

opes of a recovery  
been revived

to climb out of a trip-  
data comes as a pleas-  
exchange's benchmark  
highs. Infrastructure  
its strongest pace in  
electricity, coal and  
tries represent nearly  
As finance minister  
re are other data also  
g signs of a recovery.  
August this year stood  
vs on stalled projects.  
olved, projects worth  
o on stream.

ed its third successive  
% in September while  
ignments that barely  
narrowing the trade  
n. The strengthening  
the same month last  
ernment will be able to  
AD) — the gap between  
it \$60 billion from the

r economy have sprung  
numbers. The best way  
prompt people to spend  
es, spending power can  
ing income. Households  
g signals for the onset  
prices—retail inflation  
family budgets hard,  
of factories and firms  
d borrowing costs, have  
olding back expansion  
ugh some unorthodox

CP(M) general secretary Prakash Karat's  
praise for Orissa chief minister Naveen  
Patraik and Tamil Nadu chief minister  
J Jayalithaa has caused quite a flutter.  
But Karat had no compulsion to eulogise  
them. By wooing these leaders whom he had  
earlier castigated as anti-people and anti-  
democratic, Karat has exposed his political  
and ideological dishonesty.

His party is still a constituent of the Posco  
Prathirodh Sangram Samiti (PPSS), an alliance  
of political parties and civil society organisa-  
tions, waging a pitched battle on behalf of the  
subalterns against the \$52,000 crore mega-  
steel project in Jagatsinghpur district, Orissa.

# We cannot sail through these waters alone

India may now be among the largest military powers in the Indian Ocean but it will still need to work closely with others

## Swim with the tide

David Brewster

buying aircraft carriers, submarines and  
long-range aircraft that give it the ability  
to respond to security problems throughout  
much of the Indian Ocean region.

As Prime Minister Manmohan Singh com-  
mented earlier this year, India now sees  
itself as a "net security provider" to the  
region. "This reflects India's aspirations to  
take a leading strategic role throughout the  
Indian Ocean and to expand its strategic  
reach even into the Pacific. It is natural to  
expect that India's area of strategic interest  
will grow as its economic and political influ-  
ence expands. This means that in coming  
years India will have a growing interest in  
encouraging regional stability, including in  
containing problems that emanate from the  
many failed or fragile states in our region.

Many countries see India in benign terms  
and welcome its rise as a regional security  
provider. There is a growing expectation  
that India will shoulder more of the respon-  
sibilities of providing the so-called 'pub-  
lic goods' of security. The Indian Navy is  
already an important provider of security  
throughout much of the western Indian  
Ocean to combat threats coming from the  
failed state of Somalia.

But what does all this mean in terms of  
India's defence capabilities and its regional  
relationships? Over the last decade or more  
India has spent a lot of money on mod-  
ernising its defence forces. This includes

Dianded the Prathirodh government for inter-  
lessly' beating people who were unwilling to  
give up their betel vines for the steel project.  
It seems Karat is banking on the proverbial  
shortness of public memory as if the people  
of Tamil Nadu have forgotten the treatment  
meted out to DMK leader K Karunanidhi in  
2001 when he was dragged out of his house  
by the state police. Needless to stress, Karat  
hopes that the BJD and the AIADMK would  
leave four or five seats for the CP(M) in the  
Lok Sabha elections next year.

the way Sahoo did. But the erstwhile general  
secretary of the CPI, AB Bardhan, who still  
calls the shots at Ajoy Bhawan, the CPI head-  
quarters in New Delhi, sought support from  
Patnaik to ensure victory for CPI nominee  
Bibhu Prasad Tarai in 2009. Tarai was in  
the Congress and was allegedly very close  
to Patnaik. This had tarnished the CPI's  
image. Bardhan, an unflinching crony of  
AKG Bhawan, will try his best to hitch his  
stars to the CP(M) bandwagon. But it may  
not be easy as the fiery Gurudas Dasgupta  
will support Sahoo and the PPSS.

*The views expressed by the author are personal  
Sankar Ray is a Kolkata-based writer*

But India's regional security relation-  
ships are relatively less developed. India  
gives more attention to regional security  
relationships than it did a decade or two  
ago, but the depth of many of these rela-  
tionships still lags well behind India's rela-  
tively 'hard power' military capabilities. Indeed,  
India's greatest strategic challenge in the  
Indian Ocean in coming years may not  
be the development of power projection  
capabilities such as aircraft carriers but  
that it can build in the region.

India now has good security relations with  
some smaller states in the Indian Ocean, but  
India's partnerships with the middle powers  
of the region need much more attention.  
These include with Indonesia, Malaysia,  
South Africa and Australia. All these coun-  
tries exercise considerable military power  
within their own sub-regions and have con-  
siderable political and economic influence  
throughout the Indian Ocean and beyond  
on the international stage. India will need  
to work with countries such as these if it  
is to extend its strategic influence through-  
out the region. One key reason why these  
relationships have been relatively slow to  
develop is the general caution among Indian  
policy-makers against security and defence

*The views expressed by the author are personal*

INDIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SUPREME COURT  
with reference to the editorial *Rapid! work  
on the steel frame* (Our Take, November 2),  
it is too early to rejoice over the Supreme  
Court's verdict on giving assured minimum  
tenure of posting to civil servants. There is  
no dearth of rules regulating the civil ser-  
vices. The real problem is the government's  
reluctance to implement these rules. Despite  
a similar directive issued in 2007 by the  
Centre, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Punjab  
refused to adopt fixed tenures for babus.  
SN SHUKLA, via email

## Indira Gandhi's assassination did not trigger the Khalistan movement

With reference to Rajdeep Sardesai's  
*Confront these painful truths* (Beyond the  
bite, November 1), the author has asked  
"whether it is true that the Khalistan ter-  
rorism followed 1984 riots?" The Khalistan  
movement started much before the assas-  
sination of former Prime Minister Indira  
Gandhi in 1984. In 1971, the Khalistan  
proponent Jagjit Singh Chauhan placed  
an advertisement in *The New York Times*  
proclaiming the formation of Khalistan and  
thus collected money from the Sikh diaspora.  
Therefore, it would be wrong to suggest that  
Khalistani terrorism followed the 1984 riots.  
As far as the State's role in controlling the  
riots are concerned, the anti-Sikh riots were  
brought under control in three days while the  
Gujarat riots went on for 29 days

## Legislation protecting domestic workers will help prevent abuse

With reference to the report *Air hostess who  
'locked up' minor help arrested* (November 2),  
it is disheartening that the ill-treatment of  
domestic workers has become a growing prob-  
lem in Indian homes. Domestic help work for  
10-16 hours under pathetic conditions.  
Physical, psychological and often sexual abuse  
at the hands of employers make it no less than  
modern-day slavery. Employers who ill-treat  
their domestic help should be severely pun-  
ished. There's an urgent need for a legislation  
that will ensure domestic workers get better  
working conditions and social protection.

TS MURTHY, via email

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