India offers to share real-time maritime data

Stronger vigil:The move comes as India gears up to counter China's presence in the Indian Ocean Region.S.R. Raghunathan

India has made an offer to share intelligence of maritime movements in the Indian Ocean in real-time with 10 Indian Ocean littoral states.

This comes even as India gears up to counter China's increased presence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

The information to be shared includes movement of commercial traffic as well as intelligence.

"It was very positively received," Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba told *The Hindu* on Thursday at the Goa Maritime Conclave (GMC) when asked about the response to this proposal from the 10 littoral states present.

The Indian Navy is hosting Navy and Maritime Chiefs of 10 countries of IOR at the first GMC to identify common threats in the region and evolve a mechanism on how to tackle them.

Co-operative system

India already has co-operative arrangements with several countries in the region and this initiative would see that expanding further. For instance, white shipping agreements to share commercial shipping data have been signed with 12 countries and more are in the works.

Fusion centre

"We have offered them to share real time data on movement in the Indian Ocean. Now let them review it and get them. This is not so much for conventional military purposes but to deal with non-traditional threats arising at sea," a senior officer said.

India is in a position to be a fusion centre, the officer added and this would be based on the Navy's nerve centre for coastal surveillance and monitoring, the Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC) located outside the national capital.

Welcoming the offer, a Navy Chief of one of the Indian Ocean littorals present said all countries should pitch in equally in the effort. "It has to be done equally by all nations, small or big. We have to work out modalities for the information exchange," he said on the sidelines of the GMC.

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