

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:31
ANSWERED ON:25.02.2015
PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS
Kumar Shri Ashwini;Singh Shri Ganesh

Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the discussions held and achievements made during the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas organised recently;
- (b) the names of the countries which participated in the event and the details of contribution made by them; and
- (c) the names of the States wherein Pravasi Bharatiya Divas has been organised, so far?

Answer

MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SMT.SUSHMA SWARAJ)

(a) : A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(b): Registration for Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) held recently at Gandhinagar, Gujarat was open to people from all countries. Overseas Indian (Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) from 73 foreign countries and from India registered as delegates for this PBD. The list of these countries is at Annexure-I. Besides the registration fees that was payable by those getting the registration, no contribution was sought or made from / by any foreign country for the event.

(c): So far, thirteen editions of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas have been organized in the following Venues/States:

Year Venue/States

2003 New Delhi
2004 New Delhi
2005 Mumbai, Maharashtra
2006 Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh
2007 New Delhi
2008 New Delhi
2009 Chennai, Tamil Nadu
2010 New Delhi
2011 New Delhi
2012 Jaipur, Rajasthan
2013 Kochi, Kerala
2014 New Delhi
2015 Gandhinagar, Gujarat

Statement referred to in part (a) of the reply to Lok Sabha Starred Question No.31 for 25.02.2015 regarding 'Pravasi Bharatiya Divas'

I Major Achievements of the PBD-2015

The Thirteenth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) was celebrated from January 7-9, 2015. This year's Pravasi Bharatiya Divas was unique as it marked the Centenary Year of Mahatma Gandhiji's return to India from South Africa in 1915.H.E. Donald Ramotar, the Hon'ble President of Guyana was the Chief Guest and H.E. Ms. Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, South Africa was the Guest of Honour.

This year's PBD commemorated the 100th anniversary of the return of Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest Pravasi, to India from South Africa. The three-day function highlighted this event and had two sessions on Gandhian thoughts. There was a release of commemorative stamp and coin on Gandhiji's return by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India. There was a Book and Art Exhibition on Mahatma Gandhi.

PBD 2015 had 1444 international delegates registered and 1810 domestic registrations. 878 participants also attended the Youth PBD on 07.01.2015. This was apart from Government officials, organizers, volunteers and special invitees to the Inaugural and Valedictory Sessions etc. PBD 2015 had a very high number of foreign and Indian participants. This was a significant achievement of PBD 2015.

Session on "Investment Opportunities in India" focused on new Government initiatives - 'Make in India', 'Swachh Bharat', 'Namami Ganga', 'Smart Cities', 'Urban Planning', 'Skill Development', 'Tourism Development'.

At the CM's Session, Chief Ministers of as many as 9 States made a strong pitch for investments by overseas Indians as they

explained the opportunities, facilities and incentives for investors. Participation by so many Chief Ministers was also an achievement for PBD-2015.

There were four Concurrent Sessions on Girmityas, on the Francophone Diaspora, on Gulf countries and on Indian Diaspora Organisations.

The Valedictory Session and Conferment of Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards was held at the end of the event in which fifteen distinguished overseas Indians were given the award by Hon'ble Vice President of India for their notable contributions in various fields.

II. Details of the discussions held

The following matters were discussed during the PBD-2015. Day 1

The sessions of the Day One (Jan 7) focused on deliberations on finding ways to link the Youth Diaspora with the great traditions, culture and philosophy of India & innovations taking place in a youthful and modern India. These were termed as the Youth PBD. The following sessions were held:

(i) "Bharat Ko Jano" –Indian Diaspora Youth- Linkage with Traditions, Culture and Philosophy. The session included speeches and discussion on the culture, traditions and philosophy of India.

(ii) "Bharat ko Mano": Innovation in Modern India. This session highlighted scientific developments and innovations made in India. It emphasized that since India embarks on a journey of growth and development, innovations that affect common man can go a long way to ensure that their aspirations and hopes are met swiftly.

(iii) Gandhian thought in the Context of the 21st Century: A Youth Perspective. The session highlighted that Gandhiji's idea that youth can play a crucial role in nation building holds true in the 21st Century and that they have to take inspiration from the father of the nation to shoulder such a great responsibility.

Day2

Day-2 began with the inaugural session by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India. The Chief Guest H.E. Donald Ramotar, the Hon'ble President of Guyana and Guest of Honour, Ms. Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, South Africa also spoke. The other sessions which followed were:

(i) Opportunities in India: Thrust on Important Initiatives, Namami Ganga, Smart Cities and Urban Planning, Skill Development and Tourism Development. The session focused on highlighting the recent development initiatives under taken by the Govt. before the Indian Diaspora. It also focussed on the investment opportunities in the offing.

(ii) Session with Achievers of Indian Diaspora. Some of the prominent Indian expatriates shared their success stories and experiences during this session.

(iii) Soft Power in India's Global Engagement. This session, highlighted that while India continues to build on its hard power in terms of military, economic, and technological assets to strengthen its strategic position, the country should also seek to fully leverage its soft power as the country is blessed with a rich heritage, tradition and culture which is already garnering much attention from the world.

Day 3

Day Three saw Chief Ministers of 9 States, Punjab, Gujarat, Goa, Haryana, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Kerala presenting the investment potential of their respective states in the session on "Investment Opportunities in States". The deliberations underlined the fast changing face of the country from North to South in terms of ease of doing business, infrastructure development, innovative ideas and a renewal of the India Success Story.

Other sessions that followed were:

(i) Parallel State Session by State Governments.

State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh focussed on the opportunities, facilities and incentives for investors in their respective states. They also invited interested NRI investors to engage in various projects launched by the State Governments.

(ii) PBD Oration: Relevance of Gandhian Philosophy over the Century.

The PBD Oration on Relevance of Gandhian Philosophy over the Century was delivered by Prof. Arvind Sharma, Birks Professor of Comparative Religion, McGill University, Canada.

(iii) Issues of Labour and Employment in Gulf Countries.

Indian Diaspora members from the Gulf region voiced their concerns at the session. The issue of higher education for children of expat Indians, skill development of Gulf returnees, the plight of overseas Indians in jail and safety of fishermen from Tamil Nadu were some of the concerns raised by Diaspora members.

(iv) Session on Girmityas

The session deliberated on the evolution of the diaspora in "Girmityas" countries where Indians had been taken as indentured workers, but have now risen to positions of responsibility in Government and business. It explored ways to strengthen bonds with this section of the diaspora.

(v) Session on The Francophone Diaspora

During this session, Diaspora members from French speaking countries such as France, Mauritius, Reunion Island and Guadeloupe aired their concerns.

(vi) Role of Indian Diaspora Organisations

Indian Diaspora organizations have become important bodies over the years and are playing the role of advocacy groups in countries where they are based. In this session representatives of various diaspora organisations took part and discussed a wide range of issues of concern to overseas Indians.