

# **“India & the Indian Ocean : Renewing the Maritime Trade & Civilizational Linkages”**

**March 22, 2015 / Bhubaneshwar**

## **Address of Hon'ble MoS (I/C), P&NG**

- A very good afternoon to all of you. It is a great honor to be part of the valedictory session amongst distinguished persons to deliberate on the subject “India & the Indian Ocean : Renewing the Maritime Trade & Civilizational Linkages”.
- I would like to begin with my special thanks to Shri Manohar Parikkar who has taken time out to give his insights to this August gathering. As the Defence Minister of India his perspectives on the Indian Ocean will be guiding principles for the gathering over here.
- I also thank Hon'ble Governor of Odisha for consenting to grace the occasion. He has got long experience in political life in important positions and his guidance will add value to the proceedings of the conference.
- Friends, I am overwhelmed with the outcome of the conference in last three days. I have interacted with several delegates, guests and speakers of the various sessions on various technical and general issues related to the topic of the Conference. I have come to understand that the conference has helped in building in depth understanding of several issues and will strengthen the academic and research resources on Indian Ocean studies.
- On policy making aspect, I am happy that several senior Ministers and leaders from the Union Government and the State Government have actively participated in the conference and enriched us. I am sure they would have taken back the inputs from the other distinguished speakers which will be reflected in policy making on Indian Ocean in coming days.
- Friends, during the inaugural session I had emphasised on the special relation people of Odisha have with the sea and also the special linkages that India has shared with Indian Ocean countries since historical periods. I also stressed on the importance of the Indian Ocean region in international trade and maritime activities.
- We need to put our acts together and the academics, think tanks, policy makers in both central and state governments should work together to reestablish the lost linkages.
- The government under Hon'ble PM Narendra Modi has a clear focus to integrate India with the Indian Ocean in trade, economic and cultural bandages. His recent visits to Mauritius, Seychelles, and Sri Lanka has strengthened this. In fact PM of Mauritius was also invited to the swearing in ceremony of the NDA government where only head of governments of SAARC countries were invited.
- In the inaugural session I had stressed on focussing on regional cooperation on three aspects: (1) cooperation in the area of disaster management as the region is prone to such calamities ; (2) enhancing cultural and heritage linkages among the Indian Ocean Rim countries and promoting tourism and people-to-people contact with specific activities like developing the Buddhist Circuits; (3) skill development by exchanging best practices of each other and developing Regional Skill Development Centres.
- After going through the three days experience I have the confidence to be more ambitious and emphasis on working for the 4th area, that is , stronger cooperation in economic and trade areas. The whole region has the potential to emerge as an economic power house and spring board with intense economic, energy and trade activities.
- I will repeat that India is prepared to play a leading role in this context in the affairs of the Indian Ocean region for the larger benefit of all countries in our region.
- With these words, I thank everyone who has participated in the event in last three days. I hope ISCS and RIS will continue their efforts in this direction. Thank you all.