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Maritime Information Sharing Workshop 2025 (MISW-25)

Theme: Enhancing Real-Time Coordination and Information Sharing Across the Indian Ocean Region

I. Opening Remarks and Setting the context.

Distinguished delegates, officers, colleagues, and friends from across the Indian Ocean Region,

It is my honour and privilege to be part of the *Maritime Information Sharing Workshop 2025*. I extend warm greetings to all participants – representatives from navy, coast guards, shipping administrations, regional information fusion centres, and international partners.

I take this opportunity to commend the **Indian Navy** and the **Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)** for bringing together such a diverse and committed audience. Your presence today reflects the collective commitment of our nations to make our Indian Ocean a safe, secure, connected, and better-informed maritime space.

It also gives me immense pleasure to acknowledge the participation of our international partners – from Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (**BIMSTEC**), **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)**, **Djibouti Code of Conduct / Jeddah Amendment (DCoC/JA)**, **International Maritime Organization (IMO)**, **Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP)** **Information Sharing Centre**, and other regional organisations – whose continued collaboration strengthens the fabric of maritime governance.

Today's workshop embodies India's larger maritime vision – **MAHASAGAR: Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions** – a vision that builds upon the Prime Minister's initiative of **SAGAR – Security and Growth for All in the Region**.

Maritime India Vision 2030, and Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047 define India's long-term trajectory towards a Viksit Bharat – a fully developed maritime nation by 2047. These missions aim to position India among the **Top 5 shipbuilding and repair nations, with over INR 80 lakh crore investment potential by 2047**, and to generate more than **100,000 skilled jobs through port-led, green, and secure maritime development**

II. India's Maritime Destiny and Collective Responsibility

India's destiny has always been defined by the seas. With over **11,000 km of coastline, 12 major ports, and more than 200 non-major ports**, our prosperity and security are intertwined with the maritime domain. Nearly **95% of India's trade by volume and 70% by value** flows through the seas — the arteries of our economy.

The **Indian Ocean Region** is home to vital sea lanes that carry almost **70% of global oil shipments and 50% of container traffic**. What happens in these waters affects not just regional stability, but global economic balance.

In this interconnected seascape, **no single nation can secure the seas alone**. Our ability to prevent and respond to maritime challenges depends on how effectively *we share information, coordinate responses, and build mutual trust*.

That is precisely why this workshop is so important. **Maritime Information Sharing** is the foundation of Maritime Domain Awareness — and Maritime Domain Awareness is the first line of maritime security.

III. The Role of the Directorate General of Shipping

The **Directorate General of Shipping (DGS)**, under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, stands at the interface of **regulation, safety, and coordination**. It ensures that India's merchant fleet operates safely, securely, and sustainably, while also protecting the interests of our seafarers and maritime environment.

We serve as the bridge between **policy and practice** — linking government agencies, shipping companies, seafarers, and international bodies such as the **IMO**.

Through mechanisms like the **Long-Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) Centre** and the **DGComm system**, we support information sharing across operational, regulatory, and safety domains — linking civilian authorities with military and port security frameworks.

- Through our **LRIT system**, we maintain a constant watch on vessel movements globally. In a demonstration of regional commitment under our **SAGAR vision**, we provide this sophisticated tracking service **free-of-cost to Sri Lanka and Maldives**.
- This network is not passive. Our **DGCOMM centre** is the nation's 24x7 maritime nerve centre. Its effectiveness is proven: from managing **195 incidents in 2024**, its

operational tempo has remained high, already coordinating responses for **over 175+ maritime incidents in 2025 alone**. When the *MSC Elsa 3* sank and the *Wan Hai 503* caught fire, our **standardized protocols and multi-agency coordination** ensured zero fatalities and prevented major environmental disasters, including the recovery of **704.5 metric tonnes of plastic nurdles**

IV. Strengthening the Maritime Security Architecture

India has built a **multi-layered maritime security framework** integrating **naval, coast guard, and civilian systems** – a model for inter-agency collaboration across domains.

At the strategic apex lies the **National Command, Control, Communication and Intelligence (NC3I)** network – the digital nervous system connecting maritime stakeholders.

The **Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC)** acts as a central node for data collection and analysis, providing real-time operational picture of India's maritime zones.

The **Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)** extends this awareness globally – sharing information with partner nations to build cooperative surveillance and coordinated responses.

Under the Directorate General of Shipping, the **Maritime Domain Awareness Centre (MMDAC)** operates the **DGComm** and **LRIT** systems – enabling regulatory oversight and safety tracking of merchant vessels.

A landmark step forward is the **Merchant Shipping Act 2025**, which institutionalises the **Bureau of Port Security (BOPS)** – a specialised body dedicated to securing ports, terminals, and maritime infrastructure from **physical, cyber, and hybrid threats**.

Together, these institutions form a **comprehensive maritime grid** – uniting military vigilance, civilian governance, and regulatory enforcement into a single, coordinated maritime architecture.

V. Smart, Secure, and Sovereign Seaways

Maritime safety today demands **digital vigilance** as much as physical preparedness.

India is harnessing emerging technologies – **AI-driven analytics, satellite-based tracking, and unmanned systems** – to enhance surveillance, navigation safety, and threat prediction.

Under **BOPS supervision**, ports are adopting **cybersecurity frameworks, smart access controls, and global resilience standards**.

Our **Coastal Surveillance Network**, integrating hundreds of radar stations and AIS nodes, is now linked with partner nations through the **IFC-IOR**, reinforcing India's position as the pivot of regional maritime awareness and crisis response.

These digital and operational linkages allow us to move from **incident response** to **incident prevention**, ensuring that our seaways remain not only busy and prosperous, but also secure and sovereign.

VI. Human Element – The Seafarer as Guardian

While technology enables awareness, it is the **human element** that sustains security.

India's maritime strength rests upon the dedication of its **3.2 lakh trained seafarers**, making us one of the **top three suppliers of global maritime workforce**.

Under the leadership of the Directorate General of Shipping, major reforms have transformed the seafarer ecosystem – through **digital certification, competency upgradation, and welfare digitisation**.

We have prioritised **simulation-based training**, mental health support, and inclusivity – ensuring that Indian seafarers remain resilient, skilled, and future-ready.

In every sense, **the seafarer is not just a worker – but a guardian of the sea**. Every log entry, every radio report, every act of vigilance contributes to a safer maritime world.

VII. Cooperative Maritime Order

India's maritime vision is anchored in the belief that the oceans must remain **open, inclusive, and rules-based**.

We uphold the principles of the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** – promoting freedom of navigation, respect for sovereignty, and responsible use of marine resources.

India's active participation in **IONS, IORA, DCoC, and the Quad Maritime Security Working Group** reflects our enduring commitment to regional cooperation.

Beyond dialogue, India has been a **first responder in humanitarian crises** — from the 2004 Tsunami to evacuations in the **Red Sea and West Asia**, demonstrating our role as a **net security provider** in the Indian Ocean Region.

Through combined naval exercises, capacity-building programs, and maritime domain partnerships, we are shaping a **cooperative maritime order** where information sharing is not an exception, but a norm.

VIII. The Future – Towards a Unified Maritime Information Ecosystem

Looking ahead, our challenge is not the lack of data — but the lack of **integration and interpretation**.

We must strive to:

- Integrate **safety, compliance, and security data** into unified maritime information systems.
- Develop **standardised, trust-based sharing protocols** that encourage timely exchange while respecting confidentiality.
- Expand **capacity-building programs** for officers, regulators, and seafarers in early incident reporting and response coordination.
- Leverage **digitalisation and automation** — linking **AIS, LRIT, satellite feeds, and port systems** into multi-agency dashboards.
- Encourage **public-private partnerships**, since ship operators are often the first observers of unusual activity at sea.

These efforts will strengthen real-time maritime coordination, empowering nations to act swiftly and collaboratively — not reactively.

IX. The Larger Vision – Maritime Amrit Kaal 2047

Our long-term vision aligns with **Maritime Amrit Kaal 2047**, under which India aspires to become a **global maritime power** — secure, sustainable, and digitally advanced.

Future priorities include:

- Expanding **BOPS-led security frameworks** across all major and minor ports.
- Promoting **green and secure shipping**, aligned with the **National Green Shipping Policy (NGSP)**.
- Strengthening indigenous shipbuilding through **SBFA 2.0** and the **Maritime Development Fund (MDF)**.
- Institutionalising integrated governance through the proposed **Directorate General of Maritime Administration (DGMA)**.

These initiatives will not only enhance safety but also ensure that the Indian Ocean remains a region of **peace, progress, and shared prosperity**.

X. Concluding Reflections

As we deliberate in this workshop, let us remember — **security at sea begins with awareness, and awareness begins with sharing**.

The IFC-IOR has demonstrated how information fusion can turn **data into insight, and insight into action**.

Let MISW-25 serve as a reaffirmation of our collective resolve — to make the **Indian Ocean safer, smarter, and stronger through shared understanding and mutual trust**.

When our seas are safe, our sovereignty is secure.

When our ports are protected, our economies thrive.

And when our information flows freely, our partnerships endure.

Let us carry forward this spirit — of collaboration, of vigilance, and of shared destiny.

Thank you. Jai Hind.