

Far and Wide

Every week we share selection of six news from six continents that we believe will impact our world in the near or distant future

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Indian Navy has a Rs 2 lakh crore plan to counter Chinese dragon in Indian Ocean

Welcome to the latest edition of Far and Wide, where we embark on a journey to explore intriguing stories and global developments.

Our headline features this week talks about Indian Navy plan. The Indian Navy's recent push to expand its maritime capabilities is a strategically significant move in response to the shifting dynamics of the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**. With a comprehensive plan worth **around Rs 2 lakh crore**, the **Indian Navy** aims to **enhance its fleet and strengthen its presence**, primarily to **counter China's growing influence** in the region.

Currently, the **Indian Navy** boasts **132 warships, 143 aircraft, and 130 helicopters**. However, recognizing the evolving security challenges in the **IOR**, it has **secured preliminary approval** for the construction of several vessels. These include **eight next-generation corvettes, nine submarines, five survey vessels, and two multi-purpose vessels**, all set to be built domestically. This **ambitious endeavor** is driven by **India's overarching goal to safeguard its extensive geopolitical interests**. The **Indian Ocean Region** has become a **focal point in global geopolitics**, with **multiple stakeholders** vying for **influence and control**. China's assertive naval expansion, in particular, poses a **significant challenge**. **China's People's Liberation Army-Navy (PLAN)** has been **rapidly expanding** its naval fleet, adding an **astounding 150 warships** over the **past decade**. Projections suggest that the **PLAN** could soon operate a **fleet of 555 warships, including aircraft carriers in the IOR**. This aggressive growth **highlights the urgency for India** to strengthen its maritime presence in the region. While **India's naval expansion** is commendable, certain concerns persist. However, it's not all challenges; there are **positive developments on the horizon**. Projects like **Project-17A**, involving the construction of seven **6,670-tonne stealth frigates**, and contracts for **missile destroyers, fleet support ships, missile vessels, and offshore patrol vessels**, showcase India's commitment to enhancing its naval capabilities. **India's proactive approach to strengthening its naval forces comes at a crucial time** when **maritime security and geopolitical interests** take center stage. The challenges are indeed **formidable**, but the resolve to secure its **maritime boundaries, protect national interests, and counterbalance regional influences remains unwavering**. This maritime build-up signifies a **significant step forward in ensuring regional stability and safeguarding India's interests in the ever-evolving Indian Ocean Region**.

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Germany likely to pass 50% mark for renewable power this year – Minister

Germany is poised to make a **significant stride** in its transition to **renewable energy sources** this year by **generating over 50%** of its **electricity from clean, sustainable sources**. This achievement underscores the **country's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint and combating climate change**. However, as **Economy Minister Robert Habeck** aptly pointed out, this is just one step on the path to a **sustainable energy future**. Habeck's vision for the **future of Germany's energy landscape** is both ambitious and necessary. With the **ever-increasing demand for electricity**, it is imperative that **renewables play** an even more substantial role in the nation's power generation. The goal of **achieving 80%** of **electricity generation from renewables by 2030** is not just a target; it's a **crucial milestone in Germany's efforts** to combat climate change effectively. The current **pace of transition**, while **commendable**, falls short of what is required to meet this **ambitious 2030 goal**. This reality underscores the need for a **concerted effort** to accelerate the **adoption of renewable energy technologies**.

Source: The Reuters

<https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/germany-likely-pass-50-mark-renewable-power-this-year-minister-2023-09-18/>

Habeck rightly emphasizes the **urgency of this matter**, as the window of opportunity to **curb climate change is narrowing**. One of the bright spots in **Germany's renewable energy journey** is the thriving **solar power industry**. The country is on track to reach its **9-gigawatt capacity target** for this year, a **significant achievement** that showcases the potential of **solar energy as a clean and abundant resource**. This success is a testament to the **nation's commitment to fostering innovation and sustainable energy practices**. Germany's progress in **expanding onshore wind energy** is **noteworthy**. By already meeting its **2022 annual targets in July 2023**, the country has demonstrated its **ability to harness the power of wind to generate clean electricity**. Wind energy, both **onshore and offshore**, will play a **pivotal role in achieving Germany's renewable energy goals**.



North America

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina arrives in New York to attend 78th UN General Assembly

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has arrived in **New York** to participate in the **78th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)**. Her flight landed at the **John F. Kennedy International Airport** in New York at local time on Monday.

During her visit to **New York**, **Sheikh Hasina** is scheduled to **attend the opening day of the high-level General Debate of the 78th UNGA session**, which will take place at the **General Assembly Hall of the UN Headquarters** on Tuesday. Additionally, she is set to participate in a dinner hosted by **US President Joe Biden on Tuesday**. On the sidelines of the **UNGA session**, the **Bangladesh Prime Minister** will engage in various **bilateral and courtesy meetings**. She will also be involved in **several high-level side events**, including those related to **climate change, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), universal health, and finance**. One significant event on her agenda is delivering a keynote address at a high-level conference titled **"Thought for Food - Collaborating for Food Supply Chain Innovation to Accelerate the SDGs,"** organized by the **UNIDO and Deloitte at Rockefeller Centre** in New York on **September 18**. On the same day, **Sheikh Hasina** will also address the president of the **European Council and the European Union (EU)** at the **UN Headquarters**.

Furthermore, she will attend a **High-Level side event on Community Clinic based on Medical Services** co-organized by **Bangladesh, Antigua and Barbuda, Bhutan, China, Malaysia, Chatham House, and Suchona Foundation** at the **United Nations Headquarters**. On **September 20**, **Sheikh Hasina** will participate as a **keynote speaker**, along with **Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau**, in a **High-level Debate on Financing for Development (FFD)** titled **"Scaling up affordable and accessible international public financing for sustainable development and ensuring efficiency"** at the **Trusteeship Council Chamber**.



Source: Times of India

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/bangladesh-prime-minister-sheikh-hasina-arrives-in-new-york-to-attend-78th-un-general-assembly/articleshow/103749340.cms>



South America

President Joe Biden is hosting Costa Rican President Rodrigo Chaves at the White House



Costa Rican President Rodrigo Chaves's upcoming meeting with President Joe Biden at the White House marks a significant step in addressing the complex issue of **migration and fostering stronger economic ties** between the **two nations**. This meeting follows a **bilateral agreement** that seeks to establish **legal pathways for migrants**, reflecting a commitment to **tackle the immigration challenges** faced by **both countries**. One of the key agenda items in this meeting will **undoubtedly be the exploration** of ways to **bolster economic cooperation** and **generate new employment opportunities**. **Strengthening economic connections** is crucial not only for the prosperity of both **Costa Rica and the United States** but also for addressing some of the root causes of migration. By **creating job opportunities** and **promoting economic growth**, both nations can contribute to stabilizing the region and **reducing the incentives for irregular migration**. **Promoting democracy** is another **essential aspect** of the discussions. **Democracy forms the bedrock** of **Costa Rica's political landscape**, and **President Chaves's** visit underscores the importance of upholding democratic values in the region. This commitment to **democratic governance** aligns with the **broader goals of promoting stability and good governance**, which are essential for addressing migration challenges effectively. One of the pressing issues at hand is the growing migration through Costa Rica.

Source: The Independent

<https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/ap-joe-biden-white-house-washington-central-american-b2400919.html>

The perilous journey that migrants undertake through the **Darien Gap**, crossing from **Colombia into Central America** and continuing northward through **Costa Rica**, poses significant humanitarian challenges. Addressing the **humanitarian aspect of migration is a shared responsibility**, and both nations are likely to **explore strategies** for handling this complex issue with **compassion and efficiency**. The agreement reached in June between **Costa Rica and the United States** to establish potential legal routes for certain **Nicaraguan and Venezuelan** migrants is a crucial step. With a significant number of asylum seekers in **Costa Rica**, including a substantial proportion from **Nicaragua**, this agreement aims to alleviate the strain on **Costa Rica's asylum system**.



Asia

Indian Navy has a Rs 2 lakh crore plan to counter Chinese dragon in Indian Ocean

The Indian Navy is aggressively pursuing the expansion of its **blue-water fleet** and has placed orders for **68 warships and vessels** valued at around **Rs 2 lakh crore**. This move aligns with **India's strategic objective** of **safeguarding** its **extensive geostrategic interests** and countering **China's increasing presence** in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.

The **Indian Navy**, which **currently has 132 warships, 143 aircraft, and 130 helicopters**, has obtained **preliminary approval**, known as **'acceptance of necessity' (AoN)**, for the construction of **eight next-generation corvettes, nine submarines, five survey vessels, and two multi-purpose vessels** within India in the coming years. Despite challenges such as **slow construction in domestic shipyards**, phased decommissioning of aging vessels, and **fiscal constraints**, the **Navy aims to achieve a force level of approximately 155-160 warships by 2030**. However, the **goal is to eventually bolster the fleet to at least 175 warships, if not 200, by 2035**. This expansion is aimed at **ensuring credible strategic reach, mobility, and flexibility within the IOR and beyond**, requiring an **increase in fighter aircraft, fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, and drones**.

The **growing maritime threat from China underscores the urgency of these efforts**. **China's People's Liberation Army-Navy (PLAN)** is actively seeking **additional overseas bases** to address **logistical challenges** in the IOR and the **broader Indo-Pacific**. **China's naval capabilities** have surged, with the **PLAN adding 150 warships over the past decade**, and **projections suggest it could have 555 warships in the next five to six years**, including aircraft carriers operating in the IOR. Delays in launching **'Project-75-India,'** aimed at building **six advanced diesel-electric submarines**, have led the government to opt for an **additional three French-origin Scorpene submarines**. Nevertheless, there are positive developments, including the construction of **seven 6,670-tonne stealth frigates**, part of **Project-17A**, and the orders for **missile destroyers, fleet support ships, missile vessels, and offshore patrol vessels**.



Source: Economic Times

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/indian-navy-has-a-rs-2-lakh-crore-plan-to-counter-growing-maritime-threat-from-china/articleshow/103753375.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst



Australia

India sources antibodies from Australia to fight Nipah virus



India has approached Australia to acquire **additional monoclonal antibody** doses for combating the **Nipah virus** and anticipates **receiving 20 more** doses soon, according to **Dr. Rajiv Bahl**, the head of the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**. He mentioned that the **monoclonal antibody** has successfully completed **phase-one trials** and has been administered to **14 individuals worldwide**. The primary objective at this stage is to **swiftly contain the Nipah virus**, with **aggressive contact tracing** already **in progress**. Dr. Bahl emphasized the significantly higher mortality rate among Nipah-infected individuals, ranging from **40% to 70%**, compared to COVID-19, which had a mortality rate of **2% to 3%**. Dr. Bahl underscored the dedication to controlling the virus's spread in Kerala and highlighted that all infected patients thus far have been in contact with an index patient. Kerala is currently grappling with its fourth outbreak of the Nipah virus, with two fatalities and at least five other confirmed cases in the Kozhikode district.

Source: The Times of India
<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/india-to-procure-20-more-doses-of-monoclonal-antibody-from-australia-for-nipah-treatment-says-icmr-dg/article67311437.ece>

Numerous areas have been designated as containment zones, and **nearly 1,000 contacts** have been identified, with **over 200 considered "high risk."** Regarding the administration of the monoclonal antibody to patients, Dr. Bahl clarified that the ultimate decision lies with the State government, the patient, and the attending physician. He emphasized that ICMR is making the antibody available for a virus known for its high mortality rate and noted that none of the **14 individuals** who received the monoclonal antibody had succumbed to the virus.



Africa

Kenya: President William Ruto woos US tech companies despite boosting business taxes

Kenya's President William Ruto is actively courting American tech companies, offering a business-friendly environment despite recent tax increases on businesses in Kenya.

President Ruto extended this appeal to leading U.S. technology firms and investors during his address in San Francisco, where he emphasized the investment opportunities in Kenya and highlighted his government's strategic priorities.

However, critics argue that his government's recently imposed and proposed taxes will raise the cost of doing business in Kenya, including in the tech sector. In the first budget of his administration this year, **Kenya doubled the digital service tax to 3%**, specifically targeting foreign tech giants that use the internet for marketing and sales. While the government **projected significant revenue gains** in Kenyan shillings from this tax increase, critics raised concerns that it could deter tech investors.

Despite these tax measures, President Ruto asserted that Kenya is positioning itself as "Africa's business process outsourcing and creative economy hub," citing factors like internet penetration and a growing workforce.

It's worth noting that Kenya has faced criticism in the past for **not implementing stringent labor laws** to prevent the exploitation of employees by tech companies. Some tech firms, such as Meta, have faced lawsuits from former employees over poor working conditions and accusations of low wages for content moderators in Kenya.



Source: Africa News
<https://www.africanews.com/2023/09/16/kenya-president-william-ruto-woos-us-tech-companies-despite-boosting-business-taxes/>