

7th Indian Ocean Conference

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Why in news?

- The 7th edition of the Indian Ocean Conference is being held in Perth, Australia on 9-10 February, 2024.
 - It is being held in association with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of Australia, along with S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore and Perth-US Asia Centre in Australia.
- The theme of this edition of the conference is "Towards a Stable and Sustainable Indian Ocean".

What is Indian Ocean Region (IOR)?

- IOR is a geographical region that encompasses the Indian Ocean and its surrounding areas, including the littoral states and islands.
- The region spans from:
 - African coast in the west to the Australian coast in the east, and
 - Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf in the north to the southern coast of Sri Lanka and Australia in the south.
- The Indian Ocean is the world's third-largest ocean, covering an area of approximately 70.6 million square kilometres.
- It is home to several important sea lanes of communication, including the Strait of Malacca, the Suez Canal, and the Bab-el-Mandeb strait, which connect Asia, Europe, and Africa.

What is the Significance of Indian Ocean Region (IOR)?

- Geopolitical Importance:
 - Due to its geographical location, it serves as a major transit route for global trade, including oil and gas shipments.
 - It is home to several important chokepoints, such as the Strait of Malacca and the Bab-el-Mandeb strait.
- Economic Importance:
 - The IOR is home to several fast-growing economies, including India, China, and several Southeast Asian nations.
 - The region is rich in natural resources, including oil, natural gas, and fisheries, and is a major destination for foreign investment.
 - It shares 64% of the global population and 60% of the global GDP.
- Security Importance:
 - The IOR is also a region of great security importance, with several countries in the region facing threats from terrorism, piracy, and maritime security challenges.
 - The region has seen increased military activity in recent years, with major powers such as the US, India, and China increasing their presence in the region.
- Environmental Importance:
 - The IOR is home to several important marine ecosystems, including coral reefs and mangrove forests, that are vital for maintaining biodiversity and supporting local communities.
 - The region is also vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels and increased frequency of extreme weather events.

What is Indian Ocean Conference (IOC)

- IOC is an annual international conference that focuses on the geopolitical, economic, and strategic importance of the Indian Ocean region.

- The conference brings together policymakers, scholars, business leaders, and civil society representatives to discuss issues related to security, trade, and cooperation in the Indian Ocean region.
- The first edition of the Conference was held in Singapore in 2016. The sixth edition of IOC was organised in 2023 in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- Organised by – the India Foundation in partnership with other organizations in the region.

News Summary: 7th Indian Ocean Conference (IOC)

Key highlights of the speech delivered by EAM Jaishankar

- Highlighted the challenges in Indian Ocean
 - At one extremity, there are threats to maritime traffic, piracy and terrorism.
 - At the other, there are challenges to international law, concerns about freedom of navigation and overflights, and of safeguarding of sovereignty and of independence.
 - In between, a range of trans-national and non-traditional threats present themselves, largely visible in a spectrum of interconnected illegal activities.
 - Expressed concern regarding grey areas of various kinds
 - Some may emanate from climate change and natural disasters. Also, disruptive events are occurring with greater frequency and deeper impact.
 - There are also the consequences of distant happenings, such as the fuel, food and fertilizer crises that many countries of the region have experienced.
 - Unsustainable debt, opaque lending practices, unviable projects and injudicious choices are also affecting countries of this region.
 - Highlighted the challenges that are structurally inherent in the current form of globalization
 - The current form of globalization has led to over-concentrations of manufacturing and technology.
 - However, the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of disperse production across more geographies and need to build reliable and resilient supply-chains.
 - The digital era and emergence of artificial intelligence has, in parallel, put a premium on trust and transparency.
 - Drivers of the future
 - Our sustainable future lies in concentrating on the drivers of the future: digital, electric mobility, green hydrogen and green shipping, to cite a few.
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Q1) What is Security And Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) doctrine?

Security And Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) is an Indian foreign policy doctrine that was introduced in 2015. The aim of SAGAR is to enhance cooperation and mutual trust between India and its neighbouring countries, particularly in the Indian Ocean region. The SAGAR policy has several components, including ensuring maritime security and safety, promoting sustainable development and economic growth, and strengthening cultural and people-to-people ties between nations.

Q2) What is BIMSTEC?

BIMSTEC is a regional organization comprising seven member states in South Asia and Southeast Asia. The member states of BIMSTEC are Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. BIMSTEC was established in 1997 to promote economic and technical cooperation among its member states.

Source: [U.S.-China tussle, warships in Indian Ocean dominate India-sponsored IOC conference in Perth, as Jaishankar takes aim at China | MEA](#)

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/7th-ioc/>

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