

'IT IS VITAL TO PROTECT INDIAN OCEAN REGION'

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

Ajit Doval-

The changing geopolitical scenario in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) had led to “international rivalries, competition and clash of interests” and it was important for India to protect its interests in this area, said National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval on Wednesday, while calling for seamless coordination among all stakeholders involved in the maritime domain. He stated that the maritime domain was a multilateral construct and a nation “cannot unilaterally decide” in the maritime domain.

He was addressing the first meeting of the Multi-Agency Maritime Security Group (MAMSG) chaired by the country's first National Maritime Security Coordinator (NMSC) Vice-Admiral Ashok Kumar (Retd.) who took charge on February 16 and for the first time also brought together maritime security coordinators from all 13 coastal States and Union Territories (UTs) as well as other stakeholders.

“In the national security discourse, maritime security has its own specific emphasis,” Mr. Doval said. “We are destined for greater things. India's time will come. We, as a nation have to be strong. Coastal and maritime security will play an important role in this,” he said. Stating that land borders and maritime borders were very different, he said, “Maritime borders cannot be fenced. We cannot have the concept of zero per cent tolerance for intrusion. So we need technology and other ways of countering it.” Stating that “seas are areas of rivalry”, he said India had got some unique advantage in the maritime domain. “It is the largest littoral state in IOR. We are also centrally positioned.”

In the backdrop of the complexities involved and interests, the NSA underscored the need for seamless coordination at all levels.

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