

Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)

It is important to be aware of the various major infrastructure facilities and installations, as well as information systems operated by the Indian military forces for the [UPSC exam](#). In this article, you can read all about the Indian Navy's Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR).

IFC-IOR

The Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region is an initiative of the Indian Navy supported by the Government of India established at Gurugram in December 2018.

- It is co-located with the Information Management and Analysis Centre (jointly administered by the Navy and Indian Coast Guard).
- The Information Fusion Centre is a dedicated centre for performing the tasks of collation, fusion and dissemination of maritime information among all partner countries.
- The centre addresses the twin purposes of situational awareness and law enforcement.
- The chief objective of the IFC-IOR is to coordinate with regional countries on maritime issues and act as a regional repository of maritime data.
- It is the single-point centre linking all coastal chain radar networks along the 7500 km Indian coastline and a few neighbouring countries.
- It actively interacts with the maritime community and tracks and monitors 75000 to 1.5 lakh shipping vessels in real time 24X7.
- It keeps track of the shipping traffic as well as other important developments in the region under a collaborative framework with partner countries.
- It generates a seamless real-time picture of the country's vast coastline.
- All countries which have signed [white shipping information exchange agreements](#) with India are IFC partners.
- IFC currently partners with 21 countries and 22 multi-national agencies.
- In the future, the centre plans to host training capsules and conduct exercises in maritime information collection and sharing.

International Liaison Officers

Partner countries can host **liaison officers** at the IFC.

- Liaison officers from partner countries are based at the IFC full time.
- They will work with their counterparts from other partner countries and with the Indian armed forces to increase maritime domain awareness in the region.
- Currently, there are International Liaison Officers (ILO) from five countries, namely, the UK, the US, France, Japan and Australia.

- India has invited ILOs from 13 partner countries.

IFC-IOR Pillars

The IFC is a collaborative initiative wherein inclusive and high-tech methodologies are adopted to detect and deter the region's maritime security threats.

The Indian Navy's website states three pillars of the IFC mechanism:

1. Confidence and capacity building amongst partner nations, thereby ensuring swift and accurate exchange of information pertaining to maritime security.
2. Maintaining extensive and continuous linkages to ensure comprehensive Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) of the region thereby achieving transparency of maritime environment.
3. Use of high tech including state-of-the-art methods and analytic tools to undertake traffic analysis thereby ensuring that any emerging threats and trends are predicted in time.

Information Fusion Centre Significance

The Centre draws its significance from the strategic importance of the Indian Ocean to world trade and security.

- To ensure safety and security on the high seas, there is an urgent need for maritime countries and agencies as well as militaries to collaborate and share information and observed trends.
- Such an information fusion centre is critical for fighting maritime terrorism, curbing piracy, illegal and unregulated fishing, human and contraband trafficking, poaching and arms running.
- Today, there are large numbers of ships on the high seas ranging from small fishing vessels to huge containers transporting crude.
- Maritime Domain Awareness encompassing identification, monitoring and constant tracking of vessels is imperative to prevent any potential threat from the sea from impinging on the coastal and offshore security of the country.
- The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is strategically important not only because the region is home to a large chunk of the world's population, but also because it can be considered as an economic highway that drives global commerce.
- More than 75% of the world's maritime trade and half of the daily global oil consumption pass through the IOR, making it crucial to international trade and the economic prosperity of many countries.
- The region is also fragile with many threats like terrorism, piracy, etc.
- Considering these factors, it is not possible for individual countries to address all the problems facing maritime security of the region single-handedly. A collaborative effort is required by like-minded countries to tackle the issues and create a conducive environment for facilitating legitimate maritime activities as well as checking illegal activities in the region.