INDIA MINISTER AWARDS 31 SCHOLARSHIPS TO EMASWATI

BY MUSA SIMELANE

A total of 31 young people have been awarded full scholarships to pursue studies in various universities across India, a move that further cements the deepening partnership between Eswatini and India.

The scholarships were presented yesterday by India's Minister of State for External Affairs and Textiles, Pabitra Margherita during the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) Scholarship Award ceremony held at the United Nations building in Mbabane, where the Indian High Commission is based.

The minister, who has been in Eswatini since Thursday as part of events celebrating 50 years of diplomatic relations between the two nations, congratulated the scholarship recipients and encouraged them to seize the opportunity with determination and purpose.

Encourage

"I encourage you to stay curious and learn as much as you can. One of our mantras is that the world is one big family. Expect a colourful life in India, with its rich diversity and multicultural society, but do not lose sight of your goal," said Margherita.

Margherita described the scholarships as life-changing, urging the awardees to study diligently and make the most of their time in India. He highlighted the wide spectrum of experiences they would encounter — from India's rich cultural heritage to its vibrant arts, sciences and renowned cuisine.

"You are fortunate to obtain such a great opportunity. Work hard, excel in your fields and when you return home, add value to the Kingdom of Eswatini," he emphasised.

The minister also took time to brief the students about India's governance structures and its parliamentary system, giving them a glimpse of the political and cultural landscape they will soon experience.

India's scholarship programme is part of the long-standing collaboration between the two countries, which dates back to 1974. Over the decades, India has supported Eswatini through educational exchanges, technical training, trade partnerships and health initiatives.

Greater

This year, the scholarships carry even greater significance as both nations celebrate five decades of diplomatic relations. The ICCR scholarship programme, in particular, has played a pivotal role in nurturing future leaders and professionals from Eswatini.

Several scholarship recipients expressed gratitude for the opportunity, pledging to represent Eswatini with pride. "This is not just about education; it is about building bridges between our countries," one student remarked during the ceremony.

Margherita's visit to Eswatini, which also included a courtesy call to Prime Minister Russell Mmiso Dlamini and an audience with His Majesty King Mswati III, has been hailed as a reaffirmation of India's commitment to fostering mutual growth and development.

Accesible

The ICCR India-Africa Maitri Scholarship Scheme is accessible via Eswatini India High Commission in the capital and is open for all levels of higher education, that is, undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral studies. The scholarships include full tuition fees, a monthly stipend or living allowance, accommodation allowance, a one-time thesis and dissertation expense and flight expenses.



India's Minister of State for External Affairs and Textiles Pabitra Margherita (c) flanked by scholarship awardees and India High Commission staff. *(Pics: Musa Simelane)*