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IAS Study Circle

Lead by IAS, IPS, IAS officers

COASTAL SECURITY

MOST IMPORTANT
NOTES FOR MAINS

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GS 3- INTERNAL SECURITY

COASTAL SECURITY

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India has a vast coastline of over 7500 km and is vulnerable to various security threats. Numerous cases of smuggling goods, gold, narcotics, explosives, arms and ammunition as well as human trafficking and infiltration of terrorists into the country through these coasts makes security of coastline a top priority for India. Coastal Security is a subset of maritime security



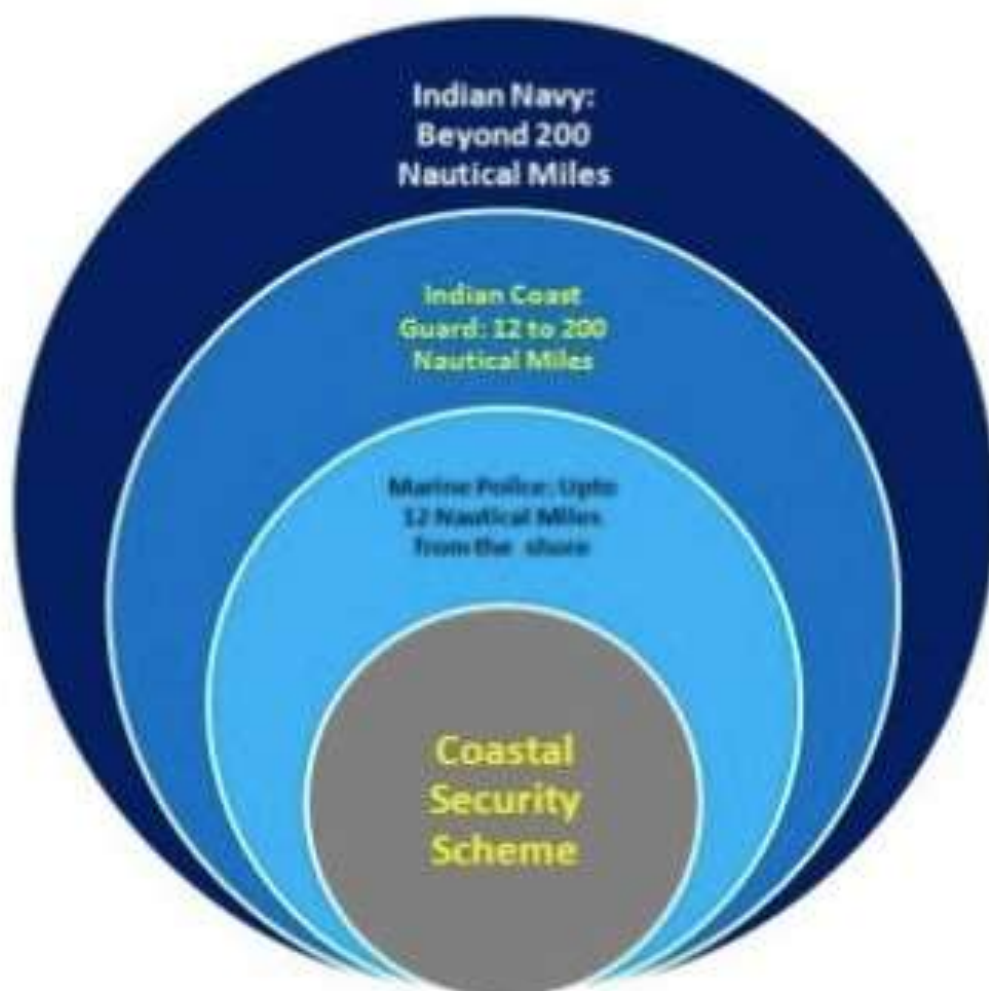
Need for Coastal Security

1. Securing Strategic security installations: The Indian coasts also have a number of strategic installations such as naval bases, nuclear power plants, satellite and missile launching ranges, and ports.
 - Naval Bases:
 - The eastern, western, southern, and far eastern naval commands are located in Visakhapatnam, Mumbai, Kochi, and Port Blair respectively.

- In addition, India's largest naval base, with a capability of housing 30 warships, is being built at Karwar along the Karnataka coast.
2. **Nuclear power plants:** Several nuclear power plants, such as at Tarapur, Kudankulam, Kalpakkam and the proposed plant at Jaitapur have been established close to the sea.
 3. **Satellite launching pad:** Satellite launching and missile testing facilities such as the Satish Dhawan Space Centre and the Wheeler Islands now APJ Abdul Kalam Islands missile facility are also located along the coast.
 4. **Ports:** India has 13 major ports and over 200 minor ports which handle 90 per cent of the country's trade.
 5. Coastal region is the Gateway to hinterland.
 6. **Maritime terrorism:** Hijacking, attacking, and sinking ships, taking hostages, sabotaging pipelines, and attacking cities and strategic installations like naval bases and petrochemical storages
 - ✓ Events like the 26/11 attack in Mumbai, 2008 can be prevented with fool proof maritime security.
 7. Geographical location of India is in close proximity to Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent, largest opium cultivating regions, makes it vulnerable to drug trafficking. eg recently heroin worth 21000 crore seized from Mundra port in Gujarat.
 8. **Attacks on Ships:** Ships are soft targets for the terrorist groups as, except for their enormous size, they have practically no means of protection. eg attack by Somalian pirates.
 9. **Smuggling and trafficking:** Indian coasts have been susceptible to smuggling of items such as gold, electronic goods, narcotics, and arms.
 10. Strategic Location of India in Indian Ocean with close proximity to international shipping lanes transporting oil from West Asia gives India an opportunity to become a net security provider in the region with sound coastal security measures.

11. Infiltration, illegal migration and refugee influx: large scale refugee influxes over the decades have resulted in widespread political turmoil in the border states. eg Tamil ethnic people from Srilanka during civil war, Rohingya crisis.
12. **Physical proximity:** The physical proximity of India's coasts to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Gulf countries adds to its vulnerability. Moreover, security over the ocean domain with the sea routes remaining poorly guarded.
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Coastal security scheme



Government Initiatives in coastal security

1. The National Committee for Strengthening Maritime and Coastal Security headed by Cabinet Secretary coordinates all matters related to Maritime and Coastal Security.
2. Indian Coast Guard: custom marine organization was merged with the India coast guard and was entrusted with the following responsibilities:

3. **Marine Police Force:** Under the Coastal Security Scheme (2005) marine police force was created with the aim to strengthen infrastructure for patrolling and surveillance.
 - Law enforcement in India's jurisdictional waters
 - Safety and protection of:
 - artificial islands
 - offshore terminals
 - Installations and other structures and devices in any maritime zone
 - Fishermen and providing them assistance at sea while in distress.
4. Indian Navy and Coast Guard coordinated the largest coastal defence exercise - **Exercise Sea Vigil** off the Indian coast which is part of biennial theatre level tri-service **exercise TROPEX** [Theatre-level Readiness Operational Exercise] by Indian Navy.
5. The Ministry of Home Affairs is implementing a comprehensive coastal security scheme to strengthen the security infrastructure in coastal states in India.
6. **Compulsory registration:** The Ministry of Shipping has been mandated to streamline the process of compulsory registration and identification of all types of vessels.
7. **Biometric ID card:** Department of Animal Husbandry and Fisheries has been mandated to issue biometric ID cards to all the fishermen.
8. **Radar sensor:** The Coast Guard has been mandated to create a chain of radar sensors.
9. **Electronic Surveillance:** National Command Control Communication and Intelligence Network (NC3I) has been launched to provide near gapless surveillance of the entire coastline and prevent the intrusion of undetected vessels, the coastal surveillance network project.
 - Coastal radar chain
 - Automatic identification system (AIS)
 - Vessel traffic management and information system (VTMS)

CONCERNS IN COASTAL SECURITY

- ❖ Ill-equipped maritime police forces of coastal states are also a cause of concern. There is lack of adequate training, motivation and non-availability of boats with state maritime police.
- ❖ **Acute shortage of manpower, shortfall in the patrolling efforts,** inadequate training for marine police, jetties under the "Coastal Security Scheme" are yet to be constructed, etc.
- ❖ Small boats, which are less than 20 m in length, are yet to get Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) which remain a primary cause of concern. An AIS automatically provides information about a vessel to other ships and to coastal authorities.
- ❖ overlapping responsibilities lead to turf wars among the various agencies. Most of them being inter-ministerial or inter-Agency in nature, the multiplicity of authorities often leads to duplication of work and may lead to confusion.
- ❖ Acute shortage of manpower in police stations, (only 25% of the sanction).
- ❖ Difficult terrain, seasonal weather patterns, administrative lapses, etc. all contribute towards introducing gaps in surveillance and the monitoring mechanism.

WAY FORWARD

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- ❖ **Training and capacity building:** Training provided to Marine Police in states at par with Indian Navy and Coast Guard.
- ❖ **Marine Police Training Institute:** The Government of India has decided to set up Marine Police Training Institute (MPTI) one each on the East Coast and the West Coast in order to impart training to Marine Police Personnel.
- ❖ The potential threat from smaller rogue boats is likely to be addressed through a **satellite-guided friend or foe identification system of the Indian Space Research Organisation** with a two-way messaging

system in all local languages.

- ❖ Fishermen and coastal communities should be included in the comprehensive coastal security plan as 'eyes and ears' of security agencies.
- ❖ Regular coastal security exercises like Sea Vigil, bi-annual Sagar Kavach should be conducted to audit the actual security scenario.
- ❖ Comprehensive legislations to place systems and processes for the protection of India's maritime infrastructure, covering both the shipping and port sectors.
- ❖ Statutory duties of government departments, Port trusts, state maritime boards, non-major ports and private terminal operators and other stakeholders need to be clearly outlined, as also minimum standards of port security requiring statutory compliance.
- ❖ **Surveillance:** Beyond coastal radar chains and AIS stations authorities must ensure mandatory fitment of AIS on power driven vessels beyond 10m length.
- ❖ **Interagency coordination:** The central government must address the problems of coordination arising out of the interactions of multiple agencies (with overlapping jurisdictions) and delayed responses.

CONCLUSION

Review of the coastal security apparatus in the country is a continuous process. A three-tier coastal security ring all along our coast is provided by Marine Police, Indian Coast Guard and Indian Navy. Government has initiated several measures to strengthen Coastal Security, which include improving surveillance mechanisms and enhanced patrolling by following an integrated approach.



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