SPEECH

His Excellency Mr Dharambeer Gokhool G.C.S.K.,

President of the Republic of Mauritius

EVENT: Grand Premiere of "The Forgotten Story of Dookhee Gungah"

VENUE: MAURITIUS TELECOM CAMPUS, 2ND FLOOR, THE CORE BUILDING, EBENE

DATE: 11 APRIL 2026

TIME: 10:00 HOURS

Protocol

Her Excellency Dr Nelly Manzini, High Commissioner of South Africa,

Mr Sarat Lallah, GOSK, Chairman of Mauritius Telecom

Professor Theesan Bahorun, GOSK, Executive Director of the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council

Ms Ingrid Bell, Director of *The Forgotten Story of Dookhee Gungah* and Managing Director- Aestetika Studio

Dr Kooshalanund Gungah, OSK,
Mr Swetam Gungah,
Members of the Gungah family,

Distinguished speakers, historians, authors and journalists,
Partners and collaborators,
Distinguished guests,
Members of themedia,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Introduction

Good morning.

Let me first of all thank the organisers for inviting me to today's very special event where latest technology is being leveraged to bring History to life.

More precisely, the inspirational and exemplary life and contributions of one of the most remarkable sons of the soil-late Dookhee Gungah- unfortunately not so well-known to the Mauritian society and elsewhere.

The documentary which is on to-day's agenda is interconnected with a Masterclass on Generative AI –an initiative of the Aestetika Studio,

whose DG is Ingrid Bell, and who has been supported in this venture by several public and private sector organisations.

As well as the Gungah family.

Ladies and Gentleman,

We are gathered here today not merely to witness the premiere of a documentary.

We are here to recover, relive and reconnect with a significant episode of our collective memory, thanks to the power of latest technology and the insightful contributions of historians Prahalad Ramsurrun and Satyendra Peertum as well as that of the biographer of late Dookhee Gungah, his great grandson, Swetam Gungah.

Let me commend and congratulate every one of you associated with this laudable initiative.

Today's event resonates to some extent with another event I attended- on *24 January 2026 - SABV Tower, Ebène Cybercity*-**the Centenary Commemoration of Dunputh Lallah's Election to the Legislative Council on 22 January 1926.**

A documentary was shown and it also used technology to leverage history, but it did not go through a first- cut.

Today we go a step further.

<u>Documentary</u>

I understand that the first part of a documentary –"the first-cut" will be of 45 minutes and the of the full documentary will be of an hour duration.

I am sure that the documentary and the discussions that will follow will inform and educate us more about the life, contributions and place of Dookhee Gungah in our historical landscape.

And contribute meaningfully towards the final version of the documentary.

For my part, I shall limit myself to a few observations and reflections of significance to today's event. I shall let the distinguished speakers unravel the biological and historical facets of the late Dookhee Gungah and comment on their significance to Mauritian history and society.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, through *The Forgotten Story of Dookhee Gungah*, we do something profoundly important.

We are remembering. We are honouring Le devoir du mémoire.

And in remembering, we **redefine who we are, where we come from and we recognize who helped us reach where we are.**

The Man Beyond History

Dookhee Gungah was not a man of power.

He held no office.

He commanded no army.

And yet, he helped to shape a nation.

He built schools where there were none.

He opened doors where society had closed them.

He believed in education not as **privilege**, but as **liberation**.

But what makes him truly extraordinary is not only what he did - it is **how he thought**.

He chose to invest in the **human mind** at a time when the world around him was defined by labour of the body.

In a time marked by hardship, inequality, and limitation, he chose vision over circumstance.

In times of scarcity, he demonstrated generosity and philanthropy.

Should he not be recognized and honoured?

I have no doubt that the documentary and the contributions of the various speakers will enlighten us further on the historical legacy of late Dookhee Gungah.

Symbolism:From Indenture to Intelligence: A Civilizational Shift

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today's event also has a powerful symbolism as far as history and technology is concerned.

The life of a man born in the era of indentured labour is now being revived thanks to the power of artificial intelligence.

Not just a technological twist of history.

It is a **civilizational transformation**.

It is a timely reminder that history cannot simply be written off.

AI is not just a technological revolution.

It is a **moral compass, a tool of creativity and conscience**

AI is inviting us to reflect on the legacy of Dookhee Gungah's thoughts and ideas and their contemporary relevance and pertinence.

To-day's event also invites to think how Culture, history and technology can emerge as a new pillar of our economic architecture….a proposal contained in Government Programme 2025-2029.

Not at the margins of global change: but at its **intellectual and ethical centre**. Where creativity and conscience can converge.

A Message to the Youth and Creative Minds

To the young people, the creators, the thinkers, and all those participating in the Masterclass:

You are not just learning tools. You are shaping the future of our cultural ethos and expression.

The real question is this:

Will you use technology to imitate; or to create with purpose?

Will you allow algorithms to define your voice; or will you use them to amplify your identity?

Dookhee Gungah did not follow the limitations of his time. He challenged them. He transcended them.

You must do the same.

Personal Reflection: The Quiet Builders of Nations

As President of the Republic, I have often reflected on a simple truth:

The most important contributors to a nation are not always the most visible ones.

They are the teachers. The thinkers, writers, artists, poets and painters. The quiet builders of minds.

Dookhee Gungah was one of them.

And perhaps, in many ways, this documentary is not only about him.

It is about all those whose contributions have shaped Mauritius silently, without recognition.

Today, we honour one. But we also acknowledge many.

Closing: A Nation That Remembers, A Nation That Leads

Ladies and gentlemen,

A nation that remembers its past is a nation that can navigate its future.

A nation that understands its values is a nation that can withstand change.

And a nation that combines **heritage with innovation** is a nation that can lead.

Let this documentary not be the end of a story. Let it be the beginning of a movement.

A movement where: we do not choose between tradition and technology; but bring them together with purpose.

To make culture, heritage and history alive and vibrant

Because the future of Mauritius will not be defined by machines alone.

It will be defined by the **wisdom with which we use them.**

Just like it has been used in the making of the documentary on late Dookhee Gungah which we shall be viewing.

A well-deserved tribute. Better late than never.

I shall be watching the documentary with you. But I shall be leaving thereafter due to prior commitments. My apologies to the panelists and the audience.

Final Line

Ladies and Gentleman,

As One People, As One Nation,

Let us build a future rooted in memory, guided by values, and shaped with intelligence: both human and artificial.

Wishing you all a very insightful viewing experience.

Thank you for your attention