

PM MODI LAUNCHES INITIATIVE FOR DEVELOPING SMALL ISLAND NATIONS' INFRASTRUCTURE

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India - Indian Ocean Island nations

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday launched the Initiative for the Resilient Island States (IRIS) for developing infrastructure of small island nations, saying it gave new hope and confidence of working for the welfare of the world's most vulnerable countries.

"The last few decades have proved that no one is untouched by the wrath of climate change. Whether they are developed countries or countries rich in natural resources, this is a big threat to everyone," Modi said.

"But even here too, the biggest threat from climate change is to the 'Small Island Developing States- SIDS'. It is a matter of life and death for them; it is a challenge to their existence. The disasters caused by climate change can literally take the form of catastrophe for them," Modi said.

Small island developing states face the biggest threat from climate change, said the prime minister, adding India's space agency ISRO will build a special data window to provide them timely information on cyclones, coral-reef monitoring and coast-line monitoring through satellites.

The launch took place on the second day of the World Leaders' Summit and Modi was joined by his British counterpart Boris Johnson, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and leaders of Mauritius, Fiji and Jamaica on the occasion. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres was also present.

The IRIS initiative is a part of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient infrastructure that would focus on building capacity, having pilot projects, especially in small island developing states.

Speaking on the occasion, Johnson said small island states were on the frontline of loss and damage caused by global warming.

"They have done virtually nothing to cause the problem, they didn't produce the huge volumes of CO2 to be pumped into the atmosphere," he said. The UK is contributing financially to the initiative IRIS. "We are stomping up as well," Johnson added.

On his part, Australia's Scott Morrison thanked India and the UK for their leadership of the CDRI. "I acknowledge the Quad support, including the US and Japan support for India's CDRI."

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