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**EDITORIAL ANALYSIS**

# India's Indian Ocean Moment in Seychelles

THE HINDU

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CURATED &amp; WRITTEN BY

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# India's Indian Ocean Moment in Seychelles

 **The Hindu** 28 June 2026 **GS2**

Source: [ujjyari.com](http://ujjyari.com) — researched, fact-checked & UPSC-mapped



## INTERVIEW ANGLE

*"Gifting a patrol vessel buys headlines; delivering on development promises buys loyalty. In a contested Indian Ocean, can India out-deliver rather than merely out-patrol its rivals among small island states?"*

Source: [Original editorial](#)  [The Hindu](#)

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## WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

PM Modi's three-day state visit to **Seychelles** (June 27 to 29, 2026), as Guest of Honour at the island's **National Day Golden Jubilee**, included the handover of the fast patrol vessel **Lespwar** to the Seychelles Coast Guard. For an aspirant, this is a GS2 case on **India's maritime strategy, the SAGAR to MAHASAGAR shift, and the contest for influence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).**

## THE CRUX IN 60 WORDS

India is consolidating its role as **net security provider** in the IOR. The visit and the evolution from **SAGAR** to **Vision MAHASAGAR** widen the frame from security to shared growth. But durable influence among small island states needs **development delivery**, not just gifted patrol vessels, especially amid competition for influence in a contested ocean.

## THE ISSUE, DECODED

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CONCEPT	WHAT IT MEANS	WHY IT MATTERS
<b>SAGAR (2015)</b>	Security and Growth for All in the Region	India's founding IOR vision
<b>Vision MAHASAGAR</b>	Mutual and Holistic ( <a href="https://ujivari.com/vocab/holistic/">https://ujivari.com/vocab/holistic/</a> ) Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions	Widens SAGAR to growth and capacity
<b>Net security provider</b>	First responder for regional maritime threats	India's strategic self-image in the IOR
<b>Small island states</b>	Seychelles, Mauritius, Maldives	Strategically large despite small size

## THE ANALYSIS

- 1 Strategic geography.** Seychelles sits astride sea lanes carrying a large share of global trade and energy. Influence there is disproportionate (<https://ujivari.com/vocab/disproportionate/>) to the island's size, which is why every major power courts it.
- 2 From security to growth.** SAGAR framed India's role in security terms; **MAHASAGAR** reframes it around mutual growth, capacity building and Global South solidarity, a softer, more durable basis for partnership.
- 3 The delivery gap.** Patrol vessels and ceremonies signal intent, but island states judge partners by completed projects, maintenance support, training and jobs. Episodic, supply-driven outreach is fragile.
- 4 The competition for influence.** Indian Ocean states can weigh multiple suitors. India's edge is that it seeks no bases and does not coerce, but trust must be renewed through performance, not assumed.

## DATA AND INSTITUTIONS VAULT

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*PM Modi in Seychelles June 27 to 29, 2026, Guest of Honour at the National Day Golden Jubilee; handover of fast patrol vessel **Lespwar** to the Seychelles Coast Guard. **The doctrines: SAGAR** (Security and Growth for All in the Region, 2015) evolving into **Vision MAHASAGAR**. **The bodies:** Indian Navy and Coast Guard; Information Fusion Centre, Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR); Colombo Security Conclave; Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). **Concept:** net security provider; maritime domain awareness; blue economy (<https://ujjayari.com/terms/blue-economy/>); non-traditional security threats (piracy, IUU fishing, climate).*

## THE DEBATE

**Argument for the strategy:** India is the natural first responder in the IOR. The SAGAR to MAHASAGAR evolution, asset handovers and maritime cooperation build a non-coercive security architecture that smaller states welcome over base-seeking powers.

**Argument against:** Outreach is too episodic and supply-driven; promised projects stall, and island states extract gifts by playing suitors against each other. Without sustained delivery, goodwill does not become strategic depth.

**Balanced verdict:** The ambition is sound and the trust is real, but influence in the IOR is won in maintenance contracts and finished projects, not at handover ceremonies. India must out-deliver, not merely out-patrol.

## HOW TO THINK ABOUT THIS (TRANSFERABLE SKILL)

*When evaluating any diplomatic event, ask what was signalled versus what was built. A handover signals intent; a training programme, a radar chain or a fisheries project builds capacity. Strong answers test whether a visit changed the underlying system or merely decorated it.*

## DIAGRAM-IN-WORDS

SAGAR (2015, security) -> Vision MAHASAGAR (growth + capacity) -> Seychelles visit + Lespwar handover -> maritime domain awareness, blue economy -> IF sustained delivery -> durable net security provider in the IOR

## THE WAY FORWARD

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- 1 **Shift from gifts to systems.** Pair asset handovers with time-bound training, hydrography, coastal radar and maintenance the island governs.
- 2 **Institutionalise MAHASAGAR.** Give the vision concrete mechanisms: joint maritime domain awareness, blue-economy funds and disaster resilience (<https://ujjyari.com/vocab/resilience/>) compacts.
- 3 **Embed in architecture.** Knit Seychelles into IORA, the Colombo Security Conclave and IFC-IOR so cooperation outlives any single visit.
- 4 **Deliver visibly.** Complete projects on time; nothing builds trust in small states faster than a promise kept.

## THE TAKEAWAY BOX

*India's net-security-provider ambition in the IOR is credible but will be judged by development delivery, not deployments.*

*"India's Indian Ocean moment in Seychelles is real, but it will be measured by what is delivered after the ships sail home."*

*SAGAR (2015) and Vision MAHASAGAR; fast patrol vessel Lesparwar; Seychelles National Day Golden Jubilee 2026; IFC-IOR; IORA; Colombo Security Conclave.*

*Is non-coercive, no-bases partnership a moral and strategic advantage, or a constraint when rivals offer cheaper money faster?*

*UPSC has asked on India's role in the Indian Ocean and the SAGAR vision; this connects doctrine to a live test case.*

*Blue economy, Global South diplomacy, neighbourhood-first and maritime security.*

**Sources:** *The Hindu* (<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion>), *Business Standard* (<https://www.business-standard.com>), *StratNews Global* (<https://stratnewsglobal.com>)

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**KEY ARGUMENTS AT A GLANCE**

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**PM Modi's Seychelles visit and the evolution from SAGAR to Vision MAHASAGAR show India consolidating its role as net security provider in the Indian Ocean Region, but durable influence will depend on delivering development, not just handing over patrol vessels, amid intensifying competition for influence among Indian Ocean states.**

 **SUPPORTING**

- The handover of the fast patrol vessel *Leespwar* and maritime security cooperation make India the first responder for small island states facing piracy, illegal fishing and climate threats.
- Vision MAHASAGAR widens SAGAR from a security frame to one of mutual growth, capacity building and shared prosperity across the Global South.
- Seychelles' position astride critical sea lanes makes it a litmus test of whether India can convert goodwill into a durable security architecture.

 **COUNTER**

Critics argue India's maritime outreach remains episodic and supply-driven, that promised projects often stall, and that island states can play suitors off against each other, limiting any single partner's leverage.

 **WAY FORWARD**

Move from one-off gifts to time-bound, demand-led development and capacity delivery, institutionalise maritime domain awareness and blue-economy partnerships, and embed Seychelles in a wider IOR architecture under MAHASAGAR.


**MAINS ANSWER FRAMEWORK**

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**QUESTION**

*"India's bid to be the net security provider in the Indian Ocean Region will be judged by development delivery, not deployments." Critically examine in light of India's evolving SAGAR to MAHASAGAR maritime doctrine. (250 words)*

**INTRODUCTION**

A patrol vessel handed over at a Golden Jubilee makes a fine photograph, but influence in the Indian Ocean is won over years, not at ceremonies. PM Modi's Seychelles visit is best read as a test of whether India can match deployments with delivery.

**BODY**

India has long aspired to be the net security provider in the Indian Ocean Region. The 2015 SAGAR vision, Security and Growth for All in the Region, framed that ambition, and its evolution into Vision MAHASAGAR widens the frame from security to mutual growth, capacity building and shared prosperity across the Global South.

The Seychelles visit operationalises this. India handed over the fast patrol vessel *Lespar* to the Seychelles Coast Guard and reaffirmed cooperation on maritime domain awareness, the blue economy and non-traditional threats such as piracy, illegal fishing and climate change.

Seychelles, astride critical sea lanes, is strategically disproportionate to its size. Yet the deeper question is durability.

Small island states increasingly weigh suitors, and influence built on episodic gifts is fragile when promised projects stall. India's comparative advantage is not chequebook scale but the trust of a partner that does not seek bases or coercion.

Converting that trust into a stable architecture requires demand-led, time-bound delivery: training, hydrography, coastal radar, fisheries and disaster resilience that the island actually governs. The contrast aspirants should draw is between transactional presence and developmental partnership; the former buys a visit, the latter buys a decade.

**CONCLUSION**

India's Indian Ocean moment in Seychelles is real, but it will be measured by what is delivered after the ships sail home. Net security provision is proved in maintenance contracts and completed projects, not in handovers.


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