



SPEECH

**His Excellency Mr Dharambeer Gokhool G.C.S.K.,
President of the Republic of Mauritius**

**EVENT: LAUNCH OF BOOK “RETURN TO MY NEST” BY
RANJITA BUNWAREE CSK**

**VENUE: OPIUM RESTAURANT,
STATE HOUSE AVENUE, REDUIT**

DATE: 11 JULY 2025

TIME: 17:00 HOURS

Protocol

Dr the Honourable Arvin Boolell G.O.S.K., Minister of Agro Industry,
Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries

Mr First Secretary, High Commission of India (TBC)

Dr (Mrs) Ranjita Bunwaree, CSK

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen,

ALL PROTOCOL OBSERVED

Introduction

Good evening and thank you for inviting me to mark the official launch of “Return to My Nest” by Dr Ranjita Bunwaree.

Ladies and Gentleman

I understand that this is the fourth book by Dr Bunwaree- an author of distinction, a voice of conviction, and a true daughter of both India and Mauritius, who continues to enrich the historical and cultural landscapes of both nations with depth, emotion, and authenticity and to uphold a family tradition with many prestigious and famous writers.

Allow me to begin by commending and congratulating Dr Bunwaree on this new milestone as her literary journey- marked by a keen sensitivity to human emotion and social realities - continues to evolve with each publication.

I also commend the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage, and the National Arts Fund, for supporting the publication of this important work and for their efforts in nurturing our writers, artists, and creators.

I have not had the opportunity of interacting with Dr Bunwaree on a regular basis; however, on the few occasions that we have shared, she has left in me the picture of a very sociable and versatile human being. We have always shared a sense of mutual respect.

Reflections

Dear Friends,

Previous speakers have spoken eloquently and insightfully- about the book, and the author and I shall try to avoid overlap and repetition in my address

Instead, I will share a few personal reflections—both as President, and as someone who believes in the power of literature and writing to illuminate hidden narratives, preserve identity and inspire understanding.

At its heart, this novel beautifully explores the constant emotional duality between attachment and aspiration, between diaspora and identity, through vivid narrative and introspective depth.

The ache of dislocation, the complexities of identity, and the quiet but persistent pull of one's homeland, compels us to reflect on questions that are both universal and deeply personal:

- Where do we truly belong?
- Can we ever return home unchanged?
- And what does it mean to reconcile the past with the present?
- Above all, what is our overall purpose in life as human beings?

I am sure all these are aspects that we can discover in reading the book.

Relevance to Mauritius

Although fictional in form, its truths are deeply real and deeply familiar to all of us in Mauritius, through our own history of displacement and diaspora.

The very fabric of our nation is woven from the journeys of slaves, indentured labourers, traders, and settlers.

As Mauritians, we are all descendants of such stories of migration.

And we have been able to turn this foreign land that our ancestors once set foot on, into our own homeland - creating a culture, identity, pride and heritage that is unique to us.

The singular stories of struggle, resistance and migration of people across the world also mirror our collective Mauritian story of resilience and victory - as one people, as one nation.

So, I would like to take this opportunity this evening to also pay tribute to our ancestors, who faced silent sacrifices, complexities, and struggles of migration – leaders like Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, and women like Anna de Bengal and Anjalay Coopen.

This book represents another fitting tribute to those who “left their country behind, adapted themselves in a new country and continued to live with nostalgia of their land they left behind.”

Importance and Celebration of Literature

Let me also highlight a particular value that this novel holds—its role in giving voice to complex, lived experiences that unite us.

Dr Bunwaree herself hails from Assam, she has studied in Delhi, and she writes in Mauritius.

This is symbolic in itself, reminding us that our sense of identity is not fixed in one place or culture in isolation, but nurtured in journey together.

It is therefore imperative that we write, narrate and transmit these emotional legacies as bridges between our generations, communities, countries. And above all as human beings.

Women and talents

Ladies and Gentlemen,

“Return to my nest” is yet another important addition to the wonderful work being done by a growing chorus of women, who are writing with talent and purpose.

We must therefore work together to ensure that more women step into public and intellectual spaces—not just as professionals, but as leaders, storytellers, poets, novelists, and historians.

Way forward

As President of the Republic, my main mission is nation-building. I am particularly happy to be present to launch this book because Dr Bunwaree's political philosophy resonates with my mission and I would like to quote an extract from an interview she gave to a local newspaper recently to illustrate this point

Dr Bunwaree was asked the following question:

Si vous étiez ministre, quel serait votre première mission ?

Her reply was :

Construire la nation mauricienne dans le vrai sens, au-delà des différences de religion, de caste et de race.

Je voudrais que les gens se disent Mauriciens d'abord et pensent en termes de coloration ethnique après.

Merci Madame pour avoir dit tout haut cette vérité universelle.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my conviction that culture, literature, and the Arts hold immense power to act as pillars of national identity, unity and transformation of societies by creating spaces for dialogue, diversity, and discovery.

Our life journey has a start and an end date. In between whatever happens is living, loving, lessons and legacy. This book captures all these facets and weaves them into a powerful human story.

Let this evening be a celebration therefore of the enduring power of literature to connect nations and people to give voice to stories that deserve to be told.

May this gathering also be a testament to the continuing, unbreakable bond between India and Mauritius—one that forged not just by shared

history and diplomacy, but also shared values and a collective vision of progress for a better future.

Conclusion

I congratulate Dr Ranjita Bunwaree once again for her unflagging dedication to the literary arts; for the depth and courage of her storytelling, and for her enduring commitment to cultural preservation and expression.

I hope that your novel will inspire reflection and action amongst readers.

I wish you success in all your endeavours.

Thank you.