

**PASSAGE 5 (Q.5 - Q.8):**

Read the following passage and answer the items that follow each passage. Your answers to these items should be based on the passage only.

The Indian Ocean is a vast theatre, stretching from the Strait of Malacca and the western coast of Australia in the East to the Mozambique Channel in the West. Along the coasts of this huge geographic expanse are countries that are home to some 2.7 billion people.

The region's size and diversity explain its geo-economic importance. Its regional forum, the Indian Ocean Rim Association, includes countries as politically and socially different as Australia, Indonesia, Iran, and South Africa, leading to striking new power dynamics. From resource-rich Africa and the energy-dense Middle East to South Asia's labour markets and manufacturing industries, the stability of the Indian Ocean is crucial to the global economy. While it may be difficult today for one nation to control the entire expanse of the Indian Ocean the way the British, French, or Portuguese empires did during the colonial period, the strategic significance of the Indian Ocean remains the same. In fact, the advent of the Indo-Pacific—the new geopolitical framework that includes both the Indian and Pacific Oceans—has pushed the Indian Ocean back into the spotlight after a period with no serious great power competition in the region, following the end of the Cold War.

The importance of trade and the sheer scope of its many subregions make the Indian Ocean critical in terms of military and strategic engagement. It is a vital trading hub, connecting the Middle East to Southeast and East Asia, as well as Europe and the Americas. Any disruption along its trading routes will impact the entire globe's energy security, let alone that of significant economies like China, Japan, and South Korea, which depend on energy imported primarily via the Malacca Strait. At the heart of the geopolitical struggle in the Indian Ocean is the ability to sustain a military presence near the key chokepoints connecting its trade routes. Such a presence gives countries the power to

protect and disrupt these valuable maritime channels—known as Sea Lines of Communications (SLOC) protection and SLOC interdiction in naval terms—during times of peace and war.

**Q.5)** According to the passage, which among the following are the reason for the prominence of the Indian Ocean Region?

1. The downfall of the British, French and Portuguese empires in the world.
2. It offers a variety of resources- both natural and human.
3. The location of important trade hubs and Sea lines of Communications along its route.

Select the correct answer using the code below:

- a) 3 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 2 only
- d) 2 and 3 only

**Q.6)** With reference to the above passage, the following assumptions have been made:

1. The strategic importance of the Indian Ocean has continued to grow unabated.
2. Indian Ocean Region functions like one giant cultural unit.
3. One's ability to secure SLOC would determine who holds influence over Indian Ocean Region.

Which of the above assumptions is/are valid?

- a) 1 only
- b) 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

**Q.7)** According to the passage, which of the following has brought more focus to the region of the Indian Ocean?

- a) The growing population in the Indian Ocean region
- b) The new geopolitical framework of the Indo-Pacific
- c) The creation of new Sea Lines of Communications
- d) The discovery of new resources in Africa and the Middle East