

India, Mauritius elevate ties to 'strategic' level



PM Narendra Modi with his Mauritian counterpart Navin Ramgoolam (left) and Mauritius President Dharam Gokhool, after receiving the highest national award of Mauritius — the Grand Commander of the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean — in Port Louis on Thursday

PHOTO: REUTERS

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India and Mauritius on Wednesday elevated their ties to an 'enhanced strategic partnership' and signed eight agreements to boost cooperation in several sectors, including trade and maritime security. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled an ambitious vision for the development of the Global South.

The agreements will promote the use of national currencies for cross-border transactions, facilitate maritime data sharing, enhance joint efforts to combat money laundering, and strengthen cooperation in the MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) sector.

On the second and final day of his visit to Port Louis, Modi attended the National Day celebrations of Mauritius as the chief guest. A contingent of the Indian Armed Forces participated in the celebrations, accompanied by an Indian Navy warship and the Akash Ganga skydiving team of the Indian Air Force.

Following talks with Mauritian Prime Minister Navinchandra

Ramgoolam, Modi announced India's new vision for the Global South, named "MAHASAGAR" or "Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions." The policy comes amid China's growing influence in the Indian Ocean.

Modi emphasised that a free, open, secure, and safe Indian Ocean is a shared priority for India and Mauritius. He and Ramgoolam agreed that defense cooperation and maritime security are crucial aspects of their strategic partnership.

"We are committed to extending full cooperation in securing Mauritius' Exclusive Economic Zone," Modi said in his media statement.

The unveiling of this new vision comes 10 years after Modi introduced the SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) policy during his 2015 visit to Mauritius, which formed the foundation of India's engagement in the Indian Ocean Region.

"We have taken the SAGAR vision forward for the stability and prosperity of this entire region. Now, moving beyond SAGAR, our vision for the Global South will be MAHASAGAR," Modi said.