



SPEECH

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

EVENT: PRIZE GIVING CEREMONY 2025

VENUE: MODERN COLLEGE, CENTRAL FLACQ

DATE: 04 SEPTEMBER 2025

TIME: 09:30 HOURS

Protocol

Honourable Anil Kumar Bachoo, GOSK, Minister of Health and Wellness

Honourable Raviraj Sinha Beechook;

Honourable Chandraprakash Ramkalawon - MPs for Constituency No.9

The Chairperson of the District Council of Flacq

Dr. Yogesswarnath Sanmukhiya, Rector/Manager of Modern College

Respected Teachers and Staffs

Distinguished Guests

Esteemed Awardees

Parents and dear Students,

All Protocol Observed.

Introduction

Good morning and thank you for inviting me here today.

It is an immense pleasure for me to join you this morning for this year's Annual Prize Giving Ceremony, as you celebrate not just academic success but also the continuing spirit of perseverance, teamwork, and holistic excellence.

I must say that I was very touched by the kind invitation of your Rector/Manager Dr. Yogess Sanmukhiya, who recalled my academic/professional and political journey, as well as my association with your esteemed institution.

Today, I am in your midst as the 8th President of our Republic.

I owe this honour to the blessings of the people of Mauritius, including your blessings as you have played a major role in elevating me to this position.

I want to thank you, and through you, all the people of the Constituency of Flacq- Bon Accueil.

Prize Giving

I congratulate all Prize Winners, especially those who have excelled at the Cambridge School Certificate and Higher School Certificate Examinations 2024.

I also congratulate all parents, whose support and encouragement have been vital in nurturing our brilliant young minds.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations in particular to Abdallah Dawjee Dawreeawo, the laureate of Modern College - HSC Batch 2024, for his remarkable achievement in the Science stream.

I understand that he will be travelling abroad to pursue his higher education in the medical field -inspired by his mother, who is a doctor herself - with a vision to serve the people and the nation.

This is a powerful reminder of how family, education, and service to society can come together to shape a life of purpose.

I wish him and all our Awardees good luck in their future endeavours.

I hope that your achievements will be a guiding light for the upcoming generations of students at Modern College.

And that wherever you are, the quadricolour of our national flag- RED, BLUE, YELLOW, AND GREEN- will keep reminding you that our Republic needs you, your talents and your resourcefulness.

This Prize Giving event is an opportunity to celebrate your outstanding performances.

But you must remember not to view your achievement as your being superior to your fellow competitors. Healthy competition is not about winning or losing, but about progressing together, in a team spirit.

So, I also congratulate all those who have given their best, regardless of the outcome, and wish them better luck for the future.

Modern College: Tribute and Special Connection

When Modern College opened its doors 56 years ago, it was considered just one of the many small rural schools in Mauritius.

I would like to share a personal thought with you: I have a very special connection with this college.

In 2006, when I was elected MP for this constituency and I served as Minister of Education, I visited your establishment.

At that time, as part of my vision for the Education sector- A World Class Quality Education for All- I had introduced one of the most important reforms in our education system — the reintroduction of the Form I to Form VI structure in all colleges.

This was a crucial step, combining quality with equity in access to education, because it allowed “non-star” colleges like Modern College to retain their brightest students and nurture them all the way to success.

It ensured that every child, no matter their background, rich or poor, rural or urban, could aspire to become a laureate or achieve great things.

Providing the full cycle of Form 1 to Form V1 education to all students was a game changer.

True, many did not become laureates, but they excelled in their performance, and uplifted the status and prestige of their colleges.

So, it is a matter of great pride for me to see Modern College thriving as one of the cornerstones of quality education with equity in our country today, producing eight laureates so far, and many other students who have excelled at national level.

Beyond education, your establishment has also molded the character, personality and destiny of thousands of students, who are contributing to the progress and prosperity of our nation.

And we are very proud of them.

One of the best examples of this remarkable achievement is none other than your Rector/Manager himself, who has had faith in the potential of this institution.

So, today's celebration must also be an opportunity to pay our tribute to the founders of this remarkable institution- Mr. Meghnath Sanmukhiya, his family and close collaborators.

I also commend the Rector/Manager Dr. Yogess Sanmukhiya, and all teachers and staffs for their tireless efforts in nurturing our children and upholding the good track record of your institution.

Reflections

Dear Friends, Parents and Teachers,

Today's gathering must also be an invitation for some thoughtful reflections about the way forward.

Our children are growing up at a time when unprecedented changes and challenges are transforming the universe.

It's a completely new world order, shaped by Artificial Intelligence, climate change, digital economies, social transformations as well as tensions, conflicts, and post Covid-19 anxieties.

I want to remind you that Technology is not our enemy, and AI is not here to replace human beings but to assist us.

But the question is: are we controlling technology, or is technology controlling us?

We must be ready to leverage these modern technological advancements while staying grounded in ethics, responsibility and humanity.

Platforms like ChatGPT, DeepSeek can generate and process information, but they cannot feel compassion, empathy, love, or display the original creativity and human wisdom that we have.

To succeed, you will need not just degrees and certificates, but also emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence – qualities like honesty, empathy, resilience, adaptability, and integrity.

So, while I encourage our Young Friends to explore opportunities that the digital world offers, you must also remain conscious of its dangers and ensure it does not overpower your moral judgment.

I also encourage you to spend time reflecting offline—by reading printed books, keeping a journal, or engaging in creative activities away from your screens.

Reduce your dependence on screen time, deepen your social relations with people, and cultivate a love for nature and its wonders.

Remember: change is possible. As mentioned by Mahatma Gandhi: **You must be the change you want to see.**

Collective Commitment toward a new Mauritius

As you may be aware, our Government Programme 2025-2029 provides a bridge to the future, with a glimpse of the predicament and the prospects of the Republic of Mauritius.

And this is where each one of us has a transformational role to play in building a new Mauritius.

To our educators: embrace lifelong learning; Harness the power of technology, repurpose and recalibrate your roles and responsibilities.

Don't limit yourself to being knowledge dispensers.

I also encourage our teachers to adopt a paradigm shift in pedagogy, leverage AI-driven methods to make the teaching-learning process innovative, help students understand how to navigate the latest technological platforms wisely, and to think critically, and act ethically

Inspire your students to aim for the moon and even if they do not reach the moon, they will still be among the stars.

I urge parents to help your children balance the digital world with offline exploration, make ethical choices, and indulge in meaningful learning – whether academic or non-academic.

You are the first teachers of our children and youth, and the home is their first classroom.

You are the antidote to all the social evils to which our children and youth are exposed. Just be responsible and aim to be a model parent of which your children and society can be proud.

Conclusion

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Students and Parents,

With these reflections and words of optimism, allow me to conclude by congratulating all our Prize Winners and the entire Modern College community once again for your remarkable achievements.

I leave you with these powerful words of Malala Yousafzai, the youngest Nobel Prize laureate:

"One child, One teacher, One book, One pen can change the world."

I wish you continued success in all your future endeavours.

May God Bless our Republic.

Thank you.