International Relations · GS - II

‘Sea is an important Component of the Cosmos’ - Discuss in the light of the above statement the role of the IMO (International Maritime Organisation) in protecting environment and enhancing maritime safety and security.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2023	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

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Answer Hint

The oceans connect ecosystems, economies and civilizations, making maritime governance a global public good; IMO establishes international standards that reduce pollution, improve navigation and strengthen safety and security across the world's seas.

Model Answer

Introduction

The sea is an essential component of the global ecological and economic system, supporting biodiversity, climate regulation, trade and human livelihoods. Since maritime activity transcends national boundaries, international cooperation through the **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** is indispensable.

Body

Role in Environmental Protection

MARPOL: The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships regulates pollution from oil, chemicals, sewage, garbage and harmful emissions.

Oil-spill prevention: IMO standards establish requirements for ship design, equipment and operational practices to minimise marine pollution.

Green shipping: IMO initiatives address greenhouse-gas emissions from international shipping and encourage greater energy efficiency and cleaner fuels.

Ballast-water management: International rules seek to prevent the transfer of invasive aquatic species through ships' ballast water.

Marine ecosystem protection: IMO's regulatory framework contributes to reducing the ecological damage caused by maritime transport.

Maritime Safety

SOLAS: The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea establishes minimum standards for ship construction, equipment and operation.

STCW: Standards concerning training, certification and watchkeeping ensure professional competence of seafarers.

Navigation safety: IMO promotes internationally coordinated standards for safe navigation, communication and emergency response.

Maritime Security

IMO frameworks support international cooperation against **piracy, armed robbery, terrorism and other maritime security threats**, while promoting secure shipping and port operations.

Challenges

Climate change, rising maritime traffic, cyber threats, illegal fishing, piracy and the increasing complexity of shipping require continuous technological and regulatory adaptation.

Conclusion

The IMO converts the oceans from a domain of competing national interests into an arena of **cooperative global governance**. By integrating environmental protection with maritime safety and security, it contributes significantly to safeguarding the sea as a shared resource of humanity.