

## **Independent day 15<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

A flag hoisting ceremony to mark the 74<sup>th</sup> Independence Day of India was held at the premises of the High Commission's old Chancery building at Mont Fleuri, Victoria at 9.00 AM on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2020 in the presence of High Commission officials, officers on ITEC deputation, their families and Seychelles-based NRIs, PIOs and friends of India. The number of guests was strictly limited to enforce tenets of social distancing in place. Excerpts from President's address to the nation on the eve of the Independence Day were read out by Shri Harsh Chirania, Second Secretary. This was followed by address by the High Commissioner. Light refreshments were served on the occasion.

2. In the evening, the High Commissioner hosted the National Day Reception at The H Resort, Beau Vallon, Mahe where local dignitaries, government officials and members of diplomatic missions were present. The Chief Guest of the function was H.E. Mr. Vincent Meriton, Vice President of the Republic of Seychelles. Nicholas Prea, Speaker of the National Assembly; Justice Anthony Francis Fernando, President, Court of Appeal; Charles De Comarmond, Leader of Government Business; Wavel Ramkalawan, Leader of Opposition; Didier Dogly, Minister of Tourism, civil Aviation, Ports & Marine; Jeanne Simeon, Minister of Education & Human Resource Development; Jean Paul Adam, former Minister of Health; Ambassador Barry Faure, Secretary of State, Department of Foreign Affairs; Attorney General Frank Ally, Auditor General Gamini Herath, prominent Members of the National Assembly, Heads of Diplomatic Mission, representatives from media and top government functionaries were also present at the event.

3. After the national anthems of both India and Seychelles, speeches were delivered by the High Commissioner and the Chief Guest. High Commissioner Gen. Dalbir Singh Suhag spoke about India-Seychelles bilateral relationship, India's developmental assistance to Seychelles and Indian medical aid to IOR and Seychelles to combat COVID-19. He also spoke about Atma Nirbhar Bharat and the steps taken by Government of India to make India self-reliant amidst COVID-19. He thanked Government of Seychelles for their support to India's candidature for observer status at Indian Ocean Commission and other multilateral bodies.

4. Vice President Vincent Meriton (VPM) thanked India for the bilateral cooperation and assistance in meeting Seychelles' infrastructural needs. He reiterated the strong bonds of friendship between India and Seychelles and recalled the visit of President Danny Faure to India in 2018. He also thanked India for the medical aid and the hydrography survey of Port Victoria. About 70 guests attended the evening function. The evening Reception was also restricted in numbers and kept short due to COVID pandemic.

5. The two leading newspapers of Seychelles, The Nation and Today brought out special supplements on Indian 74th Independence Day. These featured the message by the High Commissioner, several articles on India and photographs on mission's activities.













