

**TOAST ON THE OCCASION OF
THE 76th REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA**

SUNDAY 26TH JANUARY 2025

**HONOURABLE SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
YOUR EXCELLENCY MR KARTIK PANDE, HIGH COMMISISONER
OF INDIA
COLLEAGUE MINISTERS
MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS
DEAR FRIENDS
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
GOOD EVENING**

It is a pleasure to join you this evening to celebrate the 76th Republic Day of India.

On behalf of President Wavel Ramkalawan, the Government, and the people of Seychelles, I extend heartfelt congratulations to Her Excellency President Droupadi Murmu, His Excellency Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and the Government and people of India. I also take this occasion to recognise the vibrant Indian community in Seychelles, whose contributions enrich our society.

Tonight, we honour a defining chapter in India's history: the adoption of its constitution 76 years ago, which laid the groundwork for a democratic, just and representative nation. These principles, championed by its Independence leaders, have propelled India to its current standing as a global beacon of innovation, resilience, and progress.

India's leadership on the world stage is exemplary. Its economic dynamism, strides in technology, and unwavering commitment to sustainable development are inspiring. India's continued support in pushing for the establishment and operationalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund, and its advocacy for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), reflect its dedication to addressing shared global challenges.

Seychelles is proud of our enduring partnership with India, built on mutual respect and shared values. Our collaboration spans diverse areas, including security, health, education, renewable energy, trade ... and more. The Indian community in Seychelles plays a vital role in fostering cultural ties and contributing to economic vitality.

India's steadfast support in maritime security is deeply appreciated, especially in addressing piracy and other illegal activities in our waters. Through the High-Level Joint Defence Coordination Committee, our defence and security cooperation continue to grow.

Seychelles and India have a unique bond that goes beyond geographical proximity, and beyond historical and cultural links. Our relationship goes beyond strategic interests; it is rooted in people-to-people connections. Youth exchanges, naval participation in our National Day, and high-level visits highlight our shared aspirations. Notably, the upcoming weekly flights by Indigo, beginning this March, will enhance trade, investment, and tourism between our nations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

India's contributions to Seychelles' development are significant, from infrastructure projects to initiatives in education, health, and sport. With the arrival of 60 buses purchased by SPTC under the Line of Credit by the Exim Bank of India in October 2024, we are further reminded of India's significant contribution to transportation projects in Seychelles.

India's dedication to enhancing the well-being of our local communities through the High Impact Community Development Project is commendable. As we plan for the year 2025, seven new projects have been earmarked under this area of cooperation, including the renovation of schools and the purchase of essential equipment for the Health and Sport sectors as well as the establishment of a new Day Care Centre in La Misère.

Our partnership in capacity building continues to thrive. In 2024, 29 Seychellois from the public service and 25 officers from the Seychelles Defence Forces benefitted from various courses under the ITEC training programme. I am very pleased to note that Seychelles successfully filled all three slots provided for Master's and Phd Degrees offered by the India-Africa Maitri Scholarship for the academic year 2024/2025. These opportunities underscore India's commitment to nurturing excellence in Seychelles.

In an ever-evolving global landscape, platforms for dialogue and cooperation are essential for fostering partnerships and addressing common challenges. The upcoming India-Africa Forum Summit will provide an invaluable platform to explore collaborative opportunities and address shared challenges. It is through such engagements that we can build on our strong foundations and chart a path toward a future of mutual benefit and enduring friendship.

As we celebrate India's Republic Day, let us reaffirm our resolve to deepen the bonds between Seychelles and India. Together, we can harness our strengths to promote peace, stability, and prosperity in our regions and beyond.

High Commissioner Pande,

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to you and your team for your dedication and for hosting us this evening. May this year bring greater collaboration and success in our shared journey.

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Please join me in a toast to the health and well-being of President Murmu, to Prime Minister Modi, and the enduring friendship and cooperation between Seychelles and India.

Thank you.