

80th Independence Day of India Flag Hoisting Ceremony at India House (15 August 2026)

(Remarks by High Commissioner)

Dear Guests,

Thank you all for joining us on the occasion of the 80th Independence Day of India.

We began today's function with a rendition of *Vande Mataram*, our National Song, followed by the hoisting of the National Flag and the singing of the National Anthem. These moments fill us with immense pride and warm sentiments. They remind us of the spirit of our freedom struggle, the remarkable progress we have made since independence, and the promising future that lies ahead.

I would like to thank all those who participated enthusiastically in the campaigns and competitions organised in the run-up to Independence Day, including the *Har Ghar Tiranga* campaign, the painting and photography competitions, and the *Bharat Ko Janiye* Quiz.

We are also looking forward to greater involvement of the diaspora in the years ahead. Rashtrapati ji mentioned the Commonwealth Games in her address. In this context, we will be organising the *Girmitiya Games* early next year, and we expect enthusiastic participation from South Africa. As our women athletes continue to bring greater glory to India by winning more medals, we hope to see strong and equal participation of women athletes in these Games as well.

Our Consulates will be reaching out to community organisations for the selection of participants. I urge all of you to participate enthusiastically in this process. We will also be organising the *Viksit Bharat Run*, as we did last year, and I encourage you to participate in large numbers once again.

Last year, Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi received a very warm welcome from the Indian diaspora in South Africa. The Prime Minister and the Government of India attach great importance to the greater involvement of the diaspora in India's journey towards becoming a developed nation. You will recall that during the Prime Minister's visit, we extended the OCI facility to the seventh generation of Persons of Indian Origin and also relaxed some other criterias.. The consulates have held workshops to inform about the changes. This was another important step in strengthening the bonds between India and its diaspora. As we move towards *Viksit Bharat*—a developed India—by the centenary of our independence, I am confident that the Indian diaspora will continue to play an important role in this journey.

On 12 August, India and the Southern African Customs Union signed the Terms of Reference for negotiations on a trade agreement, which we expect to conclude within about a year. This is another step towards strengthening our commercial relations.

India is currently chairing BRICS, and the BRICS Summit will take place on 12-13 September. We have seen very good participation from South Africa in the BRICS Ministerial meetings and side events. President Cyril Ramaphosa will lead the South African delegation to the Summit. All of this reflects the strong and enduring connections between our two countries.

Recently, at the PIO Connect event held in Pretoria, we witnessed the enthusiastic participation of the Indian diaspora from different walks of life. We are very proud of the achievements and contributions of the diaspora in South Africa.

The High Commission and our Consulates will continue to encourage and facilitate the active participation of the Indian community in our programmes and events. We will also be happy to receive your suggestions on how we can further strengthen our engagement with the community.

Once again, I wish all of you a very happy Independence Day.

Jai Hind!

Jai Bharat!
