UN Shipping Safety Group

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | International relations*

Why in News?

Recently, India and Liberia co-launched the "Group of Friends on Safety and Security of Shipping and Seafarers" (GoF on S4) on 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York.

- **Co-Chairs - India** and **Liberia**.
- **Complementary Strengths**
  - **Liberia -** Holds the **world's largest open ship registry** by gross tonnage (flagging over *16%* of global commercial vessels).
  - **India -** Ranks as the **2nd-largest supplier of seafarers** globally, contributing nearly *10%* of the world's maritime workforce (~250,000 active Indian seafarers).
- **Broad Coalition -** Brings together 25 member nations spanning major flag registries (e.g., Marshall Islands, Panama), major labor-supplying nations (e.g., Philippines), and ship-owning economies.

Objectives

- **UN "Group of Friends" Mechanism-** Functions as an informal, flexible association of UN member states.
- It is designed to build diplomatic consensus, facilitate inter-governmental consultations, and direct multilateral advocacy toward a shared thematic priority.
- **Core Mandate**
  - Elevating maritime human security and seafarer protection into primary UN and International Maritime Organization (IMO) diplomatic agendas.
  - Coordinating responses to emerging high-seas threats—ranging from Houthi drone/missile strikes in the Red Sea and Bab-el-Mandeb to piracy surges in the Gulf of Guinea and Somali basin.
  - Securing diplomatic protocols for the rapid evacuation, medical treatment, and repatriation of civilian crews caught in combat zones.

Significance

- **Protection of National Workforce-** Provides direct institutional backup for Indian maritime personnel operating in volatile international waters.
- **Securing Critical Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) -** Safeguards global maritime supply chains, which carry over *80%* **of global trade by volume**.
- **Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047 -** Supports India's policy target to expand its share of the global seafaring workforce to *20%* **by 2047**.

Reference

India Today | India, Liberia launch UN shipping safety group

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