



Mains Practice Question

Q. 'Sea is an important Component of the Cosmos' Discuss in the light of the above statement the role of the IMO (International Maritime Organisation) in protecting environment and enhancing maritime safety and security. (Answer in 250 words, UPSC Mains 2023)

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Approach

- Begin with discussing the significance of the seas and the role of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).
- Discuss the role of IMO in protecting the environment and enhancing maritime safety and security.
- Conclude by reinforcing the role of the IMO.

Introduction

Seas are incredibly important for the earth considering their rich biodiversity and for humans considering the rich resource pool and providing ways for transport. A specialized agency of the United Nations, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) works to improve the safety and security of international shipping and prevent pollution from ships.

Body

Environment protection

- **Ballast Water Management Convention:** Guidelines for management, treatment, and discharge of ballast water that is held in the tanks of ships to stabilize them, were decided and standardized by IMO.
- **MARPOL Convention:** It is an international convention that prevents pollution caused by ships such as oil spillage, chemical pollution, etc.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** Stringent emission limits of sulfur and nitrogen oxide are fixed for ships. These help in reducing pollution, especially in coastal areas.
- **EEXI and CII:** The Energy Efficiency Existing Ship Index (EEXI) and the Carbon Intensity Indicator (CII) have been adopted by IMO to look into decreasing the environmental cost of the shipping industry.

Maritime safety and security

- **ISPS Code:** The International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code lists measures to enhance the security of ships and port facilities.
- **SOLAS Convention:** The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) ensures that the ship's construction, equipment, and operation are compatible with its guidelines.
- **STCW Convention:** The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) ensures standard training and certification for seafarers to achieve a basic level of competency.
- **Search and Rescue (SAR):** The SAR Plan by IMO ensures global availability of search and rescue services saving lives and improving the overall safety of maritime navigation.

Conclusion

The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) plays a major role in protecting the environment and enhancing maritime safety and security, functioning under the ambit of various conventions and exercising various codes.

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