

# About 15 stranded Indians repatriated back home

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**M**BABANE – About 15 Indian nationals who were stranded in the Kingdom of Eswatini have since been repatriated back home.

This was announced yesterday by India High Commissioner to Eswatini Raddha Venkataraman.

Venkataraman disclosed this during her speech delivered at Thembelihle during the commemoration of India's 74th Independence Day. Addressing the attendees, the commissioner said the 15 wanted to go back to India but were stranded in the country.

"There is vast scope for improving cooperation between India and Eswatini," she said. She said with the establishment of the High Commission of India in the country, they expected that the cooperation between the two countries would reach new heights in future. She thanked the government for its support and cooperation as the commission set up in the country and completing a year.

"By having our mission in Mbabane, we are now capable of better coordinating various development cooperation programmes of government of India, being implemented in Eswatini," she said. She said due to the presence of a resident mission, timely donation of more than one crore rupees of medicine by the government of India to Eswatini during the COVID-19 pandemic has been possible.

She said the High Commission of India has further successfully processed and sent many eSwati students and government officials for various scholarship and ITEC programmes to India. However, this programme, she said, was disrupted by COVID-19.

## ASHRAFF FAMILY THANKED

Venkataraman also thanked the Ashraff family for assisting the high commission team established in Eswatini.

Meanwhile, President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind, says the poor and daily wage-earners are the worst hit by the pandemic. Kovind's speech was presented by Venkataraman during the function.

"In order to support them through this phase of a crisis, virus containment-efforts have been supplemented by welfare interventions. By introducing 'Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana', the government has enabled scores of people to earn their livelihood, and mitigate the impact of job-loss, dislocation and disrup-



**A section of the people who attended India's 74th Independence Day yesterday.**

tion caused by the pandemic. The Government continues to extend its helping hand through a number of initiatives, supported whole-heartedly by the corporate sector, civil society and citizens," the president stated.

The president said, back home, the needy were being given free food grains so that no family goes hungry. He said the largest free food distribution programme in the world has been extended until the end of November 2020 to provide succor to the population.

## 'ONE NATION - ONE RATION CARD'

He said in order to ensure that migratory ration card holders get ration anywhere in the country, all states are being brought under the coverage of 'One Nation - One Ration Card' scheme.

Yesterday's event was attended by close to 50 people. It started around 10am and lasted for two hours.

The president mentioned in his speech that the central government of India, while anticipating the tremendous challenge, responded effectively and well in time regarding the coronavirus.

"For a country so vast and diverse with high population density, meeting this challenge requires super-human efforts. All State governments took measures in accordance with local circumstances. People also supported whole-heartedly. With our committed efforts, we have succeeded in containing the magnitude of the pandemic and saving a large

number of lives. This is worth emulating by the wider world," he said.

He said the celebrations of Independence Day this year was restrained.

"The reason is obvious. The whole world is confronted by a deadly virus which has disrupted all activities. It has altered the world we lived in before the pandemic" he stated. He mentioned that it has been the tradition of India that they do not just live for themselves but work for the well-being of the entire world.

He said India's self-reliance meant being self-sufficient without alienating or creating distance from the world.

## IDENTITY

"It implies that India will continue to engage with the world economy while maintaining its identity," he said.

He continued: "We have learnt some tough lessons in the year 2020. The invisible virus has demolished the illusion that the human being is the master of nature. I believe, it is still not too late for humanity to correct its course and live in harmony with nature. The pandemic, like climate change, has awakened the global community to our shared destiny. In my view, 'human-centric collaboration' is more important than 'economy-centric inclusion', in the present context. The greater the change, the better it will be for humanity. The twenty-first century should be remembered as the century when humanity put aside differences and collaborated to save the planet."