

# **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**

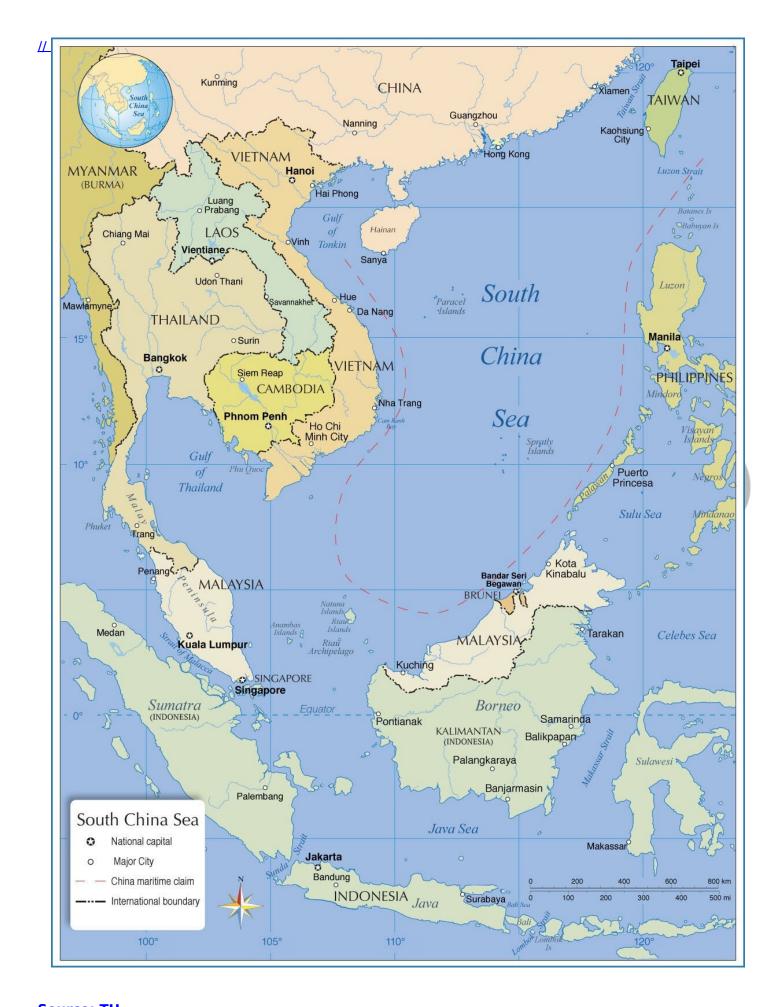
- The Chinese steel trawlers scrape the bottom of the sea and destroy other marine life.
- Chinese trawling aslo breaches the maritime borders.
- Since China is its largest trading partner, it has been argued that the Indonesian government
  has not taken any steps to deal with the incursions by Chinese 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 <u>Exclusive</u> <u>Economic Zones (EEZ)</u>.

### **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) onethird 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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