

# OUR JOURNEY OF 'THE FIRST' YEAR



High Commission of India Mbabane

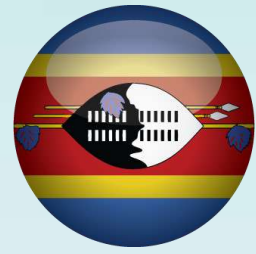


# E-BOOK

# Acronyms & Abbreviations

HCI_Mbabane.....	High Commission of India Mbabane
HCI.....	High Commission of India
Hon.....	Honourable
PS.....	Principal Secretary
Min.....	Minister/Ministry
ITEC.....	Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation
ICCR.....	Indian Council for Cultural Relations
PM.....	Prime Minister
HRH.....	His/Her Royal Highness
MP.....	Member of Parliament
UN.....	United Nations
EU.....	European Union
HOM.....	Head of Mission
IOM.....	International Organization for Migration
UNDP.....	United Nations Development Programme
SRA.....	Swaziland (Eswatini) Revenue Authority

# Introduction



In a major boost to India – Africa relations, the Union Cabinet of India chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2018, approved opening of new Indian Missions in 18 African countries. It was decided that these Missions will be opened over a four year period between 2018 and 2021. This decision was taken to enhance India's diplomatic outreach in the African continent and allow India to engage with Indian diaspora in African countries. Eswatini was part of this list of 18 African countries.

On April 9-10, 2018, the Hon'ble President of India made the first ever State Visit to the Kingdom of Eswatini on the invitation of His Majesty King Mswati III. He was accompanied by the First Lady, a Minister of State from Gujarat and some members of Parliament and senior officials of the Ministry of External Affairs.

One of the commitments made during the visit by the President of India and duly recorded in the Joint Communique issued at the end of the visit has been fulfilled with the establishment of the first resident High Commission of India in Mbabane which came into existence on 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2019 on assumption of charge by Ms Radha Venkataraman of the post of the High Commissioner of India to the Kingdom of Eswatini.

The Office of the High Commission is situated in the UN House, 5th Floor, Somhlolo Street, Mbabane. The High Commission can be contacted on Telephone Number (+268) 2410 1621 or on Mobile Number (+268) 7806 8169 and can be accessed at :



[www.hcimbabane.gov.in](http://www.hcimbabane.gov.in)



High Commission of India-Mbabane, Eswatini



@Eswatiniln



@hcimbabane



High Commission of India- Mbabane, Eswatini



# August 2019



This eBook highlights the journey of the High Commission in its Maiden year in Eswatini and brings out how its hand in hand work with the Kingdom has impacted the lives of Emaswati in their efforts towards attaining First world status as per the Vision 2022 of His Majesty King Mswati the III.

The establishment of the Resident High Commission of India in Mbabane has seen the relationship between the two countries bearing more fruits since its inception and promises to keep flourishing. It hasn't been all smooth sailing but the Mission has always been able to come up tops. Upon arrival in the 1st month, the High Commissioner :

- ◆ Hoisted the flag on 15th August 2019 at the residence of the Hony Consul of India in Mbabane Mrs Mona Ashraff.
- ◆ Presented copy of her credentials to the Foreign Affairs Minister, Mrs Thuli Dladla
- ◆ Visited Royal Science & Technology Park which was built with Indian Line Of Credit
- ◆ Organized 8 Emaswati to leave for India on full Govt. of India ITEC scholarships

Just to mention but a few.....

August 2019



# September 2019



# September 2019



From attending the Annual Reed Dance and greeting HM during it, to the first meeting with the Rt Hon PM of Eswatini, it sure was a busy September for the High Commissioner. She also met with Agriculture Minister, Jabulani Mabuza to discuss release of India's grant for the Lubuyane irrigation project. Then paid a visit to John Bosco Church to meet with the 3 Indian Sisters serving there for nearly two decades. News article on ITEC training for Royal Eswatini Police puts spotlight on the new High Commission.

**CRIME WATCH**

**INDIAN GOVT ENSURING THAT POLICE REMAIN PROFESSIONAL**

The Indian government is ensuring that its police forces remain professional and free from political interference. This is a key objective of the government's policy on law enforcement. The government has taken several steps to ensure that the police are not influenced by political parties or other external forces. This includes measures to improve the recruitment process, provide training, and ensure that police officers are held accountable for their actions. The government is committed to maintaining the integrity and professionalism of its police forces.



2019

October



**New month! New adventures! High Commissioner presented her credentials to King Mswati III, administered the oath of integrity to HCI officials, launched the Lubuyane Irrigation Project at Maphalaleni with the Minister of Agriculture. That was not all!. The first ITEC & International Students Day was celebrated in Eswatini. It saw participation from nearly a hundred ITEC alumni with Min. of Foreign Affairs, Thuli Dladla as the Chief Guest. October also saw Mahatma Gandhi 's remembrance ceremony and Deepawali celebrations both organized by the Indian Community in the country led by Mrs Mona Ashraff. What an October it was!**



# October





3 months had flown by and much had already been done. HCI Officials started grasping a few SiSwati words, got accustomed to the way Emaswati do things and started exploring the beautiful kingdom of Eswatini. The High Commissioner went on to being the Chief Guest at Good Shepherd's graduation ceremony in Siteki. Then 550th Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji was celebrated with the Indian community in the country. Worth mentioning as well is Natural Resources Minister, Senator Peter Bhembe leading a team to India for a week and 5 Emaswati receiving full ITEC training scholarships in the same month. Then the Mission began it's process of acquiring services of local officials to assist in the Mission's day-to-day running. Thousands of applications were received. Interviews were to follow.



NOVEMBER 2019

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Guru Nanak Jayanti  
2019  
Ki Badhaai!



# DECEMBER 2019



**'And the beat goes on...'** A cliché suiting the ever busy month of December globally. The High Commissioner met with President of Senate, Senator Lindiwe Dlamini, then the Speaker of Parliament, Petros Mavimbela to discuss Indian Line of Credit for the new Parliament Building in the Kingdom. She also took a short tour of the Parliament complex . Then came her attendance at the first Annual Incwala Ceremony. What an unforgettable experience that was! If Umhlanga had given her a taste of the culture of Emaswati, Incwala showed her that Emaswati are united not just in being peaceful people but people that love and respect their culture and King. Well, to seal it off before the Mission went on its festive break, the High Commissioner met with National Disaster Management Agency's CEO, Russell Dlamini. Worth noting as well is that all the prominent people who met the High Commissioner went back smiling after receiving wonderful token gifts from India. The Who's Who of the Kingdom were also greeted for the New Year with a custom made card and Indian handicraft items.



**JAN  
2020**



**JAN**



**New Year, new beginnings. The Mission had found its footing by appointing five local staff members to join the High Commission Team. January looked to be another busy month that would precede the busy six months of 2019. The year 2020 started off with the Local Indian community celebrating Vishwa Hindi Diwas & Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas (International Hindi Day and International Day for Non Resident Indians) at the High Commission's office in the Royal Villas. January meant India would also celebrate its 70th Republic Day Anniversary. An open house - flag hoisting ceremony was held at the Residence of the High commissioner at Thembelihle where nearly 200 of the Indian diaspora joined to make it a grand success. That was followed by the evening Reception at the Royal Swazi Spa Hotel where several Ministers and Eswatini dignitaries along with the local Diplomatic Corps and large diaspora took part. Both TV stations and print media of Eswatini covered the celebrations and gave it wide publicity. High Commissioner was given an opportunity to join the monthly meeting of the PS' to make a presentation on ITEC training offered by India and she also attended the formal opening of the Eswatini Parliament held on 31st January, 2020.**

# FEBRUARY

# 2020



Internationally dubbed the 'Month of Love', what better way to start off the month than a lovely familiarization visit by the Foreign Affairs Minister, Thuli Dladla and several MPs to the High Commission. The 1st set of passports were issued by the Mission to the Indian nationals living in Eswatini. Subsequently, for the first time, 7 Emaswati went to Surajkund International Crafts Bazaar in Haryana, India coupled with 15 that received full ITEC scholarships. Soon after, HRH Prince Hlangusempi visited Lucknow for the first Indian Africa Defence Ministers' Conclave where he also attended DEFEXPO2020. The High Commissioner made a presentation on the Indian Constitution at the Waterford School, Mbabane. Her attendance at the first Annual Marula Festival at Buhleni followed, where Emaswati gather to enjoy this beautiful drink with their King. The month was made perfect for the Mission by getting the Indian manufactured Mahindra XUV 500 as the Flag Car for the High Commissioner. The Mission soon hosted its 1st ever Indian Cultural Event at Bethel Court with the help of the local Indian community. The Month of Love was concluded with sharing love with children in the Kingdom by donating 200 solar lamps to 4 primary and secondary schools at Sithobela in the Lubombo region. Thus the Gandhi Global Solar Journey reached Eswatini too.



**FEBRUARY**  
♥♥♥♥♥  
**2020** ♥♥♥♥♥



March 2020



**Marching on! The Mission moved to its permanent office in Mbabane at The UN Building. Soon after, the High Commissioner hosted a get together with the Emaswati participants at the Surajkund Mela. She then was the Guest of Honor at the Graduation of National Handicrafts Training Center . The Commonwealth Day Reception Hosted by the British HC, Reception hosted by the EU Ambassador and Tourism Promotion Event at Mantenga Cultural Village were the other social engagements for the High Commissioner. The low key Holi celebrations with the Diaspora followed coupled with HOMs video conference with PM Modi. She called on HM King Mswati III to brief him on bilateral developments and met with Princes' Hlangusempi and Sicalo for a Defense Co-Operation meeting. Covid-19 infection cases started being recorded in the country and official lockdown was enforced by the Government. And the Mission had to work from home.**



March

April  
2020

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 the Mission continued to work from home. And the local Indian diaspora came together to share message on Covid-9 using placards. The Indian diaspora children decided to also take part by sharing videos on Covid-19 prevention. Placards and videos were duly shared on Mission's social media pages. Working from home, Mission conveyed Eswatini's request for essential medicines from India to complement their effort to Combat Covid 19 which Government of India accepted.

HCI\_Mbabane



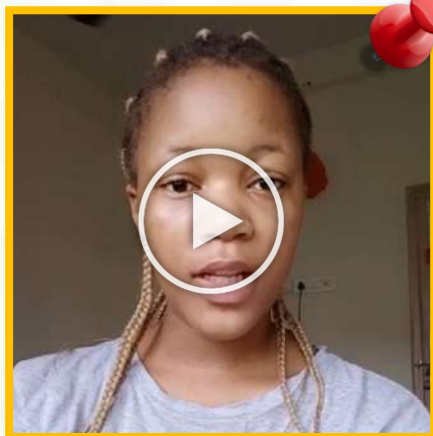
April



# May 2020



With the lockdown partially lifted, the Mission returned to office and ensured that Covid-19 regulations were adhered to and encouraged usage of online facilities for any consular related works. Top on the list was to enlighten Emaswati on the importance of Yoga and how practicing it on a daily basis can greatly improve one's health and help combat Covid-19. Lockdown had 'locked' some ICCR students in India who were encouraged to let everyone know of their safety by sharing videos with the Mission which were uploaded on our social media pages. Closing up the month, the High Commissioner administered the anti-Terrorism Pledge to the High Commission officials.

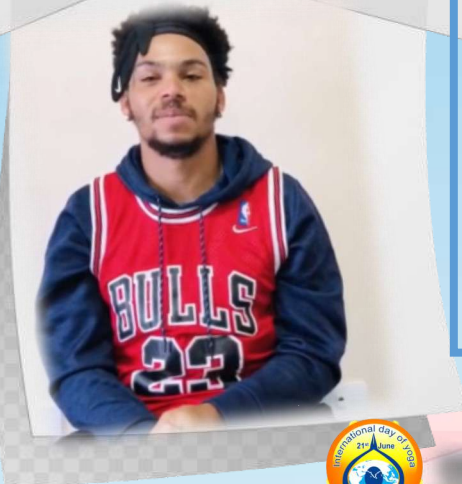


**JUNE 2020**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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28	29	30				



June was in tune. The Mission's efforts to enlighten Emaswati on Yoga included advertising on the local radio station, digital screens in City Malls as well as informative banners around the country's two major cities. IOM, UNDP and HCI Mbabane came together to practice Yoga at home and office while adhering to Covid-19 regulations. Sihlangu Semnikati striker, Justice Figuerido, Foreign Affairs Hon. Minister, Thuli Dladla, and Commissioner of Correctional Services Admin Department, Ms Phindile Dlamini, Royal Eswatini Police and Unifoods staff all shared videos on the importance of Yoga and yoga practice. An initiative highly appreciated by the Mission. These messages were uploaded on the Mission's Facebook page. A Yoga quiz was concurrently run on Facebook, which resulted in 5 winners walking away with prizes presented by the High Commission.



JUNE 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
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Yoga for Harmony & Peace



**Indian community celebrates Yoga Day**

YOGA Day is celebrated annually on June 21st. The Indian community in the United Kingdom celebrated the day with a series of events. The events were organized by the Indian Community in the UK and were held in various locations across the country. The events included yoga sessions, workshops, and seminars. The day was celebrated with a variety of activities, including yoga, meditation, and music. The events were held in a variety of venues, including schools, community centers, and outdoor spaces. The day was celebrated with a variety of activities, including yoga, meditation, and music. The events were held in a variety of venues, including schools, community centers, and outdoor spaces.

**Celebrating International Day of Yoga**  
**YOGA TRANSLATION**  
 Yoga is a physical, mental, and spiritual practice that originated in ancient India. It is a holistic approach to health and well-being, combining physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation. Yoga is practiced worldwide and has become a popular form of exercise and stress management. The International Day of Yoga is celebrated annually on June 21st. The day is celebrated with a variety of activities, including yoga, meditation, and music. The events are held in a variety of venues, including schools, community centers, and outdoor spaces.

**PERMISSION TO ORGANISE**  
 The Indian Community in the UK has been granted permission to organize the International Day of Yoga events. The events will be held in various locations across the country. The events will include yoga sessions, workshops, and seminars. The day is celebrated with a variety of activities, including yoga, meditation, and music. The events are held in a variety of venues, including schools, community centers, and outdoor spaces.



Yoga for Harmony & Peace



Yoga for Harmony & Peace

**JUNE 2020**



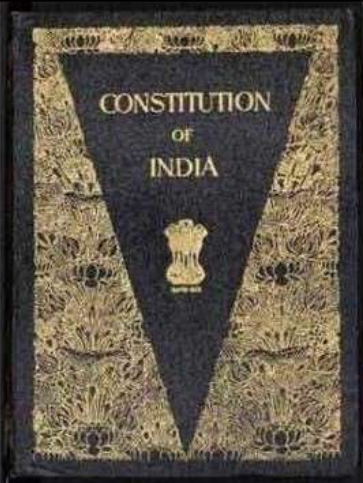
The Mission celebrated the International day of Yoga 2020 at the Embassy Residence with limited participation due to Covid-19 regulations. The event was covered by both TV Channels of Eswatini. Eswatini Observer and Times of Eswatini went on to publish the yoga event and the High Commissioner's article 'Celebrating International Day of Yoga'. A few days later, Eswatini TV's breakfast show hosted the High Commissioner to discuss the importance of yoga and how Emaswati can benefit from regularly practicing it. The Mission further on gifted Ministers, PS', Commissioner General of Correctional Services, Police Commissioner and others with pen drives containing significant information and videos on Yoga. HCI Mbabane collaborated with HCI Maputo and Foreign Ministry to repatriate stranded Indians in Eswatini through a charter flight taking back Indians from the Republic of Mozambique. Closing up June, the Mission donated India's humanitarian assistance of essential medicines to the value of E3m to the Kingdom. The medicines were received by the Hon. PM Mandvulo Dlamini himself in the company of Minister of Health, Lizzie Nkosi as well as other Ministers of the Government, at Central Medical Stores in Matsapha. Both Print and visual media gave wide coverage to the event.



# July 2020

365 days of HCIMbabane fast approaching! The Mission started off July by running an online quiz on Indian Constitution. This was in commemoration of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the constitution. Efforts made by the Mission on disseminating information on Yoga proved to be fruitful as the Indian diaspora as well as local nationals continued to practice Yoga and shared videos with the Mission. The Mission congratulated Eswatini for her election by the United Nations general assembly to serve as Vice President of the 75<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly. Then further joined the Kingdom in celebrating the late King Sobhuza II's Birthday. PS in the Ministry of Justice, Lorraine Hlophe and Maphalaleni MP Mabulala Maseko, called on the High Commissioner with the latter further sharing a congratulatory video on India's Independence. Lobamba MP also shared same video to the Mission. July would further see the Mission commencing preparations for the Independence Day of India celebrations in August.

## Indian Constitution Quiz



# July



## India offers help to ailing Eswatini health sector

**S**ITEKI – Indian medical professionals have pledged support and commitment to improving the health sector in the country following the establishment of a fully-fledged Indian diplomatic Mission in Eswatini.

Delivering a keynote address during the Good Shepherd College graduation ceremony yesterday, Indian High Commissioner to Eswatini Radha Venkataraman stated that her country was 'ever willing to assist Eswatini' to meet her aspirations, which includes improving the health sector.

"Medical professionals from India are willing to come here, even at their own expense, to conduct the required workshops for all concerned. Hospitals in India have offered to work together with medical institutions in Eswatini in capacity building training programmes," she stated. She further listed a litany of other areas where Indian healthcare professionals had pledged to support Eswatini.

"They have pledged to help in running of primary health care centre,

setting up of diagnostic units, day care chemotherapy, day care dialysis centre, organising super speciality camps with specialist doctors, medical education sessions and programme," said Venkataraman.

She further stated that other medical professionals in her country wanted to help in revamping existing medical facilities in Eswatini. She said this would be done through collaborations with Eswatini government and private institutions.

"Many companies in India wish to supply pharmaceutical products to Eswatini, (they) want to establish collaborative partnerships in the health care domain for referral to Indian Hospitals for high end surgeries and transplants," stated the Ambassador.

She thanked the college administration for inviting her to the event despite that she only presented her credentials to His Majesty the King on October 14, 2019.

She further praised Indian nationals who are working at Good Shepherd Mission Hospital, mainly as doctors.



## INDIAN GOVT ENSURING THAT POLICE REMAIN PROFESSIONAL

The Indian government is ensuring that its police officers are well equipped and empowered to offer a secure environment and keep peace with ever-changing crime trends in an ever changing society and evolving crime trends.

This is courtesy of working relations between India and the Kingdom of Eswatini which has seen the former providing scholarships to over 100 police officers for empowerment on various specialised policing areas in order to improve efficiency and service delivery.

These scholarships include foreign language programmes covering two or more years under the Indian Council Cultural Education (ICCE) and short-term courses covering two weeks to four months under the Indian Technical and Vocational Education (ITVE).

**Concepts**

A recent case under the ICCE, Scholarship programme to the graduates of two forensic police officers who were pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Forensic Science and Forensics in June 2019.

The officers who were based at the Forensic Laboratory in the Ramathaba Main compound had their year programme which began in June 2018. Concepts of the programme included psychology which is a study of human behaviour and higher mental processes in relation to psychology which is the scientific study of human behaviour in social settings, group or how people interact, react and interact in the society as well as forensic science which focuses on forensic evidence management and how

organisations keep up with emerging crime phenomena.

Over 100 police officers including those in management have benefited through sponsorship since 2011.

In recognition of the Indian Government's role in professionalising the Police Service, a delegation led by Senior Deputy National Commissioner - Internal Security Division, last week paid a courtesy call to Indian High Commissioner to Eswatini - Radha Venkataraman where they discussed issues pertaining to the existing relations. During the meeting, officers on behalf of the national institutions expressed their appreciation towards the Indian mission for its assistance in empowering police officers through various training and capacity building programmes.

He noted that a lot of Police Officers have undergone specialised training in India since the exchange programme began.

The High Commissioner stated the Police Service that the Indian Government will continue supporting the institutions in key areas for an efficient service delivery.

She said human resource operation was important for good service delivery for any organisation, hence the reason why the Indian government is committed to helping the officers acquire knowledge.



**POSE:** The police delegation flank the Indian High Commissioner to Eswatini.

Commissioner to Eswatini, Radha Venkataraman stated to promote effective effort of cooperation and trust among employees, as well as the processes of recruitment, deployment and promotion in an organisation.

**Professionalism**

Both those Masters programmes covered a period of two years and were attended by three police officers.

Comments on the impact of professionalisation and efficacy, the Police Service also discussed short-term courses under the ITVE scholarship.

These include tailor made courses such as investigation of economic offences and cybernetic, advanced forensic science and digital forensic investigation to ensure that the

## Local Indians celebrate Deepavali Festival

The Indian High Commissioner to Eswatini, Radha Venkataraman said that celebrating one's culture gives a sense of belonging and a sense of pride. She stated that this was a special occasion to the Indian community living in Eswatini, they were happy to celebrate the festival and share one of their country's special day.

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**FEELING OF LIGHTS:** The Indian community in Eswatini came together to celebrate the Deepavali Festival on Sunday.

The festival, held at the Indian community in Eswatini, was a day of joy and celebration. The festival, held at the Indian community in Eswatini, was a day of joy and celebration. The festival, held at the Indian community in Eswatini, was a day of joy and celebration.

### 3rd Technology, Innovation and Sustainable Development Goals (TIS) Conference & Expo and Dinner 2019

**1st November 2019 at Royal Swazi**  
Time: 08:00AM - 10:30PM

Hosted by Royal Science and Technology Park in partnership with United Nations Development Programme and Standard Bank

Registration Via: [info@tbl.org.sz](http://info@tbl.org.sz) / 2517 9448 / 7606 3757  
Deadline for Registration: Tuesday, 29th October 2019

**Keynote Speaker:** Her Royal Highness Ms Indabandwe Sikhanyane, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports

**GUEST SPEAKERS:**

Ms Rose Semantlana, Regional Representative, UN Women	Mr Nqobiso Phiso, President, Standard Bank Eswatini	Mr Mkhondo Mkhondo, Deputy National Commissioner, Eswatini	Mr Mkhondo Mkhondo, Deputy National Commissioner, Eswatini
Mr Thandazwe Chibwe, National & District, UN Women	Mr Nqobiso Phiso, President, Standard Bank Eswatini	Mr Mkhondo Mkhondo, Deputy National Commissioner, Eswatini	Mr Mkhondo Mkhondo, Deputy National Commissioner, Eswatini
Mr Sibusiso Mkhondo, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports	Mr Nqobiso Phiso, President, Standard Bank Eswatini	Mr Mkhondo Mkhondo, Deputy National Commissioner, Eswatini	Mr Mkhondo Mkhondo, Deputy National Commissioner, Eswatini

**Dinner at 6:00PM**  
Inventions & Innovations Awards

## INDIAN SCHOLARSHIPS - MINISTER

The High Commissioner to Eswatini, Radha Venkataraman, addressed a gathering of Indian students and their families at the Good Shepherd College. She announced that the Indian government had provided scholarships for 30 students to study in India.

The students, who are from various disciplines, will be studying in India for a period of two years. The scholarships are intended to support the education of Indian students in Eswatini and to provide them with the skills and knowledge needed to contribute to the development of their country.

The High Commissioner stated that the Indian government was committed to supporting the education of Indian students in Eswatini and to providing them with the skills and knowledge needed to contribute to the development of their country.

## MORE EMASWATI TO BENEFIT FROM

### DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SECRETARY

LHWC  
LAW SOCIETY OF SWAZILAND

**Keynote Speaker:** Her Royal Highness Ms Indabandwe Sikhanyane, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports

**Guest Speakers:**

Mr Mkhondo Mkhondo, Deputy National Commissioner, Eswatini	Mr Mkhondo Mkhondo, Deputy National Commissioner, Eswatini
Mr Mkhondo Mkhondo, Deputy National Commissioner, Eswatini	Mr Mkhondo Mkhondo, Deputy National Commissioner, Eswatini

**Dinner at 6:00PM**  
Inventions & Innovations Awards

# NEWS COVERAGE FROM THE PAST

## India's minister delivers special message to King

BY MDUDUZI MNGOMEZULU

**MBABANE - India's Minister of External Affairs Preet Kaur was in the kingdom to deliver a special message to His Majesty King Mswati III on Wednesday.**

The minister was accompanied by a senior government official, the High Commissioner for India, Ashok K Amrohi and his wife Yamini. Upon arrival at the Matsapha International Airport, Minister Kaur was met by the Foreign Affairs Chief

Protocol Officer, Promise Msibi, the Indonesian Consul to Swaziland, Kareem Ashraff and his wife Mona. Minister Preet Kaur then proceeded to the Royal Villas where refreshments were served, before paying a courtesy call on her

counterpart, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Lutfo Dlamini, at his offices.

She highlighted the importance of the relationship between the two countries that has existed for many years.

Minister Dlamini urged her to invite farmers from India to invest in the

Kingdom since farming is big in India.

Both ministers later visited the Ngenwenya Glass factory, Swazi Candles, and made a brief stop at the Mahlanya Market where the visiting minister was shown some of the fresh produce from local farmers.



India's Minister of External Affairs Preet Kaur chats to High Commissioner of India Ashok K Amrohi and Consular Kareem Ashraff. (Pic: Mduduzi Mngomezulu)



Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Lutfo Dlamini watches as India's Minister of External Affairs Preet Kaur admires her present during a courtesy call to the minister's office on Wednesday.



Minister of External Affairs of India Preet Kaur receives a bouquet of flowers from Mona Ashraff and Yamini Amrohi at the Matsapha Airport

**NATIONAL NEWS 17**

**Speaker of the Indian Parliament Mrs Meira Kumar and her delegation with the King.**

**NATIONAL NEWS**  
PAGE 6  
Times of Swaziland - Monday, May 10, 2010

### INDIA'S PARLY SPEAKER IN SD

**MBABANE** - Swaziland is hosting the Executive Committee Meetings of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) where a number of high profile parliamentarians are participating.

The meeting began on Sunday and is expected to continue on Thursday. Among those in attendance is Honourable Speaker, Lok Sabha, Smt. Meira Kumar who was welcomed by Lobamba Lomdzila MP Marwick Khumalo.

CPA India Region consists of Parliamentarians and all the Members of State Legislative Assemblies in India. Smt. Meira Kumar is the Chairperson of the CPA India Region Branch.

The Executive Committee of CPA consists mainly of the officers of each regional branch. The agenda of the Executive Committee meetings consists of reviewing the organizational aspects and functioning of CPA and planning

discussions on fostering greater participation of parliamentarians as well as legislators from all commonwealth countries.

Honourable Speaker's visit to Swaziland assumes importance in the context of the fact that though Swazi Ministers have been visiting India from time to time, there has been no high level visit from India in the recent past.

According to news wire services during her visit, the Honourable Speaker, Lok Sabha Smt. Meira Kumar is expected to call on His Majesty King Mswati III.

Honourable Speaker Lok Sabha is expected to convey assurance of India's highest regard for him and to consolidate the five decades of friendship between Swaziland and India. She will share developmental experiences as part of India's commitment to South-South cooperation and strengthen institutional linkages.

Honourable Speaker, Lok Sabha, Smt. Meira Kumar is said to represent Women Empowerment Globally and according to some of those part of her delegation, she is quite pleased to bear the selection of subjects said to be in the country.

**ABOUT THE CPA**

- The CPA is an association of Parliamentarians from the Commonwealth countries which aims at promoting the advancement of parliamentary democracy by enhancing knowledge and understanding of democratic governance.
- It works in the fields of democratic elections, human rights, gender equality (through the Committee of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians) and promoting awareness of parliamentary democracy among the youth.
- Active CPA Branches, grouped in Regional Branches, now exist in nearly 175 national, state, provincial and territorial Parliaments and Legislatures, with a total membership of about 17,000 Parliamentarians.

**LOZITHA - His Majesty King Mswati III shakes hands with Indian Consul General Mona Ashraff, who led the Special Envoy Mahesh Sharma (facing camera) and his delegation to deliver a special message to the King at Lozitha Palace on Monday night. (Pics: Mduduzi Mngomezulu)**

**His Majesty the King shakes hands with Special Envoy Mahesh Sharma while Indian Consul General Mona Ashraff (L), Pavan Kapoor and Kumar Rishi (R) look on.**

It has surely been a good year for the Mission. Too many memorable moments including Umhlanga, Incwala, Marula Festivals. Who can forget the many successful events we have hosted in such a short space of time; taking into consideration that this has only been the Mission's first year in the Kingdom. The relationships built throughout the year are just amazing. From Their Majesties, Government Officials, Diplomats, Dignitaries and the entire foreign and Emaswati citizens, this country has beautiful people from one corner to the end.

We surely look forward to keep soaring in the coming year as we start the second year journey in the kingdom.

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