



7th Edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium

Why in News

Recently, the 7th edition of [Indian Ocean Naval Symposium \(IONS\)](#) was hosted by the French Navy at Réunion island.

- It is a **biennial event** which was **conceived by the Indian Navy in 2008**.



Key Points

▪ About:

- The IONS is a voluntary and inclusive initiative that **brings together navies of Indian Ocean Region littoral** states to increase **maritime co-operation and enhance regional security**.
- It also serves to develop an **effective response mechanism and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR)** against [natural disasters](#).
- The chairmanship of IONS has been held by India (2008-10), UAE (2010-12), South Africa (2012-14), Australia (2014-16), Bangladesh (2016-18) and Islamic Republic of Iran (2018-21).
- **France** assumed the **Chairmanship in June 2021** for a two-year tenure.

▪ Members:

- IONS includes **24 member nations** that touch or lie within the [Indian Ocean Region \(IOR\)](#), and **8 observer nations**.

- The members have been geographically grouped into the following **four sub-regions**:
- **South Asian Littorals:** Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and United Kingdom (British Indian Ocean Territory)
- **West Asian Littorals:** Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates
- **East African Littorals:** France (Reunion), Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, and Tanzania.
- **South East Asian and Australian Littorals:** Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

▪ **Significance For India:**

- IONS fits into **India's three-fold ambitions** in the region:
 - **Strengthening and deepening the relations** with the Indian Ocean littoral states;
 - Establishing its leadership potential and aspirations of being a **net-security provider**; and
 - Fulfilling **India's vision of a rules-based and stable maritime** order in the IOR.
- It will help India **to consolidate its sphere of influence from the Straits of Malacca to Hormuz.**
- IONS can be used to counter-balance the increasing presence of China in the region.

▪ **Other Important Groupings/Initiatives Associated with IOR:**

- **Indian Ocean Rim Association:** The [Indian Ocean Rim Association \(IORA\)](#) was established in 1997.
 - It is aimed at strengthening regional cooperation and sustainable development within the Indian Ocean region.
- **Indian Ocean Commission:** Recently, India has been approved as an [observer of the Indian Ocean Commission](#), the inter-governmental organization that coordinates maritime governance in the south-western Indian Ocean.
- **Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR):** It was launched in 2015.
 - Through SAGAR, India seeks to deepen economic and security cooperation with its maritime neighbours and assist in building their maritime security capabilities.
- **Asia Africa Growth Corridor:** The idea of [Asia Africa Growth Corridor \(AAGC\)](#) emerged in the joint declaration issued by India and Japan in 2016.
 - The AAGC is raised on four pillars of Development and Cooperation Projects, Quality Infrastructure and Institutional Connectivity, Enhancing Capacities and Skills and People-to-People partnership.

[Source: PIB](#)

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