India - Seychelles Bilateral Meet

Why in news?

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Seychelles President Danny Faure recently visited India for a bilateral meet.

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What are the major outcomes?

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- **Assumption Island** - It is one of the 115 islands constituting Seychelles archipelago.
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- India plans for building a naval base here.
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- The National Assembly of Seychelles recently refused to ratify the naval base.
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- Given the absence of parliamentary ratification, the future of the project remains uncertain.
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- But both countries now agreed to ensure mutually beneficial steps in this regard.
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- **Security** - India clarified that security and strategic cooperation with Seychelles will go ahead.
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- It announced several initiatives for Seychelles.
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- It includes a $100 million Line of Credit (LoC) for purchase of defence hardware.
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- India also gifted a Dornier aircraft to Seychelles.
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- **Developments** - India is ready to finance 3 civilian infrastructure projects under Special Grant.
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- India will send officials to Seychelles to support for projects that it decides for itself.
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- **Others** - Both sides would intensify cooperation on hydrographical studies of the maritime region.
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- They have declared exchange of necessary oceanic maps.
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- In all, both sides sealed six agreements.
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- One of the agreements will twin Panjim in Goa with Victoria of Seychelles.
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What is the earlier agreement on Assumption Island?

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- India signed a pact to develop Assumption Island, during PM Modi’s visit to Seychelles in 2015.
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- The Island is leased to India for the operation of a naval base and air strip by the Indian navy.
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- The deal was to include 30-year access to the base.
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- It includes permission to station Indian military personnel on the ground.
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- It is being financed entirely by India.
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- But Seychelles retains full ownership of the facilities and sovereign rights over the island.
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- Seychelles would “suspend” the use of military facilities in case if India is at war.
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- This is because it is not a military base.
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- It is seen as a major strategic enhancement of India’s Indian Ocean Region naval capacities.
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- This would give India a foot- hold in the western Indian Ocean.
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- The agreement will enable India to help Seychelles build military infrastructure.
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- The island has been at the centre of high profile maritime diplomacy between India and Seychelles.
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Source: The Hindu

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