Over 400 Emaswati gain skills through ITEC programme

BY MUSA SIMELANE

More than 400 Emaswati have benefitted from the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme since the establishment of India's resident mission in Eswatini in 2019.

This was revealed by the High Commissioner of India, Ram Prasad during ITEC Day celebrations held on Friday at the United Nations House in Mbabane.

Addressing a gathering that included Minister for Public Service Mabulala Maseko, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Pholile Shakantu, the National Commissioner (NatCom) of Police Manoma Vusi Masango, members of the Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force (UEDF), ITEC alumni and other dignitaries, the high commissioner hailed the programme as a cornerstone of the India-Eswatini partnership.

"It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you all to today's celebration of ITEC Day here in the beautiful Kingdom of Eswatini," Prasad said. "Since the opening of India's resident Mission, more than 400 Emaswati from government, semi-government and private sectors have enriched their skills and knowledge through ITEC training programmes in India."

The ITEC programme, launched in 1964 by the government of India, is among the world's oldest capacity-building initiatives. It focuses on providing training, technical expertise and support to partner countries, with Eswatini being one of its key beneficiaries in Southern Africa.



High Commissioner of India Ram Prasad presenting flowers to Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Pholile Shakantu during ITEC Day celebrations held on Friday at the United Nations House in Mbabane.RIGHT The Indian high commissioner with Minister for Public Service Mabulala Maseko during the event. *(Pics: Musa Simelane)*

According to Prasad, the beneficiaries include officers from the Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS), His Majesty's Correctional Services (HMCS) and various government departments. "The impact of ITEC in Eswatini spans across vital institutions that form the backbone of this nation," he said. "This comprehensive coverage ensures that the benefits of ITEC reach every sector of Eswatini's governance structure."

The high commissioner explained that the programme was designed to respond directly to Eswatini's developmental needs, offering training in areas such as information technology, banking, agriculture, entrepreneurship and public administration.

He recalled that during the State visit of India's president in 2018, the annual civilian training slots for Eswatini were increased from 30 to 50, while 20 defence training slots were also added annually.

This, he said, underscored India's commitment to Eswatini's development.

Prasad also noted the programme's adaptability during the COVID-19 pandemic. "During the challenging period of the pandemic, 166 Emaswati officials participated in nine e-ITEC courses, ensuring that capacity- building continued uninterrupted," he said.

Looking to the future, the high commissioner highlighted that ITEC has evolved to cover advanced areas such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, nanotechnology and forensics. Training is now conducted at India's premier institutions, including the Indian Institutes of Technology and Management, as well as the Indian Institute of Science.

"To our ITEC alumni, you are the living embodiment of this programme's success," Prasad said.

"Your achievements in your respective fields inspire future participants and strengthen the ITEC alumni network that now spans across continents."

He concluded by reaffirming India's dedication to the partnership.

"ITEC represents more than just training opportunities.

"It symbolises the enduring friendship between India and Eswatini, built on the foundation of shared values, mutual respect and common aspirations for a better future."

The event was attended by a wide cross-section of stakeholders, with speakers echoing the importance of sustained collaboration and skills development through international partnerships.

SundayObserver September 21, 2025