

**RECEPTION IN HONOUR OF  
LAUREATES OF THE HSC 2019 AND 2021 EXAMINATIONS**

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

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**THURSDAY 28 JULY 2022 AT 1030 HRS**

**VENUE: STATE HOUSE, LE REDUIT**

**His Excellency the President of the Republic of Mauritius,**

**His Excellency the Vice President of the Republic of Mauritius,**

**Honourable Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism**

**Honourable Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology,**

**Rectors of Colleges,**

**Dear Laureates and family members,**

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**Good Morning.**

We have assembled here this morning to celebrate the achievements of our brilliant young students who won the distinction of being HSC Laureates in 2019 and 2021.

I am privileged to have had, yesterday, the opportunity of meeting with another batch of Star performers in HSC exams and I know that you have in common an incredible sense of wanting to beat the odds.

Congratulations for your hard work, determination and perseverance, even during the most difficult of times. We are proud of you all.

I must also congratulate your parents for their care and support, and your teachers for being your inspiration and guide.

Everyone recognises that you do not achieve such high goals without sweat and toil, but the contribution of your parents and your teachers cannot be overlooked.

There must have been times when you lost hope and your mentors were by your side to build up that self-confidence again. They have had a great influence on your performance.

I wish to put on record the extra effort put in by everyone this year due to the challenging circumstances caused by the sanitary restrictions.

Even at a time when our lives were jostled by the Covid-19 pandemic, education did not come to a standstill. All stakeholders, students, teachers, and school managers demonstrated remarkable resilience. The education continuity strategy that Government had put in place was implemented quite efficiently by all parties concerned once the initial blow of the pandemic had worn off.

**My Dear Laureates,**

What I wish for you is to be the very mainstay of our Mauritian society. You will have my full support in all your endeavours. We will continue to encourage you to pursue your quest for excellence.

This Government believes in investing in our youths, they are our most important asset. Our policy is to provide wider possibilities to students so that everyone can have access to higher education and more varied options for their studies.

There should be no barriers to University education. We have created pathways to higher education and training for all young boys and girls, including those who come from vulnerable families or those with special needs.

I will encourage all our present and future learners to continue to strive hard and to take full advantage of the schemes that are available to fund the pursuit of their studies.

**My Dear Laureates,**

As you take the first steps of your long journey towards specialization and professionalism, you must be conscious that the path will not be easy. You will be called upon to face many challenges in the years ahead.

My message to you is to make the most of the years to come. Universities are the most appropriate place for young adults to build independence, develop character strengths and forge their own identities.

You will learn new skills and be called upon to push the boundaries of knowledge in projects of your own choice. However, I will recommend that you find the right balance between academics and athletics. A perfect blend of both sports and studies is important.

You should also take time to engage in activities that will teach you lessons that transcend the four walls of a classroom. Do find the time to explore the performing and visual arts and stay socially active.

Furthermore, the country expects you to come back home once you acquire skills, knowledge, and competencies in areas of national interest. We hope that, as grateful citizens, you will want to give back to the place you call Home.

As its best brains, you can contribute to give a competitive edge to the country and make it stronger and more resilient in the face of adversity.

It is true that developed economies offer greener pastures, away from home. But as responsible citizens, you should realise that no country can make progress if brain drain undermines its development.

Brain drain is lost human capital.

It is time to operate a reverse brain drain. We want the skilled professionals who are working abroad to return home because we believe they can make a difference in their home country.

Remember that wherever you may be, it is your home country and your family that provide the greatest emotional bond.

In Mauritius, we are already setting the stage for transforming the country into a digital economy and society. At such a critical time, we hope that we can harness your innovative minds to address our development challenges.

It is true that our economy has faced a stream of shocks lately as a result of global events but I consider that the action is now to prepare for future opportunities.

The fourth industrial revolution that is occurring at present heralds a series of upheavals for the world and we, as a small nation, will no doubt be impacted by these changes.

Fields such as digital technologies, FinTech, Agri-Business Management and Biopharma digital transformation should emerge as pillars of our new economy. They will provide new opportunities and drive economic growth in the future.

**Dear Laureates,**

Knowledge creation is already active in Mauritius. In a few years, it will be your responsibility, as future leaders, to enhance this process and build a knowledge-oriented society.

The current developmental and growth needs of the Mauritian society indeed represent for you an opportunity for engagement in studies leading to economic and social innovation.

In that perspective, Government has come up with a new scheme to reward the best HSC students in Economics. As from 2023, this scheme will provide opportunities for the best boy and girl in the economics stream to pursue fully funded undergraduate studies locally or abroad.

This Memorial Scholarship is dedicated to Sir Anerood Jugnauth, whose reforms and policies set Mauritius on a very successful economic trajectory in the late eighties.

All Laureates, more specifically those from the Economics Side, will be expected to come up with innovative ideas that will give a boost to the Mauritian economy.

The offer of additional scholarships for the best Economics students is in keeping with our Vision to foster innovation and propel our economy to higher levels of growth, development, and employment.

Before concluding, I wish to convey to all students who are not here today the message that the winning mindset that motivates our laureates must be rooted in the culture and life of every student, at all levels of schooling.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**Dear Laureates,**

Once again, I wish to congratulate everyone who has been involved in the success of our academic elite.

To our laureates, I wish the best of luck as you prepare to say goodbye to the life you knew before university and embark on a new, exciting adventure.

Thank you for your attention.