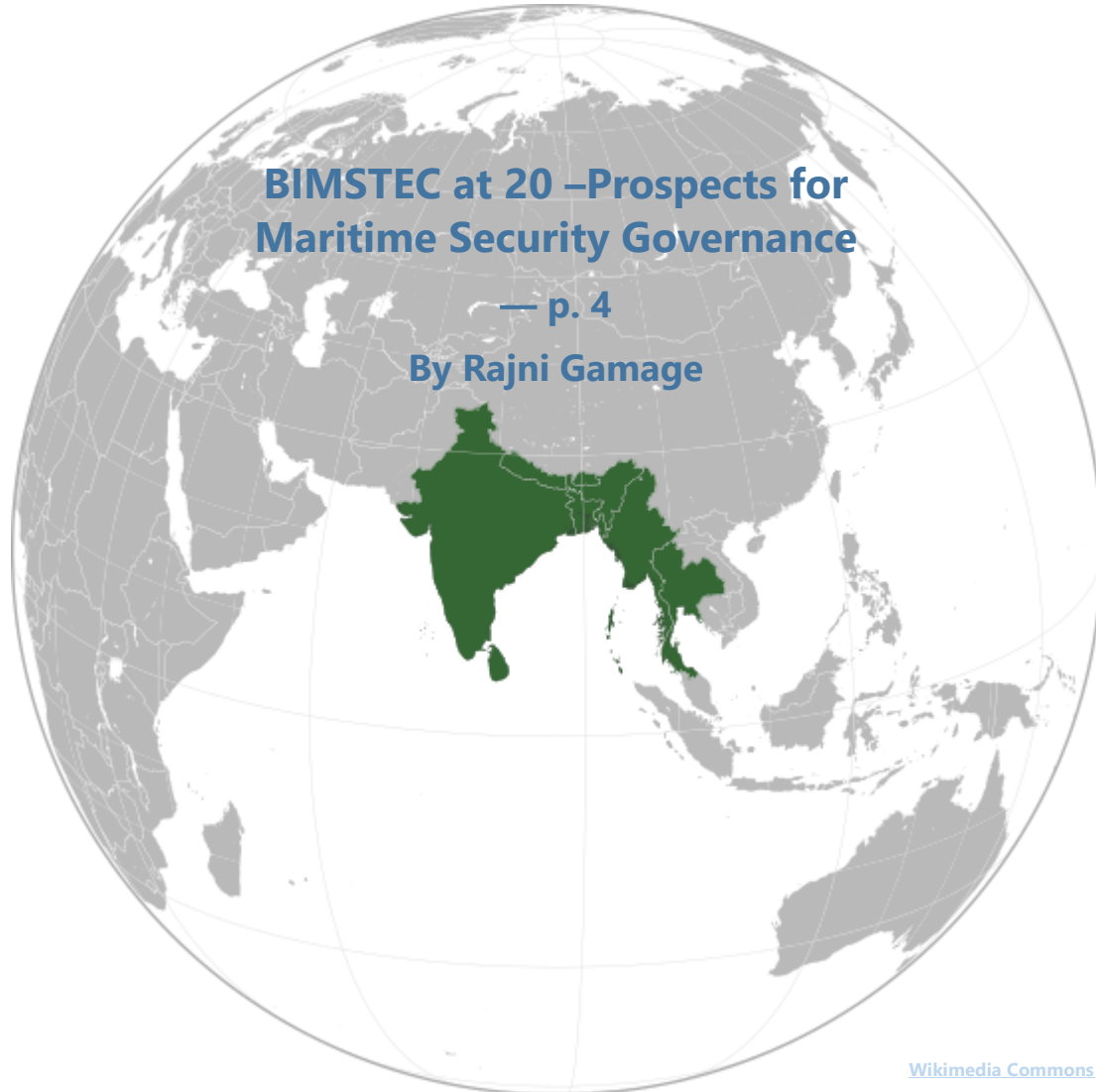


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BIMSTEC at 20 –Prospects for Maritime Security Governance
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China's forays in Indian Ocean a matter of concern, US commander tells India
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RSISMSP@ntu.edu.sg

Maritime Security Programme, RSIS

Editorial Team

Rajni Nayanthara Gamage
Philipp Martin Dingeldey
Swee Lean Collin Koh



Author

Rajni Gamage

Senior Analyst, Maritime Security Programme

In June 2017, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) celebrates its 20th anniversary. BIMSTEC approaches this milestone with an elevated reputation as a sub-regional economic and security organisation, in part due to the joint BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit hosted by India in October 2016.

Although BIMSTEC was initially established to tackle sub-regional economic and social development issues, many analysts have called out its potential for being an avenue for sub-regional security cooperation as well. In fact, BIMSTEC's working mechanism supports such a progression within itself, given its multi-sectoral approach, and it has subsequently taken on security issues since the 8th Ministerial Meeting in 2005 – including counter-terrorism, transnational crime, and disaster management.

Meanwhile, the importance of maritime security governance is increasingly recognised by coastal and island states in the Bay of Bengal, due to greater awareness of the economic opportunities and strategic significance of the oceans. Moreover, coastal states within the sub-region deal with similar maritime threats, both traditional and non-traditional in nature.

From a country-specific perspective, recent economic and political developments within the member states augur well for the prospects of maritime security cooperation. These include India's maritime-related domestic and foreign initiatives since 2014, such as 'Sagar Mala' and 'Project Mausam'; Sri Lanka's strategic 'rebalance' since 2015 and increased participation in regional maritime-related initiatives; Myanmar's 'strategic realignment' following internal political reforms since 2011; and Bangladesh's strong advocacy of 'blue economy' in the recent past, alongside efforts towards naval modernisation within these states. While Thailand's cooperativeness may appear questionable following the 2014 coup d'état, this need not necessarily mean a deadlock in maritime security cooperation. Only in June last year, Thailand and India held bilateral discussions on maritime security, trade, and connectivity; in January 2017,

Thailand and Myanmar signed an MOU on the joint development of marine tourism.

Moreover, there are a number of serious maritime security issues in the Bay of Bengal which require timely and coordinated responses. These include the 2015 Rohingya refugee crisis which led to thousands of 'boat people' being stranded on the Andaman Sea, and made vulnerable to recruitment by criminal networks, sea pirates, and Islamist fundamentalists. The Bay of Bengal is also prone to some of the most severe natural disasters, incidents of sea piracy, and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. At present, maritime security cooperation initiatives within the sub-region are predominantly non-inclusive of all the coastal Bay states, and include states from outside the sub-region – for instance, CORPAT exercises, Milan exercises, and the 'IO 5' grouping. While the involvement of 'external' states is to be encouraged, these states may not be able to respond in time and in a sustained manner. It is the Bay states that have the largest stakes in their surrounding waters, and a sub-regional maritime security governance mechanism within BIMSTEC is essential.

Finally, maritime security cooperation provides BIMSTEC members an avenue/ starting point for making inroads into Southeast Asia (or other sections of the Indian Ocean Region for Thailand and Myanmar). Recent statements made by leaders and officials from India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka all reflect the mentality that there is a need to break out of the confines of South Asia and to engage more deeply with the more prosperous countries to the East.

BIMSTEC's key challenges in the past have been the lukewarm attitude of India, and the internal preoccupations and limited capabilities of member states towards regional instruments. With a changing strategic and economic landscape, coupled with increasing maritime security threats, BIMSTEC may be well-placed to capitalise on this intersection of willingness and capability among its member states.



[Wikimedia Commons](#)

INDIA-UNITED STATES | 18 JANUARY | HINDUSTAN TIMES

China's forays in Indian Ocean a matter of concern, US commander tells India

Warning India against increasing Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean region, a top American military commander on Wednesday stressed on the need to sign two key agreements between India and the US for joint tracking.

[Full Report](#)

SOUTH KOREA | 1 JANUARY | YONHAP

S. Korea's Marine Corps to deploy new guided missiles to counter N.K. threat

South Korea's Marine Corps will get new guided missile systems that will allow its troops to better counter seaborne threats from North Korea, the military said Sunday.

[Full Report](#)

NORTH KOREA | 2 JANUARY | YONHAP

N. Korea SLBM with 1-ton nuclear warhead covers entire S. Korea

North Korea's submarine-launched ballistic missile could strike the entirety of South Korea when armed with a 1-ton nuclear warhead, foreign missile experts said recently.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA-MALAYSIA | 9 JANUARY | PEOPLE'S DAILY ONLINE

Ministry of National Defense confirms submarine stopover in Malaysia

The information office of China's Ministry of National Defense (MND) confirmed on Jan. 7 a stopover in Malaysia by a Chinese submarine.

[Full Report](#)

PAKISTAN | 10 JANUARY | REUTERS

Pakistan fires "first submarine-launched nuclear-capable missile"

Pakistan fired its first submarine-launched cruise missile on Monday, the military said, a show of force for a country that sees its missile development as a deterrent against arch-foe India.

[Full Report](#)

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Continued from page 5

JAPAN-SOUTH KOREA-UNITED STATES | 10 JANUARY | ASAHI SHIMBUN

Seoul rejects offer by Japan, U.S. for joint anti-sub drill

South Korea turned down an offer by Japan and the United States to take part in trilateral anti-submarine warfare exercises last month, yet another sign of the political vacuum left by the Park Geun-hye scandal.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 11 JANUARY | REUTERS

Chinese bomber flies around contested Spratlys in show of force: U.S. official

A Chinese H-6 strategic bomber flew around the Spratly Islands over the weekend in a new show of force in the contested South China Sea, a U.S. official said on Tuesday.

[Full Report](#)

TAIWAN | 11 JANUARY | REUTERS

Taiwan scrambles jets, navy as China aircraft carrier enters Taiwan Strait

Taiwan scrambled jets and navy ships on Wednesday as a group of Chinese warships led by China's sole aircraft carrier sailed north through the Taiwan Strait, the latest sign of heightened tensions between Beijing and the self-ruled Taiwan.

[Full Report](#)

JAPAN-SOUTH KOREA | 12 JANUARY | THE KOREA HERALD

S. Korea says Japanese planes breached KADIZ over 400 times last year

Japanese military planes entered South Korea's Air Defense Identification Zone hundreds of times last year, mainly in the airspace south of Jeju Island off the country's southern coast, military officials said Thursday.

[Full Report](#)

TAIWAN | 14 JANUARY | THE CHINA POST

Submarine project essential: defense minister

The circumnavigation earlier this week of Taiwan island by the Chinese aircraft carrier Liaoning starkly demonstrates the importance of the ongoing efforts to develop a locally built submarine, Defense Minister Feng Shih-kuan said Friday.

[Full Report](#)

MALAYSIA | 17 JANUARY | BORNEO POST ONLINE

RMN fleet now has eastern and western fleet commands

The command of the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN)

Fleet has been divided into two, namely the Western Fleet Command and Eastern Fleet Command, which aimed at giving extra focus and attention to maritime security in Sabah and Sarawak.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA | 18 JANUARY | THE JAKARTA POST

Govt to secure ownership of 111 islets

The government is expediting the finalization of land registration of 111 small islands in border areas as part of its efforts to defend national sovereignty in outer areas as well as strengthening the country's defense and security.

[Full Report](#)

VIETNAM | 20 JANUARY | VIETNAM PLUS

Last Kilo submarine arrives at Cam Ranh Port

The sixth and last Kilo-class submarine that Vietnam has purchased from Russia arrived at Cam Ranh military port in the central coastal province of Khanh Hoa on January 20.

[Full Report](#)



THAILAND | 25 JANUARY | BANGKOK POST

Navy secures funds to buy Chinese sub

The Royal Thai Navy has secured 13.5 billion baht to purchase a Chinese-made submarine.

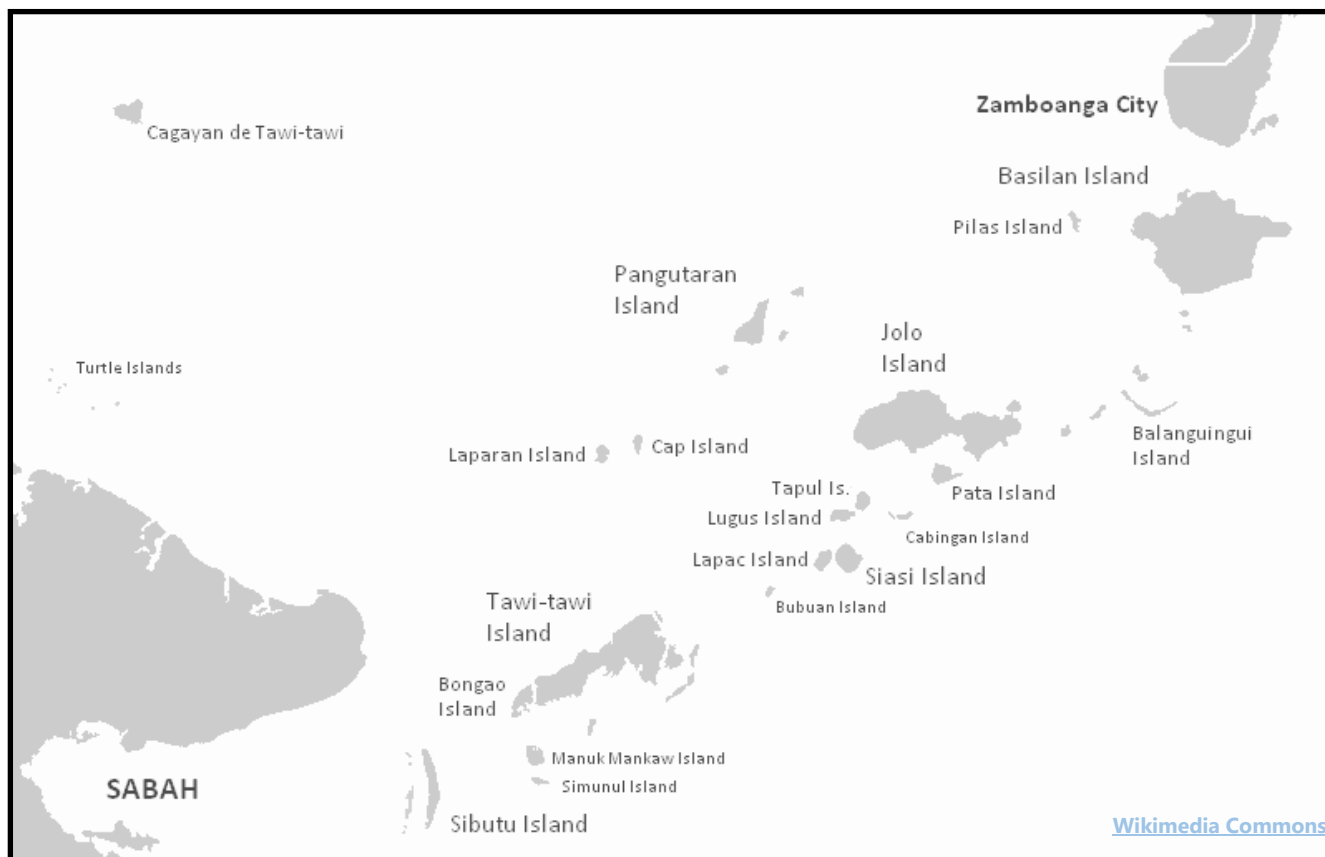
[Full Report](#)

INDIA | 28 JANUARY | BUSINESS STANDARD

Navy kicks off global search for a carrier-borne fighter

After declaring last month that the indigenous Tejas light combat aircraft (LCA) was not suitable for operations off an aircraft carrier, the Indian Navy has declared its interest in buying "approximately 57" multi-role carrier borne fighters (MRCBF) for deck operations.

[Full Report](#)



MALAYSIA-PHILLIPINES | 10 JANUARY | REUTERS

Sulu Sea kidnappings a threat to merchant shipping: Report

The Sulu Sea between eastern Malaysia and the Philippines has become dangerous for merchant shipping due to rising threat of kidnappings, the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) said on Tuesday (Jan 10).

[Full Report](#)

INDIA-SRI LANKA | 2 JANUARY | INDIAN EXPRESS

India, Sri Lanka agree on releasing fishermen, to set up SOPs

Sri Lanka will immediately release 51 Indian fishermen from its custody and has agreed to consider returning a large number of fishing boats while India will free three Lankan fishermen, as per outcome of a high-level meeting between the two countries on the vexed issue.

[Full Report](#)

SINGAPORE | 6 JANUARY | LLOYD'S LOADING LIST

Containerships collide near Singapore

The container vessels *Wan Hai 301* and *APL Denver* are reported to be in a "stable condition" and berthed at Pasir Gudang Port after colliding near Singapore in the Johor Strait on Tuesday.

[Full Report](#)

THE PHILIPPINES | 10 JANUARY | THE MARITIME EXECUTIVE

Eight Fishermen Killed by Pirates Off Mindanao

On Monday night, eight fishermen were shot and killed by pirates in the vicinity of Siromon Island, near Zamboanga City.

[Full Report](#)

ASIA-AFRICA | 11 JANUARY | HELLENIC SHIPPING NEWS

Key anti-piracy personnel in Asia and Africa attend inaugural meeting and workshop to foster closer ties and information sharing

The inaugural Meeting of Anti-Piracy Contact Points and Workshop on Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships involving participants from Africa, Asia and Europe was held in Singapore today.

[Full Report](#)

Continue on page 8

GLOBAL | 12 JANUARY | REUTERS

Insurance gaps leave shipping exposed to growing cyber threats

Shipping companies grappling with the threat of cyber-attacks on vessels are finding insurance policies often fall short, officials involved in both industries say, a risk that could feed through into global prices.

[Full Report](#)

THE PHILIPPINES | 13 JANUARY | THE STRAITS TIMES

Pirates attacking bigger ships off Philippines for ransom money

Asian pirates are focusing more of their attacks on larger merchant ships near the Philippines, hoping for bigger ransom payments from kidnapping their crew, the head of a regional anti-piracy body said on Friday.

[Full Report](#)

JAPAN-THE PHILIPPINES | 13 JANUARY | CNN

PH, Japan boost maritime security ties

Although the Philippines and Japan were bitter enemies during the Second World War, both of them have forged close ties in modern times.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA-JAPAN | 15 JANUARY | REUTERS

Indonesia, Japan discuss maritime security, railway project

Indonesia and Japan have agreed to step up maritime security and start discussions on a major railway project to link the Southeast Asian nation's capital and second-biggest city, the leaders of both countries said on Sunday.

[Full Report](#)

JAPAN-VIETNAM | 16 JANUARY | REUTERS

Japan pledges boats to Vietnam as China dispute simmers

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Monday promised Vietnam six new patrol boats during a visit to the Southeast Asian country, which is locked in a dispute with China over the busy South China Sea.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA | 21 JANUARY | THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

'Fish cemetery' in Kochi to warn against marine pollution

The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has taken the 'art route' to create awareness among the public on coastal pollution.

[Full Report](#)



INDIA-FRANCE | 24 JANUARY | THE ECONOMIC TIMES

India, France sign pact on maritime information sharing in Indian Ocean Region

India and France has signed White Shipping agreement to enable information sharing on maritime traffic and maritime domain awareness in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) amid China's expanding naval forays in the area where India wants to establish itself as the net security provider.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA | 25 JANUARY | THE JAKARTA POST

Around the World: Fight against trafficking needs int'l co-op

Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister Susi Pudjiastuti has called for a coordinated international approach to fight human trafficking in the fishing industry.

[Full Report](#)

MALAYSIA | 29 JANUARY | BBC NEWS

Malaysia boat sinks: 23 Chinese tourists and two crew rescued

Twenty-three Chinese tourists and two crew members have survived after their boat sank in rough seas off eastern Malaysia, officials said.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA-THE PHILIPPINES | 31 JANUARY | REUTERS

Philippines' Duterte asks China to patrol piracy-plagued waters

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte on Tuesday said he had asked China to help in the fight against Islamic State-linked militants by sending ships to patrol southern waters plagued by raids on commercial vessels.

[Full Report](#)



ASIA | 4 JANUARY | BLOOMBERG

Asia's shipping lines are facing more mergers

Swim or sink: That's the message shipping executives in Asia are taking into the new year.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA-DENMARK | 4 JANUARY | REUTERS

Maersk, Alibaba team up to offer online booking service for ship space

The world's largest container shipping line Maersk has teamed up with Alibaba to allow shippers of goods to reserve space on its vessels through the Chinese e-commerce giant, in a move that bypasses traditional middleman freight forwarders.

[Full Report](#)

SRI LANKA | 5 JANUARY | REUTERS

Sri Lanka delays southern port JV with Chinese firm

Sri Lanka has delayed a joint venture with China Merchants Port Holdings Company Ltd to develop a port in its south, where China has also offered to build an investment zone, a top government official said on Thursday.

[Full Report](#)

ASIA | 10 JANUARY | LLOYD'S LOADING LIST

Protectionism threat 'immediate' to Asia's export growth

The rise of global protectionist sentiment is hurting the outlook for Asian economies, which could in future become even more dependent on exports, according to one leading analyst.

[Full Report](#)

SINGAPORE | 11 JANUARY | REUTERS

Singapore bunker volumes expected to set record high in 2016

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) expects 2016 sales of bunker fuel for ships to rise to a record for a second consecutive year, with early estimates showing volumes increased 7.7 percent.

[Full Report](#)

Continue on page 10

CHINA | 12 JANUARY | REUTERS

As the smog lifts, China's ports grapple with huge traffic jam of ships

A huge traffic jam of hundreds of ships carrying coal and iron ore into China has built up outside key ports like Tianjin and Caofeidian, just as winter demand hits its peak ahead of the Chinese New Year holiday later this month.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 13 JANUARY | SHANGHAI DAILY

Shipbuilding to be boosted in 5-year plan

China aims to account for 35 percent of the global ocean engineering equipment market and to take up 40 percent of the shipbuilding market worldwide by 2010.

[Full Report](#)



SINGAPORE | 13 JANUARY | PSA INTERNATIONAL

PSA container throughput performance for 2016

PSA International handled 67.63 million TEUs at its port projects around the world for the year ending 31st December 2016. The Group's volume increased by 5.5% over 2015.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA-MALAYSIA | 15 JANUARY | THE STAR

China projects to hit Singapore

CHINA'S current mega belt-road projects in Malaysia, once completed, will alter trade routes in the region and this may divert hundreds of billions worth of trade from Singapore, according to industry players.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 16 JANUARY | HELLENIC SHIPPING NEWS

China urges shipbuilders to venture abroad

China wants its shipyards to look actively for acquisitions overseas amid weak oil prices and freight rates that have led to declining orders for offshore rigs and vessels worldwide.

[Full Report](#)

SINGAPORE | 16 JANUARY | NIKKEI

Shipping lines pinched as fuel oil prices surge in Singapore

Higher crude prices and a decline in fuel oil exports from Russia are pushing up the value of fuel oil C, a type of heavy oil, on the Singaporean market.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 18 JANUARY | THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

China's Cosco in talks to buy Orient Overseas

Chinese conglomerate Cosco Group is in talks to acquire smaller rival Orient Overseas Container Line Co., as shipping companies explore new combinations to battle an industry slump.

[Full Report](#)

JAPAN | 24 JANUARY | REUTERS

Japan Exports up for first time in 15 months, US protectionism poses risks

Japan's exports rose for the first time in 15 months in December on strong sales of electronics and car parts, a positive sign for the export-reliant economy even as U.S. protectionism threatens to hurt trade across the region and dent external demand.

[Full Report](#)

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM-INDONESIA-MALAYSIA-THE PHILIPPINES | 27 JANUARY | BUSINESSWORLD

New shipping route aimed at opening up BIMP-EAGA

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry (DTI) said a new shipping route will be opened in April, boosting the potential for subregional exports, especially trade between the Philippines and Indonesia.

[Full Report](#)

ASIA-PACIFIC | 30 JANUARY | LLOYD'S LOADING LIST

US Withdrawal from TTP 'strengthens China's trade role'

The US' withdrawal from the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) will strengthen China's position on the global economic stage and make China the clear leading trade power within the Asia-Pacific region.

[Full Report](#)