

Palk Bay scheme

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In news- The Union Government is considering increasing the unit cost of deep-sea fishing vessels under the Palk Bay scheme to make it more attractive to fisherfolk. Currently under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), the unit cost of deep-sea fishing vessels has been fixed at ₹1.2 crore.

About the scheme-

- The Palk Bay Scheme is the official scheme for **diversification of trawl fishing boats from Palk Strait into deep sea fishing boats.**
- It was **launched by the Prime Minister in July 2017.**
- It is aimed at encouraging fishermen to take up deep-sea fishing and **put an end to disputes arising between India and Sri Lanka.**
- The project helps fishermen in the Palk Straits, who are not exposed to deep-sea fishing, to venture deep into the Indian Ocean, Arabian sea and other deep-sea areas to look for fish that are in high demand.
- The project aims to replace all trawler boats and introduce over 2,000 deep sea fishing boats in a course of three years.
- The scheme is not part of PMMSY.
- The **Funding pattern** of the scheme is Centre 50%, State 20%, Institutional funding 10% and Beneficiary 20%.



About Marine Fisheries Bill-

- It proposes to only grant licenses to vessels registered under the **Merchant Shipping Act, 1958**, to fish in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
- It puts the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) in charge of Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS).
- It has proposed **punishments for fishermen breaching the EEZ without a licence**, not complying with ICG orders, and obstructing ICG officials.
- It aims to protect Indian fishermen if there is any illegal activity by a foreign fishing vessel.