

# Observer

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## **CHEERS TO INDIA!**



*Prince Sicalo, who represented His Majesty King Mswati III during India's 75th Republic Day celebration on Friday night, toasts alongside the High Commissioner to Eswatini Ram Prasad and acting Prime Minister Thuli Dladla and other cabinet ministers. The event was held at the United Nations Building. SEE MORE ON PAGES 8/9. (Pics: Simon Shabangu)*

# 75th REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA:

BY SIMON SHABANGU

**H**IS Majesty King Mswati III has called for the speedy delivery of projects that government signed to implement in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of India.

The King, who was represented by Prince Sicalo at the 75th Republic Day of India on Friday night, said the collaboration between India and Eswatini had culminated in a number of agreements for funding for various projects including those which were in the pipeline while others had been concluded.

"We look forward to serious progress and delivery on the capital projects we have started and as the people spoke during Sibaya, we must move swiftly and avoid unnecessary delays that set us back as a nation. This is the speed we expect to see in delivery of these projects," he said.

His Majesty said the country was appreciative of the numerous exchange programmes between the two countries.

He applauded the roll out of exchange

visits where Emaswati travel to India and likewise, Indians travelling to Eswatini to share and exchange skills, knowledge and experiences.

"Such opportunities are also targeted at exposing our youth and minority groups to our different worlds. As such we encourage more young people to make the best of these opportunities so that we learn from each other through art, cultural experiences and educational platforms," he noted.

He applauded the Government of India through the local office for the implementation of the Visa-free travel for diplomatic and service passport holders of Eswatini, which had been made under the India-Eswatini Visa waiver agreement.

"These healthy mutual agreements will improve movement and trade between our two countries, as we should see more of our people willing to visit each other to improve our tourism, trade, skills and knowledge exchange without having to deal with the tedious formalities from Visa requirements.

"It is also encouraging that for those other passport holders who do require

# SPEED UP PROJECTS

visas for entry. You continue to play a pivotal role in ensuring that the process is painless and less restrictive for many to also travel between our borders," he said.

The gathering was also attended by the Minister of Health, Mduduzi Matsebula, and his counterpart from the Ministry of Sports Culture and Youth Affairs, Bongani Nzima, among other dignitaries.

His Majesty also applauded the country for prioritising different capital projects being implemented in Eswatini.

The projects are in various sectors including but not limited to agriculture, ICT, finance and health.

"The development of our infrastructure is of key importance as it goes to the core of our operations and systems as a country. With our bilateral relations we have the mandate to ensure that our nations and people have the right confidence in food security, protection of all our data and a sound system of financial stability at all times," the King said.



Prince Sicalo delivering His Majesty's speech during the 75th Republic Day for the Republic of India. The event was held at the United Nations building on Friday night. (Pics: Simon Shabangu)



Members of the Diplomatic Corps toasting to the long life of the relations between the two countries.



Some members of the Indian diaspora in Eswatini who were in attendance.



Local artist M-Nation with members of the Indian High Commission and guests.



Prince Sicalo delivers His Majesty's speech before the delegates.



Part of the entertainment witnessed on the day



Diplomats following proceedings of the event.



Indian High Commissioner Ram Prasad in a conversation with Indonesian Consul General Kareem Ashraf and United Nations Resident Coordinator George Wachira after the formalities of the day.

# SIGNED WITH INDIA - KING



Minister of Health, Mduduzi Masebula posing with South Africa's High Commissioner to Eswatini, Thoko Sipamla and Indonesian Consul, General Kareen Ashraff at the event.



Prince Sicalo who represented His Majesty King Mswati III toasting with Indian High Commissioner, Ram Prasad and acting Prime Minister, Thuli Dladla.



Foreign Affairs PS, Newman Ntshangase in a conversation with SEDCO CEO Khethiwe Mahlangu.

## Building of multi-million Parliament to start soon

Construction of the new Parliament building will commence soon as funds and consultant have already been allocated.

This was revealed by the Indian High Commissioner to Eswatini, Ram Prasad, when addressing His Majesty King Mswati III (represented by Prince Sicalo), acting Prime Minister Thuli Dladla, ministers, members of the diplomatic corps, guests and members of the Indian Diaspora living in Eswatini.

The High Commissioner said the Indian government entered into an agreement with Eswatini government for funding to construct the new Parliament building.

"A sum of US\$108.24 million (over E2bn) for the new Parliament building project and a consultant has already been appointed and it is expected that the project would be completed at the earliest," he said.

Prasad said his government had also allocated USD37.9 million under the Agriculture Development and Mechanisation project, which resulted in a six-fold increase in maize productivity.

Another USD 20 million for completion of the Royal Science & Technology Park has been allocated while a sum US\$10.4 million for



Part of the entertainment rendered for the guest during the gathering.

disaster recovery site for National Data Centre by the Royal Science and Technology Park had also been approved and a consultant for the same had been appointed.

Recounting the milestones the High Commission has achieved since its opening in 2019, Prasad said they have sponsored a number of delegations which have visited in country on various capacities.

He said, to date they had hosted Their Majesties, Judiciary and officers from the security forces.

Also they have sponsored about

100 fully paid scholarships to Eswatini under the Africa Scholarship Scheme of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) in the last four years.

"More than 300 Eswatini government officials have benefitted from the capacity building opportunities under the ITEC programme of the ministry of external affairs of the Government of India. Our defence cooperation is also growing with the high-level visit of His Royal Highness Prince Sicalo and the Eswatini Army Commander to India in 2022. I am happy to

note that the Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force is now actively engaged to fully utilise the defence training opportunities available during the 2023-24 training year and look forward to their keen interest in the abundant training opportunities available in the forthcoming 2024-25 training year too," he added.

The event was spiced up with traditional performances by Indian culture dances and local artist M-Nation who was the guest performer and also destined to India as part of the delegation that leaves at the end of the month.



Guests enjoying the meals served on the day.



Members of the Indian diaspora in a relaxed mood.



Guests enjoying the meals served on the day.



Members of the Indian Diaspora and guests following speeches of the day.



Guests networking soon after the formalities of the day.

