

**SUBMARINE TELECOMMUNICATION CABLE  
INFRASTRUCTURE IN SOUTH ASIA UNDER INTERNATIONAL  
LAW: OPPORTUNITY FOR SRI LANKA AND INDIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Submarine cable infrastructure facilitates the transmission of data and telecommunication - a driving factor of global economy and a strategic tool in national security to all States. Modern society may not be aware of cable vulnerability and remain negligent in its governance. Susceptible to damage either natural or anthropogenic even small incidents may cause serious interference to real time data flow with drastic consequences. Hence quick relinking has become critical with timely approval (including that of local authorities) for cable operators and repair ships to mobilize becoming crucial, yet this remains largely challenging in most jurisdictions including South Asia. In the backdrop of Sri Lanka and India bearing strategic positioning on the international submarine cable map with geopolitical impact to the region and beyond, notable is the recent setting up of a submarine cable maintenance base in Galle, Sri Lanka. This paper investigates the principles of the *United Nations Law of the Sea Convention* (UNCLOS III) and the domestic arrangements and issues arising, frequently affecting the quick repair and maintenance of these cables in South Asia. It argues that both India and Sri Lanka may take lead role to develop understanding and enhance cooperation among State parties to the region and beyond, to facilitate an efficient submarine cable repair system and maintenance process under an umbrella set up. The paper also underscores the necessity of strengthening cooperation between these governments to advance common cause in telecommunication through a *sui generis* platform or mechanism.

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