

**COMMISSIONING CEREMONY OF
A NEW PASSENGER VARIANT DORNIER AIRCRAFT
AND HANDING OVER CEREMONY OF THE
LEASED INDIAN ADVANCED LIGHT HELICOPTER**

**SPEECH BY HON PRAVIND KUMAR JUGNAUTH
PRIME MINISTER**

**WEDNESDAY 27 APRIL 2022 AT 1600 HRS
(*HON PRIME MINISTER TO ARRIVE AT 1600 HRS*)**

**VENUE: MARITIME AIR SQUADRON
SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

Her Excellency the High Commissioner of India,

Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service,

Secretary for Home Affairs,

Commissioner of Police,

Chief Executive Officer, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited,

General Manager, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited,

Commanding Officer, National Coast Guard,

Commanding Officer, Police Helicopter Squadron,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

I am very pleased to join you today for the commissioning ceremony of the new Passenger Variant Dornier aircraft MPCG-5, and the handing over of the leased Advanced Light Helicopter Dhruv.

Let me first of all welcome Shri Sajal Prakash, and Shri Apurba Roy, respectively CEO and General Manager of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, who have come especially for this ceremony.

I wish to commend Hindustan Aeronautics Limited for delivering the New Passenger Variant Dornier well before its contractual completion time. I convey my gratitude to the CEO and General Manager, and through them, to their staff for the efficient service of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.

This commissioning ceremony of the new aircraft is a milestone in our endeavour to protect our territorial integrity, and to enhance the operational capabilities of the Mauritius Police Force.

I must add that today's event is a landmark in the rich history of the close and longstanding relationship between India and Mauritius. It is also a symbol of the fruitful collaboration between the Indian Navy and the Mauritius Police Force.

Mauritius is strategically located in the Indian Ocean, and has been endowed with one of the largest Exclusive Economic Zones in the world. Our maritime zone includes a multitude of crisscrossing sea routes, mostly used for trade. It possesses a rich array of under-exploited marine

resources, and encompasses a number of outer islands with varying degrees of activity and remoteness.

Given the immense potential of our Exclusive Economic Zone, the Vision of Government is to make the Ocean Industry an important pillar to sustain economic diversification, job creation, and wealth generation. We expect that in the medium term, this industry's contribution to our economy will double to 20% of our GDP.

Moreover, we are committed to the safety, security, welfare, and well-being of the Mauritian population, including our fellow citizens from the outer-islands. We want our country to remain safe, peaceful, and attractive to investors and tourists.

As regards outer islands, our policy is in accordance with our fundamental principles of inclusive socio-economic development, and equal opportunities. This include, *inter alia*, the upgrading of the living conditions of inhabitants, access to services such as health and education, as well as timely and adequate food supplies and provisions.

We have upgraded and improved both maritime and air connectivity so as to further support socio-economic development on the island of Agalega. We also want to improve access to government services on the island.

Security challenges can, however, be a major threat to socio-economic development. This is why we

believe that our waters must be adequately monitored and policed.

Due to the vastness of our Exclusive Economic Zone, our waters are constantly exposed to criminal activities such as illegal fishing, drug trafficking, maritime piracy, and marine pollution. So, we need to be always prepared for prompt and speedy responses to incidents, especially where life is at stake. Our officers must be ready to be deployed at any moment for humanitarian actions, including search and rescue on land and at sea, conveyance of patients from Rodrigues and other outer islands, as well as salvage operations following ship wreckages.

Our National Coast Guard has been quite successful in their interventions lately, leading to the arrest of drug traffickers with their drugs consignments at sea. There is a good interagency coordination to fight crimes efficiently. The recent drug seizure off *Le Morne* by the National Coast Guard, Police Helicopter Squadron, and other Branches of the Force stands as eloquent testimony of well-coordinated activities within the Police Force.

I am thankful to the Commissioner of Police, and the Commanding Officers of the National Coast Guard and of the Police Helicopter Squadron, for the invaluable support provided in the evacuation of

fuel from stranded boats, thus averting major oil spills in our waters.

I would also like to commend the National Coast Guard for having evacuated over 81 passengers in a short span of just six months, and the crew who evacuated a two-day-old baby in critical condition from Rodrigues. This evacuation required the crew to fly low to enable the cabin to function as a neo-natal Intensive Care Unit.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Amidst the continuously emerging threats, the sophistication of criminals, and the increasing demand for better public service, government firmly believes that a combination of intelligent policing

and state-of-the-art assets, manned by highly trained personnel, is required to combat illicit activities at sea, and respond to various emergencies and critical incidents.

With the induction of the Dornier aircraft MPCG-5, a modern state-of-the-art aircraft, the Mauritius Police Force is expanding its resources to achieve the vision of a Crime-free Mauritius, and an effective service delivery.

The new Passenger Variant Dornier aircraft MPCG-5, constructed by the Indian Defence Public Sector Undertaking, Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd, and financed under the Indian Line of Credit, will play a critical role in securing our maritime zone.

It will also transform the National Coast Guard's capability to extend support to Outer Islands.

The aircraft has maritime surveillance capabilities, and will be a pivotal element in the National Coast Guard's capability to conduct surveillance up to the very fringes of our maritime zones. In addition, the new aircraft has greater endurance, augmented load-carriage capacity blended with low operating cost, and provides ease of access for all maintenance and safety checks.

The aircraft can be configured for multiple roles, such as air ambulance, and Search and Rescue. It can even be used as a neo-natal Intensive Care Unit. The MPCG-5 will go a long way in fulfilling our

commitment to our fellow citizens in Rodrigues, and Agalega.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, we are also formally inducting an Advanced Light Helicopter, the Dhruv, on lease from India, into the Police Helicopter Squadron. The fight against crime will get a major boost from the increased use of technology intensive equipment by the Mauritius Police Force.

The Advanced Light Helicopter we have received today, is a versatile platform capable of night flying. The future holds the promise of better capabilities for the Mauritius Police Force with continued induction of technology, and state-of-the-art assets.

We are at present working on a project to replace the existing Coastal Surveillance Radar Stations across Mauritius with state-of-the-art equipment.

The Police Helicopter Squadron will receive an Advanced Light Helicopter Mark III in the coming years. The new Advanced Light Helicopter Mark III is a state-of-the-art flying machine, and has contemporary technologies that are driving the aviation sphere today.

The induction of these modern types of aircraft is another evidence that our ties with India are getting stronger by the day. It demonstrates our shared commitment to peace and security in the Indian Ocean.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of India for its steadfast support and contribution towards the Maritime Security of Mauritius. In particular, I would like to thank the High Commissioner of India, Her Excellency Mrs Nandini Singla, whose personal involvement in the realisation of several joint projects is remarkable.

I extend my thanks to Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd for its relentless and unwavering support to the Mauritius Police Force.

The delivery of the new Dornier aircraft in a record time of six months is another feather in the cap of Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. MPCG-5 is the first of its kind aircraft produced by the Hindustan

Aeronautics Ltd, and Mauritius is the first nation in the world to operate this modern aircraft.

As we commission the new MPCG-5, and induct the leased Advanced Light Helicopter Dhruv, I wish the aircrew 'Safe Flying' and 'Happy landings' in the days to come.

Thank you for your attention.
