

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.859
TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.02.2018

PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS

859. KUNWAR HARIBANSH SINGH:
SHRI SUDHEER GUPTA:
SHRI ASHOK SHANKARRAO CHAVAN:
DR. SUNIL BALIRAM GAIKWAD:
SHRI T. RADHAKRISHNAN:
SHRI S. R. VIJAYA KUMAR:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has organized Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Singapore recently;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with aims and objectives of the same;
- (c) the details of discussions held and achievements made during the said event;
- (d) the total number of non-resident Indians and persons of Indian origin who have participated in the said event, country-wise;
- (e) the names of the places where Pravasi Bharatiya Divas has been organized so far; and
- (f) the other steps taken/being taken by the Government to explore opportunities for investment in India by the Overseas Indian?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

- (a) Yes.
- (b) The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is always organized in India. However, Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (RPBD) is organized in countries where there is large concentration of Indian diaspora.

This year, the RPBD was held in Singapore on 6-7 January 2018 as a part of the commemoration of 25 years of ASEAN-India Partnership. Under the theme of "Ancient Route, New Journey: Diaspora in the Dynamic ASEAN-India Partnership", the RPBD highlighted the ancient links between India and Southeast Asia; and promoted greater economic and cultural cooperation between India and Southeast Asian nations as well as ASEAN. The event also showcased Indian Diaspora's talent and achievements and deepen their - especially the youth's - links with India and their role in promoting closer India-Southeast Asia ties.

(c) The event featured 16 thematic sessions wherein over 100 eminent speakers including policy makers from India, Singapore and ASEAN region participated. The event evolved into one of the biggest business meets with sessions on ASEAN-India Economic Partnership; India and ASEAN in the Digital World; Infrastructure Development; Financial Partnership; Expanding Trade and Services; Promotion of Make in India; Legal framework of doing business in India and ASEAN; Science & Technology; Consular, Culture, Tourism and Connectivity Issues.

External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj led the Indian delegation at RPBD, Singapore and delivered opening address on the plenary on January 7, 2018. Besides bilateral meeting with the Foreign Minister of Singapore, EAM met delegations from ASEAN countries, veterans of Azad Hind Fauz, visited all parallel sessions & addressed the Community Event. Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security of Singapore Mr. Teo Chee Hean and Foreign Minister Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan also participated in the RPBD.

A significant part of the event was competitions for diaspora youth in essay and poetry (in English, Hindi and Tamil), classical Indian dance and music, photo competition on what best represents India in ASEAN and online challenges on six social themes of relevance to India. 43 winners in all categories were felicitated by External Affairs Minister and Foreign Minister of Singapore.

Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, Shri Nitin Jairam Gadkari delivered keynote address in the panel discussion on India-ASEAN Economic Partnership on January 6, 2018. An India-Singapore/ASEAN Startup portal, which aims at connecting startups and entrepreneurs as well as investors in India and the ASEAN region, was jointly launched by the Minister and the Trade and Industry Minister of Singapore Mr. S. Iswaran.

The event has received widespread appreciation in the ASEAN region as having enhanced India's image and prestige. The event also generated considerable interest in economic engagement between Northeast India and the ASEAN region.

(d) 5296 participants including NRIs and PIOs from 25 countries participated in the two days event. The country wise break up is given below:

India	478
Indonesia	12
Malaysia	230
Thailand	33
Singapore	4407
Vietnam	12
Myanmar	11
Brunei	9
Cambodia	3
Laos	3
Philippines	2
Other countries	96

(e) RPBDs have been organized in New York, The Hague, Durban, Toronto, Mauritius, Sydney, London, Los Angeles & Singapore.

(f) The Government has put in place a liberal and transparent policy for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), including investments from Non-resident Indians (NRIs), wherein most of the sectors are open to FDI under the automatic route. The policy allows special dispensation for NRI investments in various sectors like Air Transport Services (Scheduled & Non-scheduled), Domestic Scheduled Passenger Airlines, Non-Scheduled airlines, Chartered airlines and Cargo airlines, wherein 100% NRI investment is permitted under the automatic route. Further investment made by NRIs on non-repatriation basis under Schedule 4 of Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA) Regulation is deemed to be domestic investment at par with the investment made by residents.
