

Remarks by High Commissioner Vijay Khanduja, delivered at evening reception held on the occasion of 76th Republic Day of India

Minister Delegate in charge of Relations with the Commonwealth, H.E. Mr. Felix Mbayu, and Chief Guest on the occasion.

Minister of Trade, H.E. Mr. Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana,

Minister Delegate at the Presidency, In charge of Defence, H.E. Mr. Joseph Beti Assomo,

Minister of Small and Medium Enterprises, H.E. Mr. Achille Bassilekin III,

Distinguished Members of Parliament, and Senior Officials present here,

Ambassadors, High Commissioners, and Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Prominent Business Leaders,

My colleagues, as well as the Honorary Consul of India in Douala, Mr. J. Ravikumar,

Members of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to this reception, being held to celebrate the Republic Day of India.

On this day in 1950, the Constitution of India came into effect. It laid the foundation of the largest democracy in the world. A system of governance was established and the people of India created a sovereign, democratic, republic, to secure justice, liberty and equality for its citizens. It is a day for us, the Indian people to celebrate patriotism, reflect on our history, and honour the contributions of our statesmen. India has made remarkable progress over the years, with impressive GDP growth rates. India is known for its achievements in the space, IT, manufacturing, automotive, pharma, healthcare and other sectors. This month, the ISRO once again showed its prowess with its successful Space Docking Experiment. India has now become the fourth country in the world to have this capability.

Friends, India and Cameroon have enjoyed strong and friendly relations encompassing political exchanges, trade and economic ties, developmental cooperation, defence exchanges, and in the field of culture.

I am pleased to note that in recent months, there have been high-level visits from Cameroon to India. In August 2024, His Excellency, Mr. Felix Mbayu participated

in the CII India-Africa Partnership Conclave, followed by Mme. Minette Li Likeng's attendance at the ITU Assembly in October 2024.

Additionally, I am happy to inform that :

- Cameroon is part of the International Solar Alliance, established in India, having joined in 2022.
- Two business delegations from the Confederation of Indian Industry visited Cameroon in 2024.

India has been an active partner in Cameroon's development efforts. Notably:

- In November 2024, we inaugurated the Cassava Plantation Project, for which agricultural machinery and equipment were provided from India through a line of credit worth USD 42 million.
- Another significant project is the 225 kV Nkongsamba-Bafoussam and AbongMbang Transmission Line, financed through a USD 93.5 million line of credit from Exim Bank of India. This project was completed and handed over to the Government of Cameroon in November 2022.
- We also collaborated with GIZ (Germany) on a Triangular Development Cooperation Project for Potato Seed Production using Rooted Apical Cuttings (RAC) Technology, which was implemented in 2023.
- India has supported Cameroon's capacity-building efforts by providing over 180 ITEC slots.
- A project on the rural household use of renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies in the North and Far North regions, funded through the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, was completed in December 2022 at a cost of USD 1 million.

In terms of trade, our bilateral exchange continues to grow:

- In 2023-2024, India imported goods worth USD 788 million from Cameroon and exported goods worth USD 454 million to Cameroon. India was the third-largest export destination for Cameroonian products.
- There are around 1,200 Indian expatriates in Cameroon, contributing economically, socially, and culturally to the country.
- Over 60 Indian companies are operating in Cameroon. Companies such as Kalpataru, L&T, MBH, and Transrail are working in the electricity transmission sector.

This year, we have invited a prominent Kathak exponent from India, Ms. Divya Raturi, to perform today. A cultural troupe from Cameroon is also poised to take part at the Surajkund Craft Mela next month.

Looking ahead, we are committed to further strengthening and diversifying

[Given the presence of a number of Indian companies in the electricity transmission sector, I am tempted to use the word 'electrifying'], our relations with Cameroon in the years to come.

Before I conclude, I invite you all to join me in raising a toast:

- To the good health and prosperity of His Excellency, President Paul Biya,
- To the esteemed Government and the friendly people of Cameroon,
- To the enduring friendship, cooperation, and partnership between India and Cameroon.