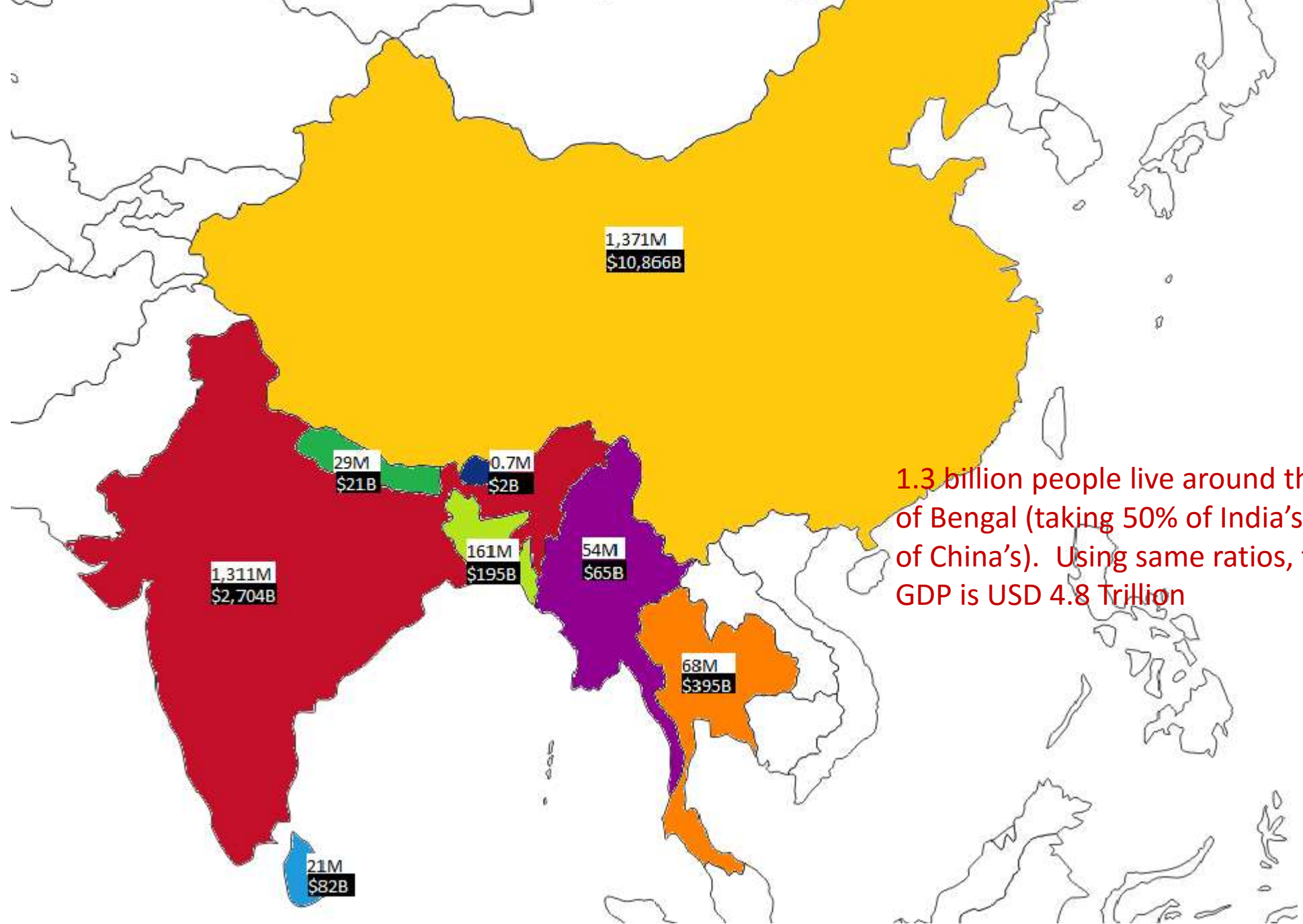


# Connectivity in the Bay of Bengal Region

Rohan Samarajiva

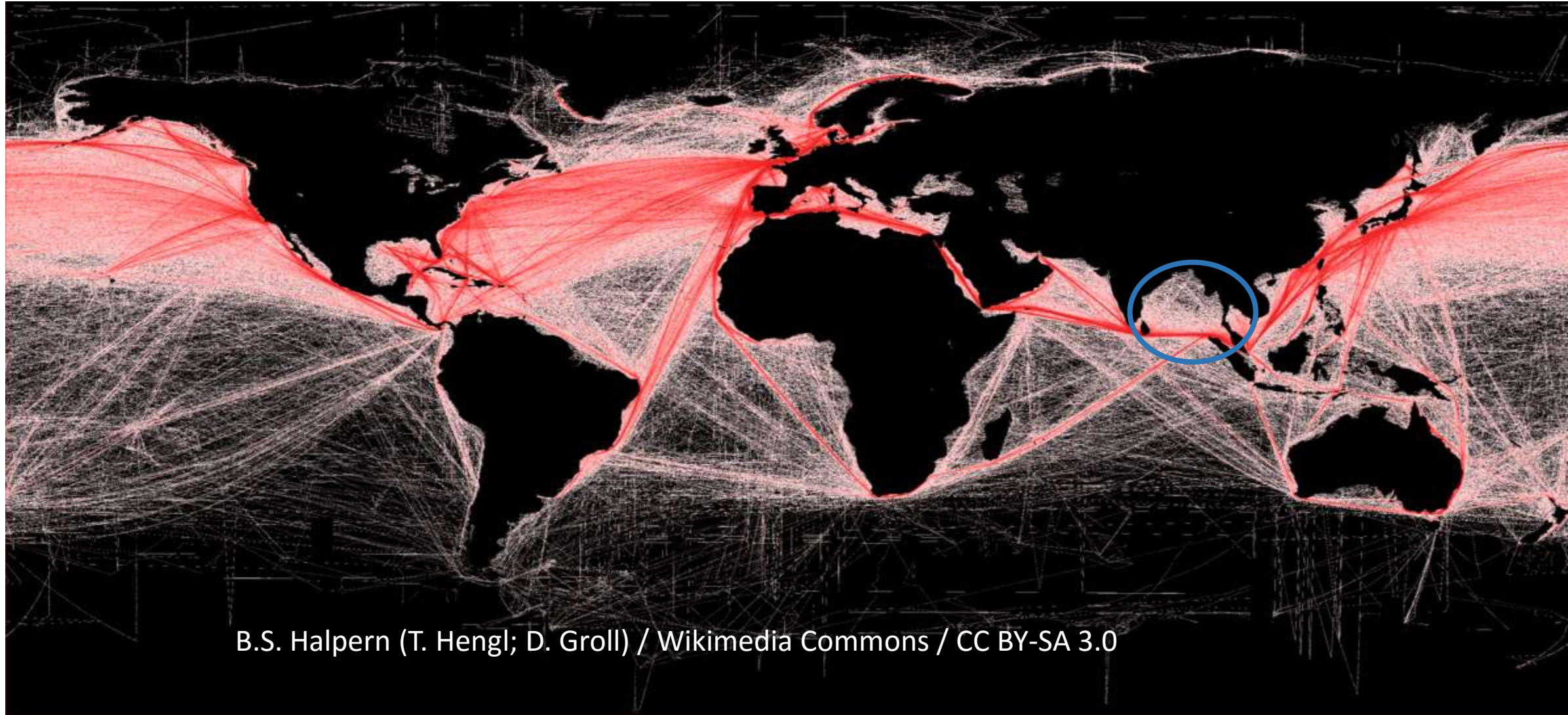
*APNIC 42, Colombo, 3 October 2016*





1.3 billion people live around the Bay of Bengal (taking 50% of India's and 25% of China's). Using same ratios, the combined GDP is USD 4.8 Trillion

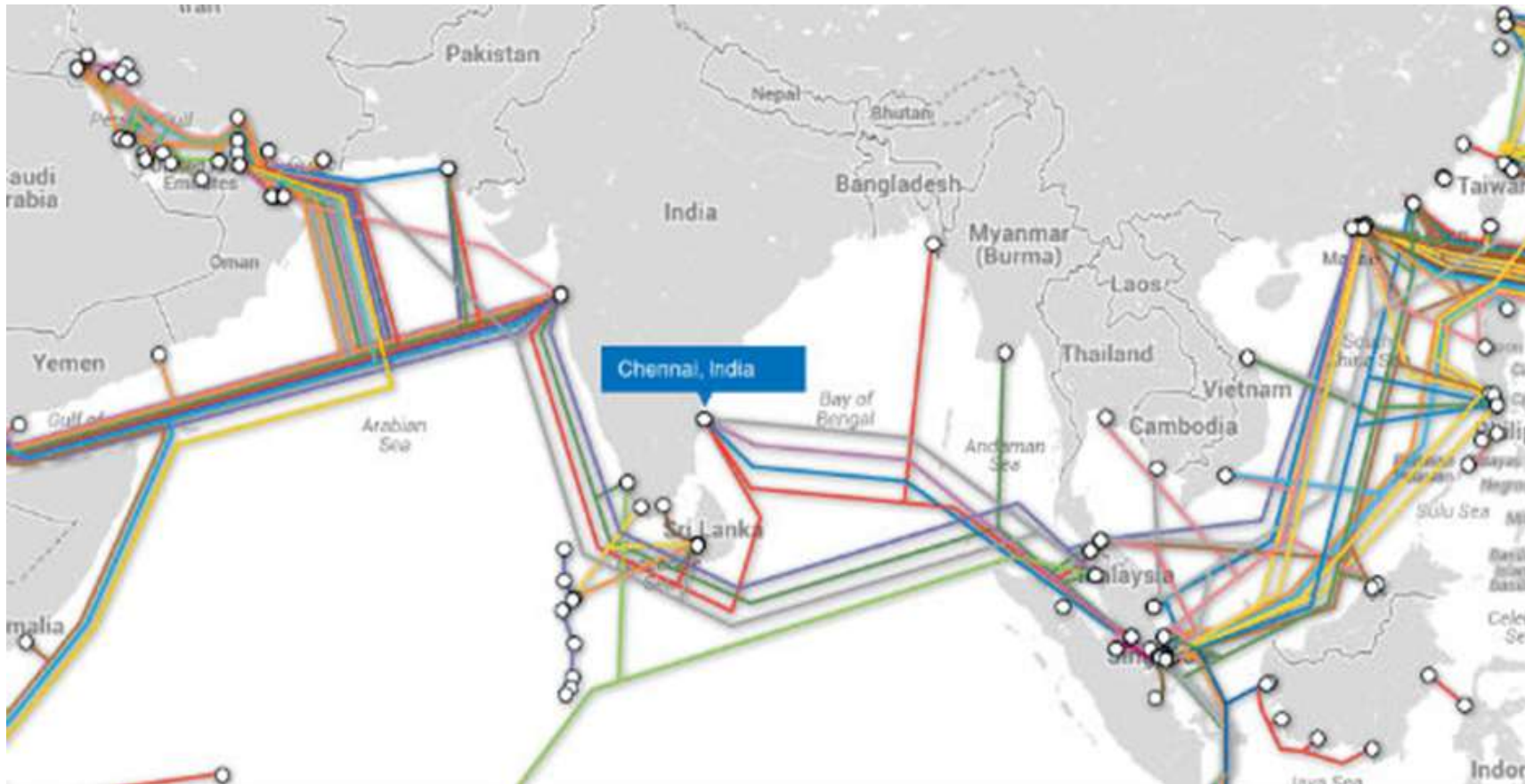
But shipping is sparse across the Bay



B.S. Halpern (T. Hengl; D. Groll) / Wikimedia Commons / CC BY-SA 3.0



One cable each to Bangladesh and Myanmar; and Chennai is only connected place on Indian coast

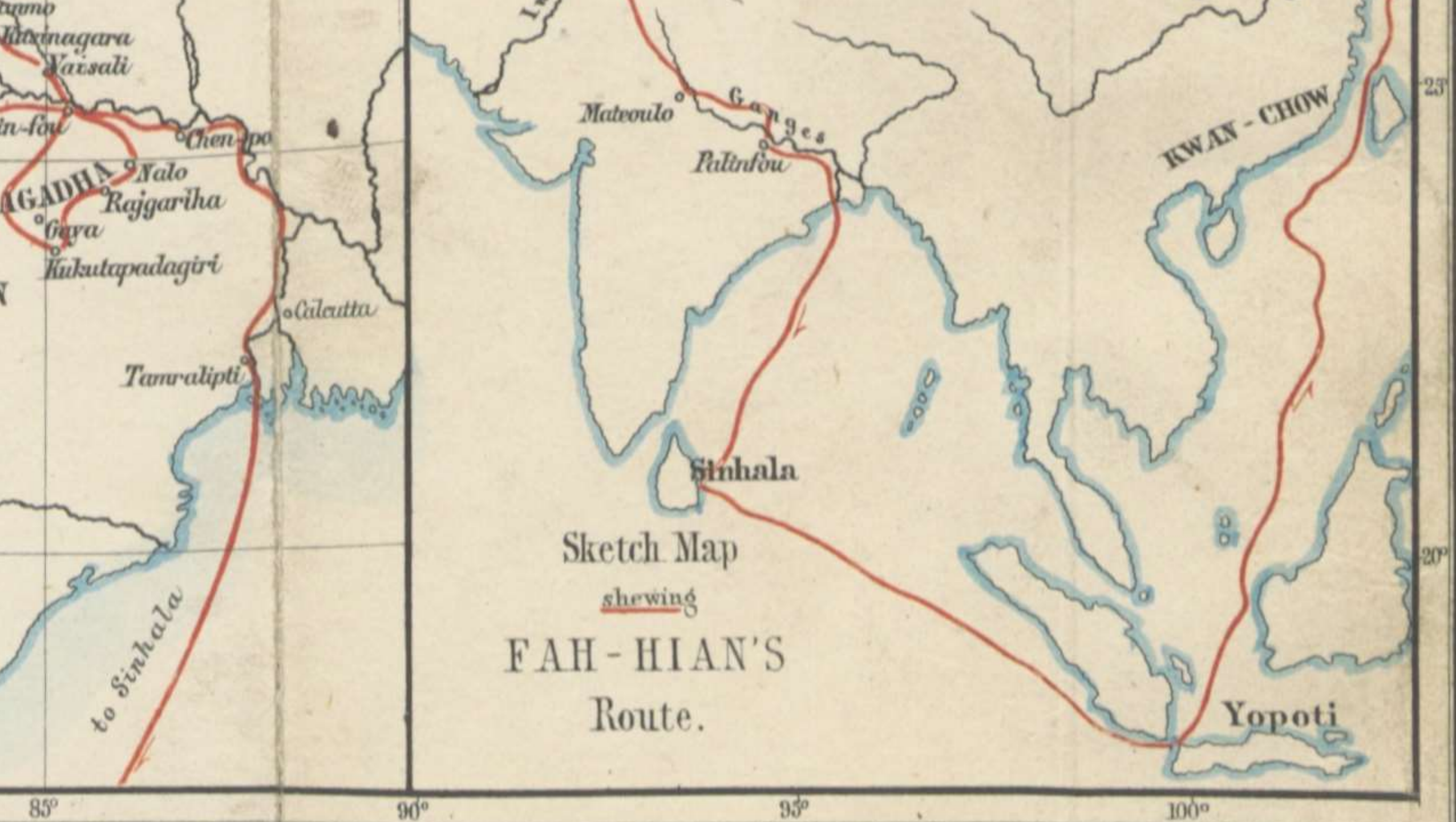


Source: Telegeography

Is this adequate for a region with  
1.3 billion people & a combined  
GDP of over USD 4 trillion?

# Was not always so . . .

- Many interactions across the Bay during Pallava Kingdom (275 CE to 897 CE)
  - Funan (in what is now Cambodia)
- The Chinese Scholar Monk Faxian (337-422 CE) arrived in Sri Lanka by ship from Tamralipti, near present-day Kolkata and left by sea via Java
  - Suggests regular commercial shipping



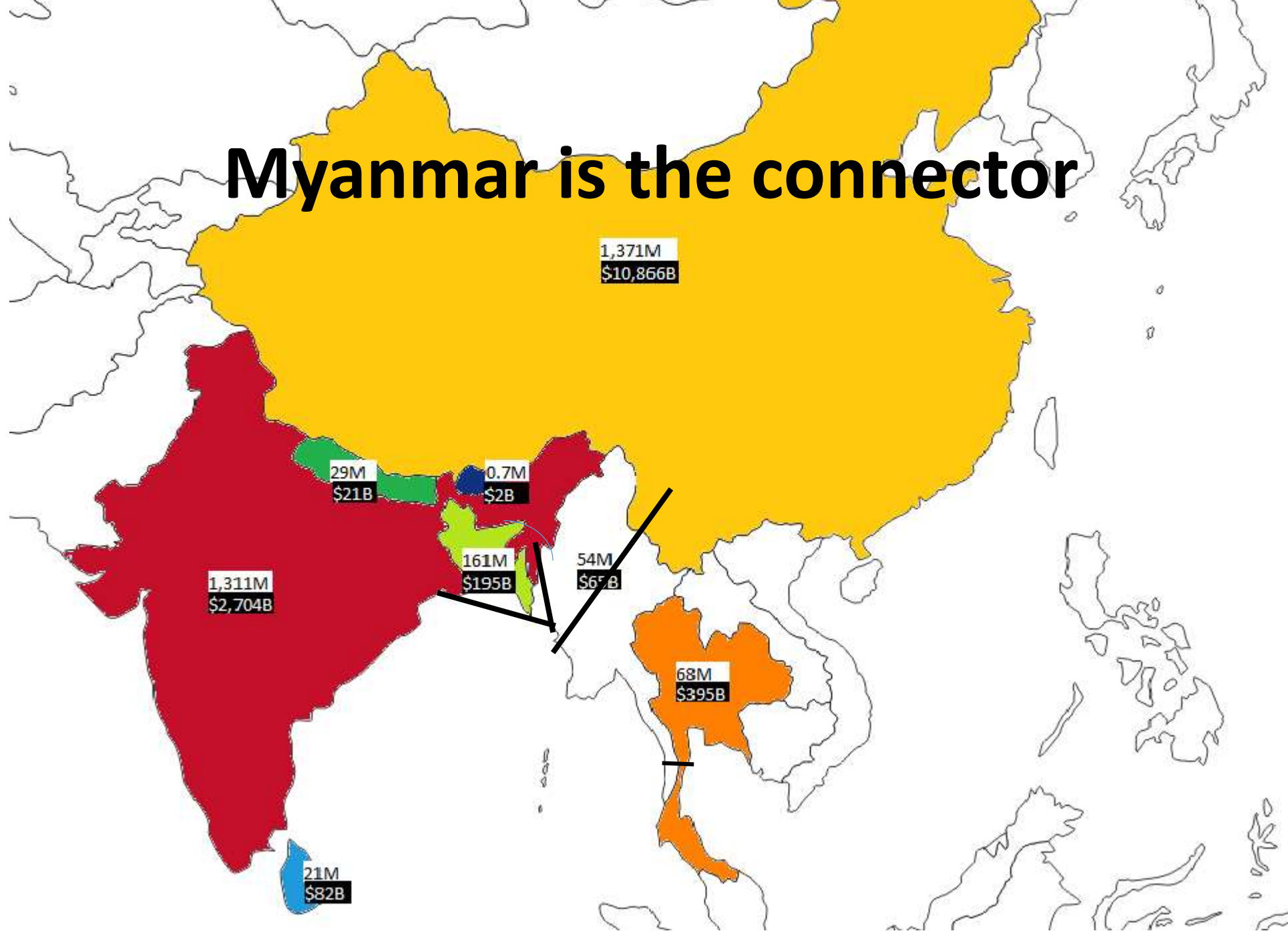
Sketch Map  
shewing  
FAH-HIAN'S  
Route.

# Interactions continued and increased until mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century . . .

- Many interactions between Lanka and the Kingdom of Bagan (Myanmar) in time of King Vijayabahu I (1055-1110 CE) and King Anwarhta (1044-77 CE)
  - Not limited to military and trading vessels
  - Monks went from the kingdom in Bagan in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century to restore the upasampada in Sri Lanka, indicating flows of ideas
- During British hegemony over the region, evidence of lots of shipping
- But connectivity in all forms declined after the Second World War



# Myanmar is the connector



With Myanmar rejoining the world, connectivity across the Bay is rapidly expanding

# Opening up of the Bay of Bengal

- Kyaukphyu (Rakhine State) is already operational as specialized port, permitting avoidance of Malacca & Lombok-Makassar straits

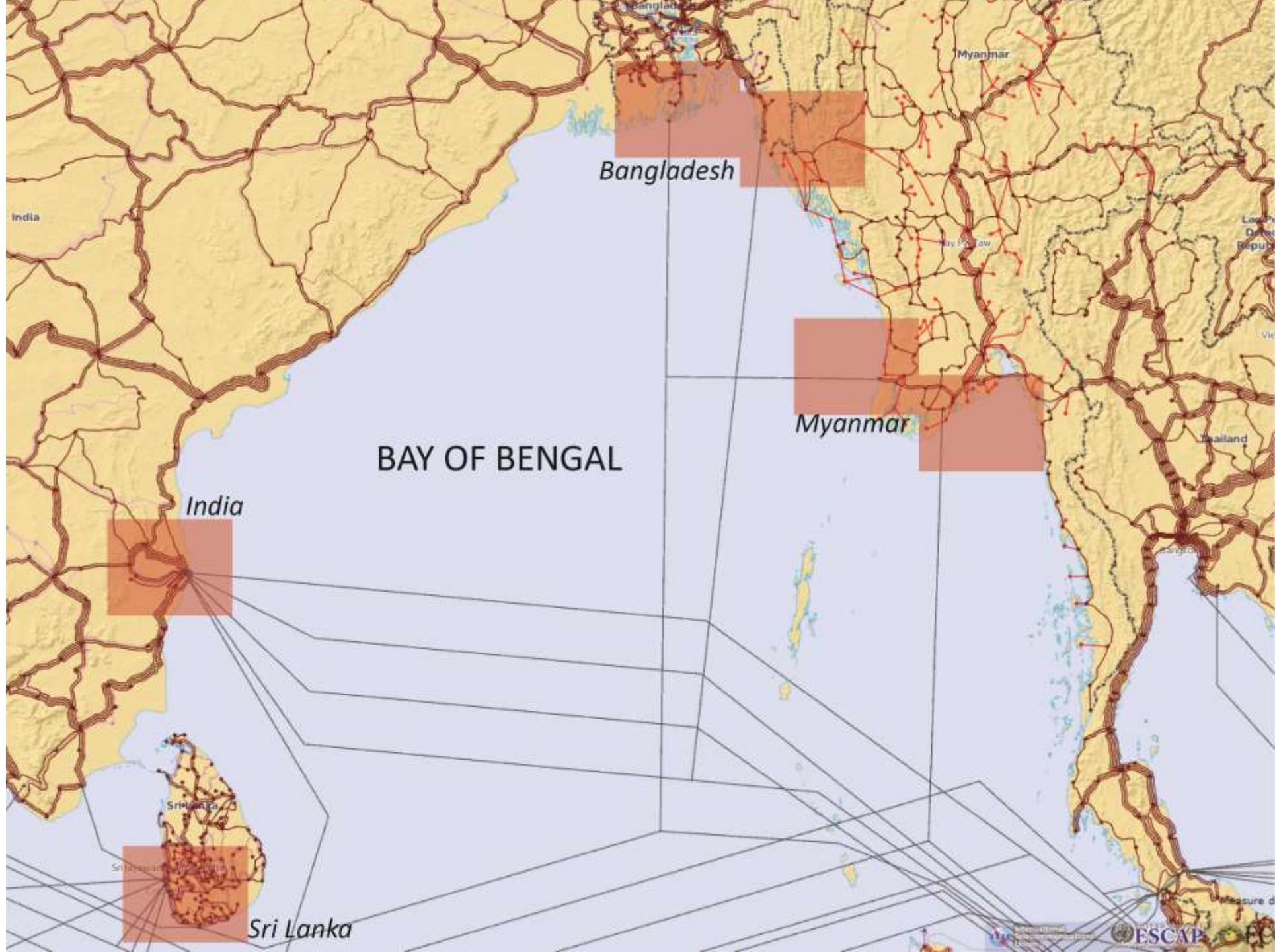


# Opening up of the Bay of Bengal (plans)

- Matarbari deep-sea port in Bangladesh
- Kaladan Multimodal Transit Project centered on Sittwe (Rakhine State)
- Dawei Port and Zone (Tanintharyi Region)









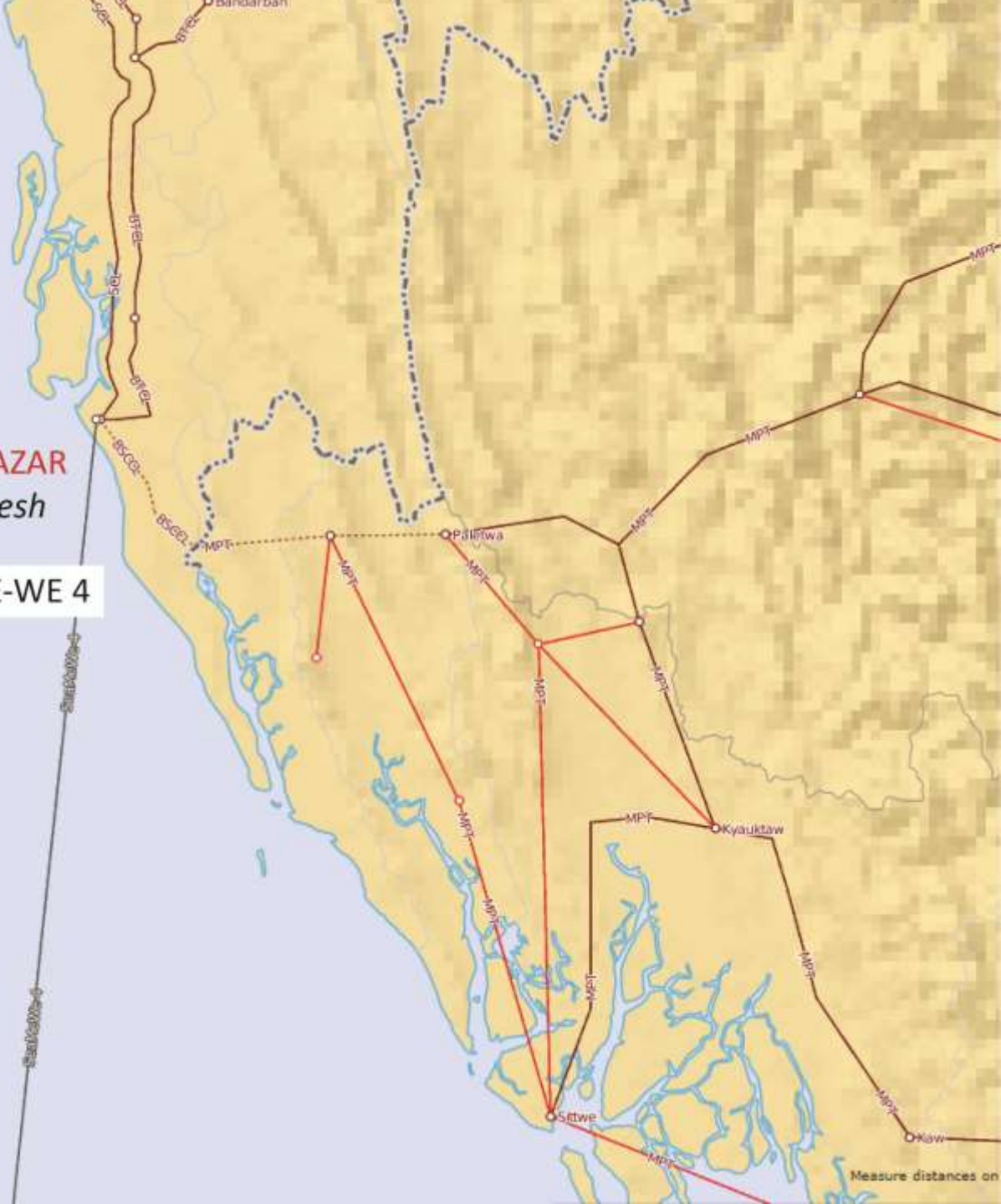
SEA-ME-WE 5





**COX'S BAZAR**  
Bangladesh

SEA-ME-WE 4



NGWE SAUNG  
Myanmar

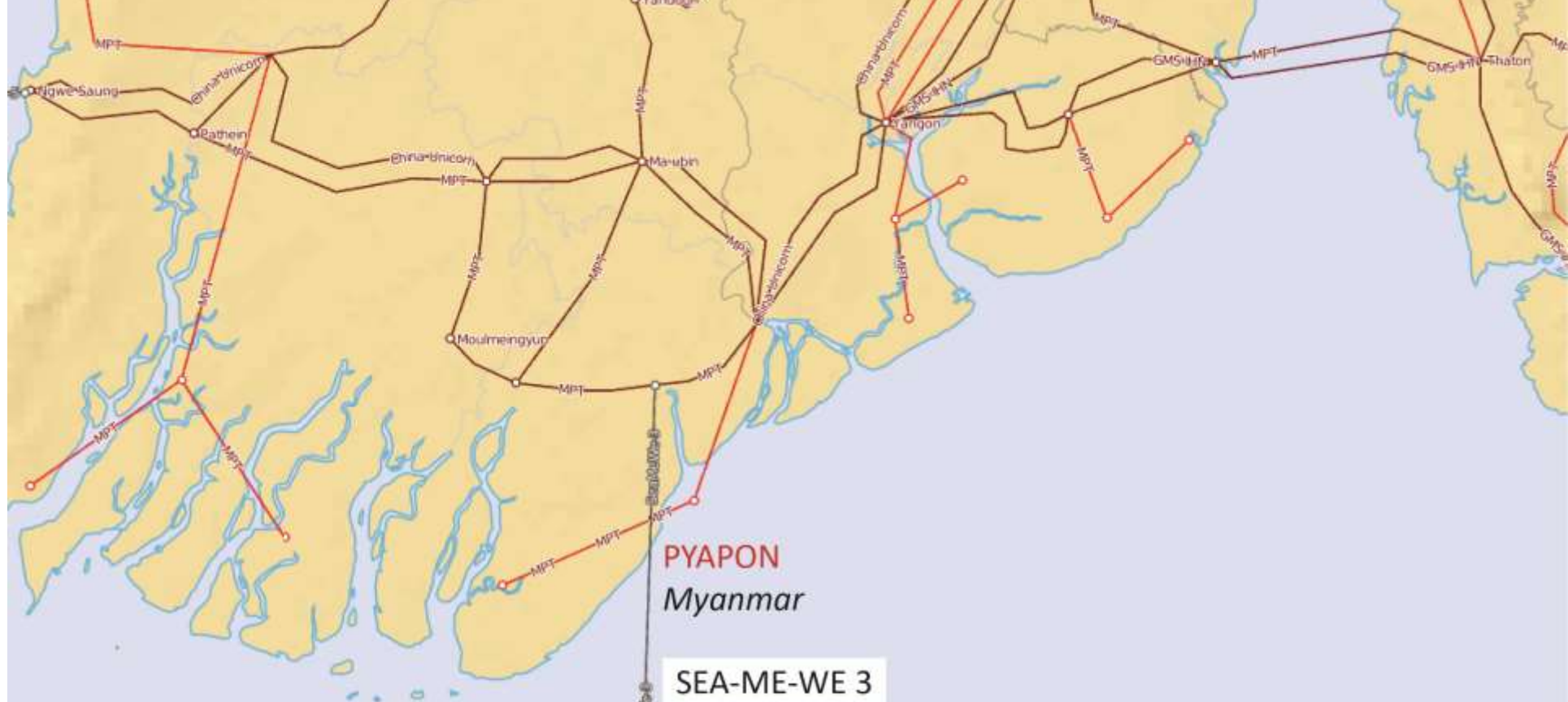
SEA-ME-WE 5

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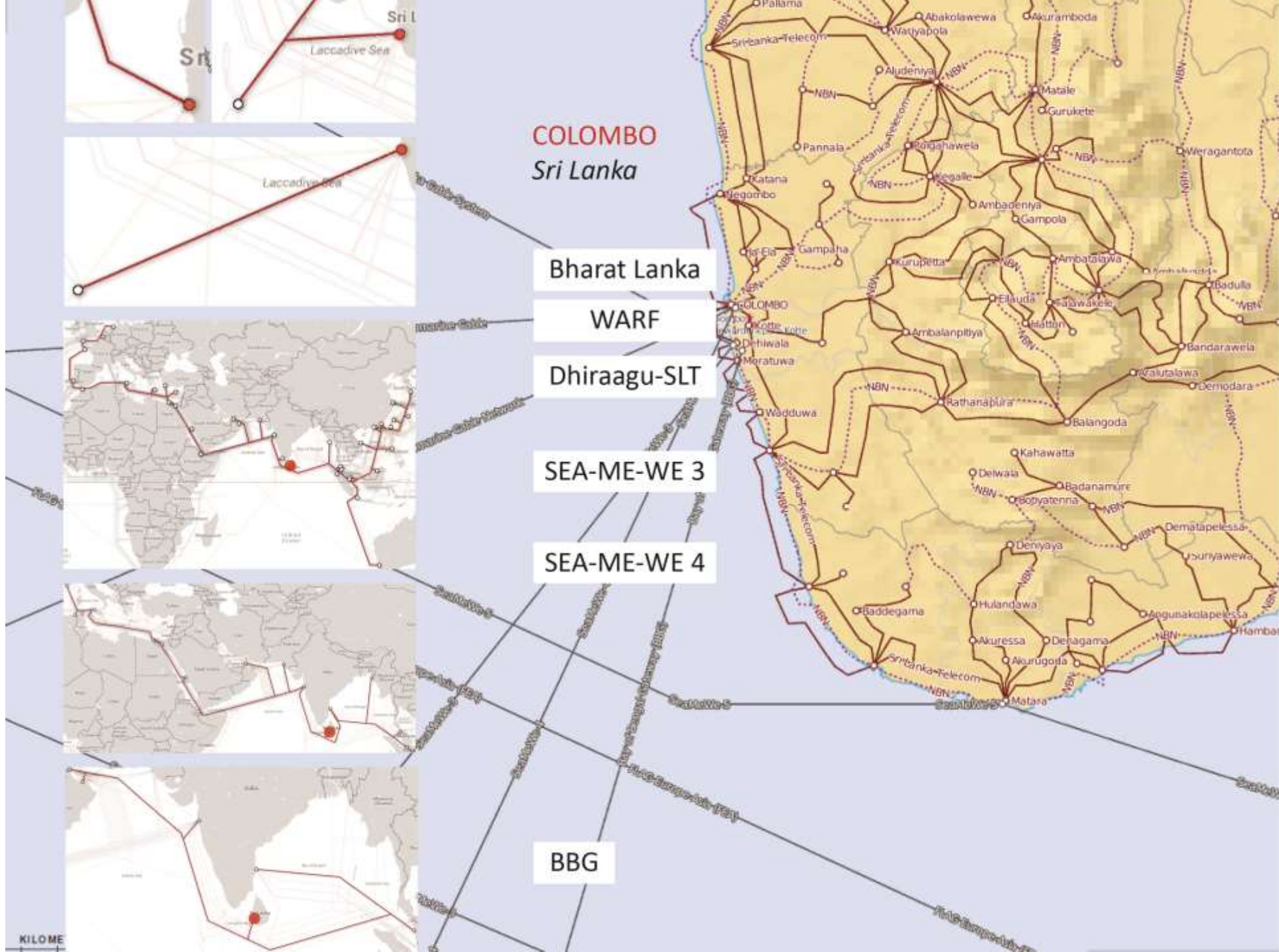
Measure distances on

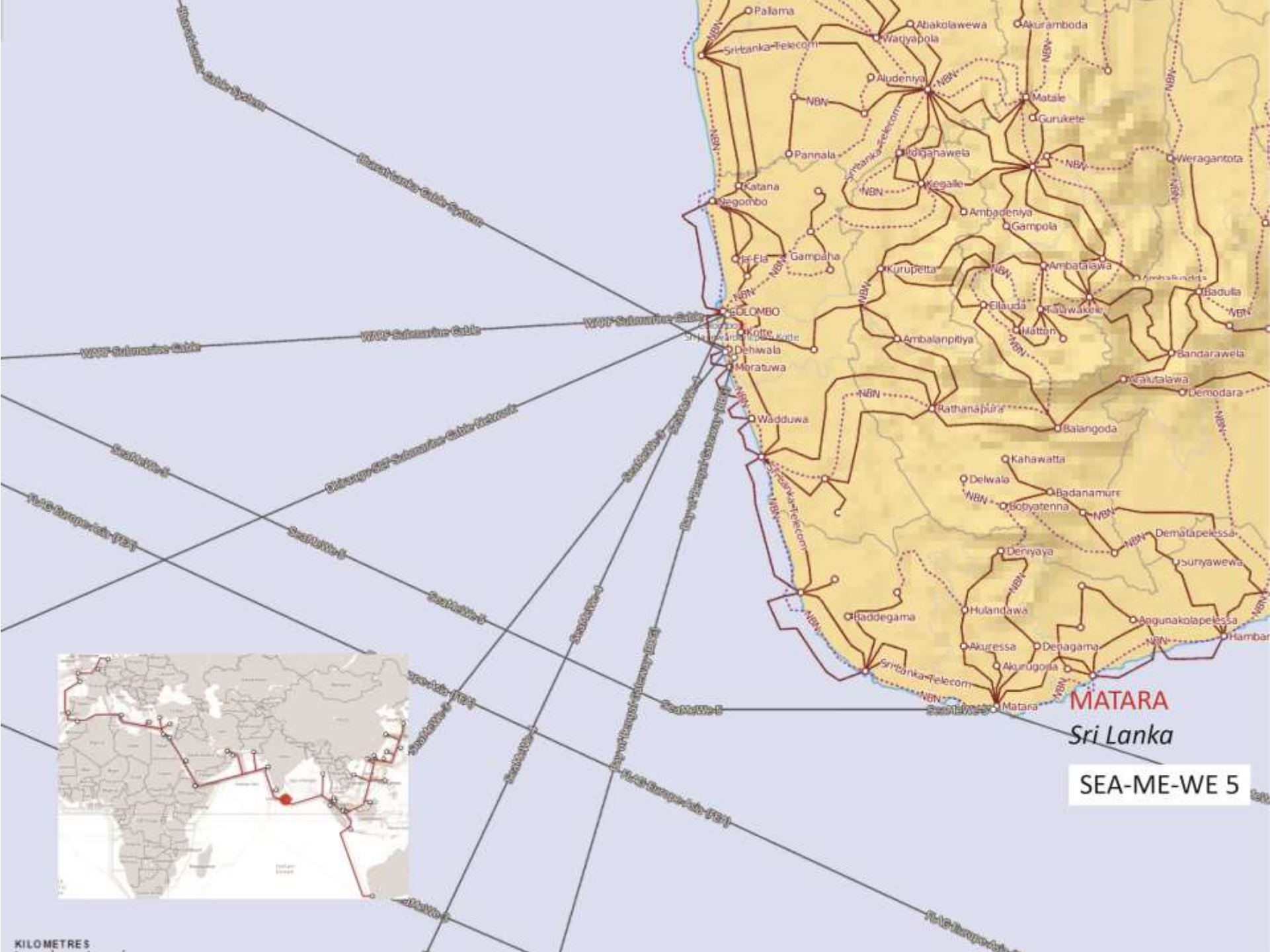












**MATARA**  
Sri Lanka

SEA-ME-WE 5

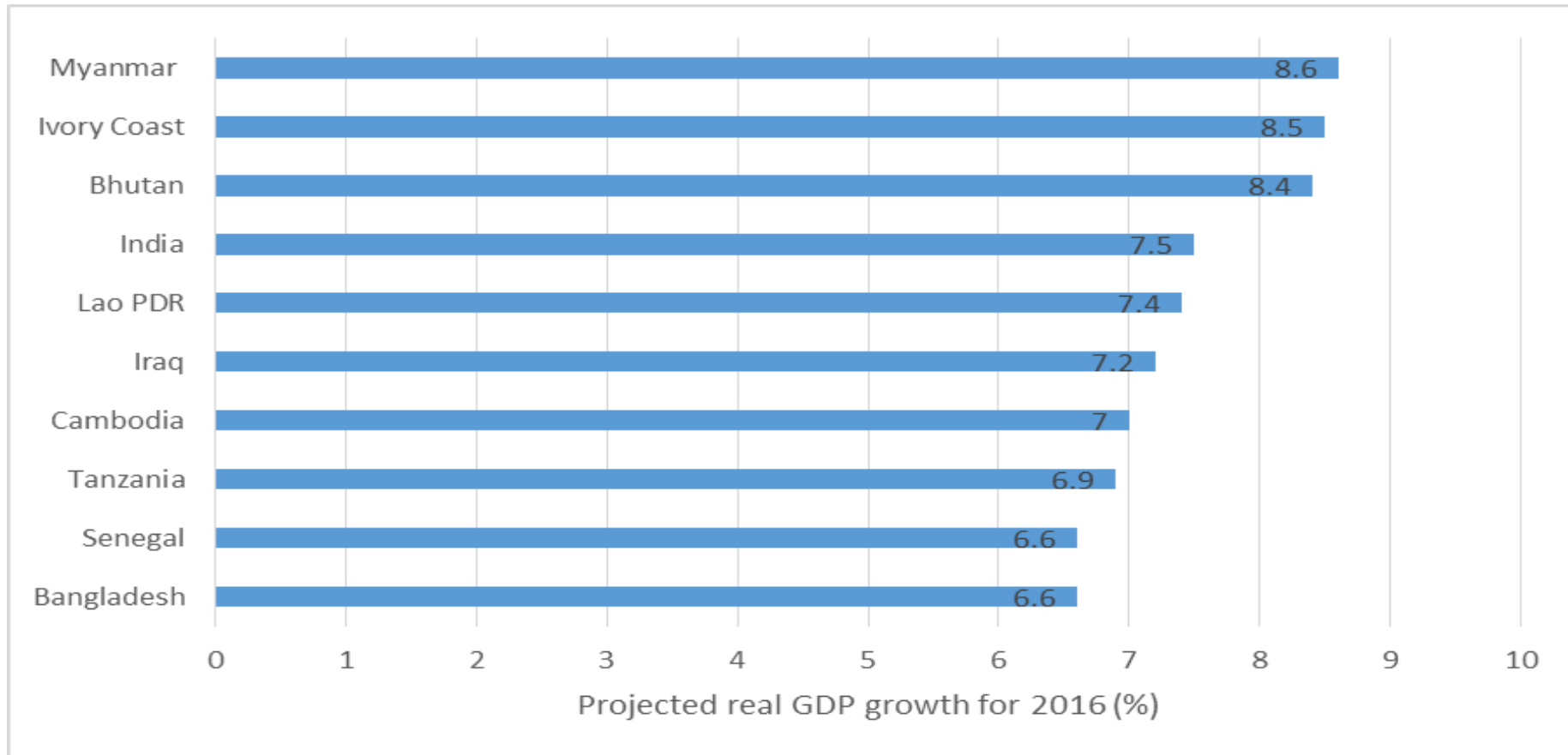
KILOMETRES



# Momentum building for Bay of Bengal connectivity

- Very high growth rates around Bay of Bengal
  - Need to integrate with global and regional value chains
- China's need to bypass Malacca and Lombok-Makassar straits & the availability of resources for infrastructure
- Geopolitical dynamics driving investments by Japan and India

# Ten fastest growing economies in 2016



# Reconnecting the Bay of Bengal

- A unfinished story
- Shipping will increase as the economies of littoral states grow
  - If two additional things happen, dramatic increases likely
    - Myanmar and China work out the modalities of transit arrangements including “dry canals”
    - India, Bangladesh and Myanmar sort out the political issues on their borders, enabling major investments in infrastructure
- Air cargo and air passenger services will also expand
- Data flows are likely to increase

## NAVIGATE

and Disaster Risk Reduction

at Asia-Pacific Information  
Superhighway

Publications

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Latest Updates

Upcoming Events

Resources

# Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway

In Asia and the Pacific, as in other regions of the world, broadband Internet is accelerating the process of regional integration. It is both a new engine of economic growth and a valuable source of innovation. Broadband Internet, along with related products and services, is the foremost tool for people-to-people connectivity across the region and is accelerating inclusiveness at all levels of society, bringing transformative opportunities to the poorest and most disadvantaged members of society.

However, at the same time, Asia and the Pacific is the





# How will improved international connectivity benefit end users?

- More undersea cables are a necessary condition, but not sufficient
- Cable stations and access to cable stations must be liberalized
  - Facilities-based competition is an alternative
- Terrestrial cables along the Asian Highway and Trans Asia Railway must be open access
- Retail markets must be competitive
  - If not, effective regulation is necessary
- Data centers must be attracted to the region
  - Undersea and terrestrial cables in mesh configurations and reliable, low-cost electricity are pre-conditions