

Time	Programme
1000 – 1030 hr	Tea break
1030 – 1035 hr	Report by IONS Working Group on Information Sharing & Interoperability (IS & I) Co-chairs (Australia & France)
1035 – 1040 hr	Report by IONS Working Group on Maritime Security (MARSEC) Co-chairs (India & Iran)
1040 – 1045 hr	Report by IONS Working Group on HADR Co-chairs (India & Iran)
1045 – 1200 hr	Conclave of Chiefs (Session 1)
1200 – 1215 hr	Tea break
1215 – 1320 hr	Conclave of Chiefs (Session 2)
1320 – 1325 hr	Closing remarks by CNS, IN
1330 – 1430 hr	Conclave lunch



9th Conclave of Chiefs

Visakhapatnam

India

20 Feb 2026



Indian Navy



9th Conclave of Chiefs

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IONS: Enhancing Maritime Convergence in the Indian Ocean

1. The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) is a voluntary initiative launched under the stewardship of the Indian Navy in 2008 to promote maritime cooperation among the littoral navies of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Over the years, it has evolved into a credible framework that fosters trust, transparency and practical collaboration while fully respecting national sovereignty and independent decision-making.

2. IONS brings together 25 member navies and nine observers, encompassing a wide spectrum of regional perspectives and capabilities. The Symposium provides an open and inclusive forum for dialogue on regionally relevant maritime issues and helps develop shared approaches for peace, security and stability in the IOR.

3. The Chairmanship of IONS is held on a rotational basis for two years among the member countries and each Chairmanship cycle comprises one Conclave of Chiefs (CoC) and an IONS Preparatory Workshop (IPW) at staff level in alternate years. During the Conclave of Chiefs, the Chair's work plan is finalised and major decisions are taken at the level of Chiefs of Navy or Heads of maritime agencies.

4. India will assume the Chairmanship during the 9th IONS Conclave of Chiefs. This transition follows the highly constructive leaderships of other IONS Chairs, whose inclusive stewardship has consolidated IONS as a widely accepted multilateral initiative across the length and breadth of the IOR.

5. The activities of IONS are conducted primarily through specialised IONS Working Groups (IWGs), which translate high-level guidance from the Conclave of Chiefs into concrete initiatives and cooperative activities. Each Working Group is co-chaired by two member navies and focuses on specific domains where collective action can deliver tangible benefits, ensuring that IONS remains focused on practical outcomes.

6. At present, three Working Groups are functioning under IONS: the Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) IWG, the Maritime Security (MARSEC) IWG and the Information Sharing and Interoperability (IS&I) IWG. India and Iran serve as co-chairs for the HADR and MARSEC Working Groups, while Australia and France are co-chairs for the IS&I IWG, reflecting a balanced and inclusive distribution of responsibilities across the membership.

7. The HADR Working Group develops cooperative mechanisms, standard operating procedures and best practices to enable rapid, coordinated responses to cyclones, tsunamis, floods and other natural or climate induced disasters in the IOR. Regular meetings and tabletop exercises under this Working Group is aimed at enhancing interoperability and jointness among the member navies of the Indian Ocean Region.

8. The Maritime Security Working Group focuses on addressing shared challenges such as piracy, armed robbery, maritime terrorism, trafficking and other illegal activities at sea that erode good order in the maritime domain. Through this Group, member navies share operational experiences, harmonise procedures where appropriate and explore opportunities for cooperative patrols, coordinated presence, and information-driven responses to transnational threats jeopardising the safety of global commons.

9. The Information Sharing and Interoperability Working Group seeks to improve Maritime Domain Awareness by promoting information-sharing arrangements, compatible communication protocols and interoperable procedures. Its efforts support the development of regional information networks, foster trust in data exchange and enable more coordinated operational responses based on a shared situational picture.

Conclave of Chiefs 20 Feb 26

Time	Programme
0845 – 0859 hr	IONS Chiefs' arrive
0900 hr	CNS, <i>IN</i> arrives
0905 – 0910 hr	Group photograph
0915 – 0920 hr	Welcome address by DCNS, <i>IN</i>
0920 – 0925 hr	Remarks by CINC, <i>RTN</i>
0925 – 0930 hr	Formal handing over ceremony between CINC, <i>RTN</i> & CNS, <i>IN</i>
0930 – 0935 hr	Remarks by CNS, <i>IN</i>
0935 – 0945 hr	Commemorative IONS video followed by launch of upgraded Website
0945 – 1000 hr	Results of last IONS essay competition Award ceremony and announcement of theme for next IONS essay competition