Speech of High Commissioner on the occasion of ICCR scholarships awards

(Friday, July 10, 2026)

Chief Guest for today Your Excellency Hon.Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla, Guest of Honour Minister for Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation Your Excellency Sen.Pholile Shakantu, Guest of Honour Minister for Education and Training Your Excellency Mr.Owen Nxumalo, officials of the Eswatini Government, educators, proud parents, distinguished guests, and most importantly, our brilliant scholarship awardees, all protocols observed— Sanibonani, Namaskar and Good morning everyone.

2. It is a great honour for me to stand before you today on behalf of the Government of India to celebrate a moment that matters deeply to both Eswatini and India which is the award of ICCR scholarships to the next generation of Eswatini leaders and professionals.

3. Education transforms lives. It opens doors that once seemed closed, expands horizons, and gives young people the tools to turn aspiration into achievement. But education is more than personal advancement. It is a public good that builds stronger communities, more resilient institutions, and more inclusive economies. When a young mind is educated, a family's prospects improve, when many young minds are educated, a nation's future is assured.

4. India and Eswatini share a long history of friendship grounded in mutual respect, common values, and a belief in the promise of human potential. Through the ICCR scholarships, India affirms this partnership by investing in people — the greatest resource any country can have. These scholarships are not only opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills, they are bridges that bring two societies closer, foster cross-cultural understanding, and create lifelong networks of cooperation.

5. His Majesty King Mswati III, has set forth a clear and ambitious vision for Eswatini, Nkwe — a vision of prosperity, social well-being, and sustainable development. Education is central to fulfilling that vision. Whether the goal is to strengthen public health systems, sharpen skills in trade and technology, modernize agriculture, or enrich the cultural life of the nation, the learning you receive in India will be a foundation for progress back home in Eswatini.

6. This year as in previous years, the scholarships were in great demand and we received 426 applications, representing more than 10 applications for each available scholarship. All applications were carefully scrutinized by a three-member committee comprising of my colleagues and all scholarships awarded purely on merit. Of the total 41 scholarships on offer, 12 went for Master's studies and 29 for Graduate studies. Also, a familiar trend was noticed in that the girls continued to outshine boys. 24 of these scholarships went to girls and 17 to the boys. The scholarship awardees for this year can

take pride in having competed against the best in Eswatini and succeeded. To our scholarship recipients, you have been chosen because you showed promise, commitment, and the potential to contribute to Eswatini's development. While you study in India, I urge you to approach every lecture, laboratory, and conversation with curiosity and discipline. Learn not only the technical skills of your field, but also critical thinking, ethical leadership, and the capacity to collaborate across differences. Immerse yourselves in India's diversity — its language, its arts, its scientific and entrepreneurial spirit — and bring back what strengthens Eswatini.

7. Remember that the scholarship is also about service to the Nation. The real value of your education will be measured by how you apply it to improve lives in Eswatini. Return as innovators, public servants, educators, entrepreneurs, and cultural ambassadors who multiply the benefit of your experience. Share knowledge with your communities, mentor others, and work with determination to realize the objectives set out by Nkwe — prosperity for families, dignity for every citizen, and sustainable pathways for growth.

8. To parents, educators, and government officials here today, your support and faith in these young people made this moment possible. Continue to create enabling environments where graduates can put their skills to use — through sound policy, job opportunities, and platforms for civic engagement. Bilateral cooperation between India and Eswatini can further strengthen capacity-building efforts, technical partnerships, and institutional linkages that help graduates transition from study to impact.

9. India stands ready as a partner in this journey. Our scholarship programme is one part of a broader partnership: faculty exchanges, vocational training, technology cooperation, and cultural programmes all aim to support Eswatini's priorities. We believe in partnerships that respect your national ownership and respond to your needs. Together we can convert education into sustainable development outcomes that benefit every citizen.

10. In closing, let me leave you with a simple thought, education is the most powerful instrument you can use to change the world. Use it to serve others, to build institutions rooted in integrity, and to chart a future where every child in Eswatini can dream boldly and achieve fully.

11. My warm congratulations to the scholarship awardees. Study well, represent your nation with pride, and return to build the Eswatini that your leaders envision and your people deserve. I also take this opportunity to thank our Chief Guest, the Hon'ble DPM and Guest of Honour, Hon'ble Ministers for Foreign Affairs & Int.Cooperation and Education & Training for having taken valuable time out of their busy schedules and gracing this occasion.

Ngiyabonga Kakhulu, Namaskar, I Thank you all.