



## National Maritime Domain Awareness Centre

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### Why in News

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The Navy's **Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC)**, the nodal agency for maritime data fusion set up after the **26/11 Mumbai terror attacks**, will soon become a **National Maritime Domain Awareness (NDMA) Centre**.

### Key Points

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- **Background:** One of the areas for enhancing coastal security is Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), which is extremely challenging since **India is located in one of the busiest maritime traffic regions of the world.**
  - The **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)** is the commercial highway for large traffic and critical for the prosperity of many nations. Hence, **threats** such as maritime terrorism, piracy, trafficking, illegal fishing etc. are required to be kept subdued at all times.
- **Maritime Domain Awareness:**
  - It is defined by the **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** as the effective understanding of **anything associated with the maritime domain** that could impact the security, safety, economy, or environment.
    - The **maritime domain is defined** as all areas and things of, on, under, relating to, adjacent to, or bordering on a sea, ocean, or other navigable waterway, including all maritime-related activities, infrastructure, people, cargo, and vessels and other conveyances.
  - Earlier this year in March, India joined the **Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) as Observer**. The Commission is an **important regional institution in Western/African Indian Ocean**.
  - Previously in 2018, **the Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean region (IFC-IOR)** was set up within the premises of the IMAC **to coordinate with regional countries on maritime security and act as a regional repository of maritime data.**

- **Proposed NDMA Centre:**

It will be a **multi-agency centre and provide information** to various stakeholders, from the fisheries department to local policing authorities on **development or movements across the coast**. This will make sure that any risk, especially transnational can be prevented.

- **Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC):**

- It is the **main center of the Indian Navy for coastal surveillance and monitoring**. It is located in **Gurugram (Haryana)** and became **operational in 2014**.
- It is a **joint initiative** of Indian Navy, Coast Guard and Bharat Electronics Ltd. and **functions under the National Security Adviser (NSA)**.
- It is the nodal center of the **National Command Control Communications and Intelligence Network (NC3I Network)**.
- **Functions:** It tracks vessels on the high seas and gets data from the coastal radars, white shipping agreements, Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) transponders fitted on merchant ships, air and traffic management systems and global shipping databases. Its functions in line with the principles listed under **'Security and Growth of All in the Region (SAGAR)'**.

- **White Shipping Agreement:**

- The white shipping information refers to an **exchange of relevant advance information on the identity and movement of commercial non-military merchant vessels**.
    - Ships are classified into **white (commercial ships), grey (military vessels), and black (illegal vessels)**.

- **Automatic Identification System:** It is an automated tracking system installed on all commercial vessels of specific tonnage.

After the 26/11 terror attack, all fishing vessels **more than 20m long were mandated to have AIS transponders installed**, while efforts are on to have such a system on under 20m fishing vessels as well.

- **Recent Initiatives by IMAC:**

- In 2019, it conducted a coastal security workshop for **BIMSTEC** countries.
  - During the **MT New Diamond (vessel) fire incident off the coast of Sri Lanka, IFC-IOR** played a key role in the early mobilization of resources that resulted in a quick reaction.

## **National Command Control Communications and Intelligence Network**

- The Indian Navy has established the NC3IN linking 51 stations, including 20 of the Navy and 31 of the Coast Guard, with a nodal Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC).
- The NC3I generates a **seamless real-time picture of the nearly 7,500-km long coastline**.

**Source:TH**