

India announces \$263-mn credit for Congo

India Thursday said it will offer \$263 million line of credit for three projects in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and also set up an IT excellence centre in the Central African country.

This was decided in a meeting between the visiting Congo Foreign Minister, Alexis Thambwe Mwamba, and his Indian counterpart S.M. Krishna here.

Mwamba arrived here Tuesday for a four-day official visit. The last high profile bilateral visit had been Congo President Joseph Kabila's visit to India in April 2008.

Krishna said the fresh lines of credit will be for three projects - the 60-MW Katende hydroelectric power project, \$50-million Kinshasa City Urban Railway System Rehabilitation project and \$45-million Kakobola Hydro-electric power project.

The largest amount of the Indian credit will go to the Katende power project, which is expected to cost \$168 million.

Besides, India would also provide grants for setting up a centre of excellence in Kinshasa and three IT learning stations, and offer special slots for Congolese women at Barefoot College in India for training in solar electrification and water harvesting.

In a joint statement issued by both parties, the Congo minister expressed his country's support for India's bid for a permanent seat in an expanded UN Security Council (UNSC).

He also supported India's candidature for a UNSC non-permanent seat in 2011-12.

Mwamba also conveyed appreciation for the Indian contingent of 5,000 soldiers in the UN Mission in the DR Congo (MONUC) 'which has not only engaged in peace-keeping but also carried out significant humanitarian work for the Congolese'.

Indian soldiers have taken part in various peacekeeping efforts in Congo since early 1960s.

The two ministers also signed a cultural cooperation agreement at the end of their meeting.

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