

SPEECH
BY
THE RIGHT HON PRIME MINISTER
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS
ON THE OCCASION
OF THE COMMISSIONING CEREMONY OF CGS
VICTORY AND CHETAK HELICOPTERS ON
SATURDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2016
QUAY A - 15 HRS

Excellency Shri Manohar Parrikar
Defence Minister of India,

Honourable Ministers,

The High Commissioner of India,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of Civil Service,

Secretary for Home Affairs,

The Commissioner of Police,

Honourable Members of the National Assembly,

Senior delegate members from the Government of India, Ministry of Defence, Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force,

Chairman and Managing Director of Goa Shipyard Limited,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome in our midst, His Excellency **Shri Manohar Parrikar**, the Defence Minister of India, as well as all distinguished guests, on this special occasion.

This is indeed another special day in the history of the India-Mauritius relationship.

Our joy is two-fold as we are commissioning at the same time a Sea going asset, the Coast Guard Ship '*VICTORY*' and two Air-based assets, namely 'CHETAK' helicopters.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the years, the Mauritius Police Force has endeavoured to meet the aspirations of the nation in different ways. The setting up of the Police Helicopter Squadron in 1974 and the formation of a Marine Wing of the Police Force almost concurrently have been significant milestones in providing the country with the appropriate resources to undertake air and sea operations.

Such endeavours have been made possible to a large extent with the support of the Government of India.

Our Exclusive Economic Zone and territorial waters, our surrounding islands, national interests and security imperatives, regional commitments and an extremely dynamic geo-strategic environment are giving rise to many challenges.

The maritime realm is vulnerable to a wide array of threats, including illegal, unreported, and

unregulated fishing, environmental degradation, smuggling, drug trafficking, piracy, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and dreadful acts, including terrorism.

These maritime threats require capabilities for preventive and enforcement interventions.

The National Coast Guard which was formally set up in 1988 has been growing at a very steady pace and acquiring assets to meet the challenges resulting out of our geographical set up.

Much progress has been achieved in these last two years.

In fact, in March last year, Coast Guard Ship '*Barracuda*' was commissioned in the distinguished presence of His Excellency Shri Narendra MODI, Prime Minister of India.

This year has also been memorable for the Mauritius Police Force and for the country as well.

On 12 March 2016, ten Fast Interceptor Boats from Goa Shipyard Limited were inducted into the National Coast Guard as well as one boat for the Mauritius Revenue Authority.

Moreover, on 13 July 2016, a new Dornier Aircraft from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited was commissioned and today we are commissioning three more major assets which will add up to the sea and air squadrons of the Mauritius Police Force.

The acquisition of all these assets from India bears testimony of the dynamic cooperation which exists between our two countries.

Undoubtedly, the Indo-Mauritian strategic partnership has reached new dimensions and is being consolidated year after year.

The Government of India has agreed to assist Mauritius in consolidating its National Coast Guard base and operations. The integrated development project known as the ‘Trident Project’ will cater for appropriate infrastructure and facilities for the future and would involve the construction of a new NCG headquarters at Fort William, upgrading of repair facilities for the NCG vessels and construction of a dry docking facility with flotilla support services.

The value of this project is estimated at USD 70 Million and it will be financed jointly by the Government of India and the Government of Mauritius at the ratio of 80:20, respectively. In

fact, for this project, funds to the tune of USD 52.3 Million will be provided under the Indian Line of credit and a one-time grant of USD 4 Million will also be made available by the Indian Government. The remaining USD 12 Million will be financed out of local funds.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

CGS *Victory* which has been built by Goa Shipyard Limited is equipped with state of the art machineries and cutting-edge technology.

Her induction into the National Coast Guard will greatly benefit the country in providing maritime security in our waters. This 50 metres patrol vessel displaces about 288 tons in full load condition and is capable of attaining a maximum speed of 35 Knots. At economical cruising speed, it has an endurance of about 2,000 nautical miles. It can thus service certain of our outer islands as well.

The ship is installed with modern navigation systems, advanced machinery control systems and one Close Range Naval Gun Mount along with an optical fire control system for day and night usage.

CGS Victory is indeed a jewel and I would like to convey my special thanks to the Goa Shipyard Limited for having successfully overcome internal challenges and delivered the first ship of the Project as scheduled.

My special thanks also go to the Indian Navy for the unflinching support it has extended from time to time in this ship project as well as in other areas of defence cooperation.

Such support could only be extended with the full backing of H.E. Shri Manohar Parrikar to whom we are very grateful and whom we thank from the bottom of our heart for also putting at our disposal the two Chetak helicopters from the Indian Air Force.

I am confident that the Government of India will continue to support Mauritius in further strengthening the resource base of the Mauritius Police Force as well as in other areas of cooperation.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

Mauritius takes pride in being India's trusted partner in its nation building process. In all spheres, India has become a world performer and Mauritius can only benefit from the vast knowledge base, expertise and technical capabilities of India which we affectionately refer to as 'Mother India'.

Long Live the India-Mauritius partnership.

I thank you for your kind attention.