

**Chief of Defence Forces, Major General Michael Rosette,
Deputy Chief of Defence Forces, Brig. General Jean Attala,
Leader of the Opposition, Mr Sabastien Pillay
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Senior officers of the Seychelles Defence Forces,
Commanding Officer of INS Sunayna, Cdr Kamal Singh Rana,
Crew of IASV Triveni
Senior functionaries of Government of Seychelles,
Friends from the Indian diaspora,
Members of the media,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Bonjour!

At the very outset, on behalf of the High Commission of India, I extend a warm welcome to everyone gathered here for this special occasion.

Today, we are pleased to welcome two distinguished delegations to Seychelles:

First, the arrival of INS Sunayna in Victoria is not just a routine port call—she comes in a unique and significant capacity, as Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) Sagar.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

IOS SAGAR is a unique initiative aligned with India's vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR). This mission underscores our commitment to fostering international cooperation and enhancing maritime collaboration, especially between India and African partner nations, as we collectively navigate challenges such as IUU fishing, drug and human trafficking, and climate change, among others.

The mission was formally flagged off from Karwar, on the west coast of India, on 5 April 2025 by the Hon'ble Defence Minister of India. On board are also 44 naval personnel from nine friendly countries—Seychelles, Comoros, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Madagascar, and the Maldives—truly a representation of regional solidarity.

Before reaching Seychelles, IOS Sagar participated in the inaugural India-Africa Key Maritime Exercise (AIKEYME 25) in Dar-es-Salaam, and made port calls in Mozambique and Mauritius.

Distinguished Guests,

India and Seychelles share a long-standing and robust defence partnership. In fact, Major General Rosette supported both the ideas of AIKEYME and IOS Sagar. Seychelles participated as planner and observers on Aikeyme and 4 members of the Seychelles Coast Guard and crew members in the IOS Sagar. Thus, the arrival of IOS Sagar in Victoria marks another milestone in the journey of reinforcing maritime cooperation and interoperability between the Indian Navy and the Seychelles Coast Guard.

This visit also reflects India's steadfast commitment to building strong maritime partnerships in the Indian Ocean and indo-pacific regions, anchored in mutual trust and collective security, envisaging these regions as free, open and inclusive maritime spaces, based on the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas.

Earlier this year, the Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi further detailed India's outlook in the region through the launch of the MAHASAGAR initiative - (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions). In this regard, the presence of naval personnel from key IOR nations on IOS Sagar, signals a united resolve to address regional maritime challenges—together.

IOS SAGAR is poised to play a pivotal role in shaping a collaborative, inclusive, and secure maritime future. Seychelles remains an invaluable partner in this shared vision for peace, prosperity, and security in the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Second, we are equally pleased to welcome the crew of IASV Triveni, a delegation that symbolizes courage, perseverance, and empowerment.

IASV Triveni is the flagship vessel of "Samudra Pradakshina", a remarkable all-women circumnavigation sailing expedition undertaken by the Indian Armed Forces.

Comprising 12 lady officers from the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force—carefully selected from 41 volunteers—they underwent intensive training before embarking on this historic journey.

The expedition was flagged off on 7 April 2025 from Mumbai and will span 55 days and over 4,000 nautical miles, from India to Seychelles and back.

The crew is divided into two teams of six; the team with us today will undertake the return voyage to India.

This initiative not only reflects the unwavering spirit of Nari Shakti (women's power) but also underlines the growing role of women in global maritime domains. It sends a strong and inspiring message—that women are equal stakeholders and contributors in all fields, including the high seas.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is both symbolic and fitting that this inspiring expedition's first international destination is Seychelles—a nation that has demonstrated admirable progress in gender parity.

We are deeply grateful for the presence of multiple distinguished women leaders, diplomats, and defence personnel present here, which will serve as a source of great encouragement to the crew of IASV Triveni—both for the voyage ahead and the journeys that follow.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the strong and enduring defence and security ties between India and Seychelles continue to play a crucial role in promoting net maritime security in our shared region. The visit of IOS Sagar strengthens our strategic cooperation, while IASV Triveni adds a new and meaningful dimension to our bilateral engagement, enriching it further with the spirit of inclusion and empowerment.

On behalf of the High Commission, I would once again like to thank all the dignitaries for their gracious presence here today. I also wish to place on record our sincere gratitude to the Government of Seychelles, including the Port Authorities, Major General Michael Rosette, and the Seychelles Defence Forces, for their generous support in facilitating these important visits.

Thank you.

Merci Beaucoup
