Defence & Security · GS - III

The interception of a vessel carrying a large consignment of missile-related chemicals and unregistered communication SIM cards highlights the growing convergence of maritime security, proliferation risks and transnational networks. Examine the implications of such developments for India's national security and suggest appropriate measures.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Maritime security, dual-use chemicals, missile proliferation, illicit communication networks, coastal surveillance, intelligence coordination, regional cooperation

Model Answer

Introduction

The reported interception of a China-origin vessel bound for Bangladesh, carrying sodium perchlorate and unregistered SIM cards, highlights the possibility of maritime routes being exploited for the movement of sensitive materials and communication equipment. Such incidents raise concerns about proliferation networks and regional security.

Security Implications for India

1. **Missile proliferation risks:** Diversion of chemicals used in rocket propellants can potentially support the development of strategic capabilities and increase regional security concerns.

2. **Transnational supply chains:** Illicit procurement and transportation networks can exploit commercial shipping, complex ownership structures and weak cargo verification systems.

3. **Communication-related threats:** Unregistered SIM cards may facilitate anonymous communications, cyber-enabled fraud, espionage or coordination by criminal networks.

4. **Maritime vulnerabilities:** India's extensive coastline, busy ports and proximity to important sea lanes create challenges in detecting suspicious cargo and vessels.

5. **Regional strategic concerns:** Such developments warrant closer monitoring of emerging security dynamics in the Bay of Bengal and the wider Indo-Pacific, without presuming the involvement or intentions of any state without verified evidence.

Measures for India

1. **Strengthen maritime domain awareness:** Integrate coastal radar networks, satellite surveillance, vessel-tracking systems and intelligence inputs.

2. **Improve cargo screening:** Enhance risk-based inspection of sensitive chemicals, dual-use materials and suspicious shipping documentation.

3. **Tighten chemical controls:** Strengthen licensing, end-user verification, inventory monitoring and coordination among customs and regulatory agencies.

4. **Regulate communication equipment:** Improve SIM registration verification and detect bulk procurement or suspicious activation patterns.

5. **Expand regional cooperation:** Strengthen information-sharing and coordinated maritime surveillance with Bangladesh, Indonesia and other Indian Ocean partners.

Conclusion

India needs an integrated security framework combining maritime surveillance, export-control enforcement, intelligence coordination and regional cooperation. A rules-based approach can address proliferation risks while preserving legitimate trade and regional connectivity.

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