

**INAUGURATION OF THE ASHOK STAMBH
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 73rd REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA**

**SPEECH BY HON PRAVIND KUMAR JUGNAUTH
PRIME MINISTER**

**WEDNESDAY 26 JANUARY 2022 AT 1800 Hrs
(*HON PRIME MINISTER TO ARRIVE AT 1800 HRS*)**

VENUE: THE HIGH COMMISSION OF INDIA

PLOT 65-C, CYBERCITY-1

EBENE

Honourable Ministers,

**Her Excellency, Shrimati Nandini Singla,
High Commissioner of the Republic of India,**

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

It is my pleasure, and an honour, to join you for the commemoration of the 73rd Anniversary of India's Republic Day and the inauguration of the *Ashoka Stambh*.

I wish, first of all, to congratulate the High Commissioner, Shrimati Nandini Singla, for organizing this event against the background of the ongoing *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav* commemorating 75 years of India's independence.

We also thank her for being so committed to forging closer bonds between our peoples and further strengthening India-Mauritius bilateral relations and cooperation.

I am pleased to announce that a wide range of events will be organized to mark the 75th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Mauritius and India next year.

Over the years, India has played a key role in the social and economic development of Mauritius. The unique relations between our two countries have led to greater cooperation in areas such as infrastructure development. Just last week, I jointly inaugurated, with Shri Modiji, via video-conferencing, social housing units in Dagotièrè and Mare-Tabac. We also launched the construction of a Solar Power Plant at Henrietta and that of the Civil Service College in Réduit.

Other major infrastructure projects such as the New Supreme Court, hospitals for ENT and cancer treatment, and Area Health Centers were undertaken, recently, with the support of India.

India has consistently proved itself a true and trusted friend. In times of crisis, like the COVID-19 pandemic, it is very encouraging to know that we have with India a strong partner at our side to help us rise to the challenge.

India was the first country to provide us with COVID-19 vaccines at a time of scarcity in the global supply of vaccines, thus enabling us to launch our vaccination campaign.

The special relationship between our two countries has reached new heights with the signature of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation & Partnership Agreement in February last year.

The CECPA not only represents an important milestone in the trade and economic relationship between our two countries, but it also opens up new opportunities for joint ventures on the African continent.

Excellency,

It was most appropriate to choose the Republic Day of India for the inauguration of the replica of the *Ashoka Stambh*. Indeed, the *Ashoka Stambh* was adopted as

the emblem of India on its 1st Republic Day, and it has held, ever since, a special place in the life of the nation. The *Ashoka Stambh* symbolizes the four Noble Truths of the Buddha. It conveys the message of compassion and wisdom, which should serve as a guidance not only to the people of India but also to humanity at large.

The adoption of the *Ashoka Stambh* has linked modern India with the wisdom of its early civilization. This emblem reflects the wish of the founding fathers of India to anchor the newly independent state to the best ideals drawn from its millennial history.

The presence of this emblem at the High Commission heightens the symbolism of this beautiful building. It adds to the solemnity of the High Commission and reflects the high aspirations which India seeks to embody.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As India has launched a series of initiatives dedicated to *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav*, it can showcase to the world its bold journey towards economic prosperity and the welfare of its people.

To conclude, I wish to say that we cannot emphasize enough the high value we attach to the sustained support of India to Mauritius to promote inclusive

development and bring significant socio-economic dividends to the People.

We look forward to still more fruitful cooperation and innovative partnerships programmes in Financial services, maritime security, and space technologies, amongst others.

I once again congratulate you, Excellency, and the People of the Republic of India on the 73rd Republic Day of India.

Thank you.
