



MARITIME SECURITY FOR INDIA - GS II MAINS

Q. Discuss the need of developing maritime security strategy in India and bring out the challenges faced by India along its seas. (15 marks, 250 words)

News: *The challenge of maritime security in the Global South*

What's in the news?

- Implementing a collaborative strategy is challenging since it requires maritime agencies to improve interoperability, share intelligence and agree on a regional rules-based order.

India's maritime security interests:

1. Maritime Territory:

- India's Maritime Territory is home to more than 1200 islands and a lengthy 7517 km of coastline. The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is 2.02 million square kilometres in size.

2. Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs):

- The International Shipping Lanes of the Indian Ocean and the SLOCs are significant to India's maritime security calculations because they account for 95 percent of all of its trade volume.

3. Maritime Economy:

- In terms of fish production, India ranks second in the world. The Indian Ocean have a vast deposit of polymetallic nodules, which is a valuable source of many minerals.

4. Maritime Transportation:

- Over 70% of the value and nearly 95% of the volume of India's international trade is transported by sea.

5. Maritime Investments:

- India's financial involvement in nearby countries like Sri Lanka and the Maldives. At the moment, India operates the "Maitri" and "Bharati" research stations in Antarctica.

6. Indian Diaspora:

- With many nations in the IOR, India has exchanged goods and maintained cultural ties.
- A key component of the maritime security framework is the safety and security of the Indian Diaspora living there.

7. India's Historic Cultural and Trade Links in the IOR:

- India has historically been the hub of trade and cultural exchange in this area thanks to its location in the Indian Ocean. Connections between India and Malaysia, Mauritius, Cambodia and Indonesia.

8. Energy security:

- Imports of energy are extremely important to the Indian economy. While offshore oil and gas production accounts for 80% of all domestic gas production, these imports are transported by sea.



Challenges for maritime security:

1. Control of Choke Points:

- India can play a significant role in the security of this vast maritime space because it is equally distant from most of these choke points.
- The protection of Indian maritime interests depends on these. The risks to Indian energy imports through the Straits of Hormuz, for instance, were made clear by the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s.
- Threats to SLOCs include both conventional and non-traditional dangers, and the SLOCs in the IOR have historically been vulnerable to disruption.

2. Regional Uncertainty:

- Uncertainty in Somalia, Yemen, Iran and other countries makes maritime security in the IOR more difficult.
- The international community is concerned about Somalia-based piracy as a whole.

3. Trafficking:

- Regrettably, the world's most notorious centres of drug production are located in the Indian Ocean region.
- Examples include the Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent.
- The IOR is also infamous for other destabilizing activities like gunrunning and human trafficking.

4. Maritime Terrorism:

- Therefore, it is quite possible for rival interests to take advantage of this extensive maritime activity to launch attacks on land, as was seen in the Mumbai terror attacks of 26/11.

5. Extra Regional Military Presence:

- For India's maritime security, the growing Chinese Navy and its acquisition of a base in Djibouti, 24 access facilities in Malaysia, the "covert" base in Gwadar, and the recently announced maritime silk route are very concerning.

6. Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing:

- IUU presents a threat to maritime security because it gives piracy a base of operations.

Government Measures:

India's Maritime Security Initiative:

- **Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)**, to improve relations with its maritime neighbours on the economic and security fronts.
- **Project Mausam**, to re-establish connections and communication channels between nations surrounding the Indian Ocean
- **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)**, to foster closer maritime ties between the navies of the Indian Ocean region's coastal states.
- **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)** – India can address maritime concerns thanks to close collaboration with IORA nations.
- **Sagarmala Initiative** – With the Sagarmala project, India's coastline will be surrounded by several ports.



WAY FORWARD

1. Regional Maritime Security Framework:

- To address the issues, an all-encompassing security framework for the IOR must be created.

2. Developing close ties with nations facing a crisis:

- For the unhindered and unrestricted movement of Indian trade and shipping to support ongoing economic development. Think of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, etc.
- Increase maritime exchanges between littoral states. For instance, military drills, cultural encounters, etc.

3. Information Exchange:

- To intercept and prosecute vessels and individuals involved in illegal activity, mechanisms and protocols for the exchange of tactically crucial information and intelligence must be put in place.

4. Common Operational Grid:

- A common operational grid between the littoral nations is necessary for the effective management of the maritime domain, particularly within a complicated region like the IOR.
- India must make improvements to its coordinated patrols with all of the littoral states. It would be necessary for ASEAN to work through SAARC, BIMSTEC, and ASEAN to fill in the gaps and establish a framework for shared maritime security.
- A multidisciplinary maritime advisory body is urgently required for a country with India's maritime resources, difficulties, and opportunities to conceptualize a vision, create plans, and keep an eye on maritime activity.