



SPEECH

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

EVENT: 65th Anniversary of Friendship College Boys

VENUE: Friendship College Boys

DATE: 27 May 2026

TIME: 09.30 hrs

Protocol

Dr the Honourable Mahend Gungapersad, Minister of Education and Human Resource

Honourable Members of the National Assembly

Dr Deenesh Patpur, Chairperson, and Mrs Aryawattee Boolaucky, Director of the P.S.E.A.,

Mr Ramchurn Coomar Bachwa. Founder of Friendship College Boys,

The Rector and Manager of Friendship College Boys,

Dear Teachers, Staff members,

Dear Students.

Introduction

Good morning to you all

Thank you for the invitation and the very special welcome to me and to my wife.

Milestone

It is indeed a great pleasure and a privilege to be present as we celebrate today a remarkable and memorable milestone: the **65th Anniversary of Friendship College Boys.**

Let me begin by joining the Hon Minister in extending my warmest congratulations to the Rector, the staff, students, parents and alumni, and all stakeholders who have contributed, over the years, to the growth and success of this institution.

Today is not merely a celebration of years gone by. It is a celebration of vision, hope, sacrifice, resilience, and the enduring power of education to transform lives communities and society.

Reasons

There are many reasons why, in spite of my very busy schedule, I decided to join you and celebrate this special occasion with you.

Let me first inform you that your manager had to negotiate very hard with my secretary for me to accept this invitation because the dates clashed as my calendar is planned over nearly three months in advance.

The very first reason I decided to come was to pay tribute to a visionary founder and a pioneer, **Mr Ramchurn Coomar Bachwa**, and his family. It was Mr. Bachwa's passion for education, his courage and determination that gave birth to this institution in 1961, well before our country became independent and when education was not free. He followed in the trail blazed by the father of our nation, SSR, who believed that investing in education for the children and the youth of a nation is the most strategic investment that any country can make.

From humble beginnings in a rented building in Goodlands, with just about 100 students, Friendship College emerged through perseverance, sacrifice, and an unwavering belief in the value of education as a vibrant, credible and forward looking institution.

At a time when resources were scarce and support uncertain, Mr Bachwa chose not to give up. He pressed on, often relying on his own means, driven by a simple but powerful conviction: that **a school is indeed the cradle of friendship** and the future of our children and youth.

His legacy is not only in the buildings we see today, but in the thousands of lives shaped within the walls of these buildings.

A Journey of Growth and Transformation

The history of Friendship College Boys is one of **steady growth and adaptation**.

From the separation of the Boys and Girls sections in 1968, to the expansion following the **introduction of free education in 1977**, the institution continuously evolved to meet the needs of the community.

The construction of new facilities, from classrooms to science laboratories, from administrative blocks to the multipurpose hall inaugurated in 2016, reflects **a commitment to providing a holistic education**.

The introduction of HSC classes in 2001 marked another important milestone, allowing students to pursue higher academic ambitions within the institution.

This journey is a testament to what can be achieved when vision is matched with strong values, leadership and perseverance.

Excellence in Academics, Sports, and Beyond

Over the years, Friendship College Boys has distinguished itself, not only in academics, but also in sports, co-curricular and extracurricular activities

The school has consistently produced students who have excelled at SC and HSC levels, and who have gone on to occupy important positions in Mauritius and abroad.

I am happy to learn that the college has also earned a strong reputation in regional football and volleyball competitions, and its athletes have represented Mauritius at national and international levels.

Inter-College Competition: Celebrating the Spirit of Unity and Excellence

I would also like to commend the school for the successful organisation of the **Inter-College Competition held on 16th March 2026** as part of the anniversary celebrations.

This event, which brought together students from various institutions, including Friendship College Girls, Universal College, D.A.V College, International College, S. Jugdambi SSS, BPS Fatima College, and Cosmopolitan College Boys and Girls, was a powerful demonstration of unity and healthy competition.

Through activities such as quizzes, debates, elocution contests, art competitions, and essay writing, students were given a platform to express their creativity, sharpen their intellect, and build self-confidence.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all participants, organisers, and winners.

Such initiatives go beyond mere competition or examinations, marksheets or certificates: they foster **respect, collaboration, and friendship**, which are values essential in today's world.

This balanced emphasis on academic excellence, discipline, teamwork, and character-building is what defines a truly great educational institution where intellectual, physical, emotional, social and civic development go hand in hand.

You have made this celebration truly meaningful and memorable.

The second reason

Many of you may not be aware that I am myself a product of a Private Secondary College, of this very constituency-the Northern College which unfortunately has closed down. My wife is also a product of a private Secondary College.

Since this is my very first function at a Private Secondary School. I want to take this opportunity to also pay a special tribute to all founders and Managers of Private Secondary Colleges for the invaluable contribution in the education sector.

At a time when education was not free, they came forward and invested in a sector which did not yield high returns. They played a pioneering role in shaping the destiny of thousands of children and youth, among whom, today, you have the 8th President of our Republic.

The Role of Education in Nation Building

As we celebrate this 65-year journey, we must also reflect on the broader role of education in shaping our nation

In a rapidly changing world, where technology and AI, innovation, and globalisation are redefining the future, where there are numerous challenges like climate change, energy crisis, demographic shifts, our education system must continue to nurture not only knowledge, but also **critical thinking, flexibility and adaptability, strong values** and civic responsibility.

Institutions like Friendship College Boys can play a crucial role in preparing our young people to face these challenges with confidence and integrity.

Remember the words of President Nelson Mandela :

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

It is the ultimate tool for dismantling oppression, breaking generational cycles of poverty, and fostering lasting global peace.

Education must not end with your certificates, diplomas and degrees or your employment; you must consider education as being on a tread mill, being always on the move-learning, unlearning and relearning.

Like your laptops and mobiles, you must always keep updating yourself by acquiring new knowledge and experiences.

A Message to Students

To the students present here today, I would like to say this:

You are the future of this country.

Make the most of the opportunities that your school provides. These are the best day of your life. Work hard, remain disciplined, and never lose sight of your dreams.

Remember that success is not measured only by academic results, but also by your character, your integrity, and your willingness to contribute to society.

Build friendships, support one another, and always strive to be the best version of yourselves.

Always try to reach for the moon; even if you don't reach the moon, you will land among the stars

Appreciation to Staff and Alumni

To the Rector, teachers, and staff, I wish to express my deepest appreciation for your **dedication and commitment**.

To my fellow educators:

Your role today goes far beyond teaching and learning: you are mentors, counsellors, role models, and guides who **shape the minds and values** of future generations. You touch the hearts and minds of your students and shape their destinies.

To the alumni of this institution, you are living proof of the impact of this school. I encourage you to remain connected and to continue **contributing** to the development of **your alma mater**.

To parents

Always stand by the side of your children. Love them, cherish them and be there for them always. They are the most precious gifts that God has offered you. Remember that parents are the first educators of their children.

Conclusion

As Friendship College Boys celebrates 65 years of existence, we honour the past, celebrate the present, and look forward to the future with confidence.

May this institution continue to grow from strength to strength, upholding its noble motto and continuing to serve as a true **cradle of friendship, excellence and inspiration**.

Happy 65th Anniversary and congratulations

Thank you for your kind attention.