

**Embassy of India
Manila**

Press Release

India and Philippines Enhance Blue Economy and Maritime Engagement

Signing of MoU between Indian Maritime University and Batangas State University

As part of efforts to strengthen bilateral engagement on Blue Economy and Maritime sector between India and the Philippines, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed today between the Indian Maritime University, Chennai and the Batangas State University, Batangas City. The MOU was signed by Dr. Malini V. Shankar, Vice Chancellor, Indian Maritime University and Dr. Tirso A. Ronquillo, President Batangas State University in the presence of the Ambassador of India to the Philippines H.E. Shambhu S. Kumaran.

The Indian Maritime University(IMU) was established through an Act of Parliament in 2008 as a Central University. IMU plays a key role in the developments of trained human resource for the maritime sector in India. The Batangas State University(BatStateU), established in 1903 as a manual training school, evolved to being the Philippines's National Engineering University in April 2022 by Republic Act 11694. BatStateU aims to develop capable engineers in the various sectors of Marine Engineering.

In her remarks, Dr. Malini Shankar highlighted that initial focus will be in the field of naval architecture and ocean engineering which subsequently could be expanded to marine engineering, nautical science and management. She emphasized that the MoU is the beginning of regional cooperation in maritime education and training, which would promote South-South engagement.

Welcoming the signing of MoU, Dr. Tirso Ronquillo said that number of programs could be conducted under the collaboration in the field of marine science, marine biodiversity, port and logistic management. He added that the partnership will help in boosting existing program and future research in marine technology. He emphasized on biodiversity research by undertaking joint developmental programs and plans for boosting marine biodiversity.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Kumaran underlined the significance of engagement in this vital sector for both India and the Philippines both bilaterally as well as in the larger strategic framework of the Indo-Pacific, especially India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) which has identified capacity building as one of its seven pillars for engagement. India and the Philippines are not just leading democracies in the region, we have vital stakes in the maritime sector which is a priority sector for national development, the Ambassador added. This MOU will particularly facilitate the skilling of specialised human resources, which is a key objective of both governments and also in line with the effort of both countries to further expand their people centric partnership, Ambassador Kumaran said.

The MOU will spur engagement between the two leading institutions by supporting academic exchanges, conduct of collaborative research projects, co-hosting of conferences and other mutually agreed activities. To start with the focus areas that have been identified for engagement are Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering, Port Management and Marine Biodiversity. This MOU would also facilitate exchange of best practices as well as visits by scientists and technologists from both countries.

Maritime Cooperation between India and Philippines is expanding. Earlier this year India's Minister of External Affairs Dr S. Jaishankar and then Philippines Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr had announced the launch of a new and wide-ranging bilateral Maritime Affairs Dialogue between the two countries. The two sides have already finalized the terms of reference for the Dialogue, and the first round is expected to be held next year.

Both sides are also working to operationalise their bilateral agreement on Sharing of White Shipping Information, with a view to enhancing Maritime Domain Awareness and Maritime Security.

To broaden cooperation in the area of Blue Economy, especially fisheries, an MOU on Research Collaboration between Indian Council for Agriculture Research(ICAR) and Apolinario R. Apacible School of Fisheries(ARASOF), Batangas State University is also under consideration. Both countries have also commenced an active engagement on Hydrography. A MoU on Enhanced Maritime Cooperation between the two Coast Guards is also being finalized.

The signing of the MOU today, along with tie-ups in other identified areas, will give further impetus to bilateral relations between India and Philippines in the field of Maritime Cooperation, and also contribute to the broader progress and development of the Indo-Pacific region.

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