

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 1512
ANSWERED ON 12.02.2026

ENGAGING INDIAN DIASPORA

1512. DR. K. LAXMAN

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the comprehensive efforts undertaken for welfare, safety and protection of vast Indian diaspora worldwide, as exemplified during crises through operations like Kaveri (Sudan) and Vande Bharat;
- (b) the enhancement of consular and passport services through digital initiatives (e.g., e-visas, passport seva) and the expansion of diplomatic missions, benefiting citizens including the large Telugu-speaking diaspora; and
- (c) the strategy to engage the diaspora as partners in India's growth story through knowledge sharing, investment and cultural connections via forums like Pravasi Bharatiya Divas?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) Safety and security of the Indian diaspora is one of the foremost priorities of the Government of India. Missions/Posts encourage and advise the Indian diaspora in their jurisdictions to register with them, join WhatsApp Group created for the Indian community and also to lodge their grievances on the MADAD Portal and CPGRAMS of this Ministry. The grievances of the Indian diaspora members are responded to almost on a real time basis through telephone calls, walk-ins, emails, social media, 24x7 emergency helplines, Consular Camps, Open Houses, the MADAD Portal and CPGRAMS. Indian Missions/Posts abroad also proactively reach out to distressed Indian nationals, either directly or through the local Indian Diaspora Associations within their jurisdiction and provide them all possible consular services, including legal assistance, medical care and boarding/ lodging, whenever required.

The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) has also been set up in Indian Missions/ Posts abroad for assisting overseas Indian nationals in distress. Under the ICWF, distressed Indian diaspora are extended counselling and legal assistance etc on a means tested basis. Assistance under ICWF is also extended for transportation of mortal remains of Indian diaspora overseas to India.

Indian Missions and Posts abroad, particularly in countries where there is political instability or economic crisis, remain vigilant and closely monitor any development that may adversely affect the Indian diaspora in such regions. From time to time, they issue advisories as required by the evolving political and security developments in their respective countries of jurisdiction to caution Indian nationals to avoid unnecessary travel, remain in touch with them through published helpline numbers and follow safety guidelines issued by local authorities. Any unfortunate incident or challenges faced by members of the Indian diaspora community are immediately taken up with the concerned authorities of the host

country to suitably resolve them. Such issues are also raised during meetings with Government officials of the concerned countries, including at the highest levels, as appropriate.

During emergencies or crisis situations in countries affected by political instability or economic crisis, Indian Missions/Posts help distressed /stranded Indians by providing food, shelter, medicine and evacuate them to India, if necessary. Notable recent evacuation operations undertaken by the Government of India include Vande Bharat, Operation Devi Shakti (Afghanistan), Operation Ganga (Ukraine), Operation Kaveri (Sudan), Operation Ajay (Israel) and Operation Sindhu (Israel and Iran). These efforts demonstrate the Government's commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of Indian diaspora in foreign lands.

(b) Digital initiatives such as Passport Seva and e-visas have simplified passport services. Passport services have been strengthened and streamlined in 203 Indian Missions/Posts abroad thus expediting workflow and making the process more transparent, and citizen-centric. The revamped Passport application system, besides enabling online applications, also captures ICAO-compliant photographs and incorporates several enhanced security features. Centralized databases have strengthened identity verification and security for the Indian diaspora. Introduction of provisions to enable digital interventions in the system, such as, application status tracking, seamless integration for identity verification etc has made passport services more responsive and reliable.

This Ministry in its endeavour to offer online services has also introduced the 'SEWA- Indian Consular Services System' enabling Indian nationals to apply online for various consular services at Indian Missions/Posts abroad. So far, 117 Indian Missions/Posts have been onboarded on the E-SEWA platform. Besides, the digital MADAD Portal for registering consular grievances, tracking and follow-up has represented a qualitative improvement over the erstwhile procedures for handling such issues. It incorporates several innovative features such as a flexible architecture to handle a variety of grievances, online filing and linking of similar grievances for easier retrieval and reference, automatic escalation and enhancement of priority, colour-coded dash boards for easy assessment and monitoring, and has an associated Call Centre to help Indian nationals in distress. A mobile App for MADAD has also been launched. Indian e-Visa facility is now available for Ordinary Passport holders from 176 countries, with inclusion of Mauritania, Kuwait, and Bahrain in the list of eligible countries in April 2025. The e-Visa system has also been expanded to a total of 14 sub-categories.

Ministry has also strengthened the eMigrate platform, which brings together recruiting agents, foreign employers, and emigrants into a unified digital ecosystem. As regards expansion of diplomatic missions, sustained efforts are being made to increase and strengthen India's global outreach to cater to the diverse needs of the Indian diaspora in foreign lands by opening new Embassies and Consulates. New Embassies have been opened in Riga (Latvia), Tbilisi (Georgia), Tirana (Albania), Libreville (Gabon), Dili (Timor Leste) and La Paz (Bolivia). New Consulates have been opened in Brisbane (Australia), Marseille (France), Barcelona (Spain) and Auckland (New Zealand). In 2025, new Consulates have been opened in Manchester and Belfast (United Kingdom).

(c) Government of India is taking comprehensive measures and several initiatives to encourage the Indian diaspora to contribute to national development through skill and technology transfer. This is a vital aspect of the Diaspora Engagement policy framework of the Government of India, which is based on 4 Cs: Care for our communities, Connect with global networks, Celebrate our shared heritage, and Encourage Contributions that drive positive change.

Government of India organizes Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) biennially during which the Indian diaspora community is invited to participate in several thematic sessions. The PBD also acts as a platform for Government of India to showcase India's cultural heritage, available investment opportunities as also avenues for contributions to skill development and technology transfer to India. The last (18th) PBD in January 2025 that was organized jointly with the State Government of Odisha on the theme “Diaspora's contribution to a Viksit Bharat” witnessed participation from across the globe and had discussions on areas pertaining to skill development and knowledge transfer.

During the PBD Conventions, eminent Indian diaspora members are conferred with the prestigious ‘Pravasi Bhartiya Samman Awards’ (PBSA). This is the highest honour conferred by the Government of India to recognize the achievements of the Indian diaspora, including those in the business and scientific fields. This also encourages diaspora members to further contribute to India’s development initiatives and foster mutual economic partnerships, including through skill development and technology transfer.

The Government also seeks to intensify engagement of the youth Indian diaspora professionals with contemporary India through its Know India Programme (KIP) thereby exposing them to India’s economic prowess and encouraging them to leverage their professional skills and capacities to advance this objective.

Further, Government of India encourages Indian diaspora to invest in India by facilitating ease of doing business in India, promoting flexibilities in FDIs and by fostering ease of travel through the OCI Card. OCI Cards holders enjoy benefits of lifelong visas, ownership rights to properties in India and are thus motivated to invest in India and contribute to skill development and technology transfer. The Union Budget 2026-27 has further eased several restrictions on investment opportunities for the Indian diaspora in India. These reforms are expected to further boost investments by the Indian diaspora in sectors that are critical for driving growth and development in India.

Indian Missions/Posts abroad also remain connected with the Indian diaspora and urge them to contribute to India’s march towards “Viksit Bharat”. The Global Pravasi Rishta Portal is being developed as a global registry of diaspora skills to allow geo-mapping of expertise and facilitate targeted collaboration with national initiatives such as the National Skill Development Corporation, Startup India, and Invest India.
