

KING THANKS INDIA FOR E2BN

STORIES BY BODWA MBINGO

His Majesty King Mswati III has thanked the government of India for committing resources worth about E2 billion towards the development of national capital projects, especially the new Parliament building and the disaster recovery site for the National Data Centre.

The King pointed out that these capital projects were very important for the country, as they are meant to improve and play very imperative roles in the operations of our systems. He further expressed hope and confidence that these projects will be given priority and the urgency they deserve.

The King was speaking through his representative Prince Guduza at the Republic Day Reception of the Republic of India, hosted by the Indian High Commission in Eswatini at Sibane Sami Hotel in Ezulwini on Friday evening.

"This is where Charge d' Affaires of the High Commission of India Susan Joseph also confirmed that the lines of credit for the construction of the new Parliament building, worth US\$108.28 million (about E1.84 billion) and construction of a Disaster Recovery Site of the National Data Centre of the Royal Science and



His Majesty King Mswati III's representative Prince Guduza delivers the King's speech during the Republic Day of India. The event was at Sibane Sami Hotel on Friday evening. (Pics: Simon Shabangu)

Technology Park (RSTP) worth US\$10.1 million (about E176.8 million) were signed in 2021.

She further noted that these projects were at various stages of commencement and that the Indian community

looked forward to their timely execution.

Meanwhile, His Majesty reiterated that as a country, Eswatini was proud of the growth that the Republic of India had made and the continued role it played in the global community and in the kingdom. He said the country has no reason not to stand in unity and associate with the government and all the people of India.

"As you celebrate your independence, we are convinced that your contribution and role is still to multiply, and more nations will learn from the wealth of skill, knowledge and abilities you have to share as we build a better and sustainable world for the generations we serve and those to come.

"The Kingdom of Eswatini is ready and remain ideal for investment opportunities in a variety of sectors, such as manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, mining and ICT, to mention but a few. Kindly pass our sincere appreciation to His Excellency the president, government and the entire populace of the Republic of India for your continuous cooperation and support to the kingdom," added the King.

He expressed pride at the bilateral relations that both countries have seen grow



His Majesty's representative Prince Guduza lights a candle to mark the start of the ceremony during Republic Day of India celebrations at Sibane Sami Hotel. The event was hosted by High Commission of India Charge d'Affaires Susan Joseph.



Prince Guduza toasts with Indian High Commission Charge d'Affaires Susan Joseph.

Thanks local Indian community for Incwala attendance

His Majesty has thanked the Indian community in Eswatini for joining the nation and being part of the country's national events, including the Incwala Ceremony.

The King said as Eswatini joined the community in celebrating the Republic Day of India, he wished to encourage the government and all the people of India to uphold their heritage and always look back to the pillars that define and identify where they came from as a nation. The King said cultural ceremonies such as Incwala define Eswatini's nationhood and they have been passed from generation to generation as they identify us as Emaswati.

"Whilst we embrace modernity but our culture heritage remains the pillar of our strength and unity. It gave us much joy to see your community join us and be a part of the national events which have been a great success.

"You have not taken a back seat and became spectators but to show your true friendship and cordial relations, you joined us and identified with us as you have become an integral part of our society," said the King.

His Majesty also looked forward to that country's continued support even in the upcoming national events in 2023, pointing out that their continued support meant a lot to Eswatini, as the nation

also pledged to stand by and support them in their national activities celebrated in the country, where they are home away from home.

The King, on another note, expressed his joy at the many Emaswati who have enrolled for educational programmes in the Republic of India through the scholarships that are extended to them to study in the Indian prestigious universities.

"We believe that those already pursuing their studies under these scholarships are applying themselves to acquire the right training opportunities and empowerment. We expect exceptional results from them and nothing less."

Congratulates India for assuming G20 chairmanship

The King further congratulated the Republic of India for the global role that she plays in the international community, noting that the country's appointment for the G20 leadership has clearly given it the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the global economy.

India assumed leadership of G20 on December 1, 2022, and has already hosted a number of meetings with various stakeholders as part of the year-long deliberations leading to the G20 Summit in December 2023.

The King said as a country, Eswatini recognises India's intent to ensure that even the global south is not left behind in the exchanges and engagements made for the developing world.

"We wish to state that you have our full support and have a true partner in the vision you have for promoting all issues of interest in the global community. The Kingdom of Eswatini is a proponent of ensuring that no one should be left behind as we build the world we want," said

the King.

The King continued that India had not only set a mark in the international community, but had made its presence felt and feasible even here in Eswatini in promoting the two countries' bilateral relations and initiatives.

He expressed appreciation at the numerous technical assistance and in service training programmes that have been extended to Eswatini civil servants, private and other sectors of society by that country.

"We do believe that these exchange programmes improve the skills and knowledge base of our sectors, particularly defence and security, commerce and trade, diplomacy, judiciary, and education, to mention but a few.

"We wish to encourage all Emaswati who have benefited from these initiatives to apply themselves fully in ploughing back to the country the experience they have received and make sure to impact and transfer the knowledge to their peers and various sectors," he added.



A section of the Indian Diaspora in Eswatini were also in attendance.

Local 20-member cultural troupe for India festival

A local 20-member cultural group has been afforded the opportunity to participate in the 36th edition of the Surajkund Mela 2023 to be held from February 3 to 9 in a fully sponsored trip by the Government of India.

A unique international craft festival, the Surajkund Mela 2023 is a platform for artists across the globe to showcase their culture and talent. Hosted annually by the Haryana Tourism Department

in Surajkund, the mela has many off-beat attractions for tourists of every age. Over 20 countries from South Asia, Africa and Europe actively participate in making this fair a huge success. Surajkund, meaning 'Lake of the Sun', is an ancient reservoir that was built by King Suraj Pal of the Tomar dynasty in the 10th century. Faridabad in Haryana, saw no tourism until it began hosting the 'Surajkund International Craft Mela' Charge d' Affaires of the High

Commission of India in Eswatini Susan Joseph handed over visas and air-tickets to Minister of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs Harries Bulunga for the 20 member Eswatini cultural and handicraft team, which is scheduled to travel to India on February 2.

Joseph highlighted that since the establishment of the High Commission of India in Eswatini in August 2019, the government of India has fully sponsored participation of Eswatini delega-