-Hind the emperor of all India and he was actually called Suru Misha which translates into Parmeshwara Pulakesin. As per Tarikh al-Rusul wa'l muluk I'm using the translation of Khalid Yahya and I'm using another translation of R.K Majumdar so the first translation of Khalid Yahya says in year 12 when the Caliph sent his general Al-Ubulla in Iraq he found that the place was under attacks by the Indians at sea. R.K Majumdar translation is more explicit he and it said the place was under attack by the Indian Navy at sea so irrespectively explicitly the word 'Navy' is mentioned or not the fact remains all translation is same that there was an attack from Indians from the sea. So there was a naval attack on Al-Ubulla in Iraq as per 12 Islamic Calendar. Around the same time the same book in Vol 5

translated by Bosword tells the king Shahniushahi-Al-Hind who was at this point of time none other than 'Furumisha' or Chalukyan Pulakesin. In year 16 exactly 4 years later the translation by Andrew Wilson of the same text of Al Tabari the Caliph tells his General that I'm threatened by the Navy of Al-Hind. In fact the Navy of Al-Hind and the Navy of Oman formed an alliance and they were attacking us. Please retreat 80 km away from the coast. Vacate the Al-Ubulla also and establish a new city with high walls which can defend you from the enemy and this new city with high walls called 'Basra' is a very famous metropolis in Iraq today. As per this translated by Andrew Wilson, Bosword, Khalid Yahya, R.K Majumdar etc as per Arabic text the city of Basra is the greatest city of Middle East and was formed due to fear of the Indian Navy. So it's an amazing feature actually. For 4 years near 12 to 16 the Chalukyan Navy was deployed in the Persian Gulf so it was an amazing thing.

So effectively speaking I just conclude my expedition discussion over here. So there is a cultural ethos always to have quality of Lord Vauna to establish a order of ocean so this is also important for a (Chakravartti) a world conqueror, for economic stability, political stability and

sense of justice because in order to protect Indian economic interest. So in the Chola period we directly found economic interest. Why did Chalukyan attack Iraq, the reason was economic interest. Indian merchants such as Jatt and Jhabiad have formed a colony called 'Ardhe Hind' in Al-Faw peninsula. Now this colony was first under attack while disintegrating the Persian empire and secondly by Rashid and Caliphate that was the first Caliphate of Islamic history that was an Arabic Caliphate. So this threat to the Indian economic interest was counter acted by the Chalukyan naval intervention there. So economic interest and protection of geo-political power projection are very important. Finally these two expeditions and there are 11 maritime expeditions as per my research. Thank you 'Shano Varunah' 'Jai Hind'.

Unveiling Mumbai's Forgotten Titanic: The SS Ramdas Tragedy

Ms. Uma Kabe



Picture1: Represented painting of SS Ramdas
Source: BBC

It is indeed a curious fact that amidst the extensive discussions and historical references to the Titanic disaster, there exists a lesser-known maritime tragedy that unfolded in the waters of Mumbai - the SS Ramdas. Often regarded as Mumbai's own Titanic, the story of this ill-fated vessel, which met its demise on 17 July 1947, remains shrouded in obscurity within the annals of history.

SS Ramdas, a 406-ton twin-screw coastal steamer passenger ferry, built by a Scottish Company and owned by the Indian Cooperative Steam Navigation and Trading Company, set sail with more than 700 passengers

onboard from Mumbai's Bhau cha Dhakka aka Ferry Wharf to Rewas, Alibaug on the morning of 17 July 1947 at 0805h.¹ SS Ramdas, being a steamship, was at that time considered the largest vessel on the six-hour ferry service between Mumbai and Rewas².



Source: TOI

Being the monsoon season, various newspaper reports claimed that heavy rains had lashed the city the night before SS Ramdas's departure. The weather report for 17 July stated that the

¹ Vaibhav Purandare, 'India's Titanic Tragedy that killed 700 also marks 75 years', 'The Times of India', accessed and retrieved through,

[India's Titanic tragedy that killed 700 also marks 75 years](#)

² National Library of Australia, accessed and retrieved through, [19 July 1947 - 669 Die In Ship Disaster - Trove](#)

weather conditions were not conducive for the next 24 hours in Bombay.³ However, the official accounts by Mr CA Butch, General Manager of Bombay Steam Navigation Company and the first-hand account by the master of the ship, Sheikh Suleman Ibrahim, state that the weather when SS Ramdas departed had been very normal for the monsoon season and that SS Ramdas wouldn't have sailed if the sea had been rough.⁴

Steaming at a slow speed of about three knots, the ship left Bombay Harbour (now Mumbai) and reached Karanja Buoy at around 0835h. Approximately four and a half to five miles from Bombay harbour near Kansa Rocks (Gull Island) and Dharmatar between Kolaba Coast and Bombay, SS Ramdas met violent rainstorms and heavy seas.⁵ Visibility was very poor on account of heavy rains.⁶ It was then that she was struck on the starboard side by a huge swell.⁷ This created

a huge panic and chaos among the passengers, and they all immediately rushed to the port side. Despite desperate efforts by the captain and his crew to take the ship to a coastal creek to save the ship and her passengers, SS Ramdas was overweighed on the port side which ultimately resulted in her keeling over at 0837h. She toppled all those on her deck into the water thereby casting hundreds into the sea. In the two minutes that the ship capsized, the captain of the ship ordered his Chief and the second officer to supply the passengers with all the available safety gear.

³ Asiatic Society, Granth Sanjeevani, Mrs. Nina Maniar, 'Ramdas Tragedy', The Bombay Chronicle, 23 July 1947.

⁴ Vaibhav Purandare, 'India's Titanic Tragedy that killed 700 also marks 75 years', 'The Times of India', accessed and retrieved through,

[1947 was the year of India's biggest shipping disaster too | India News - Times of India](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/1947-was-the-year-of-India-s-biggest-shipping-disaster-too-India-News-Times-of-India)

⁵ National Library of Australia, accessed and retrieved through, [19 July 1947 - 669 Die In Ship Disaster - Trove](https://nla.gov.au/nla:gov:1947-669-Die-In-Ship-Disaster-Trove)

⁶ Asiatic Society, Granth Sanjeevani, '700 drowned in a sea off Kolaba Coast', The Bombay Chronicle, 18 July 1947, page 1.

⁷ '70 survive out of 721 in monsoon tragedy', The Strait Times, 19 July 1947, page 1, accessed and retrieved through, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/digitised/article/straitstimes19470719-1.2.5>

Organising Relief Of Survivors Of Ill-Fated "Ramdas"

SHERIFF TO CONVENE CITIZENS' MEETING: APPEAL FOR FUNDS

(Continued from page 1)

After the announcement for the identification of the bodies of the victims of the ill-fated "Ramdas" tragedy, a meeting of the citizens of Bombay was held at the Sheraton Hotel, at 8.30 p.m. on Monday, July 21, to discuss the relief of the survivors and the recovery of the bodies of the victims.

The meeting was presided over by Mr. C. A. Butch, General Manager of the Bombay Steam Navigation Company, who reported that the ship had been struck by a huge swell on the starboard side, causing her to keel over on her port side. He stated that the ship had been carrying 721 passengers and crew, of whom only 70 had survived.

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Source: TOI

The ship was expected to reach Rewas at around 2 p.m. Very suprisingly, the maritime authorities remained entirely unaware of the calamity until several survivors successfully swam to safety and subsequently arrived at the Wharf Ferry, Colaba Point and Sassoon Docks, where they relayed this information at around 4 p.m.⁸ It was at this moment that Mr Buch spoke to the locals of Rewas and was informed that the people were waiting to receive the passengers from SS Ramdas. It was then that the search operations were started. A search party was instantly called for and was immediately asked to rush to the site of the disaster. The immediate vessels to be dispatched for search were the country crafts. The search operations were carried out by a fleet of naval, port trust and mercantile vessels.⁹ By the time the search party reached the site of the disaster, floating in the waves were one solitary life-belt, two oil drums and an old piece of furniture.¹⁰ The search party combed the area for any visible indication of the boat or any survivors.

As per the newspaper reports of Bombay Chronicle of 18 July 1947, a country craft had rescued ten passengers of the ill-fated vessel and headed off towards Rewas. The captain of the ship too swam ashore with the help of a raft and went to the nearest telegraph office (about eight miles from the shore) to communicate with the head office about the incident.¹¹ The question that arises is weren't there any radios installed for the captain to use on the ship?



While recording official statements of the incidents that happened, Mr Ibrahim stated that he was along with the Chief Officer of the ship when the ship sank and when the ship was around 10 feet below water he struggled through the porthole to emerge on the starboard side where he joined around 25 passengers and members of the crew who were clinging to a raft.¹²

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⁹ 'Ramdas Ship disaster 1947', The Times of India Relief Fund, accessed and retrieved through, <https://archive.ph/20010424230659/http://www.timesrelieffund.com/ramdasship/ramdas.htm>

¹⁰ Asiatic Society, Granth Sanjeevani, '700 drowned in a sea off Kolaba Coast', The Bombay Chronicle, 18 July 1947, page 1.

¹¹ Asiatic Society, Granth Sanjeevani, '700 drowned in a sea off Kolaba Coast', The Bombay Chronicle, 18 July 1947, page 1.

¹² Vaibhav Purandare, 'India's Titanic Tragedy that killed 700 also marks 75 years', 'The Times of India', accessed and retrieved through, [1947 was the year of India's biggest shipping disaster too | India News - Times of India](http://www.timesofindia.com/1947-was-the-year-of-India-s-biggest-shipping-disaster-too/India-News-Times-of-India)

Survivors Of Sunken 'Ramdas' Now Number 117

SHIP'S CAPTAIN NARRATES STORY OF DISASTER

THE death roll in the sinking of the "Ramdas", the greatest sea tragedy of all time in Bombay harbour, was placed on Saturday morning at 626 lives, 117 survivors having till then been reported safe ashore in Bombay and adjacent coastal ports out of a total complement of 743 aboard the vessel when she went down, on Thursday morning.

Fifty-seven of the survivors, including the Captain and the Chief Officer, were brought ashore in Bombay; 40 were listed as having reached Rewas, where the "Ramdas" was bound for, and 20 were reported to have landed at Mandwa.

But the lessening shadow of the tremendous death roll brought with it an additional burden of sorrow in that a fresh assessment of the number on board the ill-fated vessel was placed on Friday at, at least, 743 lives, 39 more than she was previously reported to have been carrying. And this figure is likely to grow, for it was based upon the number of tickets issued, with children counted as half passengers, or if infants, unaccounted for.

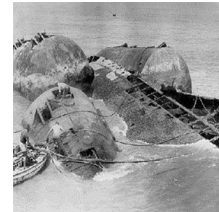
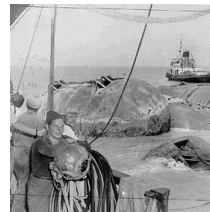
Two floating bodies part of the crew, were picked up by the R.N. Sloop, H.M.S. CAUVERY in the evening in the course of their rescue work. These bodies were taken charge of by the Kolaba Police and are being sent to the morgue. The

(Continued on page 7)

As soon as the news of such a deadly incident reached the relatives and friends of the passengers of SS Ramdas, the anxious and grief-stricken crowd gathered around Ferry Wharf and Rewas hoping to hear the news of their near and dear ones surviving the tragedy either from the search party or from across the harbour. Unable to withstand the grief of not hearing a single piece of news, they demanded to know the names of those who had survived the incident. Finally, the names of the survivors were collated by the steamer company were announced

on a loud hailer at the Ferry Wharf.¹³

An official inquiry into the accident was started by Cdr HJ Mills, principal Sea Transport Officer, Mercantile Marine Department, Bombay, Govt of India.¹⁴ He had called upon all the survivors to give in their statements in finding out the cause of the disaster.¹⁵



¹³ Vaibhav Purandare, 'India's Titanic Tragedy that killed 700 also marks 75 years', 'The Times of India', accessed and retrieved through,

[1947 was the year of India's biggest shipping disaster too | India News - Times of India](https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/digitised/article/india-news-times-of-india)

¹⁴ '70 survive out of 721 in monsoon tragedy', The Strait Times, 19 July 1947, page 1, accessed and retrieved through, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/digitised/article/strait-times-19470719-1.2.5>

¹⁵ Asiatic Society, Granth Sanjeevani, 'Survivors of Ramdas to Assist Investigation', The Bombay Chronicle, 25 July 1947.



Source: The Strait Times, 19 July 1947, page 1

Following the maritime disaster, extensive search and recovery efforts were initiated by the Port authorities. Despite their diligent endeavours, no wreckage was immediately located. In August 1951, the Bombay Port Trust, recognising the importance of the situation, resolved to undertake salvage operations. These responsibilities were subsequently entrusted to an Italian firm at a cost of ₹13.8 lakh.¹⁶ However, it is noteworthy that the sunken vessel unexpectedly resurfaced on its own accord in the vicinity of Ballard Pier, located off the coast of Bombay, during the year 1957.

The sinking highlighted the importance of stringent safety regulations and inspections for merchant vessels. When SS Tukaram of the same Indian Cooperative Steam Navigation and

Trading Company sank in 1947, the company had promised to install radios and cables on the ship. The tragedy spurred a re-evaluation of maritime technologies and navigation systems. The development of more advanced navigation aids and communication equipment gained momentum to prevent such accidents in the future.

The sinking of SS Ramdas raised questions about the humanitarian aspects of maritime disasters. It led to discussions on improving search and rescue operations at sea. The Ramdas incident left a lasting legacy in the maritime industry, emphasising the importance of safety in preventing such maritime incidents from happening again in the future.

¹⁶ A titanic like incident happened in India; in 1947, 700 people died in a shipwreck near Mumbai, 'Lokmat Times', accessed and retrieved through, https://www.lokmatimes.com/photos/maharashtra/a-titanic-like-incident-happened-in-india-in-1947-700-people-died-in-a-shipwreck-near-mumbai/?utm_source=lokmatimes.com&utm_medium=infiniteGallery-Desktop

Maritime Slave Trade in Early Modern Indian Oceanic Region

Mr Kathan Kamlesh Shah

The history of Indian subcontinent is replete with tales of grandeur and cultural exchange, so is that of its Oceanic region, but one somber chapter often goes unnoticed: the early modern Indian maritime slave trade. One might ask why even to take these efforts to learn something disturbing, but one should also know that remembering the victims of this trade is a crucial step toward recognising the enduring impact of historical injustices. Hence, let us dig into this aspect more.

Preliminary Background:

Several factors can account to this slave trade, including India's strategic geographical location, its robust nautical traditions, and the demand for labor across regions. India's vast coastline and maritime prowess allowed it to become an active participant in the broader Indian Ocean trade network. As early as the 6th century CE, Indian traders had established systematic connections with distant lands,

creating a robust system of exchange.

The early accounts often romanticised India's maritime history while neglecting the dark aspects of the trade. In exploring the maritime slave trade in India, we are confronted with ethical questions about the treatment of humans as commodities. It is imperative to acknowledge this dark chapter in history and reflect on its implications for contemporary society.

Methods of acquiring slaves in early modern IOR¹⁷

- **"Famine-slave cycle"** during famines, draughts and poverty; in which, families, as a means of **survival, sold individuals into debt** servitude apparently for brief periods of time until the debt could be paid and the person redeemed.

¹⁷ Machado Pedro. (2023). Maritime Passages in the Indian Ocean Slave Trade. In: Pargas, D.A., Schiel, J. (eds) The Palgrave Handbook of Global Slavery throughout History. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13260-5_20

- Re-enslavement may also be a result of **aristocratic debts**, similar to those that resulted from deals involving local authorities and Europeans in Southeast Asia in the middle of the 18th century.¹⁸
- **Raids**¹⁹ that were part of warring strategies: some degree of **violence** amid forcible **displacement** from a home environment.
- **Warfare**²⁰ as an imperial imposition strategy: during the 1650s to mid-1670s, Dutch officials often **forced leaders at gunpoint** to conclude slave-cause agreements or treaties, whereby fixed numbers of slaves²¹ had to be supplied to them as "*boete ofte amende*".²²
- **Religious radicalism**: eastern and southeastern Africa. In Islam, the **capture of infidels in jihad** was a recognized form of slave acquisition in the service.²³

Note: This 'religious in-group vs. out-group' way of recruiting slaves was not solely an Islamic practice, nor was limited to Africa and Middle East, for

instance, Pangeran Dipati of Jambi on the east coast of Sumatra against Ujang Salangh on the Malaysian Peninsula in 1669, for instance, was justified on the grounds that they were "*heathens*", and thus susceptible to capture. (Machado, p. 362)

- **Debt** as a powerful mechanism for the production of unfreedom among individuals, even though attempts by the British to reconstitute dependent labour ties in Bihar in northeastern India into "free" labour, where, after the theoretical abolition of slavery in 1843, enslaved agricultural labourers (Kamias) were transformed into **bonded labourers**.
 - **Kidnapping** (in absence of raiding):
 - For adults: under false pretences of financial aid, food, social upliftment, etc.
 - For children: straightforward **abductions and selling off as a means of escaping poverty**, sometimes even by parents themselves.²⁴
- Minors as young as 6 years of age were easy targets in warfare and became enslaved in large numbers in response to the labor

¹⁸ Exempli Gratia: In the 1750s, a Dutch burgher in Kupang in Timor (eastern Indonesia) was owed slaves by the raja of Amabi, but after deeming that the latter had been slow with their delivery, burgher travelled to the village of the raja's brother-in-law where he seized twelve villagers as liquidation of the debt. They were subsequently shipped to Batavia for sale.

¹⁹ Like, Western Madagascar launched a number of raids in the early 19th century in the waters off northeast Mozambique that enslaved 1000s.

²⁰

²¹ Along with other commodities

²² Literally, *fine or tribute*

²³ Also, in terms of extending the faith.

²⁴ Such as when an extremely poor 10-year-old girl named "China" was sold by her mother to a VOC employee at the company's trading post in Nagapattinam on the Indian Coromandel coast, in order to survive in absolute poverty.

needs of the date plantation and pearling economies of West Asia.

Excerpt (Machado, 2023):

“According to British officials, ships from Trucial Oman that would sail regularly to the East African island for trade would “steal” slaves, while at the same time also acquiring captives through purchase. A few decades later, slavers from Sur—located at the entrance of the Gulf of Oman—had the audacity to carry kidnapped and gagged children in large baskets through the streets of Zanzibar in daylight to awaiting vessels.”

Note: If one is pitying on the East Asian and African children, let it be known that the condition was on the same gloominess level in India.²⁵

Otherwise, in the Indian Ocean, raiding was used as either a focus/ byproduct of warfare or as

a strategy for acquiring captives for sale.

Who used to fund these slave-nexus anyway? And how widespread was it?

- Indian, Arab, Persian, Southeast Asian **merchants organised and financed voyages**, procured slaves, and **arranged their sale in foreign markets. Rulers encouraged** this to regulate trade and **impose taxes.**
- Indian traders, as well as those from foreign lands, engaged in the transportation of slaves across these waters. The trade routes connected India to regions such as East Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and beyond. The **exchange of goods**, including spices, textiles, and precious metals, often **occurred alongside human trafficking** in fixed numbers, according to their slave-cause agreements or treaties.

Location trends estimate in early modern Asia.²⁶

- Slave trade network was revolving around the dual axes of **Makassar and Bali**. Apart from operating as independent slave exporters, the kingdoms of Bali also re-exported

²⁵ Consider this:

“A young girl relates her story to a British agent in Muscat in 1841 about how when she was playing with two friends in the street in Yādḡr in present-day Karnataka, two “Arabs” approached the girls with promises of food and money. After agreeing to go with them, the “eight or nine years [sic] old” girls were separated before being thrown into a world of slavery that involved journeys of great distances and multiple sales, a common occurrence. Within the space of approximately 18 months, the young girl was sold 6 times as she was trafficked from Hyderabad to Bombay, then Mukalla in Yemen, Sur and Masirah in Oman and finally to Muscat where she recounted her story”.

²⁶Machado Pedro. (2023). Maritime Passages in the Indian Ocean Slave Trade. In: Pargas, Damian, A., Schiel, J. (eds) The Palgrave Handbook of Global Slavery throughout History. (Springer). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13260-5>, p. 355, pp.359-373

slaves from **eastern Indonesia** and as far as **New Guinea**.

- **Batavia**,²⁷ the focal point of VOC interests in the area was where they met a range of labour needs in the Dutch colony, which sustained high levels of demand for slaves among individual merchants and Company officials alike. Therefore, Batavia emerged as a hub for trade and commerce's infrastructure and human capital, plus the then slave hub of the region in Indonesia.
- Captive individuals were sold to European slavers in the 17th-19th centuries by Dutch, English, and French slavers, among others. Fueled by the **sale of firearms and gunpowder**, and strategic demands, **European** trading Companies **successfully acquired** sizable cargoes of captives in **Madagascar**.
- Sulu sultanate's of the southern Philippines, extensive slave raiding by Balangingi²⁸ pirates associated with its prolific slave-trading rulers, led to the large-scale enslavement of thousands of regional sea people, such as the Bajau. Taosug datus²⁹ organised regional slaving

expeditions, known as "Mangubat" or "Mangalay," to Mindanao & Visayas, that generated 200,000–300,000 imports into the sultanate between 1770s-1870s.

Note: Individuals could be abducted as soon as they landed on an island, so widespread were abductions.

- In the East of Bali, slave-raiding itineraries were incorporated into trading routes as the two were pursued simultaneously. (Machado, p. 365)
- The Timor region was poorly watched over by the Dutch at Kupang and the Portuguese in Lifau and Dili, which made it a desirable location for pirates and raiders, particularly the vulnerable fisherman.

Example of Labour demands³⁰

Plantation economies along the **Swahili** coast for clove, coconut, and other labour-intensive production, connected to the expansion of the Omani state.³¹ Since Sayyid Said ibn Sultan³²

²⁷ Batavia was the name given by Dutch to the present-day city of Jakarta (named so by the Imperial Japanese during their occupation in WWII), which was originally derived from its Sanskrit name "Jayakarta".

²⁸ Also nicknamed Samal pirates, they were notorious for their piratical deeds, which included robbing coastal settlements, seizing ships, and kidnapping hostages. Having a long history of sailing, being a part of the larger Moro ethnic group, and being mostly Muslim

²⁹ Traditional leaders and nobility among the Tausug people, an ethnic group in the southern Philippines, primarily concentrated in the Sulu Archipelago. The term "Datu" is used among various

indigenous groups in the Philippines to denote a chieftain, leader, or nobility, which was often hereditary.

³⁰Stefania Manfio & Yann von Arnim (2020) Maritime archaeology of slave ships: reviews and future directions for Mauritius and the Indian Ocean, Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa, 55:4, 492-508, [Full article: Maritime archaeology of slave ships: reviews and future directions for Mauritius and the Indian Ocean](#)

³¹ Who had expanded until Swahili coast under the Busaidi dynasty.

³² Elkholy. (2016, March 17). *Seyyid Said (1790–1856)*. Black Past. Retrieved October 4, 2023, from [Seyyid Said \(1790–1856\)](#)

shifted his capital from Muscat to Zanzibar in 1840, many elements of a burgeoning plantation economy were in place, which would develop simultaneously with other factors.³³

Legality collaborating + conflicting with illegalities³⁴

Arakan-Bengal coasts, slave raids in the decades between the 1620s and early 1660s involved Magh³⁵ pirates working in concert with Portuguese traders

³³ Such as—

- i. **Omani** date production's labor demands.
- ii. Efflorescence of **Gulf pearling** connected to regional, and especially **Euro-American consumer tastes**, that forcibly drew in high numbers of captive Africans to labor predominantly as divers at pearl banks in Bahrain and elsewhere.
- iii. Slave trading became a dominant feature of social and economic life, leading to 100s of thousands of Africans becoming enslaved in the regions of today's southern Tanzania, Malawi and Mozambique.

³⁴As a matter of fact, mediaeval and early modern monarchs employed pirates (or privateers) to harass and attack the ships and interests of their enemy nations. This practice was known as "**privateering**"- a completely legal term and **sanctioned form of maritime warfare**, distinct from piracy. Pirates were individuals or groups who operated independently and without state authorization, often for personal gain. In contrast, privateers were issued licenses or "**letters of marque**" by their governments, granting them permission to capture or raid enemy vessels during times of war, and as a means of **economic warfare** against rival nations, since they targeted enemy merchant vessels, capturing their cargo and disrupting their trade routes. A **highly cost-effective way to augment their naval power**. It was used extensively during the Age of Exploration and colonial expansion. For example, English privateers like Sir Francis Drake targeted Spanish ships and settlements in the New World during the late 16th century. The practice saw a decline in the 18th century as international laws and treaties sought to limit. The **Declaration of Paris in 1856**, for example, **abolished** privateering altogether. Instead, governments began to rely more heavily on standing navies for warfare.

³⁵ Sea Pirates who operated in the coastal regions of the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea during the 17th and 18th centuries- not a centralised or organised group but rather a loose affiliation of pirates who hailed from various ethnic backgrounds, including the Magh people (ethnic Burmese), et al. They looted the merchant vessels, coastal towns, and other maritime activities

operating beyond the jurisdiction of the "*Estado da India*"³⁶ and supported by the Taung-ngu³⁷ rulers of Arakan.³⁸

The awfully appalling conditions of slaves while aboard.³⁹

Conditions at sea could and often were **horrific**, as slaves experienced physical brutalities and psychological trauma associated with crossings into the unknown.⁴⁰ Testimonies gathered by the Dutch in the 1850s from individuals who had been captured by pirates in the Indonesian

³⁶ A Portuguese phrase meaning "State of India" from 1505 to December 1961, including the Goa, Daman, Diu, Dadar and Nagar Haveli, along with Macau in China and Timor in the Malay Archipelago for judicial purposes of the East. Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia (2023, September 11). Portuguese India. Encyclopedia Britannica. [Portuguese India | Facts, History, Maps, & Fortresses | Britannica](#)

³⁷ Also known as Taungoo/ Toungoo, was a dynasty that ruled over the Kingdom of Arakan (in present-day Rakhine State of Central Myanmar). During its most notable ruler Min Razagyi, they came into conflict with the Portuguese who were involved in trade and military activities in the region at the time. Today, the Arkanese Rakhine tribe and Rohingyas are always in conflict with each other.

³⁸ Today located in the western part of Myanmar, along the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal.

³⁹ *Conditions Onboard a Slave Ship - Transatlantic Slave Trade*, (n.d.). Tes.com. Retrieved October 4, 2023, from [Source Investigation: Conditions Onboard a Slave Ship - Transatlantic Slave Trade | Teaching Resources](#)

⁴⁰ Various factors could prolong a voyage, "**British anti-slaving activity**" had the effect of adding to time at sea, because **vessels sought to evade patrols**; yet even when they were "**liberated**" by the British, their experience of unfreedom did not necessarily come to an end as many were forced into extended periods of apprenticeship whose terms in many cases amounted to forms of bonded labour- were shipped onto ports of the empire such as Cape Town or Bombay where the **racialized hierarchies of rule** saw them labour under conditions that were **never truly "free."**

archipelago and later “liberated”⁴¹ by them attest to the hardships endured by the enslaved:

- held in **chains**, provided with little food, and given nothing else but seawater to drink.
- **uncertainty** of where or when they would be sold.
- As the rations of pirate crews themselves became limited, they **exchanged captives for food** whenever and wherever they could, to avoid starvation; combined with the **cramped onboard** conditions; **death rates of up to 25 percent** on voyages.
- Lack of food leading to **starvation**
- Widespread fear that “**whites intend to eat them**” had deep-seated roots and had emerged from the heavy European involvement in slave trading that had grown to a significant degree since 1750s.
- For female slaves, there was the added danger and **brutality of rape**, as experienced on the vessel *Patriote* that in 1790 left 14 slaves at the Cape on its voyage from Mozambique to the Caribbean

→ A description from around 1809, describing life in the

hold of a slave ship transporting captives from Mozambique to *Île de France*,⁴² spoke to their desperate onboard conditions:

“Individuals endured “sea sickness, the little air that circulates in the place where they spend the night, the stinking odours emanating from the hold; the buckets in which they leave their excrement and that they only change every four days...all of this adds to the horror of their situation.”

→ Times of India, for instance, published an account in 1872 that detailed the capture of a slave dhow near Ras al-Had at the southeastern tip of the Arabian Peninsula: it noted that slaves were so “crowded on deck, and in the hold below” that “it seemed, but for the aspect of misery, a very nest of ants.” There were a number of children on board along with other wretched beings in the most loathsome stage of smallpox.”

⁴¹ Notice: Imperial soft power in history writing influences perceptions of the present: how the contemporary European imperialists are competing to portray their superiority complex in rivalries, labelling themselves as “liberator”, whereas all they did was to steal slaves from the other and rename it as a new brand of chain on those poor people. Hence, **in-group vs. out-group colonialism**, something which not only reflects in historiography, but in our present day perception as well-educated elites still affirm that Indians were lucky that they were ruled by the British more than any other imperial power.

Conclusion:

⁴² “Island of France” in English; but here, Mauritius.

- Hence, evident from aforementioned examples, a simple equation arises:

*Raidings + kidnapping⁴³ =
modus operandi, leading to
displacement + historical diaspora
origins.*

- Coastal areas that served as hubs for slave trafficking, such as **Gujarat and Malabar**, witnessed economic growth and the emergence of **wealthy merchant communities**.
- Far-reaching cultural and social consequences for India- **fusion of diverse** and syncretic⁴⁴ **cultures**, as Indian slaves interacted with people from different regions. This exchange of ideas, languages, and customs left an indelible mark on the cultural fabric of India. Additionally, trade disrupted local communities, as **families were torn apart, and social hierarchies were altered**.
- While the transatlantic slave trade involved larger numbers of Africans⁴⁵ transported to the

Americas⁴⁶ the Indian maritime trade shared similarities in terms of the exploitation of human beings for economic gain, long-distance transportation, and the enduring legacies of these practices.

- Origins, destinations, economic impact, and cultural consequences paint a rich tapestry of a time when India was a pivotal player in the global exchange of goods and people. As we delve into the shadows of history, we must remember the lessons it offers about the **resilience of human beings in the face of adversity** and the enduring legacy of past injustices.
- However dark past may uncover with disturbing images, one should never be afraid to put history upon the test of trial, with pinch of salt each time, even if it contradicts/makes a villain out of self and/or community.

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⁴³ Indeed, the two activities were mutually reinforcing and practically indistinguishable from one another

⁴⁴ With elements of foreign influence still present

⁴⁵ For instance, a lugger named Coureur, built in Grand Port in 1818, sank in 1821 while transporting about 100 illicit slaves from Zanzibar. The discovery of the wreck in 2004 by a local fisherman named Cosmoledo Japhet and the sinking of the Coureur heralded the actual end of the slave trade in Mauritius

⁴⁶ Scoville, & Alfred. (1864). *The old merchants of New York City*. Internet Archive. Retrieved October 4, 2023, from <https://archive.org/details/oldmerchants0ser2scov/page/102/mode/2up>

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Exploring Underwater Museums and India's Potential Role in building one

Ms. Khushie Bhulla

India's rich maritime heritage, shaped by extensive expeditions and trade, includes legendary ports like Muziris, Dholavira, and Lothal. India's coastal waters are a treasure trove of submerged artefacts, ancient cities, and shipwrecks that offer invaluable insights into the past. Recent initiatives like excavations near what is now known as Beyt Dwarka—believed to have been the mythical buried city, much speculated INS Cuddalore, and the planned National Maritime Heritage Complex in Lothal aim to uncover trajectories of Indian waters. Maritime heritage encompasses shipwrecks, archaeological sites, indigenous cultures, and more, providing valuable insights into our history. In this blog, we explore underwater museums while addressing challenges, promoting public awareness, and advocating responsible practices. By balancing exploration, preservation, and sustainability, we can protect and appreciate the

wonders of our oceans for future generations.

Underwater museums, although sharing similarities with traditional museums⁴⁷, have unique characteristics as they lie beneath the waves and also serve the purpose of raising awareness about pollution in the high seas in addition to heritage. For instance, South Africa's first underwater museum in Dakar, Senegal, features clay sculptures that have created their own ecosystem, attracting barnacles, shellfish, and fish. Managing such museums involves monitoring water conditions and utilizing underwater cameras to document coral growth. These museums offer a distinctive experience, connecting human creations with natural beauty. These museums preserve materials in their original state as they vanished beneath the water's surface, acting as time capsules.

⁴⁷ Defined as a “not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage” (ICOMOS, 2003)

Submerged sites with Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) offer diverse treasures and invaluable insights into our shared human history and are probable sites for underwater museums.

The 2001 Convention on Underwater Cultural Heritage (UCH) emphasises preserving heritage in its original location and encourages non-intrusive documentation for public education while strictly forbidding commercial exploitation. Preserving underwater cultural heritage enhances our understanding of past cultures, history, and scientific advancements, the same may be achieved by creating and preserving underwater artefacts in their original locations.

The safeguarding of submerged historical sites is intricately linked to the conservation of marine ecosystems and their delicate ecological balance. By preserving underwater cultural heritage in the form of an underwater museum, a broader commitment to the protection of the surrounding natural environment is implied. These sites, often located in ecologically sensitive areas, coexist within intricate marine ecosystems that play a fundamental role in supporting marine species, maintaining

biodiversity, and contributing to the overall health of the oceans.

In the realm of Underwater Museums, preservation is crucial for the integrity and sustainability of underwater museums. Pollution, habitat degradation⁴⁸, overfishing, and climate change threaten marine ecosystems and cultural artifacts. Addressing these challenges is pivotal to safeguarding heritage sites and their natural surroundings. Collaborative efforts between heritage conservation and environmental preservation are essential for a harmonious coexistence between underwater museums and marine environments, ensuring the protection of these invaluable cultural and ecological resources for future generations.

While underwater museums have gained popularity worldwide, bureaucratic hurdles have hindered India's attempts to establish its first underwater museum. India has been extensively involved in preserving its underwater heritage, including proposals for introducing shipwrecks into the sea and allowing them to turn into a

⁴⁸ Far-reaching impacts on the entire ocean's biodiversity. These critical areas, which include estuaries, swamps, marshes, and wetlands, serve as breeding grounds or nurseries for nearly all marine species. (National Geographic, 2010)

museum for all to dive through, such as in the case of a coastal minesweeper INS Cuddalore which was commissioned in Riga, USSR, and served the Indian Navy for over 30 years. Decommissioned in 2018, the plan was to transform INS Cuddalore into an underwater dive spot off the coast of Pondicherry in collaboration with three organisations viz., Pondicherry Government, PondyCan—an NGO, the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), and the Indian Navy, Along with Temple Adventures—the company that would be incharge of the Scuba Diving activities. The project aimed to boost tourism and promote scuba diving activities while creating an aquatic ecosystem around the sunken ship to enhance biodiversity. The ship would be sunk at a designated location determined through a study conducted by the National Institute of Ocean Technology and the National Centre for Coastal Research. Challenges arose, including obtaining a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Department of Fisheries, representing local fishermen who would face difficulties fishing near the bits of the shoreline that have been saturated of fishstock. The Government of Pondicherry required the Indian Navy and Temple Adventures, Scuba-diving company and one of the

collaborators on the project to secure the NOC, further delaying the project. The COVID-19 pandemic also disrupted discussions and shifted priorities. Another significant issue was the lack of awareness among the people. A survey of 100 Indian citizens revealed that over 40% had never heard of an underwater museum, and more than 83% were unaware of the 'INS Cuddalore' museum plan, attributed to the absence of press releases and inadequate marketing efforts.

The financial burden of maintaining the decommissioned ship also hindered progress. Unfortunately, sources from the Indian Navy confirmed that INS Cuddalore was used for target practice by INS Delhi and sank near the Andaman Islands in 2021, permanently closing the project. This turn of events was a setback for what could have been a significant milestone in India's history, ending the prospects of establishing the country's first underwater museum.

There is also the additional issue of legalities involved, take the case of the Titanic's remnants which are lying 4,000 meters deep in international waters off Newfoundland. These were originally beyond jurisdiction under the UNESCO convention. However, recent amendments

announced in 2012 now protect the site under the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001). **(Can also be omitted-your call:** This effectively allows States Parties to outlaw destruction, looting, and sale of artifacts, while ensuring respectful treatment of any human remains. Through this convention unethical exploration may be protected and authority to seize unlawfully retrieved items may be granted. It establishes a framework for safeguarding underwater heritage within the context of underwater museums, expanding the Convention's reach to preserve such historically significant sites.) However, in the case of India, there seems to be no provisions in the law to safeguard the underwater cultural heritage.

To safeguard the integrity and longevity of underwater museums, it is crucial to promote responsible practices, encourage sustainable development, and raise awareness about the significance of preserving maritime heritage. Collaboration between legal systems, governments, heritage organizations, local communities, and relevant stakeholders is essential to address these challenges and strike a balance between exploration, preservation, and sustainable use of our marine

resources. By recognizing the value of underwater museum and taking proactive measures, we can ensure that these unique sites continue to inspire future generations, deepen our understanding of history, and contribute to the conservation of our oceans and cultural legacies for years to come.

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The lost Port of Muziris

Ms. Sharwaree Ghaisas



India has been gifted with a rich maritime heritage, which is evident through the bustling ports and cities that adorn the coastline of India. These ports were active trading areas, giving rise to new settlements and groups of indigenous and foreign traders engaged in the spice trade. Today, these port cities and those that function no longer, hold significant historical value, prompting archaeologists to diligently search for and identify their geographical locations.

Muziris, a key port on the Malabar coast, became a focal trade point between India and

West Asia, Persia, North Africa, and the Mediterranean region. The commodities traded were spices, semi-precious stones, pearls, silk, Gangetic spikenard, tortoiseshell, amongst other items of value. This port became predominantly active during the height of the Roman Empire due to vibrant commercial relations. Pliny the Elder estimated that Rome's annual economic deficit was due to an imbalanced trade with India, and Muziris had a massive chunk of the gain by importing gold coins. The port depended nearly entirely on foreign exchange due to Rome's insatiable demand for pepper.

The classical texts of the Ramayana mention Muziris as Murachipattanam, where King Sugreev's spy scurried through while looking for Sita. The Sangam literature says that Muziris was located on the northern bank of the river Periyar. The Greek travel book Periplus of the Erythraean Sea reveals that Muziris became the main trade port of the Chera kingdom and the prosperity of the port increased due to foreign commerce. In his accounts, Marco Polo, the Venetian merchant and explorer, mentions Muziris as a significant trading centre where ships from different countries would gather to exchange goods.

It is believed that Muziris could have been a melting pot of cultures due to its cosmopolitan setup. Reports suggest that Jewish immigration might have occurred in present-day Kerala due to early commercial relations with Israel. Jewish communities have a long history in India, with some traditions suggesting that they arrived on the subcontinent to escape religious persecution. Over the centuries, Jewish merchants and traders traveled to different parts of India, establishing communities and engaging in commerce, an admirable trait that the Jews are well known for. It is plausible that Jewish individuals or families may have settled in

Muziris due to its strategic location. They formed an integral part of economic development during the Chera dynasty's reign. They enjoyed commercial prosperity due to the patronage of the local rulers until the advent of the Portuguese, who persecuted them and compelled them to leave Kodungallur for Kochim in 1565.

Muziris, later believed to be Kondungallur, thrived until the 5th century CE but declined after the fall of the Roman Empire and the Periyar floods in 1341. Despite excavations yielding no evidence before the 13th century AD, nearby Pattanam has revealed significant material remains like Chera coins, burnt beads, and Mediterranean amphora potsherds. These findings suggest a potential urban settlement at this site. The presence of a large number of potsherds of Roman amphorae indicates that they consist of containers used for the transportation of wine. The recently discovered Vienna Papyrus of the mid-second century CE mentions a loan agreement between Muziris and Alexandria, which sheds light on the commercial relations between the two ports. Another excavation undertaken in the Kottapuram area revealed a fort built in 1523 during Portuguese rule. Chinese ware, red slipped

ware, and iron objects were unearthed near the fort.

The Pattanam Archaeological Research Project (PARP) has been at the forefront of excavation efforts in Muziris. Dr. P.J. Cherian's project aims to uncover the region's ancient history and shed light on the maritime trade networks that connected Muziris with other parts of the ancient world. The Muziris Heritage Project, initiated by the Government of Kerala, aims to preserve and showcase the cultural heritage of the ancient city. The project includes the development of museums, archaeological sites, and tourist attractions to promote awareness and understanding of Muziris' rich history.

The findings collated above clearly denote that Muziris formed an integral part of maritime commerce. The historical aspect of the research still needs to be worked on to understand the settlement pattern, the magnitude of trade, and the influx of foreigners. The artefacts procured from these excavations need to be preserved and analyzed thoroughly to understand the chronology of the site. Several researchers have systematically tried to find such lost ports and present their unknown stories in front of us. Overall, Muziris stands as a

testament to the Malabar Coast's ancient maritime trade networks, cultural exchange, and historical significance. Its legacy continues to captivate and inspire, allowing us to delve into the past and appreciate the interconnectedness of civilizations throughout history.

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A Maritime Fusion: Tracing the Journey of Indian Cuisine

Ms. Bhakti Rane



Imagine eating a piping hot samosa bursting with aromatic spices and a delightful filling. It is undoubtedly a quintessential part of Indian culinary culture, cherished by millions across the country. But here's the twist— the samosa actually made its way to India through the maritime trade routes! In fact, there are many such dishes that we think are Indian but have their origins in different parts of the world.

In this blog we will explore how Indian cuisine was influenced by foreign interactions that happened through the maritime medium. The Indian subcontinent has a rich culinary heritage that has been shaped over centuries.

Its culinary heritage is deeply intertwined with the maritime trade that dates back to ancient times. The country's coastal regions have long served as vital gateways for exchanging goods, culture, ideas and cuisine with the outside world. Let's delve into mouthwatering dishes that arrived in India due to India's maritime trade.



Let's start with the quintessential cup of comfort – The Indian Chai! A beverage that holds a special place in the hearts of millions of Indians- the elixir of mornings! From bustling cities to serene villages most Indians cannot think about starting their day without steaming a cup of chai. But

did you know that Tea is originally not Indian? The Britishers, who adored tea, introduced it to India. They primarily drank black tea. Over time, India's rich tea culture blended with British influence, giving rise to regional variations like mint tea, Kahawa tea, masala chai. Despite tea's origin in China, maritime trade brought tea leaves to the Indian subcontinent, making it a popular beverage.

Another dish would be the mesmerising golden rings of sweetness, crispy outside and sweet on the inside- the Jalebi! And you know what is even more fascinating? This famous Indian dessert owns its origins to maritime connections. It's fascinating to know that the recipe for Jalebi is believed to have been imported from its Middle Eastern counterparts—Zalabiya or Persian Zulbiya. These sweet delicacies were mentioned in ancient Persian cookbooks like Kitab al-Tabeeekh by



Muhammad bin Hasan al-Baghdadi, and even in Arabic cookbooks by Ibn Sayyar

al-Warraq as far back as the back in the 10th century. These culinary connections bridge the gap between cultures and bring to light the enduring legacy of this delectable treat that has delighted taste buds for centuries. With their expertise in the art of syrupy sweets, they brought a delightful twist to our culinary landscape. Over time, Jalebi became an intrinsic part of Indian festivals, weddings, and street food culture. So, next time you relish a warm Jalebi, remember the sweet journey it took to reach your plate!

Now, get ready to indulge in a fragrant feast as we dive into the world of biryanis! This delightful rice dish, with their origins in Persia, was introduced to India by Persian and Arab traders. Although biryani may seem like a dish native to India, its true origins lie in a distant land. The term “biryani” is derived from the Persian words “Birian”, which translates to “fried before cooking” and “Birinj” meaning “rice”. While there are various theories regarding its journey to India, the general consensus is that biryani originated in West Asia. Carrying the secret of cooking rice with aromatic spices and succulent meat, these traders traversed the seas, leaving behind a legacy of mouth watering flavours. The result? A beloved

culinary gem that has captured the hearts and taste buds of people across India—a delectable fusion



of rice, spices, and fragrant delights.

Prepare your taste buds for a tantalising journey into the world of fiery flavours with vindaloo! You might be surprised to learn that this spicy delight actually has its roots in Portugal. When the Portuguese colonised Goa, they introduced a dish called “carne de vinha dalhos” - a preparation of meat marinated in wine and garlic. The Goans embraced this culinary gift and made it their own by infusing it with their vibrant array of local spices and fiery chilli peppers. The result was the mouthwatering vindaloo we know and love today—a perfect blend of Portuguese influence and Goan creativity that ignites a fiery affair on your palate.

Years ago, far away in Persia, a sweet treat was born under the name “luqmat al- qadi” It’s here that the journey of Gulab

Jamun begins. Through the bustling trade routes and cultural connections, this delicacy found its way to the Indian subcontinent. As it arrived on Indian soil, Gulab Jamun embraced the vibrant flavours and culinary traditions of its new home. The soft, fried dough balls were soaked in a fragrant syrup infused with rosewater, adding an enchanting floral note to its sweetness. Over time, this exquisite dessert became an integral part of Indian cuisine, gracing festive occasions and everyday celebrations. Its melt-in-your-mouth texture and indulgent flavours have captivated the hearts of people throughout the



country.

The samosa’s journey to India is a tale of culinary exploration and cultural exchange. Originating in Central Asia, this savoury delight embarked on a flavourful voyage along the maritime trade routes. Through trade and cultural connections, it found its way to the Indian

subcontinent, where it took root and flourished. The samosa's popularity soared, becoming an integral part of Indian cuisine. A crispy, triangular pastry filled with spicy ingredients like potatoes and peas became a favourite food for people all over the country, earning a special spot in their hearts and becoming a beloved culinary symbol.

As we conclude our culinary voyage through the flavours of Indian maritime cuisine, we are reminded of the profound impact foreign connections and trade have had on shaping India's gastronomic identity. From the aromatic spices that travelled the high seas to the fusion of techniques and tastes from diverse cultures, Indian cuisine is a testament to the beauty of cross-cultural exchanges. The maritime medium acted as a culinary bridge, uniting people, and transforming dishes into delightful symphonies of taste. So, the next time you savour a spoonful of fragrant biryani or indulge in the sugary swirls of Jalebi, let it transport you to the enchanting tales of India's culinary history, where the world embraced each other, one dish at a time. Bon voyage through flavours and history!

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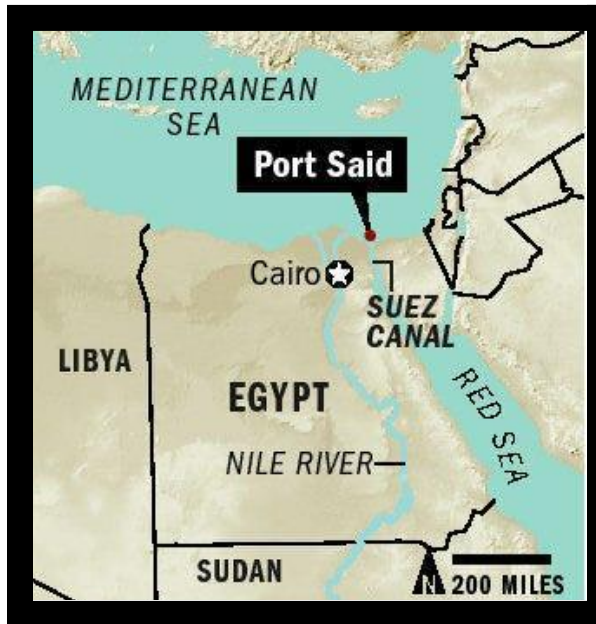
[Samosa: The Story Behind India's Favorite Snack](#)

[The Origins of Jalebi: Tracing Its Journey From Persia To India](#)

Suez Canal an artery of Prosperity for Egypt and the World

Ms. Bhoomi Shah

Introduction



The Suez Canal connects the Mediterranean and Red Seas strategically on the way to the Indian Ocean. The path is a crucial one from a strategic standpoint not only in today's time but since the early history of Egypt where the idea of building this canal came across. The Suez Canal is a man-made waterway that provides a more direct route for trade between Europe and Asia. In doing so, it basically eliminates the need to travel around Africa to get from the North Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. The man-made waterway

and its importance has always remained a concern globally. Not only is the Suez Canal crucial for trade but it is at the intersection of varying interests of global players in contemporary times, but the importance of this canal dates back to early times of the 16th century when the idea arose. Following with it, Egypt has not only faced wars for holding this strategic chokepoint but has been also colonised by the British in 1882 and later been decolonized and becoming a nationalised canal Egypt. It can be clearly said that since the canal has existed it has always had some or the other importance and it has only magnified with the growing time.

History

History of the Suez Canal almost dates back to around 40 centuries. In the 1859 B.C., the idea of connecting the Red Sea and the Mediterranean through the Nile and its various other tributaries was initiated by Egyptian Pharaoh Senausert III who belonged to the Twelfth

Dynasty.⁴⁹ This idea was brought for the ships travelling from the Mediterranean region such that there was communication possible between the East and the West hemisphere and that would also benefit the trade. Egypt was seen as a gateway where the West meets the East. These terms were used for the Mediterranean Sea (as the West) and the Red Sea (as the East) which would act as a water-based route that could be built to promote trade and link areas together.⁵⁰ On

November 30, 1854, Ferdinand de Lesseps, a French diplomat was granted the first concession, which gave him the authority to form a company that would be in charge

of excavating the Suez Canal. Its first article stated that de Lesseps would found the company and oversee all of its operations, and its second article specified that the Egyptian government would appoint the company's president. The concession's duration of ninety-nine years from the date of the Canal's opening was stipulated in the third article, and the Egyptian government would

receive 15 % of the company's yearly net profit. Knowing the fact that the Suez Canal is artificially created to link various water bodies, the digging of this canal was started in 1859 in the city of 'Al-Farama' (currently known as Port Said) by the Suez Canal Authority⁵¹ twenty thousand Egyptians were involved in making the canal. With the rise of Europe, they initially opposed the formation of the canal. Later Europe bought 44 percent of the stake of the canal, but later with time passing by the importance of the Suez Canal proved to be valuable to the British, the canal quickly became a critical line of communication. It made the voyage from London to India only four weeks and by 1874, four-fifths of the trade through the canal was British. The selling of shares to the British government in 1875 led the Egyptian government to go into bankruptcy. Britain took over the authority of the Canal completely which affected the Egyptian government and this further resulted in the Suez Crisis to take place.

1956 Suez Crisis

Under "Operation Musketeer"⁵²
Britain along with France and with

⁴⁹ "Canal History." SCA - Canal History, www.suezcanal.gov.eg/English/About/SuezCanal/Pages/CanalHistory.aspx

Accessed 27 June 2023 .

⁵⁰"Canal History." SCA - Canal History, www.suezcanal.gov.eg/English/About/SuezCanal/Pages/CanalHistory.aspx. Accessed 27 June 2023

⁵¹SuezCanal (2018,February16). HISTORY. <https://www.history.com/topics/africa/suez-canal#construction-of-the-suez-canal>

⁵² What was the suez crisis? (no date) Imperial War Museums. Available at: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/what-was-the-suez-crisis> (Accessed: 27 June 2023).

the help of Israel planned on invading Egypt and this marked the beginning of the Suez Crisis. They invaded Egypt to gain control over the Suez Canal. It was the central point for maintaining relations overseas and was the main source point for oil from the Middle East. With help from the US and the United Nations, Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser announced the nationalisation of the Suez Canal as it was a vital international waterway and majority of the stakeholdership belonged with the British and the French. The British and French governments were concerned about the canal's nationalisation because they considered it as a danger to their economic and geopolitical interests. The British, French, and Israeli soldiers finally left Egypt in late 1956 and early 1957 as a result of tremendous international pressure. Especially with the help of the United Nations to decolonise Egypt and the control over the Suez Canal. Later in June 1975 the canal was reopened for shipping.

Contemporary Strategic Importance

The canal's significance is mostly a result of its geographic significance as the only

route that connects the seas of Europe with those of the Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean and the Asia-Pacific nations. The canal has

strategic value now in addition to being a major link for international trade as since its completion in 1869, it has become a crucial waterway as it amounts to almost 12% of global trade annually.⁵³ Regional and international powers are interested in retaining stability in the Suez Canal. Due to its geographic position, it has become a focal point, affecting regional dynamics and influencing geopolitical strategy. The canal contributes to the security of the world's energy supply as an important pathway for the transfer of oil and liquefied natural gas. The Suez Canal makes a significant economic contribution to Egypt's energy industry. Energy markets might be affected by interruptions or blockades, which would cause price changes and supply disruptions. Crude oil from the Middle Eastern countries is exported worldwide through the Suez Canal and hence it again makes it an important strategic location. Nonetheless, the energy market has faced an imbalance in the prices now first the COVID-19 pandemic and currently with the ongoing Russia-Ukraine crisis, which has brought concerns of energy security globally. But the waterway path of the Suez Canal to provide oil exports to European countries has always been an important route. With respect to

⁵³Suez Canal. SIS. (n.d.). [Suez Canal-SIS](#)

Egypt itself the canal has benefited the country in numerous ways. It has earned the country hard currency and revenue since its nationalisation in 1956.⁵⁴ It also benefits Egypt's stand globally and helps it to act as a strategic barrier to any political threat.

China's BRI and its Geopolitical Interest

Given that China is currently the world's emerging power in Asia and is aiming to be 'the global power', the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has an impact by boosting commerce. The Suez Canal would be transformed into a major trading hub in the world. In preparation for the anticipated rise in global trade, China's BRI will speed up travel between the Canal's two ends and boost the waterway's carrying capacity. In an effort to strengthen connections and increase international trade, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) incorporates the Suez Canal Economic Zone (SCZone) of Egypt. Currently under development in the Ain Sokhna district of Suez province, east of Cairo, Egypt, is the 7.23 square kilometre SCZone, which is being developed by the Chinese industrial developer Tianjin

Economic-Technological Development Area (TEDA). Chinese investment is driven by strategic factors. China's investment in the Suez Canal is motivated by the canal's geostrategic significance as part of the Belt and Road Initiative, in contrast to its investment in the Gulf States, which is primarily related to the supply of energy required for Chinese industry. China is now one of the primary destinations and sites of origin for goods sent via the Suez Canal through the BRI, which includes significant overseas investment for the development of new trade routes.

Maritime Security and the Suez Canal

Since its opening in 1869, the Suez Canal has been essential to both international trade and the projection of military might. It served as the Royal Navy's crucial connection to the majority of the British Empire for almost a century. Many naval fleets still use the Suez Canal's safe and secure route to go to their operating zones in the Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf, and Arabian Sea. Recently, there has been a fair degree of interest in the intricate geopolitics of the Indian Ocean. The sea lines of communication (SLOCs) that span the Indian Ocean and connect Asia with the Persian Gulf and Europe have grown into important pillars of

⁵⁴ What was the suez crisis? (no date) Imperial War Museums. Available at: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/what-was-the-suez-crisis> (Accessed: 27 June 2023).

international trade and are essential to the energy security of several nations in Europe and Asia. However, these maritime lines have come into contact with a number of international concerns, including terrorism and piracy, and their security is now a major concern. The Suez Canal Authority has always been in charge of the general security and administration of the canal. To keep track of ship movement and identify possible security issues, the Suez Canal Authority runs an intensive maritime domain awareness programme. This entails keeping an eye on the placements, paths, and speeds of ships using sophisticated tracking devices. The programme combines data from multiple sources to provide a thorough picture of the marine environment, enabling efficient risk assessment and prompt reaction to security problems. High-level order guarantees the general security of the Suez Canal. The canal is surrounded by a sizable contingent of Egyptian military personnel and apparatus, which are there in part to ensure its security, in addition to the permanent technological and organic monitoring methods. By requesting a complete declaration of the approaching vessel's details, the Suez Canal Authority (SCA) initiates its passive security monitoring of the canal and of those vessels that use it. Due to

the obvious benefits of vessel traffic management (VTMS), radar monitoring is persistent throughout the canal. The VTMS system consists of six radars as its main component. A significant portion of the Canal Zone is covered by CCTV, with cameras positioned at the signal stations along the canal. The Ismailia Centre-managed signal station monitoring system collects Automatic Identification System (AIS) signals from transiting vessels in addition to high-definition radar surveillance of the canal. This enhances the VTMS's comprehensiveness and guarantees safe navigation. These extensive steps, together with the assistance of international partners, contribute to preserving the Suez Canal's crucial status as a safe and effective commercial route and helping to safeguard its marine security.

Conclusion

Egypt has become one of the most important geopolitical pillars of the Middle East in recent decades due to the strategic position and importance of the Suez Canal. The Suez Canal has proved to be a vital waterway and with its geopolitical importance since the beginning of its formation. Additionally, if China becomes more interested in leading the world, this might have an impact on other countries national

interests as well as maritime security. However, the threat from China always remains with the 'Debt Trap' concept. This concept of China has helped the emerging superpower to gain control of strategic locations in these countries where it loans. And when these countries are unable to pay back China acquires these locations for its benefit. China is the biggest investor in the Suez Canal Economic Zone and the biggest user of the Suez Canal, which is an essential route for 60% of the goods China ships to Europe. China is becoming more interested in expanding its activities in and around the southern Mediterranean and Red Sea corridor, as evidenced by the commercial projects it is implementing in Egypt. Over 140 of the more than 1,500 Chinese companies that are registered in Egypt have made investments. Large publicly traded corporations are also active in Egypt; one such company is China Jushi, which produces the most fibreglass worldwide.

However, Suez Canal being one of the most important waterways for trade amongst major nations in the world, it still remains to be a question whether the Suez Canal along with China's BRI be a boon or a bane. But the trade and dependency of countries globally

on the canal, it is reasonable to say that the Suez Canal serves as

an "Artery for Egypt and the rest of the world's countries".

‘Bridging History and Geopolitics: The Malacca Straits’ Journey and its Contemporary Importance

Ms. Neerada Mary Francis

The straits of Malacca, the natural channel located between the Malay peninsula and Sumatra islands, has always been influential in determining the global trade patterns, human migration, population and development. Even though it has been in use since antiquity, the growing interdependence within the international system has further concreted the importance given to this narrow chokepoint.

Certain milestones along history laid the groundwork for the straits’ prominent role in international trade. The demand for eastern luxurious goods like Chinese silk, Indian spices, gems and aromatics in the west had increased during a time when the land routes to the regions like India and China were threatened by the hostile nations along the way. They were periodically disrupted by the actions of Scythians and other central asian tribes and later by the states of Parthia and Sasanian.⁵⁵ Also the use of the seasonally

reversing winds for navigation by the western sailors and the realisation that a transshipment centre, where these monsoons could be utilised effectively aided the straits in gaining importance. That entrepot was the straits of Malacca.

One of the earlier mentions of this centre can be found in the First century work, ‘Periplus Maris Erithraei’⁵⁶ which refers to a trade tortoise shell from ‘Chryse’- which some historians agree to be the Malay peninsula. Even though during the Roman era, the Roman expeditions were confined to the red sea region, there were attempts to find direct sea routes to the Indian Ocean. The ports along the red sea region lacked productive hinterlands for trade. Historically, maritime trade routes faced logistical challenges, leading traders to transport water supplies over long distances to sustain ports. To compensate, they incorporated local resources like conch and seashells from the Red

⁵⁵ See Freeman(2003), “ The Straits of Malacca: Gateway or Gauntlet”

⁵⁶ Freeman, The Straits of Malacca: Gateway or Gauntlet, 70

Sea into trade products. While the ports along the South African coasts, by making use of the monsoons, had trade relations with India and China. The hinterlands of India's western coast ports, such as Barygaza, Calicut, Muziris, and Cranganore, among others, were fertile. Additionally they served as the transshipment centres where the products from China and other far Eastern regions were exchanged, which would be transported to these ports by land routes. The Malay Peninsula was known to Indian traders as the Golden Peninsula or Golden Island,⁵⁷ indicating that the ports in this region served as an entrepot for Indian traders, particularly because the Chinese had not ventured deep into the Indian Ocean during that time period.

The fact that the Malacca Straits were situated where the two monsoons converged and had easy access to all the major trading ports at the time contributed significantly to their significance as a turning point in the history of international trade. From the 7th to the 13th century, the empire of Srivijaya controlled the Sunda straits and the Malacca straits. As they had significant trade relations with the Chinese

kingdom they were instrumental in the integration of the trade interconnecting China, India and Arabian Peninsula. Later, the kingdom disintegrated following the attacks from foreign nations and internal rebellions. The Melaka empire⁵⁸ established in the 15th century, perhaps is the most powerful to emerge from the region. The success of this empire can be rightly attributed to seaborne trade and naval power. They were able to curb the piracy which enhanced the trade in the region. The legitimacy they enjoyed because of the support from the Indian and Chinese rulers, along with the increased trade led them to facilitate greater consolidation in the region. In 1511, the seaport town of Malacca was captured by Portuguese which made them develop into an important centre for European mariners. By 1640, they had taken control of every significant seaport in the area, weakening the power of the Muslim traders. Their new rivalry with the British in the region led to the bifurcation of the territory between the two powers. Britain then emerged as the dominant power when Singapore became a British colony.

⁵⁷ Radhakumud Mookerji (1912). *Indian Shipping - A history of the sea-borne trade and maritime activity of the Indians from the earliest times*. Longmans, Green and Co., Bombay.

⁵⁸ From *The Rise And Fall of The Great Melakan Empire : Moral Judgement In Tun Bambang's "Sejarah Melayu"* by Cheah Boon Kheng, 1998, [THE RISE AND FALL OF THE GREAT MELAKAN EMPIRE: MORAL JUDGEMENT IN TUN BAMBANG'S "SEJARAH MELAYU"](#)

Being the shortest sea route between African and Persian Gulf suppliers and Asian markets, today it is the world's second busiest waterway supporting a substantial portion of global trade. In 2016, over 90% of the global crude oil volumes passing through the South China Sea traversed these straits⁵⁹ rendering them a crucial conduit for the world's economy, while the presence of submerged internet cables within the depths of these straits underscores their paramount significance in maintaining global connectivity. The US Energy Information Administration and the World Trade Organisation have both designated it as a trade choke point in their reports. The straits have supported some of the fastest growing economies of Asia like Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea, along with their export-led policies. According to a research conducted by the World Bank, the non- OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries are now driving the global demand for oil, making this narrow waterway critical for their sustenance. And the sustenance of the non- OECD countries are essential to the world economy because of their growing

population, natural resources and increased production, consumption and investment.

Armed robbery, and smuggling are among the maritime security issues that the Malacca Straits must deal with. Due to the straits' narrowness, it is challenging to adequately patrol and watch over the massive amount of passing maritime traffic. Combating these security challenges necessitates both international cooperation and cooperation among littoral states. The overlapping claims and conflicting interests of the different states has often led to tensions and potential conflicts in the region. For example the Islands such as Pedra Blanca, Middle Rock and South Ledge have been a source of conflict for Malaysia and Singapore. These conflicts primarily revolve around the territorial waters and sovereignty and the littoral states have disagreements of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) demarcated by each other in the region. The interests of the foreign countries in the region is also adding to the fuel to the state of flux that the region is in. China has already made long term investments in the region because of its crucial role in global maritime trade and energy flows. The region is also included in its prized BRI

⁵⁹ From *Strait of Malacca Key Choke Point for oil trade* by The Maritime Executive, 2018, [Strait of Malacca Key Chokepoint for Oil Trade](#)

initiative, which aims to be the 21st century maritime silk route. To counter the Chinese influence the other nations have come together, focussing on Indo-Pacific in their immediate agenda. India's policies like 'Act east' and 'neighbourhood first policy' can be seen as expressions of its national interest. The growing influence of China has also consolidated US relations with the Chinese rivals and has adopted 'free and open Indo-Pacific' in their foreign policy. So in an era of Indo-Pacific, it is important to look at the Malacca Straits, which connects the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, with much more gravity.

According to many international experts on the region, Malacca's role in international trade is secured since it is a natural choke point and is connecting two parts of the world. Yes, with the existing data, we can make a feasible prediction about the strait remaining as an important trading point. But it should also be noted that climate change is resulting in many divergent externalities and one of them is the clearing of sea routes north of Siberia due to melting of the Arctic ocean. China has already made proactive policies for this region which was reflected in its 2018 white paper titled 'China's Arctic Policy'. The paper linked

China's aims in the region to the BRI, through a 'polar silk route'. This could mean an alternative sea route between the West and Asia. The two predominant Arctic maritime routes, namely the Northwest Passage (NWP) and the Northern Sea Route (NSR), can be employed for this purpose. While the current feasibility of navigation is limited to the summer months, the establishment of the Northwest Passage (NWP) route holds the potential to significantly reduce maritime shipping distances and shipping time in the future.⁶⁰ The prospective occurrence of such a phenomenon suggests a possible diminution in the present significance of the region, as there could be a reduction in the volume of goods transiting through the traditional route, with a notable portion being diverted through the alternative passage. It is too soon to make a prediction regarding the importance of geographical regions in an anarchic international system, where there are no permanent national interests but just the inherent instinct to survive.

⁶⁰ From 'The Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs', "China's Polar Silk Road: Implications for the Arctic Region". [China's Polar Silk Road: Implications for the Arctic Region > Air University \(AU\) > Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs Article Display](#)

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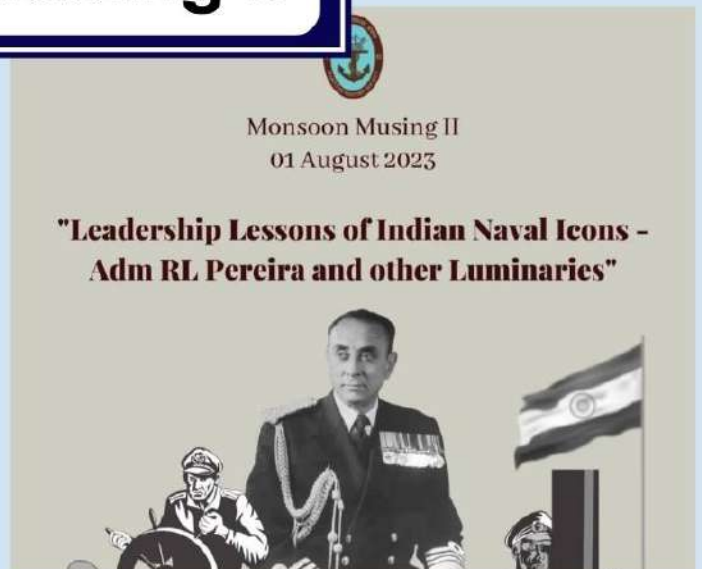
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Monsoon Musing I



Monsoon Musing II



Monsoon Musing III

