



# Chinese Trawlers in South China Sea

## Why in News

The Chinese fishing fleets have been seen raiding the rich waters of the South China Sea that are internationally recognised as exclusively Indonesia's to fish.

- The fishermen in Natuna Islands (Indonesia) are worried.

## Key Points

- The Chinese steel trawlers scrape the bottom of the sea and **destroy other marine life**.
- Chinese trawling also **breaches the maritime borders**.
- Since China is its **largest trading partner**, it has been argued that the **Indonesian government has not taken any steps** to deal with the incursions by Chinese fishing boats.
- China's illegal fishing near the Natuna islands carries global consequence, reminding regional governments of Beijing's expanding claims to the South China Sea through which **one-third of the world's maritime trade flows**.
- China wants to claim the resources such as **oil, natural gas, and fish** in the South China Sea.
- The presence of Chinese fishers also helps to **embody China's maritime claims**. The **nine dash line** (rejected by an international tribunal) asserted by China violates the principle of **Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ)**.

## South China Sea

- The South China Sea is an **arm of western Pacific Ocean in Southeast Asia**.
- It is south of China, **east & south of Vietnam, west of the Philippines and north of the island of Borneo**.
- **Bordering states & territories** (clockwise from north): the People's Republic of China, the Republic of China (Taiwan), the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, Singapore and Vietnam.
- It is connected by **Taiwan Strait with the East China Sea** and by **Luzon Strait with the Philippine Sea**.
- It contains numerous shoals, reefs, atolls and islands. The **Paracel Islands, the Spratly Islands and the Scarborough Shoal** are the most important.

## Importance

- This sea holds tremendous strategic importance for its location as it is the connecting link between the **Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean**. (Strait of Malacca)
- According to the **United Nations Conference on Trade And Development (UNCTAD)** one-third of the global shipping passes through it, carrying trillions of trade which makes it a significant geopolitical water body.
- According to the **Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Philippines**, this sea has one-third of the entire world's marine biodiversity and contains lucrative fisheries providing food security to the Southeast Asian nations.
- The South China Sea is believed to have **huge oil and gas reserves** beneath its seabed.



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