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India and Norway to Combat Marine Pollution

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Recently **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change** signed a letter of Intent establishing the **India-Norway Marine Pollution Initiative** together with the **Norwegian ministry of Foreign Affairs**.

- Both the governments **launched the first Joint initiative under this new partnership**. The India-Norway Marine Pollution Initiative will **combat marine pollution**, which is one of the fastest growing environmental concerns.
- In January, 2019, the Indian and Norwegian governments agreed to work more closely on oceans by signing a MoU and establishing the **India-Norway Ocean Dialogue** during the **Norwegian Prime Minister's visit to India**.
- A joint Task Force on **Blue Economy** with government officials, researchers and experts as well as private sector was established to develop sustainable solutions within strategic areas of the blue economy, such as maritime and marine sector in addition to energy sector.

Significance

- Through a range of implementing partners, this initiative will seek to
 - **support local governments** in implementing sustainable waste management practices,
 - develop systems for collecting and analyzing information about sources and scope of marine pollution and
 - Improve private sector investment.
- Support will also be directed towards **beach clean-up efforts, awareness raising campaigns** and pilot project, for example, using plastic waste as fuel substitution for coal in cement production and developing frameworks for deposit schemes.
- In partnership, **Norway and India will share experiences and competence**, and collaborate on efforts to develop clean and healthy oceans, **sustainable use of ocean resources** and **growth in the blue economy**.

Marine Pollution

- **Land-based sources (such as agricultural run-off, discharge of nutrients and pesticides and untreated sewage including plastics)** account for approximately **80% of marine pollution**, globally.
- **Excessive nutrients from sewage** outfalls and agricultural runoff have contributed to the **increasing incidence of low oxygen (hypoxic)** areas known as **dead zones**, where most marine life cannot survive, resulting in the collapse of some ecosystems.
There are now close to **500 dead zones with a total global surface area of over 245,000 km², roughly equivalent to that of the United Kingdom.**
- The excess **nitrogen may lead to the proliferation of seaweeds and microorganisms** and cause **algal blooms**. Such blooms can be harmful, causing massive fish kills, contaminating seafood with toxins and altering ecosystems.
- **Litter can accumulate in huge floating garbage patches** or wash up on the coasts. Plastics float in the Ocean, releasing contaminants as they break down into toxic micro-particles that animals mistake for food.
Fish and birds can choke on these particles, get sick as they accumulate in their stomachs, or become entangled in larger debris.
- In 2010, the **Gulf of Mexico deep-water oil spill** had a devastating effect on the entire marine ecosystem, as well as the populations that depend on the marine areas for their livelihoods.
Smaller oil spills happen every day, due to drilling incidents or leaking motors, and cause the death of birds, marine mammals, algae, fish and shellfish.

Significance of Clean Ocean

- The **ocean is a vital source of nourishment, especially to people in the world's poorest nations.**
- Many depend on fish for their primary source of protein; **fisheries and aquaculture support the livelihoods of about 540 million people (8% of the world's population)** directly or indirectly.
- **Overfishing, loss of biodiversity** and the **possible extinction of species** put a **stress on these limited resources**. This could lead to famine, increased poverty and conflicts, including war.
- Learning to manage ocean sustainably is the only path to global prosperity and peace.

IMO Guidelines on Shipping Fuel