



CHINA-INDIA-JAPAN IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

Ideas, Interests and Infrastructure

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China-India-Japan in the Indo-Pacific

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Editors: Jagannath P. Panda and Titli Basu

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Realising 'Make in India': Port-led Development in the Indian Ocean

Titli Basu

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Make in India'¹ initiative aimed at transforming India into an economic pole of global growth holds promise; however, it needs to be complimented with world-class infrastructure and enhanced regional connectivity, both within India and beyond. Improved regional connectivity will facilitate in integrating the economy with dynamic regional value chains, in accessing emerging markets and in sourcing energy supplies and raw materials to fuel India's economic engine. Infrastructure plays an instrumental role in stimulating economic development by linking connectivity gaps, plummeting trade costs, and accelerating networks with the resource-rich regions. Given this, promoting regional connectivity has emerged as one of the central themes in Modi's economic policy and foreign policy.

While Indian strategic thinking has traditionally had a continental underpinning, maritime strategists have for long urged to expand the strategic mind space to embrace the oceanic aspect. India is situated at the heart of the Indian Ocean which hosts vital sealanes and serves as an engine for global growth and prosperity. Subsequently, "after almost a millennia of inward and landward focus", India is 'once again turning gaze outwards and seawards', which has been argued as "the natural direction of view for a nation seeking to re-establish itself, not simply as a continental power, but even more so as a maritime power".² India is a maritime nation not just drawing from history, when it enjoyed extensive maritime linkages

with Africa, Gulf, Mediterranean, South East Asia and the Far East, but also owing to its geophysical and geopolitical setting which makes it reliant on sealanes.

Prime Minister Modi argued that “India’s quest for economic prosperity through oceans is a part of our larger efforts to transform India”.³ This chapter critically analyses the significance of Indian Ocean highways, connecting critical geo-economic and geostrategic sub-regions, in facilitating Prime Minister Modi’s economic development agenda pursued through his signature ‘Make in India’ initiative, which aims to enable India as a global manufacturing hub. Regional connectivity constitutes one of the key themes of Modi’s foreign policy – whether it is the “Act East” policy, “Connect Central Asia” policy, “Neighbourhood First” policy or linking the Indo-Pacific through Asia-Africa Growth Corridor. This chapter situates Modi’s ‘Make in India’ initiative in the Indian Ocean theatre and evaluates some of the key port-related projects India has pursued, including Chabahar and Sittwe, amongst others, in its maritime neighbourhood.

While most of these port related projects predate Modi administration, but India’s growing economic potency, diplomatic capital and strategic ambitions has led Prime Minister Modi to articulate India’s vision for the Indian Ocean region. This vision aims at improving capabilities to protect land and maritime interests; growing economic and security cooperation in the littoral; supporting collective action while dealing with natural disasters and maritime security threats; endorsing sustainable regional development through a web of political and economic partnerships; and upholding maritime rules and global norms.⁴ The vision enunciated in Modi’s Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) encompasses some of the key issues such as buttressing intra-ocean trade and investment, nurturing blue economy, infrastructure and connectivity, including improving port connectivity among the Indian Ocean littoral states – and securing sealanes from non-traditional and traditional threats to ensure unimpeded movement of goods and ideas.

Indian Ocean as an Anchor in Modi’s ‘Make in India’

Indian Ocean performs an instrumental role in Modi’s pursuit for economic development. Tapping the shipping lanes as a primary means of extending India’s connectivity and trade networks with the international market on one hand and sourcing energy resources critical for national development through major energy sea-lanes, running from the Hormuz Strait and Bab-el-Mandeb into the Indian Ocean and beyond, on the other is critical to achieving Modi’s economic agenda. Projections from the International

Monetary Fund (IMF) reflect that India is expected to grow at 7.4 percent in 2018 and 7.9 percent in 2020.⁵ According to the US Department for Agriculture Economic Research Service (USDA ERS) projections, Indian economy is likely to grow annually at an average 7.4 percent, amounting to US\$6.84 trillion by 2030.⁶ Meanwhile, Niti Aayog estimates that India will be a US\$7.2 trillion economy by 2030, developing at a rate of 8 percent.⁷ To sustain the economic momentum, there is enormous need for energy. The *India Energy Outlook* published by International Energy Agency (IEA) in 2015 argued that oil and gas production cannot keep up with the growth in demand. It further suggested that by 2040, India's dependence on oil imports will rise above 90 percent.⁸ India, with a demand of 4.1 million barrels per day, already overtook Japan to emerge as the third largest oil consumer after the US and China in 2015.⁹

Table 1: IMF World Economic Outlook Projections

	Projections			Difference from July 2017 WEO Update ¹		Difference from April 2017 WEO ¹	
	2016	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
World Output	3.2	3.6	3.7	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Advanced Economies	1.7	2.2	2.0	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.0
United States	1.5	2.2	2.3	0.1	0.2	-0.1	-0.2
Euro Area	1.8	2.1	1.9	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.3
Germany	1.9	2.0	1.8	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.3
France	1.2	1.6	1.8	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
Italy	0.9	1.5	1.1	0.2	0.1	0.7	0.3
Spain	3.2	3.1	2.5	0.0	0.1	0.5	0.4
Japan ²	1.0	1.5	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.1
United Kingdom	1.8	1.7	1.5	0.0	0.0	-0.3	0.0
Canada	1.5	3.0	2.1	0.5	0.2	1.1	0.1
Other Advanced Economies ³	2.2	2.6	2.5	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.1
Emerging Market and Developing Economies	4.3	4.6	4.9	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Commonwealth of Independent States	0.4	2.1	2.1	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0
Russia	-0.2	1.8	1.6	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.2
Excluding Russia	1.9	2.9	3.3	0.4	-0.2	0.4	-0.2
Emerging and Developing Asia	6.4	6.5	6.5	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1
China	6.7	6.8	6.5	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3
India ⁴	7.1	6.7	7.4	-0.5	-0.3	-0.5	-0.3
ASEAN-55	4.9	5.2	5.2	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0

Source: *World Economic Outlook: Seeking Sustainable Growth Short-Term Recovery, Long-Term Challenges*, IMF, October 2017.

In order to achieve the development targets outlined by Prime Minister Modi, including elevating the contribution of the manufacturing sector to 25 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) by the year 2025, India needs uninterrupted supply of energy to fuel the development engine. *BP Energy Outlook 2017* underscores that India's energy consumption increases by 4.2 percent every year, faster than every major economy in the world. Energy demand growth at 129 per cent overtakes China at 47 per cent, Brazil at 41 per cent and Russia at 2 per cent. Oil consumption will escalate from 4.1 million barrels per day in 2015 to 9.2 million bpd in 2035. *International Energy Outlook 2016*, US Energy Information Administration (EIA), argued that Non-Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Asia, including China and India, will account for more than half of the world's total increase in energy consumption over the 2012 to 2040 projection period.

India sources crude oil through the Indian Ocean, transporting from the Persian Gulf and Africa. In 2015, the EIA estimates reflected that India sourced 58 percent of imported crude oil from the Middle East (especially from Saudi Arabia and Iraq) and 19 percent from Africa (especially from Nigeria). Given this, the 2015 Indian Maritime Security Strategy identifies the Persian Gulf and its littoral, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden, Red Sea, East Coast of Africa littoral, Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal, Andaman Sea and their littoral regions including the choke points in the Indian Ocean as India's primary areas of maritime interest.¹⁰

Beyond energy security, Indian Ocean as an important channel for trade has a significant role in attainment of Modi's Make in India initiative. Indian Ocean connects India with the major global economic engines, including Southeast Asia, Eastern and Southern Africa. Today, 50 per cent of international container traffic and one-third of global cargo traffic transit through this critical maritime space. Moreover, 90 percent of India's trade by volume and oil imports are done through the seas. India's exclusive economic zone of 2.4 million square kilometres stresses the economic connotation of the Indian Ocean.

As a major highway connecting vast geographies for international trade, Indian Ocean contributes as a facilitator connecting domestic manufacturing hubs and industrial corridors with the markets of Southeast Asia and Africa. To attain this objective, it is important to connect infrastructure that bridges inland Asia and Africa with the Indian Ocean rim in order to improve the viability of regional ports. Hence, infrastructure building and connectivity both within India and beyond is one of the major themes of Prime Minister Modi's development policy. While connectivity

issues have implications for regional security concerns, India's approach is founded on "norms of transparency, good governance, commercial viability, fiscal responsibility and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity".¹¹

To support the Make in India initiative, New Delhi is bolstering connectivity and enhancing export competitiveness by developing port-proximate industrial clusters. Within the Sagarmala Programme, 415 projects have been mapped across India at an estimated cost of US\$ 123 billion from 2015-2025. The key objective is port modernisation and new port development, port connectivity enhancement, port-linked industrialisation and coastal community development. Coastal economic zones (CEZs) hosting industrial clusters are aligned to industrial corridors, for instance, the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) and Chennai-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor (CBIC), which will enable port-linked industrialisation. India aims to improve exports to US\$900 billion by 2020 from US\$ 465 billion in 2014-15 through port-linked industrialisation.¹² India has identified 189 port modernisation projects at an estimated cost of US\$ 21 billion; 170 connectivity enhancement projects at an estimated cost of US\$ 35 billion; and 33 port-linked industrialisation projects at an estimated cost of US\$ 65 billion. Following the challenges related to port saturation and developing strategic ports to seize economic opportunity, six new port locations have been identified, including in Vadhavan, Enayam, Sagar Island, Paradip Outer Harbour, Sirkazhi and Belekeri.¹³

In addition, India is building Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFCs), along the eastern and western routes, at an estimated cost of US\$ 12 billion with the aim of transporting goods at an economical and faster pace from the industrial heartlands to the ports to support Modi's Make in India initiative. The Western DFC (WDFC), running from JNPT to Dadri through Vadodara-Ahmedabad-Palanpur-Phulera-Rewari, passes through Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, and will link the Eastern Corridor at Dadri. The WDFC is focussed on container traffic from JNPT and Mumbai Port in Maharashtra and Pipavav, Mundra and Kandla in Gujarat.¹⁴

India is building infrastructure to support its planned Industrial Corridors, which is critically dependent on top-notch infrastructure and transport facilities to support a robust business ecosystem. There are five Industrial Corridors in the making, including the DMIC encompassing Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra; CBIC covering Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka; Bengaluru-Mumbai Economic Corridor (BMEC); Amritsar-Kolkata

Industrial Corridor (AKIC) passing through Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal; and East Coast Economic Corridor (ECEC) encompassing West Bengal, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.¹⁵

Given that 95 percent of India's trade by volume is conducted through the maritime route, it is imperative to develop India's ports and trade-related infrastructure and further connect it with the Indian Ocean and beyond to accelerate growth in the manufacturing industry and to assist the Make in India initiative. Infrastructure is critical in facilitating economic growth by linking connectivity gaps, easing expenses and boosting linkages with the resource-rich nations and gaining access to emerging markets.

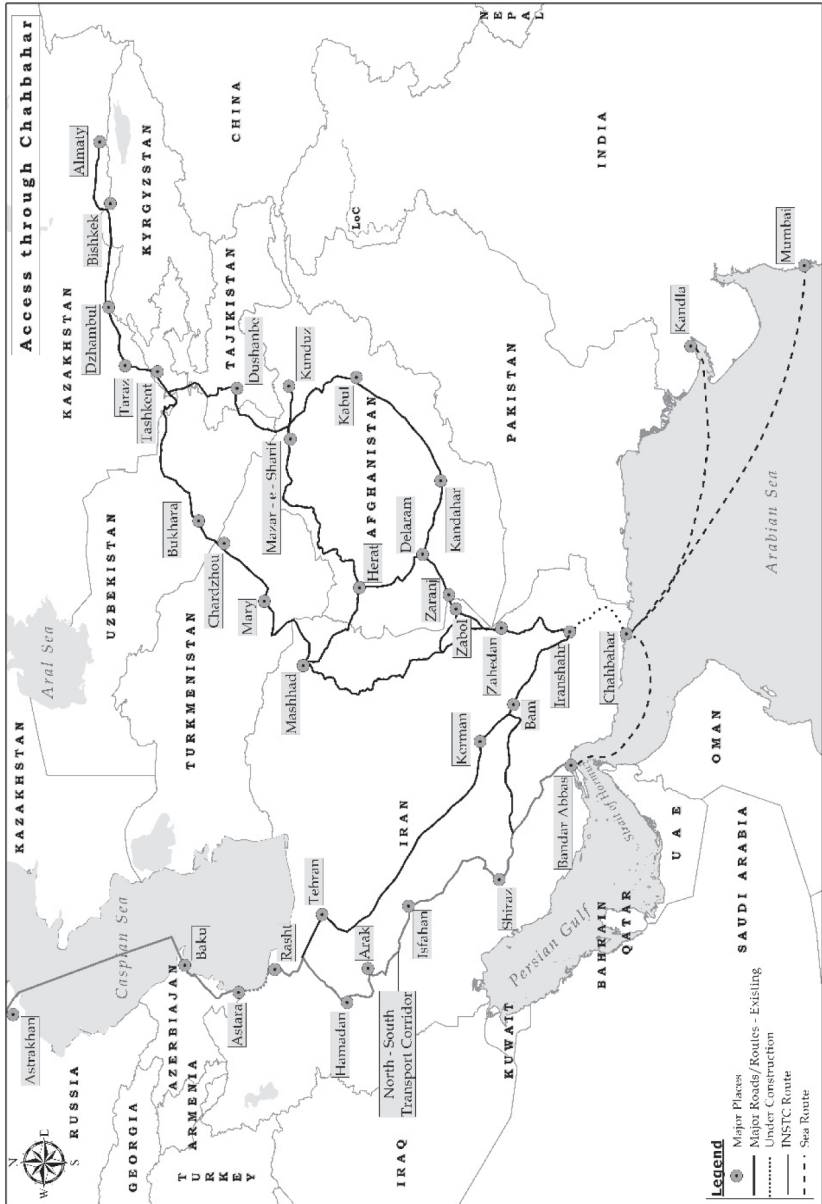
Connecting with the Indian Ocean Neighbourhood

To realise the objectives of Modi's economic development agenda, it is critical to tap the potential of the Indian Ocean highways. Promoting robust regional connectivity ambition lies at the core of Modi's key foreign policy initiatives, including the Neighbourhood First, Act East Policy, Africa Policy and Think West Policy. Pursuing the ambition of a free and open Indo-Pacific, India is engaging in several ambitious infrastructure and connectivity projects both bilaterally and in cooperation with like-minded countries. Africa has been accorded importance by the leadership, besides exploring prospects of cooperation in priority regions including South Asia, Southeast Asia and adjoining countries like Iran and Afghanistan.¹⁶

'Connect Central Asia' through Chabahar Port

Strategically situated Chabahar Port, often touted as India's gateway to Afghanistan, Central Asia and Europe, is at the fulcrum of India's connectivity ambition in the region. Chabahar Port offers India an alternative access route to Afghanistan making use of New Delhi's investment in Zaranj-Delaram road on the one hand and a direct sea-road access route into Central Asia on the other. Chabahar's strategic location also enables India to "skirt any challenges posed by developments in the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz".¹⁷ The operationalisation of the first phase of the Shahid Beheshti Port at Chabahar in December 2017 will complement the International North South Trade Corridor (INSTC), to be operational in 2018. It is argued that Chabahar together with the INSTC is likely to augment trade worth up to US\$ 170 billion from India alone.¹⁸ The INSTC, a land- and sea-based multi-modal transport corridor, was founded by India, Russia and Iran with the objective of connecting the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea to offer a shorter transit passage between Russia and India via Iran.

Figure 3: Access through Chabahar



Source: GIS Lab, IDSA (map not to scale).

Chabahar would offer the landlocked Central Asian nations with a condensed land route to carry out engagements with the economies of the Indian Ocean. Moreover, connectivity through Chabahar Port is competitive with regard to reduced delivery time, lower cost and market access to and from Eurasia. In May 2016, India-Iran-Afghanistan Trilateral Agreement to establish International Transport and Transit Corridor was signed following which a commercial contract was signed between India Ports Global Private Ltd, a consortium of Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust and Kandla Port Trust, and Iran's Arya Banader for the development and operations of Chabahar Port.¹⁹ In October 2017, India shipped wheat consignment from Kandla Port in Gujarat to Afghanistan via Chabahar Port.

India has committed to construct two terminals and five berths with cargo handling for a decade in Chabahar. India Ports Global would revamp a 640 metre long container handling facility and rebuild a 600 metre long container handling facility. It will also invest in modernising ancillary infrastructure by setting up four rail-mounted gantry cranes, 16 rubber-tire gantry cranes, two reach stackers, two empty handlers and six mobile harbour cranes. India has agreed to equip and operate two berths in Chabahar Port first phase with capital investment of US\$ 85.21 million and annual revenue expenditure of US\$ 22.95 million on a 10-year lease.²⁰ India has committed US\$235 million line of credit for Chabahar Port development since 2015. Once upgraded, Chabahar's capacity would escalate to 8 million tons from the current 2.5 million ton capacity.²¹

While India has invested in developing the Chabahar Port for decades, the project has suffered following sanctions imposed on Iran for its controversial nuclear programme. Notwithstanding the sanctions, India invested US\$135 million to construct the Zaranj-Dilaram highway in 2009 connecting the Kabul-Herat highway to Chabahar Port. Subsequently with President Obama's 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal and easing of sanctions, Japan had demonstrated its interest²² in supporting connectivity through Chabahar. The 2016 India-Japan Joint Statement underscored the prospects of cooperation "in the development of infrastructure and connectivity for Chabahar".²³ However, with the Trump administration's overturning of the Iran policy, Japan as a formal alliance partner of the US is weighing the costs and benefits of such a collaboration.

Acting East through Myanmar

Southeast Asia has emerged as an important growth pole in world trade. From 2007-2015, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) registered an annual average growth rate of 5.3 percent. Collectively, the

ASEAN economy was the third largest in Asia, with a population of 629 million, in 2015.²⁴ But India has been unable to tap the full potential of the region owing to inadequate infrastructure for physical connectivity. Robust connectivity between ports is an indispensable catalyst to facilitate smoother maritime linkage between Southeast Asia and India and unfold greater opportunities for integrating into the regional value chains. There is a need to boost a multi-modal and multi-tier approach for ASEAN-India connectivity including through the sea route along the Mekong-India Economic Corridor (MIEC) which depends on the indispensable role of the Dawei Port in Myanmar and land route along the Trilateral Highway (TH)/Asian Highway (AH1) connecting Thailand, Myanmar and India. There is policy deliberation on extending the TH to Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam. As India's economic engagement is expanding in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, it needs to reduce both its expenditure and time required in transporting through feeder routes.²⁵

Myanmar presents maritime linkage between Southeast Asia and India across the Bay of Bengal. In 2016, India completed the Sittwe Port in the Bay of Bengal as a part of the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project whose key objective is to create access to the Bay of Bengal for the landlocked north-eastern states of India. Under the waterways component of the multi-modal project, Port and Inland Water Transport (IWT) terminal at Sittwe and related infrastructure/back up facilities; IWT/trans-shipment terminal and related facilities at Paletwa; navigational channel along Kaladan river from Sittwe to Paletwa and six self-propelled IWT vessels have been completed.²⁶ Sittwe Industrial Park is located near the Sittwe Port, which is being developed by India. Furthermore, India, grasping the importance of strengthening connectivity through Myanmar, has engaged in discussing the possibilities for cooperation on the Dawei Deep Sea Port and special economic zone projects with Nay Pyi Taw²⁷ and Bangkok.²⁸ The MIEC involves integrating the four Mekong countries connecting Ho Chi Minh City with Dawei through Bangkok and Phnom Penh and further linking it to Chennai, boosting trade and connectivity on the one hand and reducing dependency on the congested Malacca Strait on the other. As India's natural partner for development, Japan is engaged in developing Dawei in cooperation with Myanmar and Thailand. Both countries should explore the opportunities for bilateral cooperation in Myanmar aimed at establishing improved economic network through connectivity.

Connecting with 'Neighbourhood First'

Augmenting regional connectivity and improving cross-border infrastructure to facilitate regional trade and investment constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of Modi's Neighbourhood First Policy. India features as one of the key development assistance partners in its neighbourhood extending grants and loans.²⁹ India has invested in several projects including railway modernisation, inland waterways, coastal shipping and upgrading of ports in Bangladesh, which is likely to grow at 6.9 percent in the fiscal year 2018, according to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) forecast. India has extended three lines of credit worth US\$ 8 billion to Bangladesh. Dhaka has used the first line of credit amounting to US\$ 862 million, which has been invested in building infrastructure including roads, railways, bridges and inland waterways including procurement of one dredger for Mongla Port and construction of Khulna-Mongla Port Rail Line.³⁰ In addition, second lines of credit of US\$ 2 billion and third Line of Credit of US\$ 4.5 billion³¹ have been extended, and 17 projects have reportedly been identified, including upgrading the ports of Payra, Chittagong and Mongla, making more roads four lane, upgrading of airports, increasing railway lines and building dedicated economic zones.³²

The operationalisation of the 2015 Coastal Shipping Agreement and transshipment of goods via the Ashuganj River Port under the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT) have strengthened connectivity aimed at facilitating trade. The Coastal Shipping Agreement has shrunk the shipping times from about a month to a week.³³ Under this agreement, the first cargo ship sailed from Chittagong to Vishakhapatnam in March 2016. Further strengthening infrastructure and connectivity, India and Bangladesh have invested in establishing an Inland Container Port (ICP) at Ashuganj and upgrading the road between Akhaura Land Port and Ashuganj to four lanes.

While Sri Lanka has emerged as one of the key hubs straddling the Indian Ocean shipping lanes, India has intensified its engagement with Colombo by way of several infrastructure projects including reconstruction of the Kankesanthurai Port into a commercial port and developing Sri Lanka's first liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal near Colombo in a joint venture with Japanese and Sri Lankan companies.³⁴ Meanwhile, New Delhi is keen on jointly developing the Trincomalee Port project and the Eastern Container Terminal of the Colombo Port.³⁵ Since the Colombo Port handles over 70 percent of the transshipment cargo to and from India and is situated at a strategic point in the global sea trade, India is competing for the Eastern

Container Terminal. In this regard, Container Corporation of India (Concor) has formed a consortium with APM Terminals B.V., John Keells Holdings and Maersk Line to bid for the development of the East Container Terminal. With regard to the Kankesanthurai project, four phases of the rehabilitation, out of the six, have reportedly been completed including dredging and hydrographic survey. With US\$ 45.27 million extended in fresh assistance in January 2018, the last two phases will focus on the rehabilitation of the breakwater and existing pier, construction of a new pier for commercial cargo handling and installation of port infrastructure facilities.³⁶ Reinforcing economic cooperation, India has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Cooperation in Economic Projects with Sri Lanka which enables India to cooperate on infrastructure projects such as port, petroleum refinery and other industries in Trincomalee, including jointly operating and managing oil storage tanks in Trincomalee under a 50-year lease agreement and development of road segments including Mannar-Jaffna, Mannar-Trincomalee and Dambulla-Trincomale Expressway under Indian investments.³⁷

Linking Indo-Pacific through Asia-Africa Growth Corridor

While India has been a beneficiary of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Extended Partnership for Quality Infrastructure (EPQI) with high-speed rail, industrial corridors and urban mass rapid transport systems playing an instrumental role in redefining national infrastructure and complimenting Modi's Make in India, both leaders have mapped the Indo-Pacific theatre for furthering bilateral cooperation. Conceptualisation of the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC) in cooperation with Japan is a pragmatic initiative. The goal is to coordinate bilaterally and with other countries for developing better regional economic linkages, connectivity and facilitating industrial networks employing collective capabilities. The May 2017 AAGC Vision Document underscores pursuing joint initiatives in various sectors, including infrastructure, manufacturing, and connectivity, consistent with the development priorities of Africa and the Sustainable Development Goals.³⁸ The central idea is to combine India's experience and understanding of the African market with Japan's technological know-how and capital for a "win-win scenario"³⁹ in realising the growth opportunities in the African market.

Following the launch of the AAGC, the Asia-Africa Growth Study is being conducted currently and a report is likely to be submitted to the stakeholders in 2018, outlining "the next steps for sustainable and innovative development, as well as partnership between Asia and Africa through AAGC".⁴⁰ Founded on a consultative and inclusive approach, the

idea of AAGC is aimed at cultivating the value chains, integrating and developing a competitive economic bloc, thereby accelerating Africa's and Asia's development trajectory. However, translating the idea into deliverables will require India and Japan to conceive joint projects aiding capacity building, infrastructure and connectivity, synergising their resources and capabilities and, most importantly, ensuring the efficient implementation of these projects to demonstrate bilateral commitment to the African partners.⁴¹

Thinking Africa

India's stakes in Africa, besides strategic complementarities, are shaped by the emerging markets in the continent which also serves as an important source for natural resources. Africa's GDP is likely to reach US\$3.6 trillion by 2020, and estimates indicate that the market would expand to US\$1.4 trillion by 2020.⁴² Indian industry argues that the manufacturing sector, including automotive industry, has potential. India-Africa trade amounts to US\$70 billion, and Indian investments in Africa amounts to US\$35 billion,⁴³ most of which is focused in Southern and Eastern Africa. Africa's energy resource has emerged as an alternative source of imports as India is attempting to diversify its supply beyond the Middle East. India's development partnership cooperation with Africa is underscored by the commitment of US\$8 billion lines of credit between 2008 and 2011. Moreover, at the India-Africa Forum Summit in 2015, India pledged an additional US\$10 billion worth of concessional credit. Africa receives roughly 53 percent of the operative credit lines which are used in varied projects, including agriculture, irrigation, food processing, rural electrification, information technology and infrastructure.⁴⁴

India is exploring opportunities to share its know-how on building roads, airports, ports, railways, economic zones and industrial corridors with Africa. India's Essar Ports Ltd is developing a 20 million tonne capacity coking coal loading terminal at Beira Port in Mozambique as a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) project. A 30-year concession agreement is signed with the Mozambique government. This project will be implemented on Design, Build, Own, Operate and Transfer (DBOOT) approach through a subsidiary, the New Coal Terminal Beira (NCTB). The NCTB is a joint venture of Essar and Portos e Caminhos de Ferro de Moçambique (CFM) on a 70-30 stake.⁴⁵ The first phase of the terminal, at an estimated cost of \$275 million, is likely to be operational by 2020. The aim of the NCTB is to function as the evacuation point for shipping coal from Tete province and provide for the Indian markets. In addition, the NCTB can be utilised as an outlet for the landlocked hinterland nations, including Zimbabwe,

Zambia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi and Botswana, and presents the shortest route to India.⁴⁶

Securing the Global Commons

To drive India's economic development through the waters of the Indian Ocean and for a sustainable Indian Ocean economic revival, India together with other regional stakeholders needs to ensure that "these waters must not only be better connected but they should remain free from non-traditional and traditional threats ... that all stake holders abide by a rules-based global order".⁴⁷ As India embraces the responsibility for securing this critical maritime space in cooperation with other regional stakeholders, Prime Minister Modi has infused momentum in strengthening security cooperation including anti-piracy, maritime security and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations in the maritime neighbourhood.

Drawing from the strength of the Indian Navy's operational footprint, the Indian leadership, including former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, has argued that India is well positioned to become a net provider of security in its immediate region and beyond. Moreover, the military leadership has underscored that the Indian Navy has been "mandated to be a net security provider to island nations in the Indian Ocean Region".⁴⁸ India is being perceived as a security provider by the US, Japan and several other regional players. The 2017 National Security Strategy published by the Trump administration outlined that the US will deepen strategic partnership with India and "support its leadership role in Indian Ocean security and throughout the broader region".⁴⁹ The previous US administration under Obama argued the case of deepening cooperation with India in safeguarding maritime security and ensuring freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region, including the South China Sea.⁵⁰

While New Delhi launched the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium with the objective of promoting multilateral naval and maritime security cooperation among regional countries, it also maintains a robust framework of bilateral and multilateral military exercises, including the Milan and Malabar exercises involving the US, Japan and India, to enhance interoperability between the navies of the three democracies and strengthening trilateral cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. Meanwhile, India has a monitoring station in Madagascar with the aim of enhancing the domain awareness of the Navy and help in securing the Indian Ocean sealanes. India intends to establish a network of coastal surveillance radars, including eight in Mauritius and Seychelles, six in Sri Lanka and 10 in

Maldives. India has instituted a trilateral security framework at the national security advisors' level with Sri Lanka and Maldives with the objective of boosting cooperation on maritime security issues.

In 2015, Prime Minister Modi signed an MoU with Mauritius for Improvement in Sea and Air Transportation Facilities at Agalega Island with the objective of "setting up and upgradation of infrastructure for improving sea and air connectivity at the Outer Island of Mauritius" that will improve the opportunities for the local communities and "enhance the capabilities of the Mauritian Defence Forces in safeguarding their interests in the Outer Island".⁵¹ Furthermore, Modi signed another MoU with Seychelles for Development of Facilities on Assumption Island, which is pending ratification in their Parliament.⁵²

In February 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi enunciated India's approach to the Indian Ocean as:

The oceans, especially the Indian Ocean, occupy a vital place in India's national security and economic prosperity. The waters of the Indian Ocean touch the shores of over 40 countries ... it also serves as a strategic bridge with the nations in our immediate and extended maritime neighbourhood ... The Indian Ocean Region is one of my foremost policy priorities. Our approach is evident in our vision of 'Sagar', which means 'Ocean' and stands for – Security and Growth for All in the Region. We would continue to actively pursue and promote our geo-political, strategic and economic interests on the seas, in particular the Indian Ocean.

The Way Forward

The unfolding power play between India and China, as each pursues its national interest and competes for influence, is increasingly shaping the Indian Ocean as strategic centre of gravity. Some scholars argue that as China follows its plan in the Indian Ocean without making attempts to "co-opt India as a partner", it may be challenging for Beijing to curve a favourable geostrategic environment.⁵³ As Xi Jinping pursues Chinese rejuvenation with the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and makes deep inroads into the Indian Ocean with port development in Cambodia's Sihanoukville, Myanmar's Kyaukphyu, Chittagong in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka's Hambantota, Pakistan's Gwadar and several projects in the African coast, India is keen to assume greater responsibility towards securing and further supporting regional mechanisms for collective security and economic integration in the Indian Ocean. The objective of Maritime Silk Road strategy is to advance China as an economic, political and maritime

power in the Indian Ocean and neighbouring region.⁵⁴ As Chinese debt trap diplomacy⁵⁵ is unfolding in the neighbourhood, India has stressed the significance of building connectivity through a consultative and transparent process founded on good governance, commercial viability, fiscal responsibility and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.⁵⁶

For decades, India's Indian Ocean Policy suffered from political neglect owing to the continentalist orientation of the leadership. But China's forays in the Indian Ocean compelled India to weigh the implications on its own maritime security which further strengthened India's resolve to utilise its "natural geographic advantages in the littoral".⁵⁷ However, "walking the strategic talk", and translating the political vision into concrete deliverables has remained a challenge for India.⁵⁸ As Prime Minister Modi pursues India's quest to become a leading power, India will first have to lay a strong economic foundation by discarding the legacy of insular policies. As Indian economy embarks on the journey to integrate with global markets and production networks under Modi's Make in India programme, political elites rationalise the inevitable seaward alignment. While India's reliance on India Ocean trade and energy highways will intensify in the coming decades to sustain its growth momentum, India will benefit from further investing energy and capital in supporting regional connectivity linking South, Southeast and Central Asia in order to achieve regional economic integration. India under Modi has reflected strategic innovativeness and intensified efforts in creating a network of strategic partnerships, based on shared universal values and norms, to exercise strategic influence and protect its interests in the Indian Ocean, which serves as the "pathway of peace and prosperity for all".⁵⁹

NOTES

1. Aimed at laying a strong foundation for the Indian economy and nation-building process, Prime Minister Narendra Modi initiated the Make in India programme in September 2014. While Indian economy is currently founded on the robust services sector, Modi's objective is to make India into an international design and manufacturing hub and boost the contribution of the manufacturing sector to 25 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) by 2020. To this end, 25 thrust sectors are identified, including automobile, electronic systems, electrical machinery, chemicals, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, construction, railways, ports and shipping, roads and highways, renewable energy, oil and gas and defence manufacturing, among others. The 'Make in India' programme is centred on four pillars: new processes, new infrastructure, new sectors and new mindset.
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