

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2954
ANSWERED ON 13.08.2026

CULTURAL DIPLOMACY BY ICCR

2954# SHRI SUBHASH BARALA
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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:-

- (a) the details of the initiatives undertaken by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), including scholarship programmes, Hindi language chairs and cultural centres abroad, country-wise;
- (b) whether any collaboration has been established between ICCR and public broadcasters or digital media platforms to enhance the global reach of Indian cultural content;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the steps being taken to strengthen scholarship and academic exchange programmes for foreign students by ICCR; and
- (e) the roadmap for expanding India's soft power and cultural diplomacy footprint globally in the coming years?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI PABITRA MARGHERITA)

- a) The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) promotes and projects Indian culture and civilisational heritage worldwide through Indian Embassies/Consulates and ICCR's 39 Indian Cultural Centres (ICCs) abroad (List of ICCs is at **Annexure "A"**). ICCR currently deploys 191 India-based Teachers of Indian Culture and Local Resource Persons to teach Yoga, Indian dance, music and language in Indian Missions/Posts/ICCs abroad. ICCR actively projects India's diverse culture in foreign countries by sponsoring Indian artists to perform abroad and fosters cultural exchanges including by organising international cultural festivals in India where foreign artists are invited to perform. ICCR also mounts visual arts exhibitions and hosts Art Residencies and celebrates national and international commemorative events in foreign countries, such as the International Day of Yoga. In addition, ICCR also gifts busts/ statues of

iconic Indian leaders for installation abroad. ICCR also fosters academic and intellectual exchanges and grants over 4500 scholarships to foreign students from over 190 countries to study various disciplines in India, including Indian music, dance, art, Yoga and Ayurveda. The country-wise detail of foreign students currently studying in India under ICCR scholarships is at **Annexure “B”**. ICCR also promotes Indian languages and culture abroad by setting up Chairs of Indian Studies in foreign universities. At present, there are 16 ICCR India Chairs in 15 foreign universities, out of which 5 are Chairs of Hindi Language in 5 foreign universities. The country-wise details of ICCR Chairs are at **Annexure “C”**. To foster intellectual exchanges, ICCR supports the organization of Conferences, Seminars and Workshops overseas to promote various facets of Indian culture and civilization. It also hosts curated visits of distinguished foreigners to India under various Visitors Programmes to develop constituencies of goodwill for India. These include the Distinguished Visitors Program, Academic Visitors Program, Important Visitors Program and others like the Student Visitors Program, GenNext Democracy Network Initiative.

(b & c) ICCR has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Doordarshan (Prasar Bharati) on 07 April 2026 to record and telecast ICCR’s cultural events/performances for international and national audiences. This will help enhance the global reach of Indian cultural content created by ICCR HQ, ICCR’s Zonal/Sub-zonal Offices in India and its Indian Cultural Centres abroad. In addition, ICCR widely publicizes its programmes and activities through its official social media handles, Embassy/Consulate/ICC handles, as well as mainstream media platforms, thereby enhancing the global reach and visibility of Indian culture. ICCR has also launched a podcast series across its social media platforms featuring distinguished international guests and their unique connections with India, along with their interviews on DD News with the aim of fostering dialogue, cultural exchange, and deeper cross-cultural understanding.

(d) To drive global outreach, transparency, and efficiency, ICCR has digitised its entire scholarship program through "Admissions to Alumni (A2A)" portal. Further, to strengthen the impact of its scholarship schemes, ICCR has streamlined and consolidated its schemes to ensure optimal utilization of scholarship slots, minimize instances of underutilization and improve the overall efficiency of the scholarship programme. In order to cater to the global interest in short-term courses in Yoga, 25 slots have been introduced for a one-year Diploma Course in Yoga from the current academic year 2026–27.

(e) In keeping with India’s rising global profile, ICCR has taken various new initiatives to promote Indian culture as a soft power component of India’s journey towards Viksit Bharat 2047. ICCR has signed MoUs with 27 Indian States and 1 UT and actively reaches out to various State governments to foster cultural exchanges. Since ICCR’s key focus is on outreach to youth, ICCR has launched specific initiatives such as Student Visitors Programme, Gen-Next Democracy Network Programme, ICCR ‘Yuva Mitra’ and ‘Kala Saadhak’ prizes, Pratibha Sangam global dance competition, etc. ICCR is also leveraging digital technologies to enhance its cultural outreach by digitizing its artist database and entire scholarship programme; offering online training courses in Indian music, dance and art forms; launching a podcast series featuring distinguished international guests and a promotional series of testimonies by ICCR’s foreign scholars to promote ICCR scholarship programmes across its social media platforms; introducing ‘ICCR ki Khoj’ and ‘Padma Awardee Series’ on ICCR’s website.

List of Indian Cultural Centres Abroad

Sl. No	Name of Centre Centres
1	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Kabul (Afghanistan)
2	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Sydney (Australia)
3	Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre (IGCC), Dhaka (Bangladesh)
4	Nehru-Wangchuck Cultural Centre (NWCC), Thimphu (Bhutan)
5	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Sao Paulo (Brazil)
6	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Beijing (China)
7	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Prague (Czech Republic)
8	Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture (MACIC), Cairo (Egypt)
9	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Suva (Fiji)
10	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Paris (France)
11	The Tagore Centre (TTC), Berlin (Germany)
12	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Georgetown (Guyana)
13	Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre (ASCC), Budapest (Hungary)
14	Jawaharlal Nehru Indian Cultural Centre (JNICC), Jakarta (Indonesia)
15	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Bali (Indonesia)
16	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Tehran (Iran)
17	Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), Tel Aviv (Israel)
18	Vivekananda Cultural Centre (VCC), Tokyo (Japan)
19	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Astana (Kazakhstan)
20	Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Indian Cultural Centre (NSCBICC), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)
21	Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), Male (Maldives)
22	Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture (IGCIC), Port Louis (Mauritius)
23	Gurudev Tagore Indian Cultural Centre (GTICC), Mexico City (Mexico)
24	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Yangon (Myanmar)
25	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Kathmandu (Nepal)
26	The Gandhi Centre (TGC), The Hague (Netherlands)
27	Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Centre (JNCC), Moscow (Russia)
28	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Durban (South Africa)
29	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Seoul (South Korea)
30	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Colombo (Sri Lanka)
31	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Paramaribo (Suriname)
32	Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Cultural Co-operation (MGICC), Port of Spain (Trinidad & Tobago)
33	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Dushanbe (Tajikistan)
34	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania)
35	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Bangkok (Thailand)
36	The Nehru Centre, London (United Kingdom)
37	Lal Bahadur Shastri Centre for Indian Culture (LBSCIC), Tashkent (Uzbekistan)
38	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Hanoi (Vietnam)
39	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Johannesburg (South Africa)

Scheme wise slots on offer for the Academic Year 2026-27				
S. No.	Scholarship Scheme	Scheme Code	Slots	Funded by
A. Agency Work				
1	Sushma Swaraj Silver Jubilee Scholarship Scheme (Formerly Silver Jubilee Scholarship Scheme) for Nepal nationals	G0102	64	Northern Div. (MEA)
2	Aid to Maldives Scholarship Scheme	G0164	20	IOR Div. (MEA)
3	Mekong Ganga Co-operation Scholarship Scheme	G0172	235	Indo-Pacific (MEA)
4	The India-Africa Maitri Scholarship Scheme (Formerly Africa Scholarship Scheme)	G0179	1513	E&SA Div. (MEA)
5	Kushok Bakula Rinpoche Scholarship Scheme (Formerly Aid to Mongolia Scholarship Scheme) for Mongolian nationals (10 slots MEA + 10 slots ICCR from 2026)	G0183	20	East Asia Div. (MEA)
6	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Scholarship Scheme (Formerly Aid to Bhutan Scholarship Scheme) for Bhutan nationals	G0192	60	Northern Div. (MEA)
7	Quad STEM Scholarship Scheme (only for AY 2025-26 to 2027-28)	G40	50	AMS Div. (MEA)
8	Aid to Sri Lanka (for Sri Lankan nationals)	G102	200	IOR Div. (MEA)
9	AYUSH Scholarships Scheme for BIMSTEC Countries (MEA)	G0139	30	Bimstec Div. (MEA)
10	AYUSH Scholarship Scheme for Non-BIMSTEC countries- (Min. of Ayush)	G0615	25	Min. of Ayush
11	AYUSH Scholarships Scheme for Malaysian nationals- (Min. of Ayush)	G0616	20	Min. of Ayush
12	AYUSH Scholarships Scheme for South East Asian Region (SEAR) Countries- (Min. of Ayush)	G0621	29	Min. of Ayush
13	Special Scholarship Scheme for Afghan Nationals (SSSAN) e-Scholarship through e-Vidya Bharati Network Project (ilearn portal) for UG/PG online courses) from 2023-24 onwards.	G38	1000	Pai Div. (MEA)

	Sub Total (A)		3266	
B. Non-Agency Work				
14	Atal Bihari Vajpayee General Scholarship Scheme (formerly General Scholarship Scheme)	A1201	554	ICCR
15	Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme (Formerly Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme - ICCR)	A1203	15	ICCR
16	Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Cultural Exchange Scholarship Scheme (Formerly CEP/EEP Scholarship Scheme - ICCR)	A1206	116	ICCR
17	Lata Mangeskar Dance & Music Scholarship Scheme (Formerly ICCR Scholarship Scheme for Studies in Indian Culture)	A1209	100	ICCR
18	Suborno Jayanti Scholarship Scheme for Bangladesh nationals	A1218	500	ICCR
	Sub Total (B)		1285	
	Grand Total A & B (for 18 Scholarship Schemes)		4551	

Scheme/Country wise slots for the Academic Year 2026-27		
Sushma Swaraj Silver Jubilee Scholarship Scheme - G0102 (To and fro airfare provisioned) (Formerly Silver Jubilee Scholarship Scheme)		
S. No.	Country	Slots
1	Nepal	64
Aid to Maldives Scholarship Scheme - G0164 (To and fro airfare provisioned)		
S. No.	Country	Slots
1	Maldives	20
Mekong Ganga Co-operation Scholarship Scheme (MGC) - G0172 (To and fro airfare provisioned)		
S. No.	Country	Slots
1	Cambodia	40
2	Lao PDR	18
3	Myanmar	100

4	Thailand	29
5	Vietnam	48
	Total	235
The India-Africa Maitri Scholarship Scheme - G0179 (To and fro airfare provisioned) (Formerly Africa Scholarship Scheme)		
S. No.	Country	Slots
1	Algeria	1
2	Angola	10
3	Benin concurrent with Nigeria	3
4	Botswana	75
5	Burkina Faso	4
6	Burundi concurrent with Uganda	15
7	Cameroon	10
8	Cape Verde (Cabo Verde)	1
9	Central African Republic	1
10	Chad	35
11	Comoros concurrent with Madagascar	14
12	Congo (Republic of Congo)	2
13	Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)	15
14	Democratic Republic of Congo	1
15	Djibouti	20
16	Egypt	15
17	Equatorial Guinea	1
18	Eritrea	1
19	Ethiopia	130
20	Gabon	5
21	Gambia concurrent with Senegal	33
22	Ghana	70
23	Guinea - Bissau concurrent with Senegal	1
24	Guinea	1
25	Kenya	100

26	Lesotho concurrent with South Africa	40
27	Liberia	20
28	Libya	1
29	Madagascar	45
30	Malawi	30
31	Mali	20
32	Mauritania	1
33	Mauritius/Rodrigues	40
34	Morocco	2
35	Mozambique	115
36	Namibia	30
37	Niger	10
38	Nigeria	40
39	Rwanda	25
40	Sao Tome & Principe concurrent with Angola	1
41	Senegal	2
42	Seychelles	2
43	Sierra Leone	50
44	Somalia concurrent with Kenya	15
45	South Africa	28
46	South Sudan	40
47	Sudan	72
48	Eswatini (Swaziland)	40
49	Tanzania	135
50	Togo	25
51	Tunisia	1
52	Uganda	64
53	Zambia	35
54	Zimbabwe	20
	Total	1513

Kushok Bakula Rinpoche Scholarship Scheme - G0183 (To and fro airfare provisioned w.e.f. AY

2026) (Formerly Aid to Mongolia Scholarship Scheme)		
S. No.	Country	Slots
1	Mongolia (10 slots MEA + 10 slots ICCR from 2026)	20
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Scholarship Scheme - G0192 (To and fro airfare provisioned w.e.f. AY 2026) (Formerly Aid to Bhutan Scholarship Scheme)		
S. No.	Country	Slots
1	Bhutan	60
Quad STEM Scholarship Scheme - G40 (only for AY 2025-26 to 2027-28) (To and fro airfare provisioned)		
S. No.	Country	Slots
1	Bangladesh	3
2	Burundi	1
3	Cambodia	1
4	Comoros	2
5	EOI Tokyo, Japan (Republic of Marshall Islands)	1
6	Eol Manila, Philippines (Palau, Federated States of Micronesia)	1
7	Eswatini	1
8	Ethiopia	1
9	HCI Canberra, Australia	1
10	HCI Port Moresby, PNG (PNG, Solomon Islands)	1
11	HCI Suva, Fiji- (Fiji, Kiribati, Tonga Tuvalu)	1
12	HCI Wellington, NZ - (Samoa, Niue, Cook Islands, Vanuatu)	1
13	Indonesia	2
14	Kenya	3
15	Laos	1
16	Lesotho	1
17	Madagascar	5
18	Malawi	1
19	Malaysia	1

20	Mozambique	2
21	Myanmar	3
22	Philippines	1
23	Rwanda	1
24	Seychelles	5
25	Singapore	1
26	South Africa	1
27	Tanzania	2
28	Thailand	1
29	Timor Leste	1
30	Uganda	1
31	Vietnam	1
32	Zimbabwe	1
	Total	50
Aid to Sri Lanka Scholarship Scheme (MEA) - G102 (To and fro airfare provisioned)		
S. No.	Country	Slots
1	Sri Lanka	200
AYUSH Scholarships Scheme for BIMSTEC Countries (MEA) - G0139 (To and fro airfare provisioned)		
S. No.	Country	Slots
1	30 slots to Bimstec Countries	30
AYUSH Scholarship Scheme for Non-BIMSTEC countries- G0615 (To and fro airfare provisioned) (Min. of Ayush)		
S. No.	Country	Slots
1	25 slots to Non-Bimstec Countries	25
AYUSH Scholarships Scheme for Malaysian nationals - G0616 (To and fro airfare provisioned) (Min. of Ayush)		
S. No.	Country	Slots
1	Malaysia	20
AYUSH Scholarships Scheme for South East Asian Region (SEAR) Countries- G0621 (Min. of Ayush)		
S. No.	Country	Slots

1	29 slots to SEAR Countries	29
Special Scholarship Scheme for Afghan Nationals(SSSAN) - G38 (airfare not provided)		
S. No.	Country	Slots
1	Afghanistan	1000 (online)
Atal Bihari Vajpayee General Scholarship Scheme - A1201 (To and fro airfare provisioned w.e.f. 2022-23) (formerly General Scholarship Scheme)		
S. No.	Country	Slots
1	Albania	1
2	Andorra	1
3	Antigua and Barbuda	2
4	Argentina	1
5	Armenia	2
6	Austria	1
7	Azerbaijan	1
8	Bahamas	1
9	Bahrain	2
10	Barbados	2
11	Belarus	2
12	Belgium	1
13	Belize	1
14	Bolivia	10
15	Bosnia and Herzegovina	3
16	Brazil	1
17	Brunei	2
18	Colombia	1
19	Cook Islands	2
20	Costa Rica	1
21	Croatia	1
22	Czech Republic (Czechia)	1
23	Denmark	1
24	Dominican Republic	2

25	Ecuador	2
26	El Salvador	1
27	Estonia	1
28	Fiji (Suva)	20
29	Finland	1
30	France	3
31	Georgia	1
32	Germany	2
33	Greece	1
34	Grenada	1
35	Guadeloupe	2
36	Guatemala	1
37	Haiti	1
38	Holy See	1
39	Honduras	1
40	Hungary	2
41	Iceland	1
42	Indonesia	20
43	Iran	12
44	Iraq	75
45	Ireland	1
46	Israel	3
47	Italy	2
48	Jamaica	5
49	Japan	6
50	Jordan	5
51	Kazakhstan	10
52	Kiribati	2
53	Kyrgystan	4
54	Latvia	1
55	Lebanon	1
56	Liechtenstein	1

57	Lithuania	1
58	Luxembourg	1
59	Malaysia	3
60	Malta	1
61	Marshall Islands	2
62	Micronesia	2
63	Moldova	1
64	Monaco	1
65	Montenegro	1
66	Nauru	2
67	Nepal	70
68	Netherlands	1
69	Nicaragua	1
70	Niue	2
71	North Macedonia	1
72	Oman	1
73	Palau	2
74	Palestine	35
75	Panama	1
76	Papua New Guinea	2
77	Paraguay	1
78	Peru	1
79	Poland	2
80	Portugal	1
81	Qatar	1
82	Republic of Korea (South Korea)	2
83	Reunion Island	2
84	Russia	20
85	Saint Kitts & Nevis	2
86	Saint Lucia	5
87	Samoa	2
88	San Marino	2

89	Saudi Arabia	2
90	Serbia	1
91	Singapore	2
92	Slovak Republic	1
93	Slovenia	1
94	Solomon Islands	2
95	Spain	2
96	St. Vincent & Grenadines	2
97	Suriname	1
98	Sweden	1
99	Switzerland	1
100	Syria	20
101	Tajikistan	30
102	Timor-Leste (Indonesia)	2
103	Tonga	2
104	Trinidad & Tobago	3
105	Turkey	2
106	Turkmenistan	12
107	Tuvalu (Fiji)	3
108	UAE	1
109	Ukraine	3
110	United Kingdom (UK)	2
111	United States of America	2
112	Uruguay	1
113	Uzbekistan	12
114	Vanuatu	2
115	Venezuela	1
116	Yemen	35
	Total	554
Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme - A1203 (To and fro airfare provisioned) (formerly Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme)		

S. No.	Country	Slots
1	Canada	2
2	Guyana	9
3	New Zealand	2
4	United Kingdom (UK)	2
	Total	15

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Cultural Exchange Scholarship Scheme (A1206) (formerly CEP/EEP Scholarship Scheme) - (To and fro airfare provisioned only for Mexico, Turkmenistan and Vietnam)

S. No.	Country	Slots
1	Australia	2
2	Belarus	2
3	Brazil	2
4	Bulgaria	6
5	Canada	2
6	Chile	2
7	China	25
8	Cyprus	2
9	France	2
10	Guyana	2
11	Indonesia	2
12	Israel	5
13	Malaysia	2
14	Mexico	4
15	Norway	2
16	Romania	5
17	Russia	2
18	Spain	5
19	Suriname	4
20	Syria	5
21	Turkmenistan	5
22	Uzbekistan	5
23	Yemen	23

	Total	116
Lata Mangeshkar Dance & Music Scholarship Scheme (Formerly ICCR Scholarship Scheme for Studies in Indian Culture)		
S. No.	Country	Slots
1	100 slots globally	100
Suborno Jayanti Scholarships (SJS) - A1218 (To and fro airfare provisioned)		
S. No.	Country	Slots
1	Bangladesh	500

ICCR Hindi Chairs

S/N	COUNTRY	UNIVERSITY	CHAIR
1.	Mauritius	Mahatama Gandhi Institute, Moka	Hindi
2.	Spain	University of Valladolid	Hindi
3.	Russia	Kazan Federal University	Hindi
4.	Bulgaria	Sofia University	Hindi
5.	Tajikistan	Tajik National Universtiy	Hindi-cum-urdu
