

- (v) Expenditure on incidentals and for airlifting the mortal remains to India or local cremation/burial of the deceased Overseas Indians in such cases where the sponsor is unable or unwilling to do so as per the contract and the family is unable to meet the cost;
  - (vi) Providing the payment of penalties in respect of Indian nationals for illegal stay in the host country where *prima facie* the worker is not at fault;
  - (vii) Providing the payment of small fines/ penalties for the release of Indian nationals in jail/detention centre.
- (c) The funds available under ICWF are being used to meet expenses of bringing back Overseas Indians in distress such as those now stranded in Iraq or those in other countries including Gulf countries.

#### **Steps to improve relationship with overseas Indians**

†984. SHRI SATYANARAYAN JATIYA: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state The details of the efforts made so far to make relationship of overseas Indians with India more cordial and mutual and the outline of planning for its further expansion and its time-frame?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (GENERAL (RETD.) V.K. SINGH): The details of the efforts made so far to make relationship of overseas Indians with India more cordial and mutual are given in Statement:

#### ***Statement***

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*Various schemes for Overseas Indians comprising Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), Overseas Citizenship of India matters, Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards, Scholarships to NRI/PIO students in India and new initiatives to promote interaction and cordial relationship of overseas Indians with India in tourism, media, youth affairs, education, culture among other areas*

#### **(i) Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) :**

To connect India to its vast overseas diaspora and bring their knowledge, expertise and skills on a common platform, the PBD Convention - the flagship event of MOIA is organized from 7th-9th January every year since 2003.

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Twelve PBDs have been held earlier in various places of India so far as follows:

Year	Dates	Venue
2003	9-11 January, 2003	New Delhi
2004	9-11 January, 2004	New Delhi
2005	7-9 January, 2005	Mumbai
2006	7-9 January, 2006	Hyderabad
2007	7-9 January, 2007	New Delhi
2008	7-9 January, 2008	New Delhi
2009	7-9 January, 2009	Chennai
2010	7-9 January, 2010	New Delhi
2011	7-9 January, 2011	New Delhi
2012	7-9 January, 2012	Jaipur
2013	7-9 January, 2013	Kochi
2014	7-9 January, 2014	New Delhi

The 12th edition of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention was held at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi from 7th - 9th January, 2014. The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports was the Partner Ministry for the PBD 2014. The theme of this year's PBD was 'Engaging Diaspora: Connecting Across Generations'. The Prime Minister inaugurated the annual flagship event of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs on 8th January and the Hon'ble President delivered the Valedictory Address and conferred the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards on 9th January to 13 distinguished overseas Indians for their notable contributions in different field.

Dato' Seri G. Palanivel, Federal Minister for National Resources and Environment, Government of Malaysia was the Chief Guest of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas held at New Delhi in January, 2014.

PBD 2014 had special sessions on youth on 7th January called the "Youth PBD". Further, there were various sessions on India's Growth and Development, India's Soft

Power, Issues of NRIs in the Gulf, Media and Entertainment Industry, Meeting of Diaspora Organisations, the PBD Oration, and sessions on Investment Opportunities in States, Innovation and Technology, Healthcare Opportunities in India etc. on the 2nd and 3rd days of PBD. Enthusiastic participation of nearly 2000 delegates from different heterogeneous and diverse overseas Indian community spread across the globe and India had made PBD Convention 2014 a hugely successful one.

**(ii) Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards (PBSA) :**

The Award shall be conferred on a Non-Resident Indian, Person of Indian Origin or an organization or institution established and run by Non-Resident Indians or Persons of Indian Origin, who has made significant contribution in any one of the following fields:

- (a) Better understanding abroad of India;
- (b) Support to India's causes and concerns in a tangible way;
- (c) Building closer links between India, the overseas Indian community and their country of residence;
- (d) Social and humanitarian causes in India or abroad;
- (e) Welfare of the local Indian community;
- (f) Philanthropic and charitable work;
- (g) Eminence in one's field or outstanding work, which has enhanced India's prestige in the country of residence; or
- (h) Eminence in skills which has enhanced India's prestige in that country (for non-professional workers).

It is conferred by the President of India as a part of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention. PBSA is the highest honour conferred on overseas Indians. So far, 164 Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards have been conferred on PIOs and NRIs. During PBD 2014, 13 prominent Overseas Indians were given PBSAs for their notable contributions in different fields. PBSA 2014 was conferred on the following:

Sl. No.	Awardees Name	Country
1.	Ms. Senator Lisa Maria Singh	Australia
2.	Mr. Kurian Varghese	Bahrain
3.	Mr. Vasdev Chanchlani	Canada

Sl. No.	Awardees Name	Country
4.	Ramakrishna Mission, Fiji	Fiji
5.	Mr. Bikas Chandra Sanyal	France
6.	Mr. Satnarainsing Rabin Baldewsingh	The Netherlands
7.	Mr. Sasindran Muthuvel	Papua New Guinea
8.	Shri Shihabudeen VavaKunju	Saudi Arabia
9.	Mrs. Ela Gandhi	South Africa
10.	Dr. Shamsheer Vayalil Parambath	UAE
11.	Mr. Shailesh Lakhman Vara	UK
12.	Dr. Parthasarathy Chiramel Pillai	USA
13.	Ms. Renu Khator	USA

**(iii) Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (RPBD) :**

This Ministry organizes Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (RPBD) to allow participation of the Indian diaspora who are unable to attend annual Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in India. So far, 7 Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas have been held at New York, Singapore, The Hague, Durban, Toronto, Mauritius and Sydney. These have elicited enthusiastic support from the Indian diaspora and the local Government and have been highly successful.

7th Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (RPBD) Convention was organized by MOIA in Sydney, from 10th - 12th November, 2013 to have interaction & discussion with Indian Diaspora to ensure their connectivity with their ancestral motherland as well to know their expectations and concerns. Secondly, the guiding spirit of the decision to hold the 7th RPBD in Australia was on account of the sentiments of the Indian diaspora in the region. Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea represent an important region for our diaspora, and the Indian community has been taken note of by the leadership of all political parties, there.

The theme of the PBD Convention in Sydney was “Connecting for a Shared Future: The Indian Diaspora, India and the Pacific”. This was appropriate, as the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas seeks to reach out to both members of the Indian origin community as

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well as all those persons who are interested in plugging into India's growing relationship with Australia and its neighbouring countries.

The programme for the event included an inaugural session on Sharing Experiences and breakout sessions on different topics including Bilateral Business Opportunities in Services, Resources, Primary Commodities, Engagement through Culture, Indian Languages, Skills, Infrastructure (Airports, Ports, Road and Construction), Manufacturing, Education, Culture and Youth Dialogue. There were breakout sessions also on Sharing Experiences, The Indian Diaspora in the Pacific, Honouring the Success Stories, Scientists and Academics, Women in Business and Community, Power of Media in the Asian Century and India Australia Strategic Partnership.

Eighth (8th) Regional Pravasi Bhartiya Divas is scheduled to be organised in London from 17th October to 19th October, 2014.

**(iv) Know India Programme (KIP) :**

The objective of the Ministry's Know India Programme is to help familiarize Indian Diaspora youth, in the age group of 18-26 years, with developments and achievements made by the country and bringing them closer to the land of their ancestors. KIP provides a unique forum for students and young professionals of Indian origin to visit India, share their views, expectations and experiences and to bond closely with contemporary India. The Ministry has conducted 28 editions of KIPs so far and a total of 866 overseas Indian youth participated in these programmes.

The participants are selected based on nominations received from Indian Missions/ Posts abroad. They are provided hospitality and are reimbursed 90% of their economy class return airfare from their respective countries to India. The programme content broadly includes the following:

- (a) Presentations on India, the Constitution, the political process, etc.
  - (b) Interaction with faculty and students at a prestigious University / College / Institute
  - (c) Presentation on industrial development and visit to some Industries
  - (d) Visit to a village to better understand the typical village life in India
  - (e) Exposure to Indian media and cinema
  - (f) Interaction with NGOs and organizations dealing with women's issues
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- (g) Visits to places of historical importance or monuments
  - (h) Participation in Cultural programmes
  - (i) Exposure to Yoga
  - (j) Call on high dignitaries, which may include the President of India, the Chief Election Commissioner of India, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, and Ministers in-charge of Overseas Indian Affairs, Youth Affairs and Sports, etc.

**(v) Study India Programme (SIP) :**

The first 'Study India Programme' (SIP) was organized from 25 September to 23 October, 2012 in Symbiosis University, Pune, Maharashtra with participation of 9 youths of Indian origin from four countries like Trinidad & Tobago, Malaysia, Fiji and South Africa. Like KIP, SIP has immense potential of connecting youth Indian Diaspora with India through the channel of educational institutions.

The SIP enables Overseas Indian youth to undergo short term course in an Indian University to familiarize them with the history, heritage, art, culture, socio-political, economic developments etc. of India. The focus of the programme is on academic orientation and research. Cost of boarding, lodging, local transportation, course fee during the programme and 90% of the cost of air-ticket by economy class is borne by Govt. of India. Gratis Visas by Indian Missions are granted to the participants.

The 2nd SIP was conducted from 01.11.2013 to 28.11.2013 at the Symbiosis University, Pune, Maharashtra with the participation of 14 youths of Indian origin.

**(vi) Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children (SPDC) :**

A scheme called 'Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children (SPDC)' was launched in the academic year 2006-07. Under the scheme 100 scholarships upto US\$ 4000 per annum are granted to PIO and NRI students for under graduate courses in Engineering/Technology, Humanities/Liberal Arts, Commerce, Management, Journalism, Hotel Management, Agriculture/Animal Husbandry etc. The scheme is being implemented by Educational Consultants India Limited (Ed. CIL), a Government of India Enterprise under the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The scheme is open to NRIs / PIOs/OCIs from 40 countries with substantial Indian Diaspora population. A total of 660 candidates have availed the scholarship since inception of the scheme. SPDC scheme has been modified and it has been decided to do away with the "Common Entrance

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Test (CET)” for selecting PIO/OCI and NRI students for the award of scholarships. The applications from students who meet the prescribed eligibility criteria are evaluated and short listed by a selection committee consisting of officers from the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Ed.CIL (India)Ltd. and MOIA and recommended for selection to the competent authority.

**(vii) Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Card Scheme :**

Keeping in view Government’s deep commitment of engaging Persons of Indian Origin with the land of their ancestors in a mutually beneficial relationship, the Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) Scheme was launched in August, 2005 by amending the Citizenship Act, 1955. The OCI Scheme is operated by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Scheme provides for registration as Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) of all Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) who were citizens of India on or after 26 January, 1950 or were eligible to become citizens of India on 26 January, 1950 and who are citizens of other countries, except Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The Scheme provides for the issue of OCI documents consisting of OCI registration certificate and universal visa sticker to PIOs. The Scheme has been operational since January 2006 and as on 31 March, 2014, a total number of 15,25,890 PIOs had been registered as OCIs.

A registered Overseas Citizen of India is granted multiple entry, multi-purpose, life-long visa for visiting India, and is exempted from registration with Foreigners Regional Registration Office for any length of stay in India. As mandated under the Allocation of Business, the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has issued notifications granting registered OCIs further benefits as under:

- (i) Parity with Non-Resident Indians in the matter of inter-country adoption of Indian children;
  - (ii) Parity with resident Indian nationals in matters of tariffs in domestic airfares;
  - (iii) Parity with domestic Indian visitors in respect of entry fee for visiting national parks and wildlife sanctuaries in India;
  - (iv) Parity with non-resident Indians in respect of:
    - (a) entry fee for visiting the national monuments, historical sites and museums in India;
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(b) practicing the following professions in India, in pursuance of the provisions contained in the relevant Acts, namely.

- Medicine, dentists, nursing and pharmacy;
- Law;
- Architecture; and
- Chartered Accountancy.

(v) Entitlement to appear for the All India Pre-Medical Test or such other tests to make them eligible for admission in pursuance of the provisions contained in the relevant Acts.

However, the OCI is not 'dual nationality'. OCI does not confer political rights. Detailed instructions and procedures concerning the OCI Scheme are available in the MHA's website: [www.mha.nic.in](http://www.mha.nic.in).

An on-line OCI miscellaneous service is now available for issuance of duplicate OCI documents, in case of issuance of new passports, change of personal particulars, such as nationality, name, change of address/occupation etc. and loss/damage of OCI registration certificate/visa.

**(viii) Tracing the Roots :**

The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs is running a scheme since October 2008 known as "Tracing the Roots" to facilitate PIOs in tracing their roots in India. PIOs who intend to trace their roots in India need to apply in a prescribed Form, through the Indian Mission/Post in the country of their residence. Application Form for this purpose is available on the website. Persons of Indian origin desirous of tracing their roots in India would be required to fill up the prescribed application form and deposit it with the concerned Indian Mission/Post located in the country of their residence along with a fee of ₹ 30,000 (Rupees Thirty Thousand only) in equivalent US \$, Euro or any other foreign currency acceptable to the Indian Mission/Post. The traced details of roots in India, *i.e.* name of close surviving relative(s); place of origin of their forefathers (paternal and maternal side); and a possible family tree, are made available to the applicant.

In case the attempt is not successful, the Indian Mission is authorized to refund ₹ 20,000 (Rupees Twenty Thousand only) to the applicant. For further details/information

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regarding the Scheme, the nearest Indian Embassy/High Commission/Consulate General may be contacted.

**(ix) Scheme for Legal/Financial Assistance to Indian Women Deserted/Divorced by their NRI Husbands :**

Issues related with desertion of Indian women by their overseas spouses are complex and sensitive. They also fall within the purview of private international law. The approach of the Ministry in addressing these issues is to create awareness amongst prospective brides and their families regarding their rights and responsibilities and the safeguards to be adopted while entering into matrimonial alliances with grooms residing overseas.

The Ministry has taken various proactive steps in this direction during the year 2011-12. Scheme of providing legal/financial assistance to Indian women deserted by their overseas spouses, launched by the Ministry in 2007, has been revised with effect from 30th November, 2011 and its scope has been widened to include marriages solemnized in India or overseas, with an Indian or foreigner husband. Besides, the quantum of assistance under the scheme has been almost doubled. The scope of the scheme has also been liberalized to cover certain categories of Indian women married to overseas husbands who had not been included earlier. The objective of the scheme is to provide financial assistance to needy women in distress due to being deserted/divorced by their overseas spouses, for getting access to counselling and legal services. The counselling and legal services are provided through credible Indian Women's Organisations/Indian Community Associations and NGOs empanelled with the Indian Missions/Posts abroad in the countries like USA, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore (included in 2013-14) and the Gulf countries.

Twenty seven (27) NGOs have been empanelled by the Indian Missions/Posts abroad to provide the assistance. A sum of nearly ₹ 1.34 crore has been disbursed by the Indian Missions/Posts to the NGOs overseas and 136 Indian women have been assisted.

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As part of awareness campaign to appreciate legal, social and related issues in the context of marriages falling in cross-country jurisdiction, a Seminar was organized in Bengaluru in December, 2013 which was attended by the officers of the Government of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Puducherry, Maharashtra, Lawyers, Researchers and some NGOs.

The Ministry plans its engagement with Overseas Indians through the aforementioned schemes. Indian Missions/ Posts abroad also engage proactively with the Overseas Indian Community and provide necessary assistance from time to time.

**Number of Indians working in Iraq**

985. SHRI D. RAJA:

SHRI M.P. ACHUTHAN:

SHRI P. RAJEEVE:

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

(a) whether Government has any information about the number of Indians working in Iraq, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether it is a fact that many Indians working in conflict-prone areas in Iraq have sought Government's help to come back to the country; and

(c) if so, the number of such people sought to be evacuated and the number out of them who have been brought back and the measures that are proposed to be taken for their rehabilitation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (GENERAL (RETD.) V.K. SINGH): (a) During the last three years, emigration clearance for Iraq has been granted to 10356 workers.

(b) and (c) A total of 120 Indians stranded in conflict areas, out of estimated 210, have been evacuated so far, including 46 nurses in Tikrit. In addition, about 2200 Indian nationals in relatively safe areas have also been given assistance to return to India.

The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, in cooperation with the Embassy of India in Iraq is in constant contact with the Iraqi authorities regarding the evacuation of the workers willing to return to India. The requests being received through different channels like State Government organizations and individuals are being taken up instantaneously.

In coordination with the State Governments, the returnees are being facilitated to reach their respective destinations safely.