

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3246  
ANSWERED ON:04.02.2004  
PRAWASI BHARATIYA DIWAS  
GADDE RAMAMOCHAN;M.V.V.S MURTHI

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas was held recently in the capital;
- (b) if so, the details in this regard along with the number of delegates who attended the same;
- (c) the main issues raised by the delegates in the said function; and
- (d) the response of the delegates with regard to the incentives announced by the Government for PIOs ?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA)

(a) Yes.

(b) Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2004 co-organized by the Ministry of External Affairs and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry was held on 9-11 January 2004, in New Delhi. It was inaugurated by the Hon`ble Prime Minister. H. E. Mr. Bharrat Jagdeo, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana was the Chief Guest. 2266 delegates including 1321 from the Indian Diaspora from 61 countries attended the event. The programme included five Plenary Sessions, eleven Sectoral Sessions/Round Tables and eight Parallel Sessions with various State Governments. Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards were conferred on 12 eminent personalities. Two cultural evening were held in which three Diaspora troupes had also taken part. An exhibition on Ethnic Media was organised on the occasion. Another exhibition on Philately on Indian Diaspora was organised by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations.

(c) The main issues raised by the delegates were acceleration of the ongoing liberalization processes; reduction of the red tape; removal of requirement of multiple approvals for investments, lack of clarity on existing routes for investors, voting rights for NRIs; introduction of a budget air travel, pension schemes for NRIs in the Gulf; creation of a PIO-Special Economic Zone for exporting products to the Diaspora countries and abolition of dual tariffs for PIOs/NRIs.

(d) Hon`ble Prime Minister`s announcements on permitting Indian corporates/registered partnerships to invest upto 100% of their net worth overseas, removal of all restrictions on corporates` undertaking agricultural activities abroad, and reservation of one third of the 15% supernumerary seats, across different disciplines earmarked for foreign/PIOs in educational institutions for the children of Indian workers in the Gulf countries, were received with appreciation and enthusiasm.