

India to supply coastal security equipment to Mauritius

India and Mauritius signed an agreement for enhancing coastal security during the visit of the Minister of State for External Affairs Shashi Tharoor earlier this week, when he also handed over a Dhruv helicopter to the Indian ocean island state.

Tharoor on a two-day official visit was the chief guest at the 175th anniversary celebrations of the arrival of indentured labourers from India. The Indian minister also met with the Mauritian President Anerood Juganauth, Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam and held talks with Foreign Minister Arvin Boolell.

On Tuesday, both governments signed an inter-governmental memorandum of understanding for supply of coastal surveillance radar system from India to Mauritius. A separate agreement was also signed between the Mauritian government and Bharat Electronics Limited for the supply of the equipment.

Under the agreement, India will supply up to eight coastal surveillance radar systems, five of which will be on the main island, while one each on the islands of Rodrigues, Agalega and St. Brandon.

BEL will also provide the training and technical support. 'An India-Mauritius Joint Monitoring Committee will be set up consisting of members from the government of India, government of Mauritius and BEL to facilitate the implementation of the project and review the progress of work,' said a press release issued by the external affairs ministry.

Tharoor handed over a Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopter to Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam, which was then inducted into the Mauritius Police Force. Later, Ramgoolam took Tharoor for a spin on the helicopter for a aerial tour of the island nation.

Both the coastal surveillance radar system and the helicopter are covered under the grant element of the \$100 million line of credit that India offered during the visit of Prime Minister Ramgoolam in October 2005.

The Indian minister also delivered an address to a 800-member audience in the University of Mauritius on the subject 'India-Africa: Partners in Development'.

(© IANS / India eNews)