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India pays tribute to Eswatini on Independence Day

BY TIMOTHY SIMELANE

MBABANE – Since gaining independence from British rule on September 6, 1968, Eswatini has charted a unique path, preserving its traditions while striving for development and prosperity.

These were the words of The High Commission of India when extending its warm greetings to His Majesty King Mswati III, government and the people of Eswatini on the 57th Independence Day. The diplomatic relations between India and Eswatini were established in 1970, with the accreditation of the High Commission of India in Maputo, Mozambique. The first resident high commission was officially opened in Mbabane in August 2019.

Both nations share an active bilateral relationship, evidenced by a number of high-level visits over the years. His Majesty King Mswati III last visited India in 2017 for the CII India-Africa Business Conclave and in 2015 to attend the India Africa Forum Summit in New Delhi. On the other hand, the former President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, paid a State visit to the Kingdom of Eswatini in 2018.

In recent months, there have been several high-profile exchanges between the two countries. The Minister for Information Communication and Technology (ICT), Savannah Maziya, visited India in August 2025 to participate in the CII India-Africa Business Conclave. She also served as a speaker at a session on 'Accelerating Digital Future through Innovation and R&D.' In July 2025, India's Minister of State for External Affairs Shri Pabitra Margherita, undertook an official visit to Eswatini, where he paid a courtesy call to His Majesty and met with the Prime Minister Russell Dlamini and other ministers.



Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Minister of Eswatini Senator Pholile Shakantu, met Dr Jaishankar External Affairs Minister of India during the first World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit in Mumbai, India in May. *(Courtesy pic)*

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Pholile Shakantu, led a delegation of officials and media professionals to India in May 2025 to participate in the first World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit in Mumbai. This was the first ever visit by a Foreign minister from Eswatini to India and aimed to deepen bilateral cooperation in media, journalism and film production. During her visit, Senator Shakantu had a bilateral meeting with India's External Affairs Minister Dr Jaishankar, to discuss enhancing ties.

Additionally, the Minister for Health, Mduduzi Matsebula, participated in the International Health Dialogue held in New Delhi from February 22-24, 2025.

India has also been an active partner in Eswatini's development.

In terms of capacity building, India has sponsored the training of approximately 98 personnel in specialised institutions under the ITEC programme since 2024.

Development

The training covered a range of fields, including infrastructure development, disaster management, wildlife preservation, crime investigation and digital technologies. So far, 11 Eswatini Government officers have also benefitted from the Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats. The high commission is also contributing to nation-building through ICCR scholarships. In 2025, 31 emaSwati students were granted fully-sponsored scholarships to study sciences, agriculture and commerce at various universities in India. The high commission believes these young people will be instrumental in contributing to the development of the nation.

Further examples of Indian support include a US$1 million cash grant and an in kind donation of 700 tonnes of rice, 300 tonnes of beans and medicines and medical equipment worth US$3 million to the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) in April 2018. The Lubuyane Irrigation Project in the Hhohho Region was also built with a grant of US$400 000.

India has also been involved in welfare activities, donating 500 blankets to the Philani Maswati Foundation and medicines worth 10 million Indian Rupees to the Khulisa Umntfwana Project. The High Commission also proudly noted that India was the first country to donate 20 000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines to Eswatini in March 2021.

Culturally, both nations place a high priority on preserving their traditions. Every year, a delegation of Eswatini artists and artisans, sponsored by the high commission, participates in the Surajkund International Crafts Mela in Faridabad, India. This year, a 20-member delegation attended the event in February. To help the youth with global awareness, the High Commission of India has established India Corners at the National Libraries in Mbabane and Manzini.

These corners are equipped with computers, internet access and digital content. The high commission has also set up mini-India Corners at the University of Eswatini, Sifundzani High, Good Shepherd College of Health Sciences, Purity High, Woodlands High, Matsanjeni Community High schoolsand Waterford Kamhlaba United World College of Southern Africa.