

# Eswatini troupe leads nation's parade in India

BY Mxolisi Dlamini

**MBABANE** – Eswatini's cultural team led the nation's parade in this year's 36<sup>th</sup> edition of the Surajkund International Crafts Mela held in India.

The Mela is organised by the Surajkund Mela Authority and Haryana Tourism in collaboration with Union Ministries of Tourism, textiles, culture and external affairs. This is a unique event which gives nations the opportunity to come together and showcase their culture to each other.

At least 20 countries and all the States of India are participating in this year's Mela. Some of these countries include Uganda, Sudan, Niger, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia as well as Zimbabwe, to name and a few. Eswatini Cultural troupe left the country for India last week Thursday (February 2) to attend the 2023 Mela. They will spend 17 days in all in India as this big event is set to last until February 19. The troupe is said to be turning heads in this big event while just in the first phase of the event.

### Event

This was revealed by Eswatini National Council of Arts and Culture Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Stanley Dlamini, who is with the local troupe in India. Dlamini said the team had been turning heads since the first day they set their foot in this big event. "Our team was able to receive a standing ovation during the first day of this event and that is very humbling. Secondly, the team was further asked to lead the nation parade which took place yesterday. This parade featured other recognised nations such as Nigeria, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Niger," Dlamini said.

During the parade, Eswatini Cultural team was followed by Uganda, as number two and Sudan as number three. Uganda was represented by six members while Sudan had eight people representing their country. Overall, the parade was composed of 264 representatives from all the countries that attended the crafts Mela.

### Recognition

Dlamini went on to add that the team also continued to get the recognition during the event through their handicrafts that is being displayed at the event. "The troupe is causing traffic when performing in any of the stages set up for this event. This is not only on the stage but also when they are just walking around, it appears that the people here really admire our culture. We are also pleased to announce that our stall, where we get to display some of the handicrafts, is always busy and extremely crowded for many hours. These are the things that we like to see happening for our culture, the love from these people is humbling," Dlamini said.

The local cultural team which is in India consists of 20 members. Among these members, there are cultural dancers, five handcrafters as well as Gospel artist Linda Dlamini, who is expected to perform there. During the Mela, Linda rubbed shoulders with the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Damodardas Modi.

The Mela is set to continue for the remaining 12 days, courtesy of the collaboration of Surajkund Mela Authority and Haryana Tourism in collaboration with Union Ministries of Tourism, textiles, culture and external affairs.



Local Gospel musician posing with India Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



Some members of Eswatini cultural team posing with Indians during the Surajkund International Crafts Mela, held in Faridabad.



L - R: Sikhetsiso Hlongwane, Simphiwe Nkonyane, Nonhlanhla Dlamini, Takangwane Dlamini and Tenele Sihlongonyane. These are some of the cultural dancers present in India. (R) Didumbutfo Matsebula captured with the local cultural team, upon making entrance at the crafts Mela.



Eswatini cultural team looking lavish in their traditional attire while posing with Eswatini National Council of Arts and Culture CEO Stanley Dlamini (L).



## ... Linda Dlamini performs in India

**MBABANE** – Local Gospel musician Linda Dlamini performed in India courtesy of the 36<sup>th</sup> edition of the Surajkund International Crafts Mela.

The Gospel musician formed part of the Eswatini troupe, which went to India last week to showcase their culture as part of the crafts Mela. Linda Dlamini performed at 5:05pm (Indian time), which is 2pm in local time. At 7pm (Indian time), which is 4pm local time, he proudly led Eswatini troupe in a parade to close the day.