

**High Commission Of India
Pretoria**

PRESS RELEASE

2nd Edition of PIO Connect Event 2026

The High Commission of India in Pretoria organized PIO Connect 2026 on 31 July 2026 at The Capital Menlyn Maine, Pretoria, bringing together distinguished members of the Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) community from across South Africa to celebrate their achievements and reaffirm their invaluable contribution towards strengthening the close and enduring ties between India and South Africa.

2. The event commenced with welcome remarks by the High Commissioner of India to South Africa, H.E. Shri Prabhat Kumar, who highlighted the vital role played by the Indian diaspora in promoting the shared values, people-to-people connections and growing partnership between the two countries. He acknowledged the outstanding contributions of the PIO community in diverse fields and encouraged greater engagement with India's development journey and initiatives.

3. The inaugural session also featured keynote addresses by Dr. Murthi Sooboo, noted community activist, and Mr. Fakir Hassen, veteran journalist and author, who reflected on the rich legacy of the Indian community in South Africa and the importance of preserving cultural heritage while fostering stronger India-South Africa relations.

4. The programme comprised three engaging panel discussions featuring eminent personalities from a wide range of professions.

5. The first panel on "Arts, Music, Culture and Literature", moderated by Ms. Zena Velloo John, showcased accomplished artists, performers, authors, filmmakers, academics and cultural practitioners, who shared their experiences and perspectives on preserving and promoting Indian heritage through creative expression.

6. The second panel on “Academia, Professionals and Young Achievers”, moderated by Prof. Sunil Maharaj, brought together distinguished academics, entrepreneurs, business leaders and sportspersons. The discussion highlighted excellence, innovation and leadership within the South African Indian community, while inspiring young professionals to contribute meaningfully to society.

7. The third panel on “Sport, Community Outreach and Journalism”, moderated by Mr. Jack Devnarain, featured accomplished journalists and community leaders who discussed the role of media, sports and community service in fostering social cohesion and strengthening bilateral people-to-people ties.

8. PIO Connect 2026 witnessed enthusiastic participation from around 100 members of the Indian diaspora and provided a vibrant platform for interaction, networking and exchange of ideas. The event reaffirmed the High Commission’s commitment to engaging closely with the PIO community and recognising its significant contribution in strengthening the India and South Africa partnership.

Pretoria
31 July 2026