

SPEECH OF HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR DECK RECEPTION

ONBOARD INS TRIKAND

MOMBASA PORT – 07 APRIL 2026

Major General Paul Otieno, Commander Kenya Navy; our Chief Guest this evening;

Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command of the Indian Navy;

Deputy Governors of Kilifi and Taita Taveta;

Commanding Officer of Indian Naval Ship Trikan and her distinguished crew;

Officers of the Kenya Defence Forces

Defence Attaches, Members of the diplomatic corps;

Esteemed members of the Indian diaspora;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Namaskar, Jambo!

It is a privilege to welcome you all onboard Indian Naval Ship Trikan during her visit to Mombasa—a city that has, for centuries, stood at the crossroads of maritime exchange across the Indian Ocean.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the Chief of Defence Forces of Kenya and Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command of the Indian Navy, for joining us this evening. The presence of both dignitaries reflects not only the warmth of India–Kenya relations, but also the strategic importance both countries attach to bilateral defence cooperation. I also extend my deep appreciation to Hon’ble Governors for their esteemed presence.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

India and Kenya are bound by geography, history, and a shared maritime destiny. The Indian Ocean does not divide us—it connects us. Today, more than ever, this ocean carries the weight of global commerce, energy flows, and digital connectivity. At the same time, it faces complex challenges—ranging from piracy and trafficking to emerging non-traditional threats.

The current geo-political conflict in West Asia is also having its repercussions on maritime transport through this region. It is in this context that India and Kenya find natural convergence—as responsible maritime nations committed to stability, security, and the rule of law at sea.

Distinguished Guests,

India's maritime outlook is today articulated through the vision of MAHASAGAR—a more expansive articulation of our approach to the seas. At its core lies the belief that maritime security, economic growth, and regional stability must advance together through partnership. Our approach remains collaborative and inclusive—focused on capacity building, enhancing maritime domain awareness, and working with partners such as Kenya to address shared challenges in the Western Indian Ocean.

Standing onboard *Trikand*, one sees a reflection of India's operational reach and professionalism. The ship, and others like her, are deployed across vast maritime spaces—not only to safeguard national interests, but also to contribute to regional stability, humanitarian assistance, and cooperative security. In this context, the Western Naval Command of the Indian Navy continues to play a pivotal role in shaping India's maritime outreach in the Indian Ocean Region—driving operational engagements, partnerships, and sustained presence across the western seaboard and beyond. *Trikand's* presence in Mombasa is a demonstration of India's continued commitment to this region of growing strategic relevance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Defence cooperation between India and Kenya is fast evolving into a partnership of substance with cooperation spanning training, capacity building, defence exchanges, and maritime cooperation. The frequent high-level visits by defence leadership from both sides is symbolic of this growing partnership. The enunciation of the BAHARI maritime vision, regular holding of the Joint Defence Cooperation Committee meetings, commissioning of the India-Africa Commemorative pillar, regular port calls by Indian naval and Coast Guard ships at Kenyan ports, participation of Kenyan navy in International Fleet Review and MILAN 2026

are some of the recent examples of our shared intent to deepen this partnership across domains, bringing greater structure and momentum to our engagements.

The initiatives taken today by gifting of 100 INSAS rifles to the Kenya Defence Forces and the signing of a Quick Impact Project for supply of MRI machine to Kenyan Navy on grant basis by the Ministry of Defence of India, reflect a broader philosophy—that security cooperation must go hand in hand with human-centric development. In all this, we deeply value the professionalism of the Kenya Defence Forces and the shared ethos that underpins our interactions.

Looking ahead, there remains significant potential to further expand our partnership—particularly in areas such as maritime security and domain awareness, capacity building, defence industry collaboration, and coordinated responses to regional challenges. India remains committed to working closely with Kenya as a trusted and dependable partner.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I conclude, I once again thank General Kahariri, Vice-Admiral K Swaminathan and all distinguished guests for joining us this evening. I invite you all to enjoy the hospitality and flavours of India onboard INS Trikhand, a part of India.

As we stand here on the shores of the Indian Ocean, let us reaffirm a shared resolve—that these waters remain not a theatre of contestation, but a space of cooperation, stability, and shared prosperity.

Thank you. Asanteni sana. Jai Hind.