

**Message from His Excellency Mr. Sylvestre Radegonde,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Tourism of the Republic of Seychelles**

'Long years ago, we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance...'

Pandit Nehru's "Tryst with Destiny", extolling the rebirth of a nation long-oppressed and incarnating the will and determination of Indians to triumph over British colonial rule, is a timeless oration, which continues to resonate today, as much as it did with the people of India seven and a half decades ago. India's struggle for liberation and independence has inspired countless other similar movements, starting in Africa, leading to the process of decolonisation globally in the second half of the past century.

India's strife for freedom, its rebirth as a nation and its rise as a global power continue to inspire. They feature prominently in the events being organised to celebrate this defining moment of India's history, as do India's rich cultural heritage and history, her freedom fighters and Independence heroes, not least Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru himself. In the months leading to the commemoration of India's 75th anniversary as a free and independent nation, those cultural events also bear testimony to India's indomitable spirit. In the face of all adversity and tribulations brought about by the pandemic, India's spirit remains undaunted! And her selflessness and generosity boundless!

For these and many other reasons it is right that Seychelles should join the **India@75** events, a colourful, lively and purposeful journey, leading to the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of India's Independence and founding as a Republic on 15th August 2022.

The strength, dynamism and diversity of the amity between Seychelles and India need not be expounded on. The strong ties between our two countries predate our own Independence as a nation. Since then, they have taken on a new dimension, resulting in a vibrant programme of cooperation in numerous spheres and sectors. We also share a commonality of views and interests on many issues, including our advocacy for the environment and mitigation of the effects of climate change, peace and security, democracy and human rights as well as reform of multilateral institutions. All these are, of course, of crucial importance to us as we seek to forge more dynamic ties both bilaterally and on the international scene. But, perhaps, of greater importance are the cordial relations and understanding between our two peoples that our shared history, culture and geographical proximity have defined.

The India@75 events is also an opportunity for Seychelles to commemorate the importance of the bilateral ties of friendship and cooperation between the two countries: "A partnership which has withstood the test of time, a steadfast and unwavering one which is set to grow further as we prepare to celebrate our 45th anniversary of Independence and, on the same occasion, the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Seychelles and India.
