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India, Eswatini to deepen economic ties

Mduduzi Magagula

MBABANE – India is seeking to deepen economic ties with Eswatini, signalling interest in a broad range of sectors.

These could open new opportunities for trade and development between the two countries.

The Asian giant, home to a burgeoning population of 1.4 billion people, has expressed a strong appetite for agricultural products from Eswatini, particularly commodities that can feed into that country's vast food supply chains.

India is also showing keen interest in the country's mining industry, which it views as a potential source of raw materials needed to sustain its rapidly expanding manufacturing and technology sectors.

In return, India has pledged to create pathways for Eswatini to participate in its growing technology and development industries. The country has also indicated a willingness to assist in addressing Eswatini's pressing health sector challenges, including shortages in essential medicines and medical equipment.

To this end, India has already submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Health, on recognition of Indian Pharmacopoeia which could open the doors for supply of medicines, medical equipment and related utilities to Eswatini at a much economical cost.

While the Government of Eswatini has yet to formally respond, the offer comes at a time when the country's health services are under significant strain, with calls from various sectors for sustainable solutions.

India is widely recognised as one of the world's leading producers of generic medicines, exporting pharmaceutical products to several countries, including the United States of America, United Kingdom and South Africa.

Its manufacturing base is supported by advanced research capabilities and a strong technological infrastructure, making it an attractive partner for nations seeking affordable, high-quality medical supplies. During the COVID-19 crisis, India was able to produce its own vaccine which it utilised to not only vaccinate its own people, but also donated to several countries.

Celebration

The information of India's interest was made by Ram Prasad, the High Commissioner of India to Eswatini, during the celebration of the 79th Independence Day of India.

The event, held in Mbabane, brought together members of the Indian community, friends of India and local dignitaries.

Proceedings commenced with the ceremonial hoisting of the Indian Tricolour by the High Commissioner, accompanied by the rendering of the national anthem.

This was followed by the reading of the Address to the Nation delivered by the president of India on the eve of Independence Day.

In his address, the high commissioner reflected on the sacrifices made by India's freedom fighters in securing independence from British colonial rule.

He noted that these sacrifices laid the foundation for a resilient nation that has achieved remarkable progress across multiple sectors over the past 79 years, from agriculture and pharmaceuticals to information technology and space exploration.

He also highlighted India's economic achievements, noting that it is now the fourth-largest economy in the world by nominal GDP and the third-largest by purchasing power parity (PPP).

On a per capita basis, India's income has been steadily rising, supported by consistent economic growth.

In the final quarter of the 2024–2025 fiscal year, the economy expanded by 7.4 per cent year-on-year, with an overall annual growth rate of 6.5 per cent. These figures, have set the stage for a confident outlook for the 2025–2026 fiscal year.

India recently reaffirmed its ambition to become a US$5 trillion economy by 2027, pointing to strong macroeconomic fundamentals, ongoing policy reforms and a shared national commitment to inclusive growth.

Meanwhile the high commissioner cited major developmental milestones achieved in the past decade, including the Jal Jeevan Mission, which has brought safe drinking water to millions of households, and the Bharatmala Pariyojana, a national highway development project aimed at improving connectivity and boosting economic activity.

India has also seen a significant expansion in digital infrastructure, with widespread adoption of the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), rollout of the 5G network and efficient delivery of welfare benefits through direct bank transfers.

He stressed that the 'Make in India' initiative and the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (Self-Reliant India) scheme have reduced the nation's reliance on imports while creating employment opportunities for artisans, craftsmen and entrepreneurs. He also referenced Operation Sindoor, where Indian-made weapons played a pivotal role, as a demonstration of the country's growing defence manufacturing capabilities.

The celebration was further enlivened by cultural performances from children of the Indian diaspora. Dressed in vibrant traditional attire, they sang patriotic songs and performed dances that captured the spirit of the occasion.

Sacrifices

Speeches in both English and Hindi by the younger participants reflected on the sacrifices made for India's independence and urged all present to contribute towards the 'Viksit Bharat 2047' (Developed India Mission), which envisions India as a fully developed nation by the 100th anniversary of its independence.



In recognition of their contributions, all performers received gifts from the high commissioner and Vijayalakshmi, who praised their talent and dedication. The event concluded with the serving of refreshments, providing an opportunity for guests to interact and share in the celebratory atmosphere.

By aligning its economic ambitions with collaborative partnerships, India's outreach to Eswatini signals a willingness to strengthen ties that could benefit both nations.