IRNSS

Why in news?

Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) was recognised by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

What happened?

- The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) of the IMO recognised the IRNSS as a component of the World-wide Radio Navigation System (WWRNS).
- After the US, Russia and China that have their own navigation systems, India became the fourth country to have its system recognised by IMO.

What is the IMO?

- The IMO is the United Nations' specialised agency.
- It is responsible for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine and atmospheric pollution by ships.

What is the IRNSS?

- The IRNSS is an independent regional navigation satellite system developed by India.
- The system is designed to provide accurate position information service to assist in the navigation of ships in the Indian Ocean waters.
- It is based on the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) satellites that are used for navigation.
- It could replace the US-owned Global Positioning System (GPS) in the Indian Ocean waters up to 1500 km from the Indian boundary.

What does the IMO's recognition of the IRNSS mean?

- With the recognition, the IRNSS is similarly placed as GPS, most commonly used by marine shipping vessels across the world.
- Unlike GPS, IRNSS is a regional and not a global navigation system.
- This is also a significant achievement towards the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative.

Who can make use of the IRNSS?

- While the system will be open to all including security agencies, all merchant vessels including small fishing vessels are authorised to use the system.
- Vessels that have transponders will be tracked by satellite navigation showing accurate position in the Indian Ocean region.
- At any given time, there are at least 2,500 merchant vessels in Indian waters that can all use the IRNSS.

Why was it necessary for India to have its own navigation system?

- An overdependence on one system (GPS) cannot be safe.
- The IMO encouraged countries to design their own navigation systems.
- The recognition accorded to IRNSS was in the process for two years.
- The IMO issued a circular announcing the recognition of the IRNSS to its member states.

Source: The Indian Express

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