



## **SPEECH**

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

**EVENT: 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF CHISTY SHIFA CLINIC**

**VENUE: TAHER BAGH, PORT LOUIS**

**DATE: 08 APRIL 2026**

**TIME: 19:00 HOURS**

## **Protocol**

His Excellency Mr Cassam Uteem, Former President of the Republic

Honourable Ministers

Mr Raouf Bundhun, Former Vice-President of the Republic

Honourable Members of the National Assembly

Mr Aslam Hossenally, the Lord Mayor of Port Louis

Dr Dawood Oaris, MSK, Medical Director - Chisty Shifa Clinic and  
Chairman -Islamic Medical Trust

Members of the Chisty Shifa Clinic and Islamic Medical Trust

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen.

## **Introduction**

Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to be with you tonight and to share a few words on this special occasion.

First of all, allow me to thank Dr Dawood Oaris and all organisers for the kind invitation extended to me and my wife Brinda.

I also thank the Islamic Medical Trust for organising this meaningful gathering.

I have listened with great attention to the valuable insights shared by Dr Oaris and the Honourable Shakeel Mohamed.

I would like to share a few reflections of my own which, I hope, will add meaningfully to this occasion.

## **The Clinic**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since its inauguration in 1996 by former President Cassam Uteem, the Chisty Shifa Clinic has grown into a multi-speciality facility combining medical care with community outreach.

Quite interestingly and true to its name - Shifa - which, in the Islamic tradition, refers to healing and holistic well-being.

I am particularly pleased to note the ongoing collaboration with the Muslim Orphanage, which has existed since its early days and which continues to ensure that residents benefit from consultation and treatment, mostly free of cost.

At the same time, as a charitable health institution - together with the Board of Trustees of the Islamic Medical Trust comprising members of the Islamic Medical Association and Mauritius Muslim Orphanage- it continues to engage with the wider community: working with NGOs and offering services to needy patients at very reduced and affordable costs where needed.

## **Tribute**

I would like to pay my tribute to all those who laid the foundation of this institution and contributed to its journey, in particular the late Dr Hassam Gareeboo, the First Chairman of the Islamic Medical Trust.

Alongside him, I acknowledge the contributions of all those who have helped shape and continue to sustain this vision.

In particular, I commend Dr Dawood Oaris for his long-standing leadership as Medical Director of the clinic and his continued service as Chairman of the Trust.

For nearly three decades, you have offered your dedication and medical expertise to this project on a benevolent basis, reflecting a deep sense of service and continuity.

I also wish to acknowledge the important role of the Oaris family.

Behind every sustained commitment is often the quiet support of loved ones. I therefore recognise the contribution of your wife, your children, and their spouses - many of whom are themselves in the medical profession.

In particular, I commend the involvement of your son, Dr Akbar Oaris, who has also contributed on a benevolent basis, bringing new ideas and supporting efforts to further improve the quality of infrastructure and services offered to patients.

I take this opportunity to express my appreciation and respect for all our healthcare professionals - doctors, nurses, and support staff - especially in the post-COVID era, where your efforts and resilience have been tested in profound ways, and remain essential to the functioning of our nation.

## **Reflections**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Tonight's gathering must also invite reflections on where we stand as a nation.

Mauritius stands at an important crossroad in its healthcare journey.

We have a public system that provides free, universal access to healthcare, and health remains a national priority.

Government is investing Rs 18.5 billion in the public health sector to support a more inclusive system. This does not account for private

healthcare spending, which constitutes an equally important component of the overall landscape.

**Yet, we must ask ourselves honestly: is our population truly healthy?**

**As President, my observation is that it is not.**

And the data reflects this.

Non-communicable diseases account for over 80% of deaths, with cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and cancers being primary drivers.

We must move beyond traditional models that focus primarily on cure, and instead prioritise prevention, health promotion, and more effective long-term management of disease.

The Government Programme 2025–2029 that I presented to the nation in January last year. sets a clear direction to address these issues.

Government is already introducing key measures notably:

- Modernising outdated health legislation,
- Strengthening quality control through a National Health Quality framework,
- Establishing an Ombudsperson for health services,
- Accelerating digital transformation through e-health, telemedicine, and e-prescriptions, and
- Investment in infrastructure - including the development of a new SSR National Hospital and the AYUSH Centre of Excellence.

These measures, together with sustained efforts to strengthen prevention and health promotion - such as increasing excise duties on alcoholic, tobacco and sugar-sweetened products, reflect a clear commitment to addressing the root causes of disease.

But Government action alone cannot achieve these objectives.

This is why strong partnerships are essential - across institutions, communities, and the private sector

We must also work towards a renewed sense of individual responsibility and conscience, recognising that lasting change depends on the daily choices we make.

At State House, we welcome people from all walks of life every week. And in my interactions with visitors, conversations often turn to health.

At times, I am told, “President, you must ask the Minister of Health to do this or that so people can be health conscious”

I gently remind them that no Minister or President can enter our homes to regulate what we eat, drink, or how we live. These are choices that rest with each of us.

I also remind them that health is our greatest wealth.

Public policy can guide, enable, and support. But ultimately, healthier societies are built on the daily decisions of informed and responsible citizens.

### **Human Resource Development**

We must also recognise the issue of human resources. There is a clear shortage of doctors, which further increases the pressure on both the public and the private healthcare systems.

In this context, our human capital remains key, including the continued training and development of healthcare professionals.

In fact, I recall that in December, I welcomed the Delhi Alumni community to State House, where Dr Dawood Oaris was present, along with the High Commissioner of India, Mr Anurag Srivastava.

We reflected on how such exchanges continue to contribute meaningfully to our national development.

More recently, we have also seen concrete examples of collaboration through visiting medical teams and partnerships, such as with medical institutions from India and Pakistan, and I have welcomed them for fruitful exchanges at the State House.

Going forward, our priority must be clear - stronger coordination between public and private healthcare sectors, continued investment in health infrastructure and people, and a healthier and more resilient Republic.

**In this spirit, I wish to re-emphasize that good health starts with us.**

### **Conclusion**

On this thoughtful note, I thank you once again for your kind invitation.

I extend my congratulations to the Chisty Shifa Clinic, the Islamic Medical Trust, and the entire team on reaching this important milestone and wish you continued success in the years ahead.

I wish you all a pleasant and memorable evening.