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Office Of The Premier
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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MEDIA ALERT

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INDIAN PRESIDENT VISITS PIETERMARITZBURG TRAIN STATION

The Honourable Premier of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, Dr Zweli Mkhize has committed the Provincial Government to continue honouring Indian leaders who have contributed towards socio-economic development of the Province.

Dr Mkhize was speaking during a visit by Her Excellency Mrs Pratibha Patil, the President of India, to Pietermaritzburg train station. The Premier accompanied the President on a train ride from Pentrich station to Pietermaritzburg station, an exercise that gave the President first-hand experience of the horrible and racist conditions that Mahatma Ghandi found himself subjected to. Ghandi was asked to relocate to a less desirable part of the train after a white man had complained and upon his refusal, he was physically thrown out of the train.

The Premier announced recently that the Pietermaritzburg Station will be one of the many stations that will be upgraded with an allocated budget of about R140-million over the next 18 months. PRASA's Property Management Division is managing the station upgrade/development program to ensure PRASA's operational buildings, facilities and stations are well maintained, upgraded and hygienic. The program also includes a commercial component to ensure that stations generate additional revenue in order to reduce their reliance on operational subsidies for the management and maintenance of the stations.

"Importantly, this province, working with the National Heritage Council, civil society, cultural organisations and community organisations is crafting what we call the political routes which maps together places, people and events that were pillars of the South African struggle. Pietermaritzburg station is one of the important political sites."

"These sites and political routes will be a strategic political and cultural resource which we want to use for, amongst other things; cultural tourism, local economic development and more importantly political education."

"Importantly, we remain indebted to the Indian indentured labourers for their contribution especially in terms of establishing the agricultural potential of Kwa-Zulu Natal making it a world renowned region in the sugar industry."

"They did this despite the harsh conditions that were meted out by the apartheid government. Indeed they were a good stock of men and women who have left an indelible mark."

Working Together for Growth, Development and a Better Life for All.



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"We remain grateful for the support of Indian government in human capacity development that has seen over a hundred students flying to India for training in various fields sponsored by the government of India."

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