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TODAY'S ANALYSIS

(02 September 2024)

TOPICS TO BE COVERED

- **COLOMBO SECURITY CONCLAVE**
- **CHINA PHILIPPINES DISPUTE OVER SABINA SHOAL**
- **MCQs**



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COLOMBO SECURITY CONCLAVE

Why in News?

On August 30, 2024, India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Mauritius signed a Charter and Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish the Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) Secretariat.

- This milestone in **regional security collaboration** shows the commitment of these **nations to enhancing cooperation** on various security issues in the Indian Ocean region.
- The signing ceremony, **hosted in Colombo by the Government of Sri Lanka**, was **attended by key national security representatives from each participating country**.
- **Host:** Government of Sri Lanka, which organized the event in Colombo.
- **Significance:** The establishment of the CSC Secretariat **marks a significant step in formalizing and enhancing regional security collaboration**.

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COLOMBO SECURITY CONCLAVE (CSC)



Regional security grouping initially formed in 2011 as a trilateral Indian Ocean maritime security grouping of India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives

MEMBERS

India
Sri Lanka
Maldives
Mauritius

OBSERVERS

Bangladesh
Seychelles



WHAT IS COLOMBO SECURITY CONCLAVE?

- **Formation and Membership:**
 - **Established:** Formed in 2011 as a trilateral maritime security initiative among India, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives.
 - **Expansion:** Mauritius joined as a fourth member during the fifth meeting of national security advisers. Bangladesh and Seychelles have attended as observers and are invited to join the CSC.

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- **Goal:**

- The CSC aims to enhance regional security by focusing on the five pillars of cooperation. This collaborative framework is designed **to address shared security concerns and promote stronger ties among member states.**

CORE OBJECTIVES

- **Maritime Safety and Security:** Ensuring safe and secure maritime navigation and cooperation among member states.
- **Countering Terrorism and Radicalisation:** Addressing terrorism and extremist activities through joint strategies and intelligence sharing.
- **Combating Trafficking and Transnational Organised Crime:** Tackling illegal trafficking and organized crime across borders.
- **Cyber Security and Protection of Critical Infrastructure and Technology:** Safeguarding digital infrastructure and addressing cyber threats.
- **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief:** Coordinating responses to natural disasters and humanitarian crises.

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SIGNIFICANCE

- **India's Strategic Outreach:**

- The **CSC represents India's strategic outreach to enhance regional cooperation and address security issues** in the Indian Ocean region. This initiative aligns with India's broader regional and global security objectives.

- **Countering China's Influence:**

- The CSC is **seen as a countermeasure to China's growing influence** in the Indian Ocean. By strengthening regional security cooperation, the CSC aims to mitigate the strategic impact of China's presence in the area.

- **Maritime Security Prioritization:**

- India's extensive coastline and **strategic maritime chokepoints make maritime security a top priority**. The CSC plays a vital role in addressing maritime security challenges and enhancing regional maritime cooperation.

- **Alignment with SAGAR Vision:**

- The CSC complements India's "**SAGAR: Security and Growth for All in the Region**" vision, which seeks to enhance security and **promote growth in the Indian Ocean**

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region. The CSC also aligns with **India's strategic interests as a member of the QUAD grouping.**

- **Emerging Sub-Regionalism:**

- The formation of the CSC reflects the development of **sub-regionalism in the Indian Ocean, where countries with shared security concerns come together on a common platform.** This trend signifies a shift towards more focused regional security cooperation.

- **Associated Challenges:**

- Despite the alignment of strategic interests among CSC member countries, challenges remain. **Similar to SAARC, which struggled to fulfill its objectives due to internal and external pressures, the CSC may face difficulties in achieving its goals if not supported by strong institutional frameworks and collective commitment.**

CONCLUSION

The signing of the Charter and MoU for the Colombo Security Conclave Secretariat represents a significant advancement in regional security cooperation among India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Mauritius. By establishing a formal structure for collaboration, the CSC

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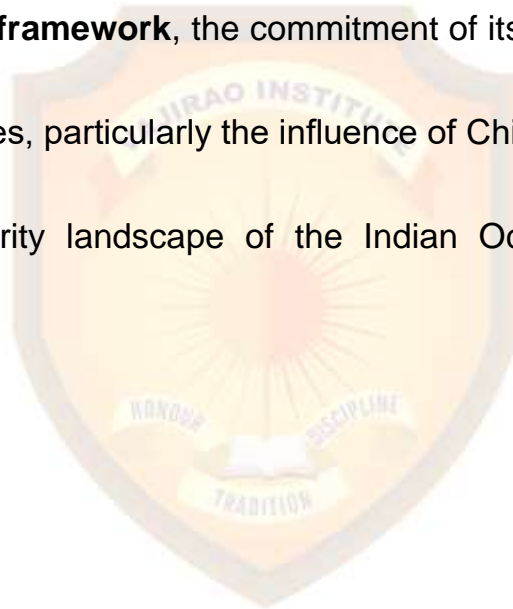
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aims to address key **security challenges such as maritime safety, counter-terrorism, and cyber threats**. This initiative reflects India's strategic vision for the Indian Ocean region and its commitment to regional stability.

However, the effectiveness of the CSC in achieving its objectives will depend on the strength of its institutional framework, the commitment of its member states, and its ability to navigate external challenges, particularly the influence of China. The CSC's success will be crucial in shaping the security landscape of the Indian Ocean and enhancing regional cooperation.



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CHINA PHILIPPINES DISPUTE OVER SABINA SHOAL

On Friday, **China released its first survey report on Sabina Shoal in the South China Sea.**



- It rejected the Philippines' claims of damage to the reef.
- The report, conducted by China's Ministry of Natural Resources from May to July.
- It states that there is no scientific evidence to support the Philippines' accusations.

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KEY FINDINGS

- **Survey Results:**

- The survey showed that the **coral reef at Sabina Shoal is in good condition for growth.**
- China denied the **Philippines' claims that Chinese activities at Xianbin Reef (Sabina Shoal) caused significant coral damage.**
- The report said, "There is no scientific or factual basis for the **Philippines' claims that China's activities have caused coral bleaching and death in the region.**"

- **Accusations and Counterclaims:**

- The **Philippine Coast Guard has accused China of building an artificial island at Sabina Shoal.**
- In response, **China claimed that the presence of Philippine warships has harmed the coral reef.**
- The report also mentioned that the **damage was caused by a Philippine coast guard ship's "illegal" stay at the shoal.** China said this led to **damage from anchors and small boats operating in the area.**

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ABOUT SABINA SHOAL

- **Geographical Details:**

- Sabina Shoal is an **oceanic coral atoll developed on a seamount**. It extends about 23 km along its northwest-southeast axis and **comprises two main parts connected by a narrow section**.
- The **western part is larger, measuring 13 km by 6 km**, while the eastern part measures **10 km by 3 km**. Both parts feature a central lagoon surrounded by a **coral ring made of discontinuous shallow sections**.

WHAT IS A SEAMOUNT?

- **Definition and Formation:**

- A seamount is an **underwater mountain formed through volcanic activity**.
- Seamounts are **hotspots for marine life and can be active, extinct, or dormant volcanoes**.
- They form near **mid-ocean ridges**, where tectonic plates move apart, allowing molten rock to rise to the seafloor.

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- Some seamounts are **found near intraplate hotspots** or oceanic island chains with volcanic and seismic activity.

RECENT INCIDENTS

- **Incident Near Sabina Shoal:**

- On Sunday, **tensions escalated when the Philippine South China Sea task force reported that Chinese vessels had rammed and used water cannons against a Philippine Bureau of Fisheries ship.** The ship was reportedly transporting **food, fuel, and medical supplies for Filipino fishermen.**

- **Geopolitical Background:**

- Sabina Shoal, also known as **Xianbin Reef**, is situated in the eastern part of the **Spratly Islands in the South China Sea.**
- It lies approximately **75 nautical miles from the Philippine province of Palawan** and is considered **part of the Philippines' 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) under the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.**
- China, however, claims sovereignty over the shoal and much of the South China Sea, maintaining a continuous presence there. The **shoal is located about 630 nautical miles from China.**

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MCQs

1. Which of the countries are permanent members of Colombo Security Conclave?

1. Bangladesh
 2. Sri Lanka
 3. Seychelles
 4. Maldives
- (A) Only 1 & 2
(B) Only 2, 3 & 4
(C) Only 2 & 4
(D) All of the above



Ans. (C)

2. Consider the following statements and mark the correct one:

1. Colombo Security Conclave was formed in 2011.
 2. Colombo Security Conclave aims at providing Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief.
- (A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 & 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans. (C)

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3. Which of these shoals lie in the 9 dash line?

1. Scarborough Shoal
2. Sabina Shoal
3. Second Thomas Shoal

- (A) Only 2
- (B) Only 2 & 3
- (C) Only 1 & 2
- (D) All of the above

Ans. (D)

4. Sabina Shoal is part of which Island?

- (A) Spartly
- (B) Paracel
- (C) Coco Island
- (D) None of the above

Ans. (A)

