



SPEECH

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

**EVENT: INAUGURATION OF SPECIALISED CORNEA
TRANSPLANT AND PINHOLE PUPILLOPLASTY
FACILITY**

VENUE: DR. AGARWAL EYE HOSPITAL, CYBERCITY, EBENE

DATE: 10 DECEMBER 2025

TIME: 14:00 HOURS

Protocol

Honourable Ministers

His Excellency Shri Anurag Shrivastava, High Commissioner of India

Professor Amar Agarwal, Chairman of the Dr. Agarwal Group of Eye Hospitals;

Dr. Ashar Agarwal, and the entire team of Dr. Agarwal's Eye Hospital

Respected healthcare professionals

Partners, Collaborators

Distinguished Guests from Mauritius and Abroad,

All Protocol Observed.

Introduction

Namaskar and Good Afternoon

I am happy to be associated with today's event:

INAUGURATION OF SPECIALISED CORNEA TRANSPLANT AND PINHOLE PUPILLOPLASTY FACILITY

Ladies and Gentlemen

“It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver.”

These words by Mahatma Gandhi remain profoundly relevant, reminding us that the wellbeing of our people is the truest measure of a nation's progress.

It is my conviction that every effort to strengthen our healthcare system -through innovation, partnership, or enhanced capability- constitutes an essential investment in the long-term stability and prosperity of our country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me, at the outset, to commend Professor Amar Agarwal, Chairman of the Dr. Agarwal Group of Eye Hospitals; Dr. Ashar Agarwal, Mr. Ugandhar, along with their entire team for their unwavering commitment to advancing eye care in Mauritius and other parts of the world and for their continued compassion, bringing specialised treatments and cutting-edge procedures within reach of our people.

I congratulate the Agarwal family for their exceptional pioneering efforts in the field of eyecare.

I also pay tribute to all doctors, nurses, and healthcare professionals who work tirelessly across Mauritius, often behind the scenes, to care for our people and whose dedication form the foundation of our health system.

Eye Health in Mauritius

It is no secret that Mauritius faces growing challenges in eye health, with over 170,000 people having visited the Subramania Bharati Eye Hospital, and over 6,600 surgeries performed in 2023 alone.

The new Eye Hospital, inaugurated last month, aims to improve patient access and expand ophthalmology services in Reduit on its end.

The most common challenges remain cataracts, especially in older adults with diabetes; glaucoma, which affects more women; and diabetic eye disease, a leading cause of blindness in adults under 50.

Uncorrected vision issues and age-related damage to the central part of the eye add to the burden.

And these challenges are made worse by the growing prevalence of diabetes, high blood pressure, and other chronic conditions among our people.

Introduction of Specialised Cornea Transplant and Pinhole Pupilloplasty /PDEK Technology

Against this backdrop, I welcome the introduction of this innovative advanced technology.

I understand that this is a corneal transplant procedure that replaces the damaged inner layers of the cornea with healthy tissue, making surgery easier for doctors, allowing the use of younger donor corneas, speeding up recovery, and giving patients better vision with fewer complications.

Most importantly, I understand that this technology directly addresses our key eye health challenges in Mauritius by increasing the availability of donor tissue, improving surgical outcomes, and restoring clarity, colour, and sight to many people.

An advancement that promises to become a vital alternative and the future of corneal transplant procedures, and bring hope and a much-improved quality of life to our patients.

Eye Care in the Changing World

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Eye care today is evolving rapidly, with technologies like AI and non-invasive retinal imaging transforming how we detect and treat eye conditions.

AI can analyse detailed images of the retina to spot early signs of diseases, allowing treatment to start sooner and improving the chances of preserving vision.

Non-invasive imaging is making eye exams faster, more comfortable, and easier to access, encouraging regular monitoring and better overall care.

Yet, the digital age has brought new challenges.

Digital Eye Strain - from prolonged use of computers, tablets, and smartphones- is leading to increased instances of dry or watery eyes, blurred vision, headaches, and even neck or back discomfort.

Among children, increased screen time during the pandemic has accelerated myopia progression.

Innovations like high-resolution screens, anti-glare coatings, and ergonomic designs are helping reduce these effects, demonstrating the constant paradox of how technology can both create and solve problems.

This dual reality therefore requires both smart solutions and collective effort.

Our Government Programme 2025-2029 already lays emphasis on innovation, investment, and partnership as key pillars for addressing evolving health needs.

Our Republic also has the ambition to establish a Regional Medical Hub

But government cannot do this alone.

Collaboration with private hospitals, international expertise, and centres like Dr. Agarwal's Eye Hospital takes on greater significance to ensure that world-class eye care reaches all Mauritians and beyond, today and in the years to come.

India-Mauritius Collaboration

In this context, I wish to sincerely thank India for its longstanding support and expertise in healthcare, which has greatly benefited Mauritius.

I extend my appreciation to High Commissioner Shri Anurag Srivastava, for his continued engagement and partnership.

Our ties are rooted not only in history and culture, but also in strategic partnership, and, above all, in a shared investment in the well-being of our people.

And India's well-established healthcare system, distinguished by knowledge, technological innovation, and a strong tradition of medical excellence, continues to provide us with invaluable opportunities to collaborate, learn, and adopt best practices.

The setting up of the forthcoming AYUSH Centre of Excellence, to be funded by the Government of India under the Special Economic Package, represents a significant milestone for Health care system in Mauritius.

With the establishment of this facility being inaugurated to-day, we shall be laying the foundation of yet another bridge for multilateral engagement between Africa and India, as witnessed by Dr. Agarwal's Eye hospital's expansion to 20 centres across the continent.

Today's event therefore stands as yet another testament to the enduring spirit of cooperation and friendship between our nations.

And I have no doubt that together, we will continue to advance healthcare, share expertise, and strengthen the well-being of our people for generations to come.

Conclusion

In closing, allow me to once again express my gratitude to our partners in India, to Dr. Agarwal's Eye Hospital, and to all those who have contributed to advancing eye care in Mauritius.

Let us continue to embrace innovation, strengthen collaboration, and ensure that every Mauritian has access to world-class healthcare - As One People, As One Nation, As One Humanity.

I wish you all continued success and fulfilment in your invaluable and noble work for the welfare and well-being of humanity.

Thank you for your attention.