



## Maritime Security

**For Prelims:** Maritime Security, Yuan Wang 5, Government's Initiatives

**For Mains:** Significance of Maritime Security, Challenges in Maritime Security, Government's Initiatives

### Why in News?

Recently, **Sri Lanka's envoy in India** said India-Sri Lanka should build a **framework to discuss maritime concerns** like the **Chinese satellite and missile tracking ship, the [Yuan Wang 5](#)** in Hambantota Port.

### What is Yuan Wang 5?

- **Yuan Wang 5:**
  - It is a third-generation vessel of the **Yuan Wang series** that entered service in 2007.
  - This series of ships include "**space tracking ships involved in supporting the manned space programme**".
  - It has the ability to **track satellites and intercontinental missiles**.
- **Hambantota Port:**
  - Hambantota International Port Group is a **Public Private Partnership** and a Strategic Development Project between the **Government of Sri Lanka and China Merchants Port Holdings (CMPort)**.
  - This port was **given to China by Sri Lanka** on a 99-year lease after Sri Lanka failed to repay Chinese loans.
  - It is seen as a case of Chinese "**debt trap**" Diplomacy.

### What is the need for Maritime Security in India?

- **About:**
  - Maritime security **doesn't have a commonly agreed definition**.
    - It classifies issues in the maritime domain comprising **[national security](#), [marine environment](#), economic development, and human security**.
    - Besides the world's oceans, it also deals with **regional seas, territorial waters, rivers and ports**.
- **Significance:**
  - Maritime security is of **utmost significance to the world community** as there are maritime concerns ranging from **piracy at sea to [illegal immigration](#) and weapon smuggling**.
    - It also deals with **threats of terrorist attacks and environmental catastrophes**.
  - For India, maritime security is an important aspect of national security as it has a coastline of over 7,500 km.
    - With advancement in technology, **physical threats in the maritime region** have now been overshadowed by technological threats.

- India's **exports and imports** have remained mostly across the shipping lanes of the Indian Ocean. Therefore, securing **Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOCs)** have been an important issue for India in the 21st century.
- **Chinese presence:**
  - In 2019, the Chinese **research vessel** Shiyan 1, was seen near the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
  - In August 2020, in the middle of the ongoing **conflict in eastern Ladakh on the Sino-Indian border**, China sent its Yuan Wang class research vessel into the Indian Ocean.

## What are India's Initiatives for Maritime Security?

- **Security and Growth for All (SAGAR) Policy:**
  - India's SAGAR policy is an integrated regional framework, unveiled by Indian Prime Minister during a visit to Mauritius in March 2015. The pillars of SAGAR are:
    - India's role as a **net security provider in the Indian Ocean region (IOR)**.
    - India would continue to **enhance the maritime security capacities and economic resilience** of friendly countries in IOR.
    - A more integrated and cooperative focus on the future of the IOR, which would enhance the prospects for the sustainable development of all countries in the region.
    - The primary responsibility for peace, stability and prosperity in the IOR would be on those "who live in this region".
- **Mission SAGAR:**
  - Launched in May 2020, '**Mission Sagar**' was India's initiative to deliver **Covid-19** related assistance to the countries in the Indian Ocean Littoral states. The countries included were **Maldives, Mauritius, Madagascar, Comoros and Seychelles**.
    - Under 'Mission Sagar', the **Indian Navy has been deploying its ships to send medical and humanitarian aid** to the counties in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)** and beyond.
- **Abiding by the International Law:**
  - India accepted an **United Nations Convention for the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** tribunal award on the maritime boundary arbitration between India and Bangladesh.
  - It envisaged contributing a new impulse to effective international economic cooperation among the littoral states of the **Bay of Bengal (BIMSTEC)**.
- **Data Sharing:**
  - Sharing data on **threats to commercial shipping** is an important component of enhancing maritime security.
  - In this context, India established an **International Fusion Centre (IFC)** for the **Indian Ocean region in Gurugram in 2018**.
  - IFC is jointly administered by the **Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard**.
  - IFC serves the objective of generating Maritime Domain Awareness on safety and security issues.

## Way Forward

- **India to Adopt Multi-Pronged Approach:**
  - For India, only a **robust military strategy to counter China** is not enough, it will have to be a **multipronged approach including infrastructure component, the technology related aspect**.
  - In the Indian Ocean, India must **maintain its preeminence and assertiveness**, deter China from operating in regions that are significant to India.
  - India must **cooperate and improve ties with its partners** to gain an influence over the Pacific region because **it is where China is highly unstable and sensitive**.
  - India's maritime policies **have to be mated against China**.
- **Matching China's Levels of Infrastructure Projects:**
  - China is planning to **build a port in Israel, antagonizing the USA**.
  - It has ports in **Djibouti** in Africa and also in **Gwadar** in Pakistan near Iran and its **Belt and Road Initiative** has its reach in Europe.
  - Indian strategy will have to **match the Chinese level of the effort** which it is making in

the African countries by building infrastructures.

- **Development of Indian infrastructure** is essential for the country's economic development and growth. As India adopted a growth-led economic policy, India needs to develop our maritime infrastructure, be it in developing our ports and harbours, connectivity, logistics etc.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year's Question (PYQs)

### Prelims

#### Q. Consider the following in respect of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS). (2017)

1. Inaugural IONS was held in India in 2015 under the chairmanship of the Indian Navy.
2. IONS is a voluntary initiative that seeks to increase maritime co-operation among navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region.

#### Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

#### Explanation:

- The 'Indian Ocean Naval Symposium' (IONS) is a voluntary initiative that seeks to increase maritime cooperation among navies of the littoral States of the Indian Ocean Region by providing an open and inclusive forum for discussion of regionally relevant maritime issues. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- It provides a forum to increase maritime security cooperation, and promote friendly relationships among the member nations.
- The inaugural IONS-2008 was held in New Delhi, India in February, 2008. The Chief of the Naval Staff, Indian Navy was designated as the Chairman of IONS for the period 2008-10. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

### Mains

**Q1.** Project 'Mausam' is considered a unique foreign policy initiative of Indian government to improve relationship with its neighbours. Does the project have a strategic dimension? Discuss. (2015)

**Q2.** With respect to the South China sea, maritime territorial disputes and rising tension affirm the need for safeguarding maritime security to ensure freedom of navigation and overflight throughout the region. In this context, discuss the bilateral issues between India and China. (2014)

[Source: TH](#)