

**Ministers to the Government of Seychelles,**  
**Chief of Defence Forces, Major General Michael Rosette,**  
**Members of the Diplomatic Corps,**  
**Brigadier General, Jean Attala,**  
**Senior officers of the Seychelles Defence Forces,**  
**Commanding Officer of ICGS Saksham, DIG Shatujeet Singh,**  
**and crew**  
**Senior functionaries of Government of Seychelles,**  
**Friends from the Indian diaspora,**  
**Members of the media,**  
**Ladies and gentlemen,**

I, along with the Commanding Officer of ICGS Saksham, DIG Shatrujeet Singh, welcome you all on board. Your presence here symbolises and reinforces the deep and cordial nature of India-Seychelles relationship.

This evening we are on an Indian Coast Guard Ship. The Indian Coast Guard was set up in 1977, after approval of the Indian Cabinet. The main reason was to patrol the vast Indian shoreline against the menace of sea-borne smuggling, and support the Navy. The Coast Guards first vessels were two frigates and five patrol boats, transferred from the Indian Navy. The Indian Coast Guard was formally inaugurated by the then Prime Minister Shri Morarji Desai on 19 August 1978.

The objective of the ICG has evolved. Its duties now include, among others, to protect India's ocean and offshore wealth including oil, fish and minerals; assist mariners in distress and safeguard life and property at sea; enforce maritime laws with respect to sea, poaching, smuggling and narcotics; preserve marine environment and ecology and protect rare species.

Commencing with 7 vessels in 1977, the ICG now possesses 25 Offshore Patrol Vessels, 43 Fast Patrol Boats, 14 Hovercrafts, 67 Interceptor boats, 3 Pollution Control Vessels. There is also a fully functional air wing comprising Dorniers, Alouettes and Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopters.

The Patrol Boat Boudeuse, recently gifted to the Seychelles Coast Guard also belongs to the stable of the ICG.

### **Distinguished guests,**

The port call of ICGS Saksham is the second visit of an Indian ship to Seychelles in 2025 and continues the tradition of regular port call of India to Seychelles.

As countries of the Indian Ocean, maritime security and promotion of maritime economy are crucial for both India and Seychelles. Majority of Indian exim trade is sea-borne. Seychelles has a nearly 1.4 sq million km EEZ to protect and monitor. Recent events have amply demonstrated that countries in the IOR need to be on their toes to mitigate maritime challenges. Non-traditional threats like IUU fishing, drugs and human trafficking, and climate change, remain of high concern. All these have to be handled by like-minded partners and friendly countries together.

Contained in the 'Neighbourhood First' policy and effected through the 'Security and Growth for All in the Region' vision, India's maritime engagement envisages IOR and the the indo-pacific region as a free, open and inclusive space, based on the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS). India and Seychelles are integral stakeholders in an Indian Ocean community that is stable and prosperous, strong and resilient, and which is able to cooperate closely.

Further, India is also fully invested in regional cooperation to bolster maritime security. Indian ships, along with Seychelles Defence Forces have regularly participated in regional exercises including CMF's Op Southern Readiness, Ex Cutlass Express, and the IMEX. The RCOC and the IFC-IOR in India have a MOU for cooperation. These synergies strengthen regional security and augment interoperability between friendly navies to mitigate the ever increasing maritime. With Seychelles recently taking over the Chairperson-ship of the Contact Group on Illicit Maritime Activities, regional security engagement, such engagement will gain further in importance.

So, in the above context, in addition to the regular visits of IN ships, I am especially happy to see a ship from the ICG make a journey to Seychelles, which also underlines the growing importance of international cooperation for the ICG. It also highlights the robust defence and security ties between India and Seychelles, as two responsible and important partners enhancing the net security in the region.

I would once again like to thank the Government of Seychelles (including the port authorities), Major General Rosette and the Seychelles Defence Forces for their invaluable assistance for the visit of ICG Saksham.

I also take this opportunity to thank Commanding Officer and crew of ICGS Saksham for organizing this deck reception.

Thank you.

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