India, Seychelles Explore Maritime, Blue Economy Cooperation at Business Roundtable in Mumbai

"India–Seychelles Maritime Partnership Deepens Under MAHASAGAR Vision, Signals Strategic Convergence in the Indian Ocean": Sarbananda Sonowal

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India and Seychelles explored opportunities to deepen cooperation in maritime trade, blue economy sectors and sustainable development at an Indo-Seychelles Business Roundtable, held in Mumbai, which was attended by H.E. Dr. Patrick Herminie, President of the Republic of Seychelles, and Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal.

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal noted that India and Seychelles share a relationship rooted in history and strengthened by enduring people-to-people ties, with maritime exchanges predating modern diplomacy. This partnership, Sonowal asserted, has evolved into a close and friendly relationship based on shared democratic values, pluralism and mutual respect, with cooperation spanning development assistance, capacity building, education, healthcare, maritime security and disaster response.

India's engagement with Seychelles is guided by the MAHASAGAR vision—Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions—which emphasises economic cooperation, sustainability and security in the Indian Ocean Region.

"This partnership has received renewed momentum under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji. His emphasis on neighbourhood-first engagement, ocean-based cooperation, and inclusive growth has provided clear strategic direction to India's engagement with island nations of the Indian Ocean, including Seychelles. India and Seychelles share a common vision of the Indian Ocean as a region of peace, stability and shared prosperity," said **Sarbananda Sonowal**.

Sonowal said India's experience in port-led development, logistics, maritime services and renewable energy can complement Seychelles' development priorities, while Mumbai's financial and fintech ecosystem can support innovation and financial inclusion initiatives.

Identifying priority areas for deeper cooperation, **Sarbananda Sonowal** said, "Blue economy offers significant scope, including fisheries, aquaculture, port development, marine infrastructure, ocean-based renewable energy and marine research. Tourism and hospitality, renewable energy, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, financial services, fintech, education and skills development also present strong opportunities for collaboration"

The India-Seychelles Business Roundtable saw participation from numerous business entities in India active in the infrastructure, ports, fisheries, health, education, fintech and automobile sectors.

The Union Minister underlined that Mumbai's strengths as a port city—its ports, logistics networks, maritime services, shipyards and financial ecosystem—make it a natural platform to advance India–Seychelles cooperation in maritime trade and ocean-based industries.

"Mumbai has, for centuries, symbolised India's engagement with the world. Shaped by the sea, trade and enterprise, it is a fitting venue to discuss economic and business cooperation between India and Seychelles—two maritime nations connected by the Indian Ocean and united by a shared vision of prosperity and sustainable development," **Sarbananda Sonowal** said.

Referring to India's broader economic trajectory, Sonowal said the country is at a pivotal moment, supported by sustained domestic demand, a reform-oriented policy environment and large-scale infrastructure investment. Over the past decade, he said, India has undertaken wide-ranging reforms in taxation, corporate regulation and digital governance, enhancing transparency and ease of doing business.

"In the last 11 years, India's port capacity has doubled, the number of seafarers has tripled, and sea cruise passengers have increased fourfold," Sonowal said, adding that India's maritime growth creates natural synergies with partners such as Seychelles. He said India's young and skilled workforce remains central to its growth story and offers long-term opportunities for global partners.

Sonowal said India and Seychelles stand at a moment of opportunity, with historic friendship, political trust, expanding connectivity and a shared maritime vision providing a strong foundation to elevate economic partnership.

"From Mumbai to Mahé, the distance is shorter and the possibilities greater," Sonowal said, urging businesses from both countries to work together to build enduring and mutually beneficial partnerships.

Indian exports to Seychelles include pharmaceuticals, food products, textiles, engineering goods, construction materials, automobiles and consumer products, while Indian companies have contributed to infrastructure development, energy projects, construction and services in Seychelles. He noted that improved connectivity, including direct flights between Mumbai and Mahé, has strengthened tourism, business travel and commercial engagement between the two countries.

Organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs, Govt of India, it was attended by senior officials, business leaders and industry representatives from both countries including Vijay Kumar, IAS, Secretary, MoPSW; Shyam Jagannathan, Director General of Shipping; Captain B K Tyagi, Chairman & Managing Director (CMD), Shipping Corporation of India (SCI); M Angamuthu, Chairperson of Mumbai Port Authority (MbPA); Gaurav Dayal, Chairperson, Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA); Rohit Rathish, High Commissioner of India to Seychelles; S. Kuppuswamy, Special Advisor, Shapoorji Pallonji among others

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