



Projects to Track Small Fishing Vessels

For Prelims: Exercise Sea Vigil, India's Coastal Management Projects

For Mains: Coastal Security, India's Projects to secure Coastal Line, Exercise Sea Vigil

Why in News?

Recently, it has been reported that projects launched to **track small fishing vessels along India's coast** are making progress.

- The third edition of the 'pan-India' coastal defence [Exercise Sea Vigil-22](#) is also scheduled to be held on 15th-16th November to test [coastal security](#).

What are Different Projects to Track Small Fishing Vessels?

- **Automatic Identification System:**
 - An [Automatic Identification System \(AIS\)](#) was made **compulsory for all vessels above 20 metres** after the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai.
 - The decision was taken by the National Committee on Strengthening Maritime and Coastal Security, set up to look into issues related to coastal security.
 - However, for vessels under 20 metres, the process has been delayed for several reasons.
- **Vehicle Management System:**
 - **The Vehicle Management System (VMS)** has advanced features and **enables two-way communication**. The technology has been handed over to four companies for commercial production.
 - Trials were conducted in association with the [Indian Space Research Organisation](#) on one of their communication satellites last year along the coasts of Gujarat and Tamil Nadu.
- **ReALCraft:**
 - Verification and monitoring of a large number of fishing vessels in India has been greatly eased by the creation of the online **ReALCraft (Registration and Licensing of Fishing Craft)**.
- **Biometric Identity Cards:**
 - Issuance of [biometric identity cards](#) to the majority of fishermen and composite card readers to the maritime security agencies has been done to enable biometric verification of the identity of fishing vessel crews at sea.
- **Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA):**
 - As part of overall efforts for [Maritime Domain Awareness \(MDA\)](#) on the high seas, the [Quad](#) grouping, at the **Tokyo summit 2022** announced an ambitious [Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness \(IPMDA\)](#) initiative to track "**dark shipping**" and build a "**faster, wider, and more accurate maritime picture of near-real-time activities in partners' waters**" integrating three critical regions in the Indo-Pacific - the **Pacific Islands, Southeast Asia, and Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.

What is Exercise Sea Vigil?

- **About:**
 - The **inaugural edition of the exercise** was conducted in January 2019.
 - It is billed as India's **largest coastal defence drill**.
 - The exercise is a build up towards the major [Theatre Level Readiness Operational Exercise \(TROPEX\)](#), which the **Indian Navy** conducts every two years.
- **2022 Edition:**
 - **Exercise Sea Vigil-22** will provide realistic assessment of India's strengths and weaknesses and thus will help in further strengthening maritime and national security.
 - The exercise will see activation of the **coastal security apparatus** across India and is being conducted by the **Indian Navy** in coordination with **Coast Guard and other Ministries** entrusted with the task of maritime activities.
 - The exercise will be undertaken along the entire **7,516 km coastline and Exclusive Economic Zone** of India and will involve all the **Coastal States and Union territories along with other maritime stakeholders**, including the fishing and coastal communities.
- **Significance:**
 - Sea Vigil and TROPEX together will cover the **entire spectrum of maritime security challenges**, including transition from peace to conflict.
 - It provides opportunity, at the apex level, to assess the country's preparedness in the domain of maritime security and coastal defence.

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