



BINDING BHARAT

## BINDING BHARAT

Kanupriya Jaju (Founder and Chairperson)

Binding Bharat is a collective youth network founded to identify and meet the challenges that nation-states are facing all over the world today. Binding Bharat is based on a single premise that young people have the potential and willingness to bring about momentous changes, and therefore they must be provided with opportunities to play a significant role in creating better lives for themselves, their communities, and society. We strongly believe that as we continue to work, in our ways, in our respective communities, there is great value to be gained through the exchange of experiences, information, and ideas, and by supporting one another at a global level. This network is, therefore, our tool through which we can become more familiar with the realities of young people in our regions and elsewhere, and can express freely our expectations, hopes, and concerns. At a time when information is becoming more and more accessible through new technological advancements, we have a greater awareness than ever before of the world outside our own. Each day we see the devastating effects of conflict, poverty, injustice, homelessness, crime, environmental degradation, inequality, drug abuse, and disease. We can, as individuals, feel overwhelmed or frozen by a sense of helplessness in the face of such tremendous problems.

For a better tomorrow, the world needs to form common grounds & who else better to voice it than the youth. We talk about winning hearts, we talk about reaching out to each other, about hearing each other out, about lending support, about understanding each other's sensitivities. We talk of binding hearts. We, at Binding Bharat, believe that the only sustainable way of moving in today's world is with respect for territorial integrity & reverence for global rules for global commons. Exclusion & exclusivity are colonial notions. We appreciate the difference of opinions, for the fact that to differ is to think. We dream of a world where ideas flourish regardless of borders.

It is not only a question of proposals but also of actions!

## INDO-MAURITIUS BILATERAL SETU

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## Introduction/ Background

Indo-Mauritian relations are defined by the close historical, social, economic and cultural relations between the citizens of the two countries. For the two nations to augment their socio-economic ties further, a secure and safe environment is a prerequisite. In the recent times these interrelations have transcended the socio-economic domain and descended into the domain of strategic-military cooperation between the nations.

Both countries share collective respect for international laws and principles. India has respected the sovereignty of Mauritius by providing it military assistance to reinforce its territorial integrity. The Indian Navy has assisted in preventing piracy, illegal fishing and help reinforce maritime security in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Mauritius. The co-operation between Indian Navy, the Indian Coast Guard and the MNDF (Maldives National Defence Forces) has been instrumental in upholding the shared respect for international law principles like Safe and secure passage along with Freedom of Navigation (FON). Mauritius has no separate military forces. The Mauritius National Police Force (MPF) maintains a battalion sized motorised infantry. The most understated aspect of India-Mauritius defence symbiotic relationship is that several elements of the Mauritian security establishment are commanded by Indian military officers on attachment to the MPF.

In the past decade Indian government's foreign policy towards Mauritius has assumed utmost significance due to the rising tensions in the Indian Ocean. In 2015 that Prime Minister Modi unveiled an ambitious policy called the SAGAR (security and growth for all). It was India's first significant policy statement on the Indian Ocean in many decades. Pushing further the strategic partnership between the two nation, the Indian Prime Minister signed an agreement to set up eight Indian-controlled coastal surveillance radar stations in Mauritius as a part of India's security grid including Coastal Surveillance Radar (CSR) station of Indian Navy's National Command Control Communication Intelligence network. SAGR is a mutually inclusive vision which seeks to deepen economic and security cooperation of India with its maritime neighbours and also assist them building their maritime security capabilities. This will be facilitated through exchange of information,

coastal surveillance, building of infrastructure and strengthening their capabilities. It is a mutual win-win proposition that reiterates that only through collective action and cooperation peace can be achieved in Indian Ocean Region.

The global dynamics have changed in the post Covid scenario which is defined by a notorious chinese policy of territorial expansion across land and seas. This policy holds nuisance value for every country across the world. Mauritius is the most strategically placed country in the Indian Ocean region. This gives it a leveraging power over the superpowers such as the US and China. The EEZ of Mauritius is offers potential of economic resources that are eyed by several powers of the world. It is no secret that Chinese would eagerly want to ingress this region for commercial contracts such as deep-sea mining and ocean exploration. It is not only a strategic flashpoint for India but will repercussions on Mauritius too. China's complete disregard for Ocean and environmental laws is well known. Its refusal to accept South China Sea decision by a arbitration tribunal constituted under Annex VII of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) has unmasked its greedy intentions. This flippant refusal to accept the reward for territorial sovereignty claims attracted many eye-balls but the environmental ramifications of China's environmental degradation in the South China Sea must not be forgotten. China's blatant disregard for international environment law are always maliciously disguised in its investment incentives. Mauritius is an environmentally sensitive country threated the most rising seas levels and climate change and can't afford investment at the expense of environmental degradation.

## Webinar Details and Participation

**Date and Time: 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 and 4:00 PM (IST)**

**Topic of Discussion: Securing the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**

The central objective of the webinar was the discussion of following parameters in light of the India – Mauritius relations:

1. Safe and secure passage along SLOCs and Freedom of Navigation.
2. Implications of a robust security architecture for economic prosperity, including tourism.
3. Ensuring equal access to the global commons in the high seas.
4. Sea level rise, global warming, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response operations, and non-traditional security threats in the I.O.R.
5. Cooperation between Navies and Coast Guards.
6. Shift in maritime geopolitical significance from the Pacific to the I.O.R, and South-South cooperation.
7. Collaborative efforts to tackle extremism and terrorism, both in domestic and international spheres.

<b>Mauritius</b>	<b>India</b>
Chief Guest & Key-note Speakers	
<b><u>Sir Anerood Jugnauth</u></b> <b><u>Ex-President and Ex-Prime Minister of Mauritius</u></b>	<b><u>Hon’ble Harish Chandra Dwivedi</u></b> <b><u>Member of Parliament, India</u></b>
Panellists	
Ambassador Dr. Nomvuyo N. Nokwe Secretary General, <b>Indian Ocean Rim Association</b>	Captain Sarabjeet Singh Parmar Executive Director, <b>National Maritime Foundation</b>
Mr. Raj Mohabeer Director, <b>Indian Ocean Commission</b>	Mr. Deepak Shetty Ex-Secretary to the Government of India (Indian Revenue Services)
Ms. Valerie Uppiah Senior Lecturer Dept. of Law, <b>University of Mauritius</b>	Kanupriya Jaju. Founder & Chairperson, Binding Bharat

## Webinar Record

Time (IST)	Participant	Event Summary
4:09 PM	<b>Mr. Abbas</b>	The event started with National anthem of Mauritius, followed by that of India.
4:12 PM		Mr Abbas introduced the panellists
4:14 PM		Mr Abbas invited Kanupriya Jaju, founder of Binding Bharat to give the welcome speech.
4:15 PM	<b>Ms. Kanupriya Jaju</b>	She began by expressing her heartfelt gratitude towards right honourable Sir Aneerood Jugnauth, honourable Shri Harish Dwivedi ji, national secretary of Bhartiya Janta Party and member of parliament and esteemed panelist for being part of this session.
		Discussed about the rising geo-political tensions and increasing threats to sovereignty, democracy and Human Rights.
		Gave the idea whole world is one family derived from ancient Sanskrit saying "Vasudev Kutumbakam".
		Discussed the vision of Binding Bharat and a need for connecting youth across the countries.
		She concluded with P.M.'s quote about <b>Blue Economy "To me the blue chakra or the wheel in India's national flag represents the potential of Blue revolution or the blue economy."</b>
4:19 PM	<b>Mr Abbas</b>	Mr. Abbas invited Sir Aneerood Jugnauth to grace the gathering with his words. Sir Aneerood Jugnauth is a stalwart of Mauritian politics and a barrister who has served as both President and Prime Minister of Mauritius. Sir is one of the only two Prime Ministers who served under Queen Elizabeth II and the pre-republic regime. In 2020, he was awarded with Padma Bhushan by the Government of India.
4:20 PM	<b>Mr. Aneerood Jugnauth</b>	Discussed about the historical beginnings of the relations between India and Mauritius
		He enumerated role of Mahatma Gandhi ji in promoting a culture of education amongst the early Mauritius people.
		Thanked Government of India (GoI) for supporting Mauritius financially
		He remarked that Mauritius looks at India as "Mother India" and that Indo-Mauritian relationship is like a blood relationship.

4:27 PM	<b>Mr. Abbas</b>	Invited Mr. Akhilesh for the vote of thanks.
4:27 PM	<b>Mr. Akhilesh Gunpath</b>	Thanked Mr. Anerood Jugnauth for his presence.
4:28 PM	<b>Mr. Abbas</b>	Invited Shri. Harish Dwivedi ji, MP of Lok Sabha and National Secretary of Bhartiya Janta Party.
4:28 PM	<b>Harish Dwivedi</b>	Discussed importance of Indo-Mauritius relations from historical, social, economic point of view.
		He spoke of the security and strategic agreements between the nations to secure sea routes from international piracy and terrorism
		He told about the origin and importance of 2nd November as National Aapravasi Day.
4:40 pm	<b>Nivedita Jha</b>	Translation of Mr. Harish Dwivedi's speech in English.
4:46 PM	<b>Dr. Nomvuyo Nokwe</b>	She spoke about the mandate and functions of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (I.O.R.A.), an outcome based organization.
		Discussed about the contribution of late Mr. Nelson Mandela in I.O.R.A.
		Expressed her concern about Drug, Human and Weapon trafficking in Indian Ocean region of 68 million Sq K.M. Focused on the joint efforts of all countries to restrict such operations.
		Concluded by affirming the role of I.O.R.A. as the maritime safety and security forum that will enhance cross border relations.
4:56pm	<b>Capt. Sarabjeet Parmar</b>	He spoke about the need for stability, security and peace in high amidst conflicting interests of nations under international laws and treaties.
		He enumerated maritime threats time as terrorism (Mumbai 1993 and 2008) and strategically placed entry/exit point of the Indian Ocean Region.
		He emphasized on the need for 22 nations and 10 dialogue partners in I.O.R.A. should come together to secure I.O.R. and to promote peace. He Recommended three level framework to secure the region.
		He also discussed nontraditional threats such as natural disasters arising in the sea (cyclones and Tsunamis) and other environmental hazards such as illegal fishing.

5:14 PM	<b>Mr. Raj Mohabeer</b>	He spoke in brief on the organizational structure of the IOC and status of India, nominated as the observer member of I.O.R on 6th March 2020.
		He told about the importance of I.O.R. in the economic and political activities.
		He suggested the mechanism of regional minimal maritime capability and regional structure for maritime security.
5:33 PM	<b>Mr. Deepak Shetty</b>	He gave a brief introduction about merchant shipping and spoke of relationship between India and Mauritius at regional level.
		He emphasized that 70 % of world's trade are through water ways and India holds the best track record in maritime safety.
		He also referred to (OSRO) Oil Spill Response Organization and its role in the maritime eco system.
		He emphasized the need for national contribution, co-operation and information sharing from the I.O.R.A countries and other stakeholders in the region.
		He expressed his concern about money laundering and cyber attacks from Africa modelled through the sea route. He also shared his experience of the U.N. security council related to charcoal from Somalia and oil from Libya.
5:58 PM	<b>Ms. Valerie Uttapiah</b>	She discussed about the origins of the law of sea, which is now coded into the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS).
		She covered basic aspects of the law of sea such navigational rights, conservation and utilizing of resources in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
6:09 PM	<b>Mr. Abbas</b>	Requested Ms. Kanupriya to give the vote of thanks and declare the session close
6:10 PM	<b>Ms. Kanupriya Jaju</b>	She expressed her heartfelt gratitude to all the esteemed panelists and concluded with Henry ford line "Coming together is beginning, Keeping together is progress and working together is success"
		She also reiterated that India and Mauritius will stand side by side for socio-economic growth both countries and will respect international laws for future growth between both nations.

She ended her speech with the popular Sankrit quote

*"Sarve Bhavantu Shukhina,*

*Sarve Santu Niramaya,*

*Sarve Bhadrani Pachyanti,*

*Maa kashit dukh bhagbhvet",*

which means May All be Happy, May All be Free from  
Illness, May All See what is Auspicious, May no one Suffer,  
Peace shall prevail.

## Speech summary of the Participants

### Right Honourable Sir Anerood Jugnauth

Sir /Right Honourable Anerood Jugnauth, an ex- President and Prime Minister of Mauritius, a stalwart of Mauritian politics was the chief guest of the event. He was honoured with Pravasi Bharatiya Samman for his unwavering support for India's causes and efforts for strengthening India's relationship with Mauritius. In 2020 he was also awarded India's second highest civilian award, in the field of public affairs, the Padma Vibhushan a token of affection from 130 crore Indians for his continuous efforts towards deepening friendship between the two countries.

While addressing the event, he asserted the symbiotic nature of relationship between the two countries. He expressed his gratitude to India's father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi for infusing the educational and schooling culture amongst the then migrant workers who today form a majority of the chunk of modern-day literate and developed Mauritius. In those days majority of the Mauritians were inherently Indian migrant workers who worked in Sugarcane plantations. In those days migrant workers were very reluctant to send their children to school. Mahatma Gandhi had embarked on his not so well-known trip to the Island nation in the year 1901. During this trip he encouraged the sugarcane and plantation labourers to educate their children and take part in local politics. He went on to thank India for various financial projects and investments that have helped build the modern-day infrastructure of Mauritius. Last but not least he remarked that India to Mauritius is "mother India" and the relationship between the two countries is actually a blood relationship, which would be everlasting.

### Mr. Harish Chandra Dwivedi

Mr. Harish Chandra Dwivedi a member of Parliament commented on the multifaceted Indo-Mauritius relationship and its historical links. He said it is still throbbing in the present scenario and moving in the right direction. Indian traditions, culture and history that were taken to Mauritius by our forefathers and echo in Mauritius even today. From the Immigration Ghats, where more than 180 ago, the first batch of laborer's came to work in the sugarcane

plantations to the sparkling cyber tower of Port Louis, the glorious journey of Mauritius's transformation into a modern nation-state has had an element of Indian Diaspore and its values.

He mentioned the element of strategic and military partnership between the nations. Due to its strategic location in the Indian Ocean Region, India has always viewed Mauritius as a zone of tranquility and security. India and Mauritius have security and strategic agreements to secure sea routes from international piracy and terrorism. These sea routes account for 70% of India's energy needs. Indian Navy and the National coast guard of Mauritius have an active partnership to protect the EEZ of Mauritius with Indian navy ships constantly patrolling the area. Apart from training the Mauritian police forces, India has offered Advanced light helicopter Dhruv, offshore patrol boats and marine radars to Mauritius to keep off any threats to its territorial sovereignty and integrity.

He fondly spoke of former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee's and current PM Shri Narendra Modi's love for Mauritius. He remarked that the deep rooted Indian culture and values that are inherent in modern day Mauritius owing to the historical links established by Indian forefathers who set foot upon Mauritius as indentured labourers. In memory of the first batch of Indian labour's that arrived in Mauritius On Nov 2nd 1834, Mauritius celebrates this day as a national holiday. He concluded by saying that the prosperity and economic progress seen in Mauritius today assimilates the struggles and perseverance of our Indian ancestors.

### **Dr. Nomvuyo Nokwe**

She spoke about the mandate and functions of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (I.O.R.A.), an outcome-based organization. She discussed the contribution of late Mr. Nelson Mandela to I.O.R.A. The vision for IORA originated during a visit by late President Nelson Mandela of South Africa to India in 1995. Dr Nomvuyo N. Nokwe, informed the participants about the IORA Action Plan 2017-2021 and progress made so far by IORA Member States in their commitment in taking the process forward. She referred to the contribution of India for playing particularly important roles in strengthening IORA's architecture in recent years. She expressed her concerns about Drug, Human and Weapon trafficking in Indian Ocean region of 68 million Sq K.M.

She also elaborated the need for the joint efforts of all member countries to restrict such operations. She concluded by affirming the role of I.O.R.A. as the maritime safety and security forum that will enhance cross border relations between all the member states citing the example of India and Mauritius.

### **Captain Sarabjit Parmar**

He spoke about the need for stability, security and peace in high amidst conflicting interests of nations under international laws and treaties. He cited the example of UNCLOS (United nation convention on the law of the seas) wherein even a landlocked country like Malawi has economic interests in the high seas as the provisions of UNCLOS. He discussed strategic entry and exit points in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and pointed out the most menacing ones from the security point of view. He enumerated how maritime threats time as terrorism (Mumbai 1993 and 2008) arise from these strategically placed entry/exit point of the Indian Ocean Region.

He emphasized on the need for 22 nations and 10 dialogue partners in I.O.R.A. should come together to secure I.O.R. and to promote peace. He recommended three level framework (conceptual, political and ) to secure the region. He warned of the inevitable and imminent flashpoints brewing in the North Arabian Sea due to changing dynamics in the middle eastern countries. He also discussed how non-traditional threats such as natural disasters (cyclones and Tsunamis) and other environmental hazards such as illegal fishing can also be mitigated with proper co-operation and dialogue between the nations. He hailed India's progress in natural disaster prediction and response in mitigating the effects of Cyclones in recent years. The same information sharing model can be replicated across regions of IORA and will help reduce impact of very severe natural disaster like the Tsunami of 2004.

### **Mr. Raj Mohabeer**

He spoke in brief on the organizational structure of the IOC and status of India, nominated as the observer member. He spoke of the prospective need for cooperation between I.O.R.A and I.O.C. He mentioned some astounding statistics as why securing the Indian ocean region is of utmost importance. 35% of the World's population lives in countries having their coasts along the Indian and it is the busiest marine highway of the world. He highlighted how

illegal arms trade and the movement of vessels arising in the coastal countries of the Northern Indian Ocean has been used to perpetrate acts of terrorism across continents from Sri Lanka to Kenya. He also expresses his concern for IU fishing in the Indian Ocean Region, a problem that has remained unsolved since two decades now. He spoke for the need for a comprehensive response against maritime security threats involving national, regional and international actions.

According to him smaller countries like Seychelles and Mauritius owing to various regions cant completely secure their EEZ and lookout for the aid of the international community. He cited an example of I.O.C ministerial program wherein countries have pooled their resources to monitor movement of vessels from 26N to 37S latitudes and 76E to 29E longitudes. He mentioned the concept of a “regional minimum maritime capability”. He mentioned how India can contribute to this initiative by transfer of technology to Mauritius through its strong bi-lateral ties. He concluded by reiterating the need for a strong collective and coordinated response rather than numerous individual responses. In his words by not sitting together and initiating our own individual responses, “as Humankind we are letting the sea down”.

### **Mr. Deepak Shetty**

He gave a panoramic view of the three key aspects an introduction to Merchant Shipping and vessel movement, a brief about merchant shipping and relationship between India and Mauritius at the bilateral level and last but not the lease merchant shipping at the regional level. He mentioned how merchant shipping is the most effective manner of import/export trade across the world in terms of energy efficiency and volumetric efficiency as well. In the course of this Pandemic, it is the only sector to have operated largely unaffected. He gave brief statistics on the profile of the Indian Merchant shipping industry saying that it has the best education and training structure and the Indian Merchant Navy officers are the most sought after. He emphasized that 70 % of world’s trade are through water ways and India holds the best track record in maritime safety.

He listed out fifteen key points wherein India and Mauritius can collaborate not bilaterally but on a regional and international level. He mentioned the need to amplify the mandate of the UN security council resolution i.e. Contact

Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) giving it a 360 degrees mandate to tackle piracy originating from anywhere. He mentioned the need for redefining the definition of armed robbery within the premise of UNCLOS. He also mentioned the threat posed by floating armouries in the Indian ocean and need for Indo-Mauritian collaboration on this front. He expressed the need for the safety and welfare of sea-farers to be taken up on an international level. He said there is a dire need to address marine pollution through a shared resources platform as event such as oil spills have repercussion beyond territorial waters. He also referred to (OSRO) Oil Spill Response Organization and its role in the protection of maritime eco system. He lamented out the fishing community is often neglected in such discussions and applauded India for developing an indigenous DATS (distress alert transmission signals) that can be retrofitted on the fishing vessels. He mentioned various other technologies that India has pioneered in the field of merchant shipping and trading. He urged the I.O.R.A to put in place a common pool of skilled maritime experts that can be leveraged by the various geographies. He expressed his concern about money laundering and terror financing arising out of the ransom payments to the pirates in the horn of Africa. He also shared his experience on dealing with the U.N. security council sanctions related to exports of charcoal from Somalia and oil from Libya. To conclude, he emphasized the need for national contribution, co-operation and information sharing from the I.O.R.A countries and other stakeholders in the region.

**Ms. Valerie Uttapiah**

She discussed about the origins of the law of sea, which is now coded into the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS). She mentioned the how the UNCLOS originates from old age customs. UNCLOS is like a constitution of the high seas. She covered basic aspects of this constitution of the seas such navigational rights, conservation and utilizing of resources in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). She discussed the concept of territorial waters, Exclusive Economic Zone & Continental shelf and the high seas. She stated as is commonly stated in legal fraternity “the high seas belong to no one and everyone”.

She elaborated the duties and accountability of the ships in the high seas, as per the provisions of the UNCLOS. She also mentioned how UNCLOS is one of the first document's that speaks of the protection of marine resources. She in brief discussed the strength's and weaknesses of the UNCLOS dwelling upon the issues of ratification needed to ensure compliance of the provisions of UNLCOS.

## Outcomes and Suggestions

What was evident from the panel discussion was that most panellists have urged for the need of coordinated and collective response to the threats arising in the Indian Ocean Region. Almost all the stakeholders have agreed for shared resources-based platform to address the challenges of the Indian Ocean Region. In terms of the size of our population, we are the largest country having economic interests in the Indian Ocean Region. Peace and Prosperity in the Indian Ocean Region is a pre-requisite for our Blue economy to prosper. India must take lead in mobilising resources of the I.O.R.A nations and their collective utilisation to tackle the maritime security threats. All maritime security threats arising in the Indian Ocean Region will have huge repercussions in India. Currently there seems to be a void in terms of leadership role in the Indian Ocean Region. The region has is potential treasure of economic resources eyed by many world powers. It won't be long before the Chinese dragons have their eyes firm on this region. It is the need of the hour that India's steps up its leadership role in this region.

There are many factors that would work in favour of India being a leader in the cause of the India Ocean Region. Apart from the factors of self-interest such strengthening the Indian Peninsular Coast from maritime threats, India's position as a regional leader in the Indian Ocean Region will also be backed by most stakeholders in this region. India has strong bilateral relations with not only Mauritius but also other states in the Indian Ocean Region along. Other countries such as US, UK and European Powers such as Germany and France though acknowledge the vitality of the Indian Ocean Region but don't hold the same level of trust with I.O.R.A states. The Chagos Island arbitration was one prime example. This case was a contention between Mauritius and the UK over the sovereignty of Chagos Archipalego which houses the important strategic and naval base Diego Garcia. India owing to its principled opposition to colonialism has always supported the Mauritian claim. However, it is to be remembered that Diego Garcia allows the US Navy to maintain a dominant presence in the Indian Ocean, keeping the hungry Chinese in check. With the changing political dynamics, it is probable that in future balance of power considerations to weigh the burden of its principles upon India. This case proves the trust deficit between some I.O.R.A states and the world

superpowers. India however, enjoys a level of confidence among these states and is respected more than so called world powers due to past track record for compliance and respect for International laws and customs.

To further India's cause, amongst all the states in the I.O.R India is the only one with a comprehensive and strong Navy and ocean infrastructure & technology. Our panellists had reiterated in the webinar that small countries in the IOR are not capable enough to secure their EEZs. India has provided military infrastructure to Mauritius to secure its EEZ without any ulterior motive. The same model can be replicated on the regional level in the IOR states.

India's has already launched mini-steps towards assuming the leadership in the IOR through its ambitious Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) doctrine of maritime cooperation in the Indian Ocean region. Acting upon this doctrine India dispatched 600 tons of food items, two medical assistance teams and essential medicines to countries in the IOR such as Mauritius, Maldives, Madagascar, Comoros and Seychelles. However currently this is just a voluntary initiative of part of India. Unlike the ambitious Chinese "One Belt One Road" SAGAR is merely a policy of the Indian government rather than an initiative involving participation of the relevant stakeholder nation-states. PM Narendra Modi has already allayed any fears regarding India's Indian Ocean Policy and affirmed that "Our goal is to seek a climate of trust and transparency; respect for international maritime rules and norms by all countries; sensitivity to each other's interests; peaceful resolution of maritime issues; and increase in maritime cooperation". However this mere doctrine needs to be expanded into a win-win initiative for both India and its partners in the Indian Ocean Region. The time is ripe for India to show its assertive leadership in the region.

- Report by Nivedita Jha

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