



## **DAILY EDITORIAL ANALYSIS**

**TOPIC**

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### **THE INDIAN OCEAN AS CRADLE OF A NEW BLUE ECONOMY**

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## THE INDIAN OCEAN AS CRADLE OF A NEW BLUE ECONOMY

### In Context

- India must revive its leadership role in shaping the governance, sustainability, and security architecture of the Indian Ocean, guided by the principle “**From the Indian Ocean, for the World.**”
- This comes at a time when:
  - The **climate crisis** is intensifying stresses on marine ecosystems.
  - Global attention to oceans is rising through COP30, UNOC3, and new blue finance commitments.
  - India is positioned to drive a **cooperative, sustainable, and inclusive ocean agenda.**

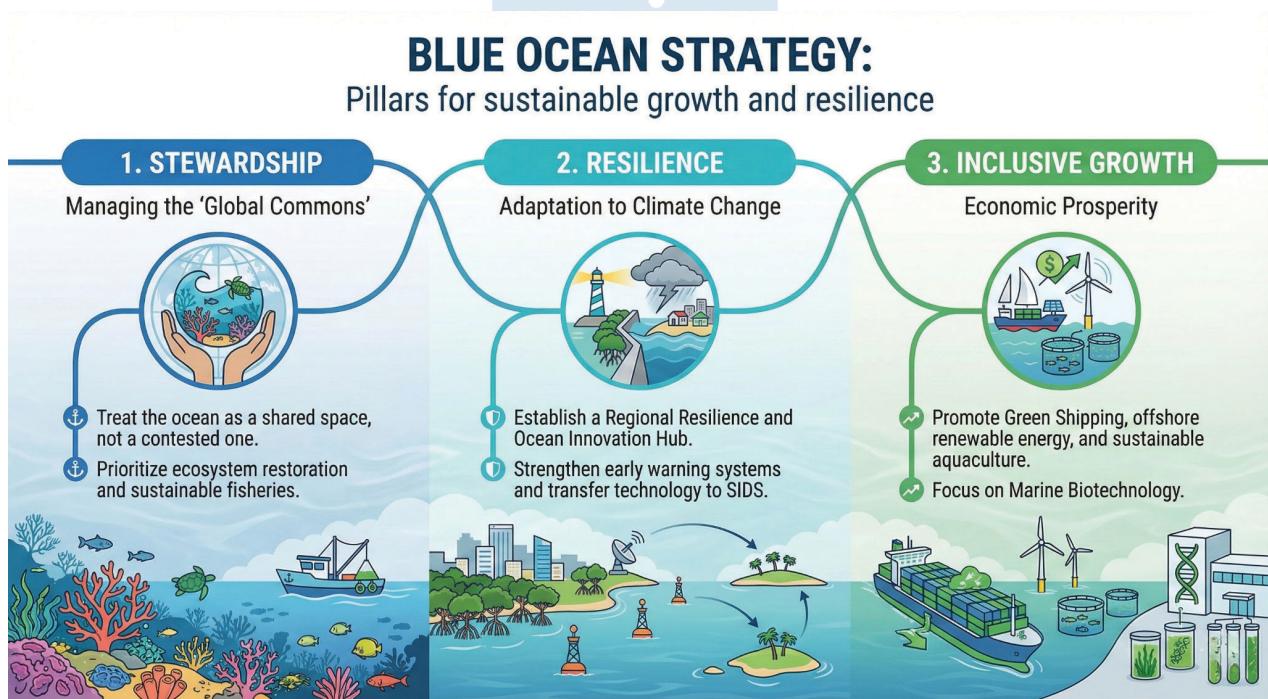
### India's historical role in ocean governance

- During **UNCLOS negotiations (1970s–80s)**, India sided with small island nations to promote the “**common heritage of humankind**” principle for seabed resources beyond national jurisdiction.
- This echoes Jawaharlal Nehru’s vision of the ocean’s centrality to **India’s security and prosperity**.
- Perhaps, India has long projected itself as a **maritime nation as well as a maritime leader**.

### Rising Pressure on Oceans

- The Indian Ocean is increasingly **threatened by climate-induced challenges** like ocean warming, acidification, rising sea levels, and illegal fishing, presenting India with a strategic chance to spearhead regional solutions and **geopolitical rivalries in the Indo-Pacific** (China’s naval presence, U.S.-China competition).

### India's Blue Ocean Strategy: Three Pillars



### Global Key Developments in 2025

- Blue Economy and Finance Forum (Monaco):** At the forum held in Monaco, governments, development banks, and private investors presented a strong pipeline of ocean-related investments worth 25 billion. They further announced new commitments amounting to 8.7 billion.
- COP30 in Belém:** At COP30, the Brazilian Presidency launched the “One Ocean Partnership.” This initiative aims to mobilise \$20 billion for ocean protection and sustainable ocean activities by the year 2030.
- Development Bank of Latin America:** The Development Bank of Latin America doubled its financial target for blue economy projects. It revised its earlier target and now plans to invest \$2.5 billion by 2030.

### Security Via Sustainability

- Beyond naval rivalries, environmental threats like **IUU fishing, coral loss, and intensified storms erode livelihoods and stability in the Indian Ocean**.
- **And, India's SAGAR doctrine** integrates ecosystem health with maritime security through enhanced cooperation in domain awareness and disaster response.

### India's Leadership Imperative

- Echoing **Indira Gandhi's 1972 Stockholm ethos**, India can leverage **BBNJ ratification** (effective 2026), UNOC3/COP30/G20 momentum, and IORA chairmanship to **pioneer an Indian Ocean Blue Fund**, green shipping, and blue bonds—transforming pledges into sustainable prosperity.
- 2026 is a pivotal year with the **UN Ocean Conference (UNOC3) and the entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement** (Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction), India's role is to ratify the BBNJ Agreement & utilize chairmanship of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) to push for green shipping corridors and blue bonds with guiding Principle of "From the Indian Ocean, for the World".

### Way Forward

- **Institutional Leadership:** India should work toward establishing mechanisms such as an Indian Ocean Sustainability and Security Council within IORA. It must also operationalise the Indian Ocean Blue Fund to support long-term regional projects.
- **Strengthening Regional Partnerships:** India can deepen partnerships with small island developing states and African coastal nations. It should also use initiatives like the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) to expand cooperation in areas such as marine ecology, resource management, and maritime security.
- **Domestic Reforms:** Modernising the fisheries sector, expanding marine protected areas, and improving coastal regulation frameworks are essential steps. India also needs stronger climate adaptation measures for its coastal populations.
- **Maritime Diplomacy:** India should continue to promote the Indian Ocean as a space for cooperation. Its diplomatic approach must remain inclusive, respectful of sovereignty, and rooted in shared development goals.
- **Technology and Innovation:** India can invest in technologies such as satellite-based ocean monitoring, AI-driven early warning systems, and green port infrastructure. Advancing marine biotechnology and responsible carbon sequestration research will further enhance India's leadership in sustainable ocean practices.

**Source:** TH

### Daily Mains Practice Question

**[Q]** India must move from viewing the Indian Ocean primarily as a strategic theatre to viewing it as an ecological and developmental space." Discuss in light of recent global momentum in ocean governance and India's maritime initiatives.

