Indian Coast Guard

Why in News

On 1st February 2022, **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)** celebrated its **46th Raising Day.**

- ICG was **established in August 1978 by the Coast Guard Act, 1978** as an independent Armed force of India.
- As the **fourth largest Coast Guard in the world**, it has played a significant role in securing the Indian coasts and enforcing regulations in the maritime zones of India.

What are the Functions of ICG?

- **Background:**

  - It is an **Armed Force, Search and Rescue and Maritime Law Enforcement agency** under the **Ministry of Defence.**
  - It is headquartered **in New Delhi.**
  - The concept of forming ICG came into being **after the** 1971 war**.**
  - The blueprint for a multidimensional Coast Guard was conceived by the visionary **Rustamji Committee.**
  - For effective command and control, the **Maritime Zones of India are divided into five Coast Guard Regions,** namely, North-West, West, East, North-East and Andaman & Nicobar, with the respective Regional Headquarters located at Gandhinagar, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and Port Blair. .

- **Functions:**

  - **Preventing Smuggling:** One of the primary duties of the ICG is prevention of smuggling through maritime routes.

    - It has jurisdiction over the territorial waters of India including contiguous zone and **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).**
    - It is responsible for marine environment protection in maritime zones of India and is coordinating authority for response to **oil spills** in Indian waters.
  - **Aid to Civil Authority:** It has also rescued approximately 13,000 personnel till date during various **'Aid to Civil Authority'** operations viz. assistance provided to civil authorities during floods, cyclones and other natural calamities; most recently during the recent floods in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Goa.

    - It is also working in close coordination with Central and State agencies to put in place a **robust coastal security mechanism.**
  - **Maritime Security:** It is also collaborating with littoral countries to combat transnational maritime crimes and enhance maritime safety in its area of responsibility and in the Indian Ocean Region.

    - Under **SAGAR' - Security and Growth for all in the Region** & **'Neighbourhood First' policy,** the ICG has nurtured professional relationships across oceans and established ties with countries in the Indian Ocean Region **for Ocean**

Peacekeeping.
- **Role in Disaster Management**: The ICG has successfully averted major ecological disasters and emerged as the **'First Responder' in the region.**

  - For example, by undertaking a major fire-fighting and pollution response operation off the Sri Lanka coast, the most recent being **'Sagar Aaraksha-II'** onboard Chemical carrier MV X-Press Pearl.

Source: PIB

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