

**High Commission Of India
Pretoria**

PRESS RELEASE

**ICCR Pre-Departure Orientation Programme for India-Africa Maitri
Scholarship Students in Maseru, Lesotho**

The High Commission of India, Pretoria, in collaboration with the Office of the Honorary Consul of India in Lesotho and the Indian Association of Lesotho, organized the ICCR Pre-Departure Orientation Programme for students selected under the India-Africa Maitri Scholarship Programme 2026–27 in Maseru, Lesotho on 25 July 2026.

2. The programme was organized to familiarize the outgoing scholars with academic life in India, provide practical guidance on their forthcoming journey, and strengthen their understanding of the educational and cultural opportunities that await them.

3. In her remarks, Dr. Sona Soman, First Secretary (Education, PIC & Consular), highlighted the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) Scholarship as one of India's flagship initiatives in educational and cultural diplomacy. She noted that students from over 160 countries pursue undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programmes at prestigious institutions across India under the ICCR scholarship programme. She further observed that Lesotho continues to be one of the largest beneficiaries of the India-Africa Maitri Scholarship Programme, with 40 scholarship seats allocated for the 2026–27 academic year. Congratulating the selected students, she encouraged them to make the most of this opportunity by excelling academically while serving as ambassadors of the enduring friendship between India and Lesotho.

4. The programme was attended by Mr. Ngaka Ramoroke, Counsellor, Department of Asia and Pacific Realm, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations of the Kingdom of Lesotho, who

described the ICCR Scholarship as an exceptional opportunity for the students to pursue higher education in India. He appreciated this opportunity provided to the youth of Lesotho by the Government of India and encouraged the scholars to make the best use of their time in India. He also underscored the importance of respecting local laws, customs and traditions, advised students to remain focused on their studies, and return home with outstanding academic achievements.

5. Mr. Biju Abraham Korah, Honorary Consul of India in Lesotho, spoke about India's vibrant higher education ecosystem, its strong literacy tradition, and the diverse academic opportunities available to international students across Indian universities and institutions. He encouraged the students to actively engage with India's rich cultural heritage while pursuing academic excellence. He extended best wishes to all the scholarship recipients for a successful and enriching academic journey in India.

6. Two ICCR alumni from the 2020 batch shared their personal experiences of studying and living in India, offering valuable insights and practical guidance to the outgoing scholars. The interactive session witnessed enthusiastic participation, with students engaging actively through questions and discussions on academic life, campus experiences and cultural adaptation.

7. The orientation programme reaffirmed the High Commission's commitment to strengthening the longstanding educational partnership between India and Lesotho and promoting greater people-to-people ties through academic exchange.

Pretoria
25 July 2026