

## Sansad TV Perspective: Maritime Security

In the series Sansad TV Perspective, we bring you an analysis of the discussion featured on the insightful programme 'Perspective' on Sansad TV, on various important topics affecting India and also the world. This analysis will help you immensely for the [IAS exam](#), especially the mains exam, where a well-rounded understanding of topics is a prerequisite for writing answers that fetch good marks.

In this article, we feature the discussion on the topic: Maritime Security.

Video link: <https://youtu.be/vbR3BD0mSCU>

**Anchor:** Vishal Dahiya

### Participants:

1. Hitendra Singh, Former DIG, Indian Coast Guard
2. Vice Admiral Shekhar Sinha (Retd.), Maritime Security Expert
3. Alok Bansal, Director, India Foundation

### Context:

India has been blessed with its unique physiography that resides with considerable alertness amidst a sensitive geography of land and sea. India's peninsular extent is gifted with a coastline that spans over 7000 km which demands well-equipped security along with a progressive maritime policy. In this regard, India presided over a crucial debate on empowering maritime security at the [UNSC](#) in August 2021.

### Maritime Security and its Importance:

- In the world of International Relations, there is no harmonised definition of maritime security. However, it is always a context of essence when it comes to the various maritime concerns like port security, maintenance of peace in the oceanic space, the safety of the sailors and so on. Therefore it is an amalgamation of national security, human security, maritime environment and economic environment.
- Turning the pages of history, we step back to the time that witnessed curiosity and competition among the Europeans to trade in the East Indies using the sea route. We are reminded of the times when [Vasco da Gama](#) became the first European to reach the Indian coast by circumnavigating the Cape of Good Hope and shaped Indian history with the onset of European colonization.
- As the world looks towards sustainable development, securing our maritime space becomes extremely important and offers a boost to the emerging concept of a blue economy. Blue

economy refers to the sustainable usage of ocean resources for economic growth, improving the livelihoods of people residing in coastal areas and creating a healthy ocean ecosystem.

Read more about the [Blue Economy](#) in the given link.

### Government of India's Interventions:

#### 1. The Coastal Security Scheme (CSS)

- The Ministry of Home Affairs initiated the CSS to embolden the security set up in the coastal states of India.
- The scheme was implemented in phases and was approved in 2005. Phase I operated from 2005-11.
- A three-tier security arrangement has been installed consisting of the Indian Navy, Coast Guard and the marine police who are entitled to protect the maritime zone.
- An Automatic Identification System and Joint Operation centres were established.
- The entire coastal region is monitored with a strong intelligence system.
- But there have been concerns over the shortage of labour, inefficiency in patrolling and policing activities, lack of proper training and unavailability of essential equipment.
- To reverse the challenges it is suggested that the fisherman and coastal community can be engaged with the scheme and pass on relevant information to the security forces along with the capacity building of maritime police.
- The Government of India recently tried to expand the scheme to facilitate legitimate trade.

#### 2. SAGAR Vision

- The Security and Growth for All in the Region is India's policy to expand the maritime cooperation between the countries in the Indian Ocean Region and it was launched in the year 2015.
- This initiative offers importance on security, capacity building, collective action, sustainable development and maritime engagement.
- This boosts the promotion of a blue economy and averts socio-economic challenges developing connectivity with its neighbours.
- The SAGAR doctrine plays a pivotal role in binding India with the countries with which it shares its oceanic space.
- This is a testimony of India's leadership role in the region.

Read more about [SAGAR Vision](#) in the given link.

3. In the 2018 [Shangri La](#) dialogue, the Prime Minister of India outlined the vision for a free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific region. This was appreciated by the international community.
4. The 14th [East Asia Summit](#) witnessed the announcement of the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative for the practical implementation of a shared vision to improve the management, conservation and security of the maritime sphere.
5. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue comprising India, Japan, Australia and the US is a major landmark grouping that ensures to strengthen the Indo-Pacific region and it is a significant response to China's aggressive policies that aspire to lay hegemony in the oceanic space through its strategic policy encircling the Indian subcontinent. This strategy of China is referred to as [String of Pearls](#) by many experts.

Read more about [QUAD](#) in the given link.

#### India's Oceanic Space with a Sustainable Future:

- The maritime domain will witness a tightly regulated security network by maintaining a cooperative maritime domain awareness.
  - Besides, an expansion of public-private partnerships in improving the maritime infrastructure will strengthen the maritime security forces.
  - The regional collaborations can be augmented to avert the challenges of piracy, smuggling, drug trafficking, illegal fishing and other illegitimate activities in the maritime sphere.
  - India's land boundaries are always amidst hostile conditions and continuous threats. In such a scenario the oceanic space offers umpteen opportunities for India to empower its National Security interests and extend its compassion towards the countries of the Indian Ocean Region with the help of exemplary groupings like the QUAD and [AUKUS](#).
  - It was highlighted by an expert in the panel that there is a requirement of increasing the number of cooperative agreements with countries that are well equipped and also with the countries that are not very well equipped for the up-gradation of technology. India's resources are never inadequate to extend the hand of humanity to those in need. This transforms the oceanic space of India into an ocean of humanity and shared prosperity accompanied by maritime security.
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