

The fourth biennial China Maritime takes place at the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre from the 28th of February to the 1st of March 2012. Organiser, Baird Maritime, has announced that record numbers of Korean and Chinese exhibitors have signed up, and there will be a large China pavilion.



In the past, Chinese exhibitors have tended to join events on the Mainland, but have become frustrated at the poor response from shipping people in the PRC, and lack of quality visitors. So, they are coming to Hong Kong instead.

The exhibition is only one facet of China Maritime, though, and this year there are almost 20 other events taking place. These range from receptions and a gala charity dinner in aid of the Sailors' Society, to conferences, seminars, product presentations, the regional meeting of INTERFERRY and a maritime promotion from the Philippines.

Highlights are likely to be the Nautical Institute seminar on the challenges of electronic navigation, the Marine Money conference, a ballast water symposium and the Clean Ships, Seas, Shores & Ports Conference and Luncheon.

We will be particularly interested to see what the Young Shipping Professionals of Hong Kong will tackle in their seminar on the afternoon of the 28th of February. They are a relatively new group, but they are growing



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Seychelles support for Chinese Eyebrows were raised recently when Tokyo announced it had established, in Djibouti, an overseas naval base for the support of Japan Maritime Self Defence Force regional anti-piracy operations. Now, the government of the Seychelles has extended an invitation to China to establish support facilities, on the main Seychelles island of Mahe, for the PLA Navy's anti-piracy deployments. (For the past three years PLA task groups have been providing escort for convoys of merchant ships through the piracy-plagued seaways off Somalia).



The Seychellois, meanwhile, have themselves won international plaudits for their counter piracy efforts, which have included both sea and air patrols, and the prosecution of apprehended pirates. The inventory of the Seychelles Coast Guard (SCG) includes former Indian and Russian offshore patrol vessels, and ex-British and American search and rescue craft, as well as maritime patrol planes.

The proposal may have been motivated, in part, to coax further investment from China's great strategic rival, India. Another factor may have been the need to counterbalance the increasingly high profile use of Mahe as a base for American Reaper UAVs, which carry out anti-piracy, and counter terrorism, missions over Somalia.

The offer was made during a visit to the country by Chinese defence minister, General Liang Guanglie (right), and comes at a time when Beijing is forging significant financial and security links with the strategically-placed island nation. The Seychelles, incidentally, has a small (1,000 strong in a population of 90,000) but very wealthy ethnic Chinese community.



In recent years, many Chinese enterprises have set up holding companies in the Seychelles, to move money offshore and minimize their taxation liabilities. On the security front, Beijing has been running training programmes for Seychellois military personnel since 2007 and, in May 2011, delivered two Harbin Y-12E aircraft to the SCG for anti-piracy patrol duties.

The Chinese are very aware of regional sensitivities over their maritime ambitions. China's defence ministry points out that it has no intention of formally commissioning a naval base in the Seychelles, but needs to make use of port facilities there to support its anti-piracy work. Others, though, particularly the Indians, will be watching this development closely . . .

fast and are full of enthusiasm for their chosen professions.

Fragrant Harbour has supported China Maritime since its inception, and Baird Maritime (an Australian organisation) deserves credit for seeing a need for a professional maritime exhibition in one of the world's leading ports . . . when local interests couldn't.

We encourage readers to visit Baird Maritime's website and get a taste for what's on offer, and look forward to seeing you there.

On the 23rd of January, India became the sixth country to operate nuclear-powered submarines, with the handing over of a Russian Akula-II class attack craft at Primorye. Now called *INS Chakra II* (below), the sub is on a 10-year lease and comes as part of a secret 2004 deal worth almost US\$1 billion. The other five countries that operate nuclear subs are the US, Britain, Russia, France and China.



Towards the end of 2012, India is expected to induct its own nuclear-powered submarine into service. Called *INS Arihant*, it will be equipped with K-15 ballistic missiles, capable of delivering a nuclear warhead up to 700 kilometres.

Chakra II cannot deliver nuclear warheads in its current configuration. It will carry torpedoes, land-attack cruise missiles and anti-ship missiles.

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