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GENERAL STUDIES 2: INTERNATIONAL RELATION

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TOPIC: INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBORHOOD- RELATIONS.

What India needs to do in the Indian Ocean

1. The Indian Ocean Conference (IOC)

- India, along with partners like Singapore and Oman, is hosting the 8th Indian Ocean Conference in Muscat this weekend.
- The conference will bring together foreign ministers from around 30 countries to discuss the future of the region.
- Oman and India have had strong historical connections, with India being a major seafaring nation for millennia.

2. Historical Influence of India in the Indian Ocean

- The name "Indian Ocean" comes from India's historical and civilizational influence in the region.
- India has had maritime trade with Arab countries, Southeast Asia, and China for over a millennium.
- Ancient texts, like Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, highlighted the importance of maritime activity in India.

3. India's Maritime Power Decline

- India was a leading economic power in the first millennium, but its maritime power declined in the second millennium.
- European powers took control of the Indian Ocean in the second millennium, and India's naval capabilities were neglected.
- India still lags in shipbuilding, ranking 20th in the global shipbuilding industry, with only 0.06% of the global market share.

4. The Importance of the Indian Ocean for India

- K.M. Panikkar, a diplomat, emphasized the importance of the Indian Ocean for India's future.
- India's maritime trade and dependence on the sea have been key to its destiny, but the country's leadership initially failed to realize this.



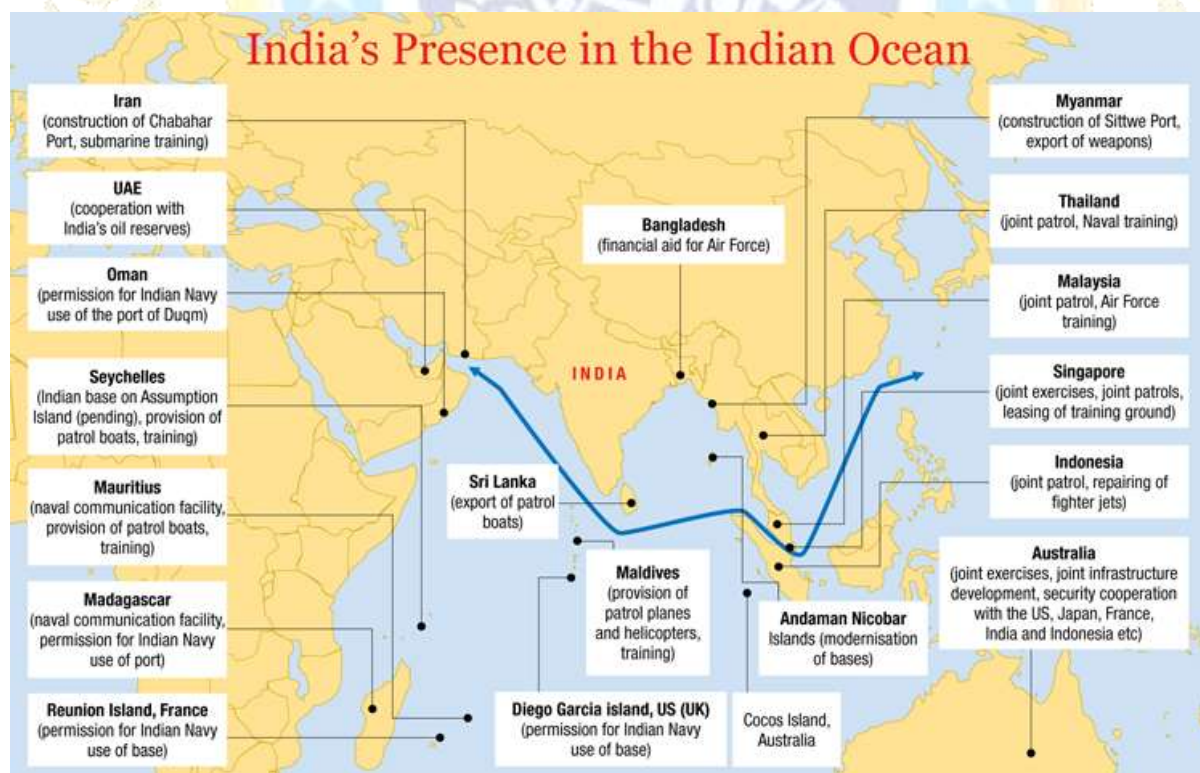
- The Indian Ocean is a vital trading route, handling 70% of global container traffic, and 80% of India's external trade passes through it.

5. India's Growing Influence in the Indian Ocean Region

- The Indian Ocean region has become a focal point of global power, with countries like the US, UK, France, and China active in the region.
- India, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has aimed to become an influential blue-water power and a voice for the Global South.
- The SAGAR Initiative (Security and Growth for All in the Region) was launched by India in 2015 to strengthen its role in the Indian Ocean.

6. Challenges in the Indian Ocean

- The Indian Ocean faces challenges like piracy, sea-borne terrorism, climate change, illegal fishing, trafficking, arms running, and rising sea levels.
- Undersea cables, once managed by European companies, are now being installed by Chinese companies like Huawei, highlighting the growing influence of China in the region.





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7. Conclusion - Mahan's Maritime Supremacy

- Alfred T. Mahan, a geopolitical theorist, stated that maritime supremacy in the Indian Ocean would make a nation a key global player.
- The IOC conference emphasizes that the nations of the Indian Ocean region should maintain control over their waters and manage the region's peaceful affairs.
- India's ambition to play a leading role in the Indian Ocean Region aligns with Mahan's idea of maritime supremacy being crucial for global influence.

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