



# Indian Ocean Naval Symposium

## Why in News

The **7<sup>th</sup> edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave of Chiefs** is being **hosted by the French Navy at Paris** from 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> Nov 21.

- The **inaugural edition of IONS was held in Feb 2008 at New Delhi**, with the Indian Navy as the Chair for two years. The IONS Chair is presently held in France.

## Key Points

### ▪ About:

- The IONS is a **voluntary and inclusive initiative that brings together navies of Indian Ocean Region (IOR) 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 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 counterbalance 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.
- **Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR):** It was set up by India in 2018, as an **information-sharing hub of maritime data**.
- **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.
- **Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation:** It is a sub-regional organization that came into being **in 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration**.
  - It mainly aims to create an enabling environment for rapid economic development, accelerate social progress, and promote collaboration on matters of common interest in the IOR.

**Source: PIB**

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