

06

**COMMITTEE
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(2024-25)**

EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

**Indian Diaspora Overseas including NRIs, PIOs, OCIs and Migrant Workers:
All Aspects of their Conditions and Welfare, including the Status of the
Emigration Bill**

SIXTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

APRIL, 2025/ Chaitra, 1947 (Saka)

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*Presented to Lok Sabha on 01 April, 2025
Laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 01 April, 2025*



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

APRIL, 2025/ Chaitra, 1947 (Saka)

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COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2024-25)

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| 2. Smt. Reena Gopalakrishnan | – | Director |
| 3. Ms. Maya Menon | – | Under Secretary |

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Committee on External Affairs (2024-25) having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Sixth Report (18th Lok Sabha) on the subject 'Indian Diaspora Overseas, including NRIs, PIOs, OCIs and Migrant Workers: All Aspects of their Conditions and Welfare, including the Status of the Emigration Bill.'

2. The Committee selected the subject 'Indian Diaspora Overseas, including NRIs, PIOs, OCIs and Migrant Workers: All Aspects of their Conditions and Welfare, including the Status of the Emigration Bill' for detailed examination during 2024-25. The Committee was briefed by the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs on the subject on 27 November 2024. Thereafter, the Committee heard the views of the representatives of NORKA Roots (Kerala), Department of NRI Affairs (Punjab), People of Indian Origin Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PIOCCI) and Centre for Diaspora Studies (Gujarat University) on 21 January 2025. The Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs on 04 February 2025.

3. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their Sitting held on 26 March 2025. The Minutes of the Sitzings of the Committee are appended to the Report.

4. The Committee wish to express their gratitude to the Ministry of External Affairs and the Diaspora Organisations for placing material information as well as tendering evidence and views before the Committee.

5. For facility of reference, the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in bold letters in the Report.

NEW DELHI
26 March, 2025
05 Chaitra, 1946 (Saka)

Dr. Shashi Tharoor,
Chairperson,
Committee on External Affairs

PART I – REPORT

CHAPTER I

INDIAN DIASPORA OVERSEAS- NRIs, PIOs /OCIs

'Indian Diaspora' refers to those people of Indian origin who had migrated to foreign lands from India either several generations ago or in the recent past on long term Visas issued by other countries and have since settled abroad. The Indian Diaspora includes Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs)/Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs).

1.2 The Indian Diaspora is one of the largest and most diverse global communities with an estimated population of over 35 million spread across the globe. As of January 2024, the population of Indian Diaspora was about 35.42 million, comprising of 15.85 million NRIs and 19.57 million PIOs and OCIs. Major countries with significant Indian populations include the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, the Gulf countries, Australia, South East Asia, and the Caribbean. Indian Diaspora has made a unique identity by excelling and making significant contributions across various fields like politics, business, science, technology, music, and literature.

A. DEFINING OCI/PIO/NRI

1.3 A Person of Indian Origin (PIO) means a foreign citizen (except a national of Pakistan, Afghanistan Bangladesh, China, Iran, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Nepal)

- (i) who at any time held an Indian passport or
- (ii) who or either of their parents/ grandparents/ great grandparents was born and permanently resident in India as defined in Government of India Act, 1935 and other territories that became part of India thereafter provided neither was at any time a citizen of any of the aforesaid countries (as referred above) or
- (iii) Who is a spouse of a citizen of India or a PIO

1.4 An Overseas Citizen of India is a foreign national, -

- (i) who was a citizen of India at the time of, or at any time after 26th January, 1950; or
- (ii) who was eligible to become a citizen of India on 26th January, 1950; or
- (iii) who belonged to a territory that became part of India after 15th August, 1947; or

- (iv) who is a child or a grandchild or a great grandchild of such a citizen; or
- (v) who is a minor child of such persons mentioned above; or
- (vi) who is a minor child and whose both parents are citizens of India or one of the parents is a citizen of India - is eligible for registration as OCI cardholder.

1.5 Besides, spouse of foreign origin of a citizen of India or spouse of foreign origin of an Overseas Citizen of India Cardholder and whose marriage has been registered and subsisted for a continuous period of not less than two years immediately preceding the presentation of the application is also eligible for registration as OCI cardholder.

1.6 However, no person, who or either of whose parents or grandparents or great grandparents is or had been a citizen of Pakistan, Bangladesh or such other country as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, specify, shall be eligible for registration as an Overseas Citizen of India Cardholder.

1.7 A Non Resident Indian(NRI) is an Indian citizen who has traveled with an Indian Passport from India to another country to ordinarily reside there for any purpose, except for tourism purposes MEA adheres to the broadest definitions of these terms, in order to ensure the most inclusive welfare of Indian Diaspora.

1.8 A detailed comparative chart of the three categories is as under:

| | NRI | Persons of Indian Origin | OCI Cardholder |
|---------|---|---|---|
| 1. Who? | An Indian citizen who is ordinarily residing outside India and holds an Indian Passport | A person who or whose any of ancestors was an Indian national and who is presently holding another country's citizenship/ nationality i.e. he/she is holding foreign passport | A person registered as Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Cardholder under section 7A of The Citizenship Act, 1955 |

| | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|--|
| 2. Who is eligible? | - | - | <p>Following categories of foreign nationals are eligible for registration as Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Cardholder:-</p> <p>(1) Who was a citizen of India at the time of, or at any time after the commencement of the Constitution i.e. 26.01.1950; or</p> <p>(2) who was eligible to become a citizen of India on 26.01.1950; or</p> <p>(3) who belonged to a territory that became part of India after 15.08.1947; or</p> <p>(4) who is a child or a grandchild or a great grandchild of such a citizen (mentioned in (1) to (3) above) ; or</p> <p>(5) who is a minor child of such persons mentioned above; or</p> <p>(6) who is a minor child and whose both parents are citizens of India or one of the parents is a citizen of India; or</p> <p>(7) spouse of foreign origin of a citizen of India or spouse of foreign origin of an Overseas Citizen of India Cardholder registered under section 7A of The Citizenship Act, 1955 and whose marriage has been registered and subsisted for a continuous period of not less than two years immediately preceding the presentation of the application.</p> <p>Such spouse shall be subjected to prior security clearance by a competent authority in India.</p> <p>Note : No person, who or either of whose parents or grandparents or great grandparents is or had been a citizen of Pakistan, Bangladesh or such other country as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, specify, shall be eligible for registration as an Overseas Citizen of India Cardholder.</p> |
| 3. How can one get? | - | - | <p>Eligible persons to apply online. For this purpose, please log on to https://ociservices.aov.in .</p> |

| | | | |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|---|
| <p>4. Where to apply?</p> | <p>-</p> | <p>-</p> | <p>The applicants have to submit the application form online and upload all the requisite documents (self attested), photograph and signature (in the case of minors who cannot sign, left hand thumb impression) along with the application. After submission of the complete application online including documents, photograph and signature, the original of the supporting documents have to be submitted to the Indian Mission/ Post/ FRRO concerned for prior verification. They are not required to bring hard copies/ printouts of the application or the photocopies of the uploaded documents.</p> <p>Details of offices where the applicants have to submit the original supporting documents for prior verification are as follows:-</p> <p><u>Applicants outside India</u></p> <p>(1) The Indian Mission /Post having jurisdiction over the country of which applicant is a citizen; or</p> <p>(2) If he/she is not living in the country of his/her citizenship, to the Indian Mission /Post having jurisdiction over the country of which the applicant is ordinarily resident.</p> <p><u>Applicants in India</u></p> <p>If the applicant is residing in India, to the Foreigners Regional Registration Offices (FRROs) according to their jurisdictional control. To know the jurisdiction of FRROs, please see “Addresses of offices to submit OCI applications” in the website of the Ministry of Home Affairs - www.mha.aov.in.</p> <p>Note: For the above purpose, ‘ordinarily resident’ will mean a person staying in a particular country or in India for a continuous period of 6 months.</p> |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|---|

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------|--|
| 5. Fees? | - | - | (a) in case of application submitted in Indian Mission/ Post abroad - US \$ 275 or equivalent in local currency. (b) in case of application submitted in India Rs. 15,000/-. |
| 6. Which nationals are ineligible? | - | - | No person, who or either of whose parents or grandparents or great grandparents is or had been a citizen of Pakistan, Bangladesh or such other country as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, specify, shall be eligible for registration as an Overseas Citizen of India Cardholder. |
| 7. What benefits one is entitled to? | All benefits as available to Indian citizens subject to notifications issued by the Government from time to time | No specific benefits | <p>1) multiple entry lifelong visa for visiting India for any purpose:</p> <p>Provided that for undertaking the following activities, the OCI Cardholder shall be required to obtain a special permission or a Special Permit, as the case may be, from the competent authority or the Foreigners Regional Registration Officer or the Indian Mission concerned, namely:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) to undertake research; (ii) to undertake any Missionary or Tabligh or Mountaineering or Journalistic activities; (iii) to undertake internship in any foreign Diplomatic Missions or foreign Government organisations in India or to take up employment in any foreign Diplomatic Missions in India; (iv) to visit any place which falls within the Protected or Restricted or prohibited areas as notified by the Central Government or competent authority; <u>Note:</u> For requisite special permission, OCI Cardholder may visit: https://ociservices.gov.in . <p>(2) exemption from registration with the Foreigners Regional Registration Officer or Foreigners Registration Officer for any length of stay in India:</p> |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | <p>Provided that the OCI Cardholders who are normally resident in India shall intimate the jurisdictional Foreigners Regional Registration Officer or the Foreigners Registration Officer by email whenever there is a change in permanent residential address and in their occupation;</p> <p>(3) parity with Indian nationals in the matter of,- (i) tariffs in air fares in domestic sectors in India; and (ii) entry fees to be charged for visiting national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, the national monuments, historical sites and museums in India;</p> <p>(4) parity with Non-Resident Indians in the matter of,- (i) inter-country adoption of Indian children subject to the compliance of the procedure as laid down by the competent authority for such adoption (ii) appearing for the all India entrance tests such as National Eligibility cum Entrance Test, Joint Entrance Examination (Mains), Joint Entrance Examination (Advanced) or such other tests to make them eligible for admission only against any Non Resident Indian seat or any supernumerary seat: Provided that the OCI Cardholder shall not be eligible for admission against any seat reserved exclusively for Indian citizens; (iii) purchase or sale of immovable properties other than agricultural land or farm house or plantation property; and (iv) pursuing the following professions in India as per the provisions contained in the applicable relevant statutes or Acts as the case may be, namely:- (a) doctors, dentists, nurses and pharmacists; (b) advocates; (c) architects; (d) chartered accountants;</p> |
|--|--|--|--|

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| | | | <p>(5) in respect of all other economic, financial and educational fields not specified in this notification or the rights and privileges not covered by the notifications made by the Reserve Bank of India under the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (42 of 1999), the OCI Cardholder shall have the same rights and privileges as a foreigner.</p> <p>(6) Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders are eligible for appointment as teaching faculty in NTs, NITs, IIMs, IISERs, NSc, Central Universities and in the new AIIMS set up under Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY). Explanation —</p> <p>(1) The OCI Cardholder (including a PIO Cardholder) is a foreign national holding passport of a foreign country and is not a citizen of India.</p> <p>(2) “Non-Resident Indian” shall have the same meaning as assigned to it in the Foreign Exchange Management (Acquisition and Transfer of Immovable Property in India) Regulations, 2018 made by the Reserve Bank of India under the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (42 of 1999) and who fulfils the “Non-Resident Indian” status as per the Income Tax Act, 1961 (43 of 1961). Any other benefits to an OCI Cardholder may be notified by the Central Government under section 7B(1) of The Citizenship Act, 1955.</p> <p>Note: - (1) State Governments should ensure that the OCI Cardholder registration booklets of OCI Cardholders are treated as their identification for any services rendered to them. 8. Does No he/she require visa for visiting India.</p> <p>(2) A person registered as an OCI Cardholder is eligible to apply for grant of Indian citizenship under section 5(1) (g) of The Citizenship Act, 1955 if he/she has</p> |
|--|--|--|---|

| | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|---|--|
| | | | attained full age (18 year) and if he/she is registered as OCI Cardholder for five years and is ordinarily resident in India for twelve months before making an application for registration. Central Government, if it is satisfied that special circumstances exist, may after recording the circumstances in writing, relax the period of twelve months, up to a maximum of thirty days which may be in different breaks. |
| 8. Does he/she require visa for visiting India. | No | Yes | OCI Card is itself a multiple entry lifelong visa for visiting India for any purpose. However, for undertaking certain activities, OCI Cardholders will require prior permission as mentioned against Sl. No. 7 above. |
| 9. Is he/she required to register with the local police authorities in India? | No | Yes if the period of stay is for more than 180 days | No |
| 10. What activities can be undertaken in India? | All activities | Activity as per the type of visa obtained | All activities except certain activities for which prior permission/special permit is required as mentioned against Sl. No.7 above. |
| 11. How can one acquire Indian citizenship? | He/she is an Indian citizen | As per section 5(1)(a) & 5(1)(c) of The Citizenship Act, 1955, he/she has to be ordinarily resident in India for a period of 7 years before making an application for registration. | As per section 5(1)(g) of The Citizenship Act, 1955, a person registered as an OCI Cardholder for 5 years and who is ordinarily resident in India for twelve months before making an application for registration is eligible for grant of Indian citizenship. Central Government, if it is satisfied that special circumstances exist, may after recording the circumstances in writing, relax the period of twelve months, up to a maximum of thirty days which may be in different breaks. |

i) OCIs and PIO Card Holders

1.9 On being asked about the differences and similarities between the OCIs and PIO card holders and the benefits accorded to each, MEA stated as under:

“The benefits to an OCI cardholder are the following:

- (i) Multiple entry, multi-purpose lifelong visa to visit India;
- (ii) Exemption from reporting to Police authorities for any length of stay in India; and
- (iii) Parity with NRIs in financial, economic and educational fields except in the acquisition of agricultural or plantation properties.

1.10 The Scheme of PIO cards has been discontinued since 2015. Indian Immigration will accept all Person of Indian Origin (PIO) cards (including handwritten ones) along with valid foreign passport, as valid travel document till December 31, 2025, instead of earlier deadline of December 31, 2024. Indian Immigration Check Post(s) will continue to consider all PIO cards (which were valid as on January 9, 2015) valid for exit from/entry into India till December 31, 2025. This extension of timeline is subject to the condition that if in the meantime, any deadline is notified by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) thereby making handwritten PIO cards invalid, then PIO cardholders may have to obtain appropriate visa from Indian Missions/Posts. All PIO cardholders (handwritten and machine-readable) have been advised to convert their PIO card to OCI card before this deadline”

1.11 Talking about OCIs and PIOs, the Secretary, continued during oral evidence as under:

“We almost treat PIOs and OCIs same because the Government has told every PIO card holder to convert themselves and get an OCI. Not everybody has still done it and I know the numbers could be varying anywhere between a lakh and a half who are still PIO card holders. The Government has been continuously extending the date for converting their PIO cards into OCI cards. I think, the latest date perhaps has now been extended to 31st December, 2025. They have this opportunity to get it converted. The PIO card holder does not face any difficulty in entering India. We are okay with it as long as they show the PIO card. So, that is the definition that we have.”

1.12 The Ministry, in a written reply, have informed that the following steps have been taken to further liberalize the OCI Scheme:

- i. The requirement to re-issue an OCI card each time a new passport is issued to a foreigner up to 20 years of age and once after completing 50 years of age is dispensed with. Now, an OCI cardholder shall have to get the OCI card re-issued once a new passport is issued after completing 20 years of age so as to capture his/ her facial features on attaining adulthood.
- ii. Missions/Posts have been asked to not seek renunciation certificate from those applicants who have already acquired foreign nationality.

- iii. Extension of the OCI facility upto 6th generation of PIOs residing in
 - a. Suriname
 - b. Reunion Island
 - c. Guyana
 - d. French territories of Gaudeloupe and Martinique
 - iv. Extension of the OCI facility upto 7th generation of PIOs residing in Mauritius
- 1.13 As per data available on MHA's OCI portal, till date 51,58,262 OCI cards have been issued.

Year wise details since 2005 as under:

OCI Cards Issued (All Missions Abroad & All FRROs)

| S.No. | Year | Total Cases |
|--------------|------|----------------|
| 1. | 2005 | 289 |
| 2. | 2006 | 86321 |
| 3. | 2007 | 112401 |
| 4. | 2008 | 158805 |
| 5. | 2009 | 169794 |
| 6. | 2010 | 214414 |
| 7. | 2011 | 262646 |
| 8. | 2012 | 234826 |
| 9. | 2013 | 253345 |
| 10. | 2014 | 220406 |
| 11. | 2015 | 316330 |
| 12. | 2016 | 403898 |
| 13. | 2017 | 405518 |
| 14. | 2018 | 339510 |
| 15. | 2019 | 329340 |
| 16. | 2020 | 191592 |
| 17. | 2021 | 328799 |
| 18. | 2022 | 403676 |
| 19. | 2023 | 349382 |
| 20. | 2024 | 341315 |
| 21. | 2025 | 35655 |
| Total | | 5158262 |

1.14 During the course of evidence, concerns were raised by various members relating to complaints being received regarding dishonouring of OCI Cards or their revocation. On being asked about the same, the Committee have been informed that the Ministry of Home Affairs is the competent authority to decide on revocation of OCI cards and records on OCI cards revoked or OCI cardholders denied permission to travel are available with MHA.

1.15 On a specific query about the reasons for denial of OCI cards to Indians abroad despite possessing genuine credentials and identity papers, the Ministry, in their written reply, have submitted that the OCI applications abroad are accepted by Missions/ Posts abroad and approved by Ministry of Home Affairs. Reasons for denial of OCI cards are also available with MHA.

ii) Non Resident Indians (NRIs)

1.16 On being pointed out that a common definition for the term 'Non Resident Indians' is lacking, the Secretary during the sitting held on 04.02.2025 submitted as under:

“xxx I agree with you that the definition of NRI varies from Act to Act. xxxxx FEMA has a different definition of NRI. The Income Tax Act has a different definition of NRI. As far as we are concerned, we treat a person as NRI as long as that person is abroad and holds an Indian passport. That is how we differentiate. A PIO or an OCI card holder is not an NRI because he or she does not hold an Indian passport. So, for us, that is the definition of NRI. We are not looking at the Income Tax Act – xxx. We are not looking at FEMA or any other Act. So, our definition, therefore, is that those who are holding a blue passport, we treat them as NRIs and as long as they are abroad.”

1.17. The Committee felt that multiplicity of definitions have a potential to lead multiple interpretations which in turn impacts the decision making process and accessibility of services. On being asked about the same, MEA has replied as under:

“This Ministry considers that Non-Resident Indians are those people who hold an Indian passport and who have travelled abroad for any reason other than that of tourism. This is the definition that is used by this Ministry for devising its Diaspora Engagement policies. This is the most expansive definition of Non-Resident Indians and Ministry adopts it to extend for maximum mutual benefit.”

iii) Issuance of Aadhaar Cards to Overseas Indians

1.18 Apprising the Committee of the difficulty being faced by the Overseas Indians in procuring Aadhaar Cards, a representative from Diaspora Organisation during the sitting of the Committee on 21.01.2025 submitted as under:

“Another issue of interest or concern to us is that there was a time when we could obtain the Aadhaar Card and now it has become difficult for OCIs and PIOs to get an Aadhaar Card. But Aadhaar Card in India is the basis for everything. If you need an investment or need to open an office or a bank account or deal with parents, you need an Aadhaar Card. Even to get a SIM Card, you need Aadhaar Card.”

1.19 When asked about the facilities available for Aadhaar Card enrolment for OCI card holders from abroad, the Ministry in their written reply have informed that Aadhaar Card enrolment is handled by UIDAI which has not made any arrangements for setting up Aadhaar facilitation centers outside India.

iv) Voting Rights to NRI's

1.20 During the course of the sitting with the State representatives and the Diaspora organizations one of the proposals brought forth was related to extension of voting rights to NRI's and enabling them to exercise their franchise from abroad. When asked about the same, Secretary (CPV & OCI) during the sitting held on 04.02.2025 submitted as under:

“The electoral politics part, xxx as to whether NRIs can have voting opportunities. xxx, I remember earlier, five, six years back, this was talked about. If a decision is taken to have voting rights for NRIs, we in the MEA, the Missions post abroad, I am sure would become the polling centres. We would be very happy to facilitate in whatever way we can. I think we had discussions with the Election Commission also. We said that we would be happy to help in every way possible for enabling NRIs to vote while they are abroad. But the Election Commission has to work around that.

1.21 Asked about the status of this demand of the NRI's, the Ministry in their written reply have submitted as under:

“During a meeting with the Election Commission of India, ECI informed the Ministry that the matter is currently pending with the Ministry of Law and Justice (MoLJ) as the subject matter “Voting Rights to NRIs” pertains to legislative department of MoLJ. It will also need amendments in the Act of 1950 and 1951, which provides registration and enrollment of the overseas electors in the electoral rolls.

ECI also mentioned that even after necessary amendments are made, the implementation of NRIs voting abroad will take some time because ECI will have to engage with national political parties before implementation of the voting rights and expressed apprehensions that voting rights to NRIs may lead to a discriminatory system in non-democratic countries.”

B. GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION & DATA ON INDIAN DIASPORA

1.22 Based on inputs received from Missions/ Posts abroad, the Ministry of External Affairs is maintaining a database of physical distribution of Indian Diaspora members across the world, Country- wise (**Annexure-'A'**)

1.23 It is seen from the data that as of January 2024, the population of Indian Diaspora was 35421987, comprising of 15850612 NRIs and 19571375 PIOs and OCIs. However, as per the UN Population Division's estimate there were around 178.6 lakh Indian migrants in 2020 implying that the number of migrants would have undoubtedly increased significantly than the figures reflected by the Ministry.

1.24 When pointed out the probable discrepancy between the Ministry's records and the UN Population Division's estimate, Secretary (CPV & OIA) during the sitting held on 04.02.2025 submitted as under:

"xxxx one of the biggest problems, xxxx, is the availability of data. The data that we have provided to you is based on the inputs that we receive from Missions/Posts. I would say that the data is a kind of rough data. It is not a perfect immigration data -- that means immigration of that country concerned where they can say that 'x' number of Indians entered. So, on the basis of data, we try to get estimates from the Missions/Posts as on 31st December of a particular year or 1st of January. xxx the biggest challenge is to really get the data particularly of not only NRIs, PIOs, but also, the students. xxxx the difference that you are mentioning about the UN data and our data is something that if we can get a little bit of more details, if we get it country-wise, then, we can circulate it to our Missions and Posts, and tell them that this is what we have from the UN and you need to look at it a little more closely, and perhaps, reconcile. xxxx Getting data is a big challenge.

1.25 Asked about the best possible way out to have a near correct figure on our Diaspora abroad, the Secretary submitted as under:

"We need to devise mechanisms actually between the Bureau of Immigration and the Ministry of External Affairs to put the data together particularly of how many people have actually gone abroad; their final destination; where they have settled; and where they are working. And if they have come back, then it is a different thing."

1.26 During the sitting of the Committee on 21.01.2025, representatives from Diaspora Organisations put across their concerns regarding lack of data availability and data sharing by the Centre with the State Governments.

1.27 In a written response regarding the above concerns regarding more reliable data on our Diaspora, the MEA submitted as under:

"Accurately tracking the large Indian Diaspora spread across the globe and generations is a challenging task, which requires enhanced data collection methods through regular surveys,

census data, and collaboration with host countries for securing immigration records. Countries differ in their methods of collecting immigration details and the extent to which it is made available in the public domain. Ministry is making all efforts to motivate the Indian Diaspora to register themselves with Indian Embassies and Consulates abroad or on digital platforms of the Ministry.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the UN Population Division released the International Migration Report 2020, in the wake of the disruptions caused by the Covid pandemic to the migration flows across the world. The report identified India as the country with the largest Diaspora population in the world, accounting for 17.86 million migrants out of the 281 million estimated migrants in the world. The report defines migrants as persons living outside of their country of origin. It arrived at these figures after analyzing the data collected jointly with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

While the methodology and accuracy of the United Nations' data remains outside the purview of this Ministry, Ministry makes wholehearted efforts to encourage the Indian Diaspora to register with its Missions/Posts abroad to have the most authentic and accurate data on them. Such data has proved extremely useful particularly while managing crisis situations in foreign lands, particularly those relating to evacuation of Indian nationals from abroad during distress”.

Ministry, based on the official records and inputs received from Missions and Posts, estimates that Indian Diaspora comprise of 15.85 million NRIs and 19.57 million PIOs and OCIs, adding to the total of 35.42 million Indian Diaspora in January 2024.

C. REMITTANCES RECEIVED FROM INDIAN DIASPORA

1.28 It was submitted before the Committee that the data of inward remittances received from abroad is being maintained by the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA). The data comprises of current transfers in cash or in kind received by resident households from non-residents mainly for the purpose of family maintenance. As per inputs from DEA and RBI, the year-wise data, representing private transfer receipts as available in India's Balance of Payments (BoP) statement II, is given below:

| India's Inward Remittances (In USD Billion)* | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Year | Inward Remittance |
| 2021-22 | 89.1 |
| 2022-23 | 112.5 |
| 2023-24 | 118.7 |
| 2024-25 (Quarter 1) | 29.5 |
| 2024-25 (Quarter 2) | 31.9 |

D. ADMINISTRATIVE & POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR DIASPORA

i) Divisions in MEA Handling Matters Relating to Diaspora

1.29 Consequent upon the merger of the erstwhile Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the Ministry was directed to elaborate upon the institutional, administrative and policy framework that has been set up since the merger. Various Divisions have been set up under the MEA, which provides the requisite institutional and administrative support for wider engagement with Diaspora and formulates policies for the same.

1.30 Divisions in the Ministry of External Affairs handling matters relating to Diaspora, their welfare and matters pertaining to migration along with their mandate are given below:

- (i) **Diaspora Engagement (DE) Division:** This Division deals with matters relating to students and NRI marital disputes issues along with programmes related with engagement of Diaspora which includes Know India Programme (KIP), Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children (SPDC), Promotion of Cultural Ties with Diaspora (PCTD), celebration of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) etc.
- (ii) **Emigration Policy & Welfare (EP & W) Division:** This Division deals with matters relating to Migration and Mobility including MMPAs & LMAs, Emigration Bill, India-EU CAMM, Global Compact on Migration, ADD, IMRF and other Regional Processes along with welfare initiatives for Indian workers abroad like PDOT, PBBY, ICWF & PKVY.
- (iii) **Overseas Employment & Protector General of Emigrants (OE & PGE) Division:** This Division deals with matters related to overseas employment of Indian workers, appointment of overseas recruitment agents, providing assistance through Pravasi Bharatiya Sahatya Kendra (PBSK), working of E-Migrate Portal, Welfare measures to protect the interests of Emigrants working abroad etc.
- (iv) **Passport Seva Programme (PSP) Division:** The PSP Division of the Ministry provides passport services through the Central Passport Organization (CPO) and its network of Passport Offices, Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs); and Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSKs). Consular, Passport and Visa services to overseas Indians/Foreign

nationals are provided by the PSP Division through the Indian Missions and Posts abroad.

- (v) Consular, Passport & Visa (CPV) Division: It handles all policy matters related to Consular Grievance, Legalisation/Attestation of documents, Extradition Matters, Issuance of Indian Visas at our Missions abroad for foreign nationals, Registration of births and deaths abroad and Issuance of OCI Card by our Missions/Posts abroad

1.31 Following the merger of the two Ministries, India's Diaspora policy has emerged as one of the key components of India's soft power projection in the world. The Ministry of External Affairs acknowledges the strategic significance of soft power projection through public and cultural diplomacy and accords it high priority while formulating and implementing India's foreign policy.

ii) **India's Diaspora Policy**

1.32 Asked about the availability of a comprehensive policy document on the Indian Diaspora as a guiding document in engaging meaningfully and productively with the Diaspora community, the Secretary (CPV & OIA), during the sitting held on 27.11.2024, stated as under:

".....recognizing the importance of the Indian Diaspora, the Ministry of External Affairs has developed a comprehensive Diaspora policy framework centered around the four C's and we call them as Care, Connect, Celebrate, and Contribute.

The objective of this policy is to recognize and appreciate the immense and invaluable contribution of the Indian Diaspora to India's development, acknowledge their growing influence and high standing in the overseas community, uphold the welfare and protection of our Diaspora, connect them to their roots, and celebrate their achievements.."

1.33. Giving details about the comprehensive Diaspora policy framework centred around the "4Cs"—Care, Connect, Celebrate, and Contribute, the Ministry have submitted as under:

"The Indian Diaspora is incredibly diverse, spanning across various countries, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Such diversity does not therefore permit formulation of a single, tight and unique policy for the Indian Diaspora all across the globe since it would then fail to address the unique needs and aspirations of all Diaspora members. The Ministry have further submitted that the policies pertaining to the Indian Diaspora has evolved with time, on the basis of feedback received from the Diaspora as well as from Indian Missions/ Posts abroad from time to time. The Ministry connects to the Indian Diaspora abroad through thematic events and conferences aimed at promotion of sectoral expertise on various subjects including Economy, Energy, Science & Technology, Culture, Trade & Tourism, Health, Social and other contemporary issues, and through various welfare schemes and programmes aimed at promotion of ties with the Indian Diaspora. India's engagement with its Diaspora has moved from 'All of Ministry approach' towards an 'All-of-Government

approach' in which other wings of the Government, other Ministries and Departments as well as the State Governments are involved in all aspects of Diaspora affairs”.

1.34 On a specific query as to when the shift in Diaspora policy framework centering around the four 'C's' namely Care, Connect, Celebrate and Contribute was framed, the Ministry in their written reply have, *inter-alia*, stated the shift in the Diaspora policy to a more comprehensive, holistic and effective framework to engage with the Indian Diaspora was brought in at the time when Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs was merged into the Ministry of External Affairs in January 2016. Since then, this Ministry has been following a Diaspora policy centered around the 4Cs. Such a holistic approach towards engagement with the Indian Diaspora ensures that the latter remains connected as an integral part of India's growth story and its global identity.

1.35 While informing about the Diaspora Policy Framework and its working, the Ministry have submitted that a Working Group to analyze the objectives, working and challenges of various schemes/programmes/initiatives for the welfare of the Indian Diaspora has also been constituted.

1.36 Replying to an additional query on the details of constituting this Working Group, its meetings and the tangible outcomes/suggestions that have emerged from its meetings the Ministry in their written reply have submitted as under:

“Following the Standing Committee on External Affairs recommendations in the 8th& 11th Reports of 17th Lok Sabha, a Working Group was constituted to make a comparative analysis of the objectives, working and challenges of various programmes/ initiatives/ schemes for welfare of Indian Diaspora. It was constituted under the Chairmanship of Secretary (CPV&OIA) and Heads of Divisions of OIA-I, OIA-II, CPV, PSP and OE & PGE Divisions as members of the Working Group. The group met for the first time on 22 December, 2021. The Working Group examined the efficacy of the various ongoing Diaspora Engagement and Welfare Schemes of the Ministry besides revisiting those which had closed subsequent to Overseas Indian Affairs coming under the jurisdiction of MEA from the erstwhile Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA). The Working Group proposed:

- (i) To include medical courses in the list of courses under SPDC.
- (ii) To provide 50% reservation of seats for women under the SPDC Scheme as per the recommendation of the Standing Committee to adopt gender inclusive measures by the Ministry.

The recommendations of the Working Group have since been implemented. It has not met thereafter”.

1.37 Asked to clarify how other Ministries/ Departments and State Governments are involved in aspects of Diaspora affairs and how the change in approach has resulted in addressing the concerns of our Diaspora abroad more effectively, the Ministry in their written reply have submitted as under:

“The collaborative model of ‘All-of-Government approach’ ensures that the diverse and evolving needs of the Diaspora are met more effectively by drawing on the expertise and resources of multiple government stakeholders. In 2021, Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of External Affairs decided to set up ‘One Stop Centres’ to ensure safety, security and well-being of Indian women abroad. It was also proposed for augmenting the facilities for assisting women in Missions where such centres already existed. The Ministry also collaborates with National Commission for Women for providing guidance and counselling to distressed Indian women married to NRI spouse. Additionally, the ministry also participates in consultations organized by NCW on the subject of issues faced by Indian women abroad.

The Ministry works closely with the Ministry of Labour & Employment, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Ministry of Law and Justice and Ministry of Skills Development and Entrepreneurship regarding Overseas Employment, Migration, Mobility and training matters. There is regular interaction with the Ministry of Home Affairs and Bureau of Immigration regarding issue of passports to Indian citizens abroad and OCI cards to persons of Indian origin. There is collaboration with the Ministry of Education on student matters.

Ministry also organizes VideshSampark Program whereby the States are being apprised regarding the information about Diaspora Engagement initiatives of the Ministry including various schemes, consular and Visa matter for helping the Indian Diaspora and NRIs from these states. The involvement of multiple ministries allows for more holistic policies that address the wide-ranging needs of Diaspora, from economic issues to social and legal matters. With more stakeholders involved, concerns raised by the Diaspora community are met with quicker responses and more tailored solutions.

iii) Role of Missions/Embassies Abroad

1.38 The Committee enquired about the functioning of Indian Embassies for the welfare of NRI workers abroad. The Ministry in their written reply have submitted as under:

“The Government has established various mechanisms to enable Indian workers abroad to reach out to Missions/Posts abroad in case they need any assistance. The workers can contact the Missions/Posts through various channels like walk-in, email, multilingual 24x7 emergency numbers, grievance redressal portal like MADAD, CPGRAMS, and e-Migrate, and social media etc.

Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendras (PBSK) have been set up in New Delhi and at Dubai (UAE), Riyadh & Jeddah (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) to provide assistance, guidance and counselling to Indian workers in distress.

Indian Missions/Posts abroad have also established 24X7 Helplines including Toll Free Helplines, Whatsapp numbers and have launched mobile Apps to enable Indian nationals contact respective Indian Missions/Posts when in distress or in emergency situation.

Missions/Posts in Gulf Countries also have dedicated Labour wings which ensure redressal of labour grievances. Shelter homes for distressed Indian nationals have been set up in countries having sizeable presence of Indians such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Malaysia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE. These shelter homes provide free boarding and lodging to Indian nationals in distress pending their repatriation back to India.

On receiving complaint from migrant workers against the Foreign Employers (FE), the concerned Indian Mission/Post takes up the matter with the employer/local authorities. On finding any FE at fault, they are placed under Prior Approval Category (PAC) in the e-Migrate portal and further employment of Indian workers through that particular FE is allowed only after due consultation with the concerned Indian Mission/Post. Issues relating to FEs are also raised in the periodic meetings of the Joint Working Group held under the aegis of Memorandum of Understandings signed with various countries.

Indian Missions/Posts also regularly organize Open House and Consular camps in remote areas to interact and get feedback from the Indian workers abroad and address their grievances.

Regular sensitization of Mission officials on the needs of the Diaspora is an ongoing process undertaken by our Mission/Post.”

1.39 During interaction with the representatives from the State Diaspora Organisations, one of the representatives stated as under:

“... a lot of the illiterate people who go abroad, xxxxx, what we observed is that people who go off Punjab are generally in certain States, maybe Canada, New Zealand, Australia, a few European countries and for Kerala it is the Arab countries, and what we feel is that in the Embassy, someone from the State who understand the State nuances should be posted. Most of the time these people cannot communicate in English. They only communicate in the local language. So, this has been a long-pending demand for us because someone in the Embassy who does not understand Punjab and someone from Punjab comes up to him, he would not understand the nuances or his problem or his issues. Most of the time there is a language barrier also.

1.40 When asked how the Ministry proposes to address this issue, the Ministry in their written reply have submitted as under:

“The officers / officials in the Ministry of External Affairs come from different States of India with diverse social background. In addition to English and Hindi, they can speak in their regional languages. When posted in Embassies and Consulates abroad, they have the ability to directly interact with the migrant labourers in their native language to address their issues.

Additionally, in countries with large Indian emigrant population, especially in the Gulf countries, the locally recruited staff in our Embassies/Consulates are predominantly from large migrant source states (Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, UP, etc.) who can converse with the Indian migrant labourers in their native language. Communication so far has not been a hindrance in addressing labour issues.

Indian Missions/Posts also regularly organize Open House and Consular camps in remote areas in order to render consular services, interact with community, including migrant labourers, get their feedback and address grievances, if any. The revamped e-Migrate portal

V2.0 launched by Hon'ble EAM on 14 October 2024, has been integrated with BHASHINI to enable access to information in 12 regional languages.”

1.41 When questioned about the complaints received by Diaspora members in respect of accessibility of Indian mission abroad to NRI workers and students abroad, Secretary (CPV & OIA) during the sitting held on 04.02.2025 submitted as under:

“I am very disturbed to hear that the experience of dealing with Mission posts has not been very good. Almost all our Mission/Posts have got every mechanism possible to help and facilitate our Diaspora.”

1.42 The Committee also enquired about the frequency of holding of Open houses by the Missions abroad. The Ministry in their reply have submitted as under:

“All Indian Missions/Posts are mandated to organize Open Houses at least once in every quarter. Based on the high priority accorded to the holding of Open Houses by Indian Missions/Posts abroad, it has also been incorporated in the Performance Evaluation Monitoring System (PEMS) of this Ministry. Indian Missions/Posts abroad receive grades for holding such Open Houses. Details of the number of Open Houses held and grievances received during the last three years are being compiled from Indian Missions/Posts abroad and will be furnished shortly.”

iv) Indians in Prisons Abroad

1.43 As per information available with the Ministry, at present 10,152 Indian prisoners including under-trials are lodged in foreign prisons. Country-wise list is as under:

| Sr. No. | Country | Total number of Indians incarcerated in Foreign Jails |
|----------------|-------------------|--|
| 1 | Afghanistan | 8 |
| 2 | Angola | 2 |
| 3 | Argentina | 1 |
| 4 | Armenia | 39 |
| 5 | Australia | 27 |
| 6 | Azerbaijan | 10 |
| 7 | Bahrain | 181 |
| 8 | Bangladesh | 4 |
| 9 | Belarus | 9 |
| 10 | Belgium | 1 |
| 11 | Bhutan | 69 |
| 12 | Brunei Darussalam | 6 |

| | | |
|----|----------------|-----|
| 13 | Cambodia | 22 |
| 14 | Canada | 23 |
| 15 | Chile | 1 |
| 16 | China | 173 |
| 17 | Congo | 5 |
| 18 | Cote d' Ivoire | 14 |
| 19 | Croatia | 3 |
| 20 | Cuba | 2 |
| 21 | Cyprus | 21 |
| 22 | Denmark | 1 |
| 23 | Egypt | 1 |
| 24 | Ethiopia | 4 |
| 25 | France | 45 |
| 26 | Georgia | 45 |
| 27 | Germany | 25 |
| 28 | Guatemala | 2 |
| 29 | Guinea | 2 |
| 30 | Indonesia | 21 |
| 31 | Iran | 18 |
| 32 | Iraq | 1 |
| 33 | Ireland | 5 |
| 34 | Israel | 4 |
| 35 | Italy | 168 |
| 36 | Jamaica | 1 |
| 37 | Japan | 6 |
| 38 | Jordan | 28 |
| 39 | Kazakhstan | 3 |
| 40 | Kenya | 4 |
| 41 | Kuwait | 387 |
| 42 | Kyrgyzstan | 4 |
| 43 | Laos | 6 |
| 44 | Lenbanon | 2 |
| 45 | Lithuania | 1 |
| 46 | Madagascar | 1 |
| 47 | Malawi | 1 |
| 48 | Malaysia | 338 |
| 49 | Maldives | 10 |
| 50 | Mali | 1 |

| | | |
|----|---------------------|--------------|
| 51 | Malta | 5 |
| 52 | Mauritius | 10 |
| 53 | Mexico | 1 |
| 54 | Morocco | 2 |
| 55 | Mozambique | 5 |
| 56 | Myanmar | 27 |
| 57 | Nepal | 1317 |
| 58 | Nigeria | 3 |
| 59 | North Macedonia | 5 |
| 60 | Oman | 148 |
| 61 | Pakistan | 266 |
| 62 | Philippines | 44 |
| 63 | Poland | 7 |
| 64 | Qatar | 611 |
| 65 | Republic of Korea | 4 |
| 66 | Russia | 27 |
| 67 | Rwanda | 3 |
| 68 | Saudi Arabia | 2633 |
| 69 | Senegal | 5 |
| 70 | Serbia | 4 |
| 71 | Singapore | 92 |
| 72 | South Africa | 8 |
| 73 | Spain | 34 |
| 74 | Sri Lanka | 98 |
| 75 | Switzerland | 1 |
| 76 | Tajikistan | 1 |
| 77 | Thailand | 37 |
| 78 | Trinidad and Tobago | 1 |
| 79 | Turkiye | 3 |
| 80 | UAE | 2518 |
| 81 | Uganda | 11 |
| 82 | United Kingdom | 288 |
| 83 | USA | 169 |
| 84 | Uzbekistan | 3 |
| 85 | Vietnam | 4 |
| 86 | Zimbabwe | 1 |
| | | 10152 |

1.44 The Ministry have also furnished the details of Indian/ Foreign prisoners transferred under TSP Agreements during the last two years (2023 & 2024) and current year (As on 13.02.2025). The same are as under:

Indian prisoners transferred from foreign countries to India

| Year | Number of prisoners | Country-wise |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---|
| 2023 | 05 | Iran- 03 Cambodia- 01 United Kingdom- 01 |
| 2024 | 02 | United Kingdom - 02 |
| 2025 (As on 13.02.2025) | 01 | Russia -01 |
| Total | 08 | |

Foreign prisoners transferred from India to their native countries

| Year | Number of prisoners | Country-wise |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 2023 | 03 | Iran- 02 Brazil- 01 |
| 2024 | Nil | -- |
| 2025 (As on 13.02.2025) | Nil | -- |
| Total | 03 | |

1.45 The Committee enquired as to the steps being taken by the Government for the release of these prisoners. The Ministry in their written reply have submitted as under:

“The Government attaches high priority to the safety, security and well-being of Indians in foreign countries, including those in the foreign jails. Indian Missions/Posts abroad remain vigilant and closely monitor the cases of Indian nationals being put in jail in foreign countries for violation/ alleged violation of local laws.

As soon as the information about the detention/arrest of an Indian national is received by an Indian Mission/Post, it immediately gets in touch with the local Foreign Office and other concerned local authorities to get consular access to the detained/arrested Indian national to ascertain the facts of the case, confirm his or her Indian nationality and ensure his or her welfare. Missions/Posts remain vigilant to ensure that rights of the Indian prisoners in foreign jails are protected.

Apart from extending all possible consular assistance to Indians imprisoned abroad, Indian Missions and Posts also assist in providing legal aid wherever needed. Missions and Posts also maintain a local panel of lawyers where Indian community is in sizeable numbers.

No fee is charged from any Indian prisoner for extending facilities by the Indian Embassy concerned. The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) is set up in Indian Missions & Posts abroad for assisting overseas Indian nationals in distress situations on a means tested basis in deserving cases. The support extended under ICWF includes financial assistance to Indian prisoners for legal aid as well as travel documents / air tickets during repatriation.

The issue of release and repatriation of Indian nationals in foreign prisons is regularly pursued by Indian Missions and Posts abroad with the local authorities concerned. Missions/Posts abroad also approach the law enforcement agencies to complete the investigation and judicial proceedings at the earliest possible. The Government also follows up this issue during consular and other consultations with other countries. In addition, the Government, through its Missions/Posts abroad and during high level visits, also takes up and pursues grant of amnesty/commutation of sentences of Indian prisoners in foreign countries. India has also entered into prisoner transfer treaties with many nations that allow a person convicted of a crime to be transferred to his or her home country to serve the prison sentence.

1.46 Asked whether some of these Indians are in jails in countries with which India has Transfer of Sentenced Persons Agreements and yet have not been repatriated, the Ministry in their written reply have submitted as under:

“India has on Transfer of Sentenced Persons by virtue of which Indian prisoners lodged in foreign countries can be transferred to India to serve the remainder of their sentence and vice-versa. These are Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Egypt, Estonia, France, Hong Kong, Iran, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Maldives, Mauritius, Mongolia, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkiye, United Arab Emirates (UAE), United Kingdom and Vietnam.

India has also signed two multilateral conventions on Transfer of Sentenced Persons, namely Inter-American Convention on Serving Criminal Sentences Abroad and Council of Europe Convention on Transfer of Sentenced Persons, by virtue of which sentenced persons of member States and other countries which have acceded to these conventions can seek transfer to their native countries to serve the remainder of their sentence.

Consent of the prisoner, host country and transferring country are required for transfer under Transfer of Sentenced Persons (TSP) agreement. MHA is the nodal authority overseeing transfer of prisoners under TSP agreement and is currently processing a number of cases. TSP cases involve several stages of processing, namely obtaining consent of the transferring country, availability of complete documentation necessary for processing the request, obtaining comments of the State Government concerned and identification of the specific prison where the prisoner is to be lodged, making escort arrangements by the State Government concerned for transfer from foreign country to India, clearance from various agencies etc. All these factors have to be attended to while processing request transfer. Therefore, no rigid timeline can be fixed for completion of such requests as the fulfillment of requirement depends on receiving complete documentation and clearance from foreign Governments, State Governments and other relevant agencies etc.”

1.47 As per information available with the Ministry, there are 12 countries where Indians are imprisoned in large numbers (more than 100). These are Bahrain (272), China (185), Italy (164),

Kuwait (387), Malaysia (371), Nepal (1187), Oman (117), Qatar (740), Saudi Arabia (2647), Sri Lanka (143), United Arab Emirates (2479) and United Kingdom (288). Nine of these countries are covered under existing agreements on Transfer of Sentenced Persons.

1.48 Asked whether the Government has taken up the matter regarding the release of these prisoners with the nine countries with which India has agreements on Transfer of Sentenced Persons, the Ministry has in their written reply submitted as under:

“The matters relating of Indians nationals in prisons in foreign countries and of the foreigners of that country in Indian prisons is routinely discussed at various fora. Missions/ Posts abroad take up welfare of Indian citizens in prisons, among other matters, as a part of their meeting with the Foreign Ministries, as do the Foreign Missions in India. The matter is also covered during Foreign Office consultations and Consular Dialogues. As far as transfer of sentenced persons from countries with whom we have bilateral agreements, Government has been working on the matter. Our Embassies have been in regular contact with their host government and Ministry of Home Affairs to transfer the sentenced Indians. It may be noted that Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal Ministry for negotiating and implementing the agreements on transfer of sentenced persons.”

1.49 Asked about the status of agreements with the other 3 countries, namely Nepal, Malaysia and Oman, the Ministry have stated that regarding the signing of agreements with more countries, MHA is working on negotiating for signing such agreements with various countries.

1.50 On being asked whether the Ministry intends to have bilateral agreements with these 3 countries, the Ministry have informed that consultation on bilateral agreements is taken up based on mutual interest and the nature of bilateral relations.

1.51 Regarding the steps being taken by the Ministry to conclude Transfer of Sentenced Persons with countries wherein large number of Indians are imprisoned, the Ministry in their written reply have submitted as under:

“With India signing the two multilateral conventions on Transfer of Sentenced Persons, namely Inter-American Convention on Serving Criminal Sentences Abroad and Council of Europe Convention on Transfer of Sentenced Persons, most of the countries in Europe, North America and South America are covered for the purpose. This leaves countries in Asia, Africa and few countries in Eastern Europe which needs to be covered by bilateral agreements. So far 31 bilateral agreements on Transfer of Sentenced Persons have been signed. Ministry of Home Affairs, which is the nodal Ministry for this subject, processes and signs the agreement as and when the foreign country is willing to do the same.

CHAPTER II

EMIGRATION POLICY & WELFARE SCHEMES

A. EMIGRATION POLICY

In recent times, international migration has assumed a pivotal role, shaped by demographic shifts and technological progress, significantly impacting labour markets worldwide. India is a leading country in the international migration dynamics and is advantageously poised due to its demographic potential. By 2030, India's working-age population is set to peak at 68.9%, reaching 1.04 billion persons. India's Diaspora is over 35 million strong and it is the top remittance receiving country in the world with inward flow of remittance to the tune of USD 118.7 billion in the year 2023-24 . The Government of India recognises this potential of its citizens and its objective to promote safe and legal migration to provide employment opportunities abroad for both workers and professionals.

2.2 It is the Emigration Policy and Welfare Division in the Ministry of External Affairs that works towards establishing institutional mechanisms to foster the global mobility of Indian workers, students, academicians, researchers, business persons and so on. The Ministry has been proactively furthering the mobility for the Indian workforce through diverse Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) and agreements such as Migration and Mobility Partnerships and Labour Mobility and Labour Welfare Agreements with destination countries, which establish a robust framework for legal migration. These agreements/MoUs seek to achieve fostering people-to-people ties, streamlining visa procedures.

i) Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreements

2.3 Migration and Mobility Partnerships aimed at harnessing India's demographic dividend and fostering mobility for our students, academics, business people, and professionals have already been signed with France (2018), the UK (2021), Germany (2022), Australia (2023), Austria (2023), Italy (2024) and Denmark (2024).

2.4 The Labor and Manpower Cooperation MOUs/Agreements that provide the overarching framework for cooperation on labour and manpower related issues are in place with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Japan (2021), Portugal (2021), Mauritius (2023), Israel (2023), Taiwan (2024) and Malaysia (2024).

2.5 These MOUs and Agreements have provision of implementation through Joint Working Groups, and all prevailing labour and manpower-related issues are discussed during these JWG meetings. Further, to safeguard the specific interest of domestic workers in GCC Countries, agreements on Labor Cooperation for Domestic Sector have been signed with Saudi Arabia, UAE and Kuwait.

2.6 When the Committee desired to know whether India has agreements like MMPAs and LMAs with all countries where Indian Diaspora is in large numbers, Ministry on External Affairs stated, inter-alia, as under:

“ India has signed Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreements/ MoUs (MMPAs) or Labour Mobility Agreements/ MoUs (LMAs) with several countries where the Indian Diaspora is present. Additionally, the government is actively engaging to conclude more such agreements with destination countries. We have prioritized countries with significant potential that offer benefits and opportunities for Indian nationals including skilled workers, professionals and students.

The government is actively engaged in ongoing discussions with various countries to finalize MMPAs and LMAs, particularly with countries in Europe and the Far East”.

ii) Collaboration with International/ Multilateral Organisations

2.7 Apart from bilateral arrangements on migration and mobility and labour migration, the Division is also deeply engaged with international and multilateral organisations for enhancing the horizon of India's initiatives in fostering safe, orderly, and regular migration pathways.

iii) International Organisation for Migration

2.8 Secretary (CPV and OIA) participated at the 114th Session of International Organisation for Migration (IOM) at Geneva, Switzerland. Engagement at senior official level will aid in strengthening the existing cooperation with IOM and help identify further initiatives with IOM.

iv) India Centre for Migration (ICM)

2.9 The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) set up the India Centre for Migration (ICM) formerly known as Indian Council for Overseas Employment, as a 'not for profit' society under the Societies Registration Act 1860, in July 2008. The India Centre of Migration (ICM) serves as a research think-

tank to Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on all matters relating to international migration and mobility. The Centre undertakes empirical, analytical and policy related research, and undertakes pilot projects to document good practices. Over the years, ICM has expanded its scope of work, by following a multi-pronged approach by actively organizing workshops, research studies and seminars in collaboration with academic institutions, state governments and international bodies.

2.10 On being asked about the reasons for not being a party to any international instrument for protection of Diaspora, it was submitted as below:

“ India values the international instruments for the protection of the Diaspora and appreciates the efforts made in this regard. While India has chosen not to become a party to certain specific instruments, this decision is informed by a variety of factors including the implications of any international convention/ instrument on its national policies and priorities.

India has a robust framework for engaging with and supporting its Diaspora, which includes a wide range of bilateral agreements/MoUs and welfare measures. These policy measures and initiatives have proven effective in addressing the diverse needs and challenges faced by the Indian Diaspora worldwide.

Our approach has been multifaceted allowing for flexibility and context-specific solutions that are responsive to the unique circumstances in different countries and the evolving dynamics in the domain of international migration and mobility. We have been actively exploring ways to strengthen cooperation and collaboration on Diaspora-related matters at international, bilateral as well as multilateral levels. India has proactively participated in international forums and discussions related to migration and Diaspora issues and has remained committed towards its international obligations” .

v) Global Compact for Migration

2.11 The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) is a non-binding agreement that aims to improve the management of migration. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) of India has taken steps to facilitate safe and regular migration, in line with the GCM's objectives. Giving details MEA submitted as under:

“India had endorsed the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM) in December 2018 at the Intergovernmental Conference in Marrakech, Morocco. The GCM is the first-ever inter-governmentally negotiated UN agreement on a common approach to managing international migration. While not legally binding, the GCM's guiding principles, objectives and actions find their roots in established obligations and principles, underpinned by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and international law.

The Compact outlines 23 objectives aimed at facilitating safe, orderly, and regular migration while addressing challenges related to irregular migration, as follows:

- (i) Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies

- (ii) Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin
- (iii) Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration
- (iv) Ensure that all migrants have proof of legal identity and adequate documentation
- (v) Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration
- (vi) Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work
- (vii) Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration
- (viii) Save lives and establish coordinated international efforts on missing migrants
- (ix) Strengthen the transnational response to smuggling of migrants
- (x) Prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration
- (xi) Manage borders in an integrated, secure and coordinated manner
- (xii) Strengthen certainty and predictability in migration procedures for appropriate screening, assessment and referral
- (xiii) Use migration detention only as a measure of last resort and work towards alternatives
- (xiv) Enhance consular protection, assistance and cooperation throughout the migration cycle
- (xv) Provide access to basic services for migrants
- (xvi) Empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion
- (xvii) Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration
- (xviii) Invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences
- (xix) Create conditions for migrants and Diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries
- (xx) Promote faster, safer and cheaper transfer of remittances and foster financial inclusion of migrants
- (xxi) Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration
- (xxii) Establish mechanisms for the portability of social security entitlements and earned benefits
- (xxiii) Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration

Many of the policies and initiatives of the Government of India are in consonance with the objectives and guiding principles laid out in the GCM. India's emigration framework aims at strengthening regular pathways and improving recruitment and decent work in line with objective 5 and 6 of the GCM respectively. India has entered into several bilateral agreements/MoUs/MoCs with destination countries showcasing India's commitment towards fostering regular pathways for migration and mobility.

Additionally, the government has put a major focus on skills development and recognition, migrant and Diaspora contributions and international cooperation aligning with objective 18, 19 and 23. The same is being achieved through coordination between different ministries such as the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Labour and Employment, other line ministries and in collaboration with State and private agencies, international organizations and civil societies.

Furthermore, the Government of India has been taking steps to improve data and information on international migration which align with objective 1 and 3 of the GCM.2 For instance, the newly revamped e-Migrate 2.0 portal, launched to regulate the safe and ethical recruitment of Indian workers abroad, embodies GCM objectives by ensuring ethical recruitment practices and providing transparency in the migration process.

Welfare policies like Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) and Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY, translated as Overseas Indian Insurance Programme) assist Indian migrant workers working abroad. An online consular grievance monitoring system is being administered, namely MADAD Portal (loosely translated as 'Help Portal'), for Indian citizens living abroad. Moreover, during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, Vande Bharat Mission (loosely translated as 'Salute India Mission') served as the largest repatriation operation to bring back overseas migrant workers to country of origin (India, in this case). Pre-departure Orientation Training (PDOT) is one of the initiatives to ensure a safe, orderly, legal and humane migration process with the motto- 'Surakshit Jayein, Prashikshit Jayein' (translated as 'go safe, go informed').

India plays a key role in regional consultative processes such as the Colombo Process (CP), Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) and international/multilateral migration forums such as the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and the International Dialogue on Migration (IDM). At present, India holds the chair of the Colombo Process for a two-year term (2024-2026). Towards this end, the Government of India is actively implementing measures to ensure safe and regular migration and in enhancing international cooperation.”

B. OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT & PROTECTION OF EMIGRANTS

2.12 A large number of Indians go abroad for employment. The process of emigration of Indian workers, with Emigration Clearance Required (ECR) category passports, is regulated under the Emigration Act, 1983, which is administered by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

2.13 With the help of 16 offices of the Protector of Emigrants (POEs) located at Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chandigarh, Hyderabad, Cochin, Thiruvananthapuram, Jaipur, Raebareli, Patna, Bengaluru, Guwahati, Ranchi, Bhubaneswar and Agartala across the country, the Protector General of Emigrants (PGE) enforces the Emigration Act, 1983.

i) Protector General of Emigrants

2.14 PGE under Ministry of External Affairs is the authority responsible for protecting the interest of Indian workers going abroad. PGE is also the registering authority to issue Registration Certificate to the Recruiting Agents for overseas manpower exporting.

ii) Protector of Emigrants

2.15 The Protectors of Emigrants are responsible for granting emigration clearance to the intending emigrants as per the procedure prescribed under the Emigration Act, 1983. The Protectors of Emigrants shall perform the functions assigned to them by this Act under the general superintendence and control of the Protector General of Emigrants.

2.16 The mandate and core responsibilities of the Protector of Emigrants are defined under the Emigration Act, 1983. These duties of PoEs have been elaborated under Section 4 of the *ibid* act, as "General duties of Protectors of Emigrants—Subject to the other provisions of this Act, every Protector of Emigrants shall, in addition to the special duties assigned to him by or under this Act—

- (a) protect and aid with his advice all intending emigrants and emigrants;
- (b) cause, so far as he can, all the provisions of this Act and of the rules made thereunder to be complied with;
- (c) inspect, to such extent and in such manner as may be prescribed –
 - (i) any emigrant conveyance, or
 - (ii) any other conveyance if he has reason to believe that any intending emigrants or
 - (iii) emigrants are proceeding from, or returning to, India to or from a place outside India by such other conveyance;
- (d) inquire into the treatment received by emigrants during their voyage or journey to, and during the period of their residence in the country to which they emigrated and also during the return voyage or journey to India and report thereon to the Protector General of Emigrants or such other authority as may be prescribed;
- (e) aid and advise, so far as he reasonably can, emigrants who have returned to India.

2.17 Apart from above duties following responsibilities have been entrusted to the Protector of Emigrants:

- a. Emigration Clearance: Granting Emigration Clearance (EC) to individuals intending to go abroad for employment to notified ECR countries, ensuring that applications are thoroughly verified and meet all legal requirements.

- b. **Guidance and Protection:** Providing comprehensive protection and guidance to prospective emigrants and those already deployed abroad. This includes rendering timely and effective advice and assistance throughout their journey and employment abroad.
- c. **Regulatory Compliance:** Ensuring all stakeholders, including Recruiting Agents (RAs), comply with the Emigration Act, 1983, and relevant regulations, thereby maintaining the integrity of the emigration system.
- d. **Grievance Redressal:** Addressing grievances from emigrants regarding repatriation, employment disputes, and related issues, ensuring quick resolution and support.
- e. **Coordination with Authorities:** Engaging with the Bureau of Immigration, State Police, Indian Embassies, and Consulates, as well as other relevant government agencies, to protect emigrant welfare and enforce compliance.
- f. **Monitoring and Investigation:** Conducting thorough investigations into the treatment of emigrants, both during transit and their stay abroad, and taking corrective actions if required.
- g. **Educational and Outreach Programs:** Organizing educational initiatives and outreach programs to inform and educate emigrants and stakeholders about safe and legal migration practices. Pre-departure Orientation Training for emigrants is an important initiative in this direction.
- h. **Policy Implementation and Feedback:** Implementing policy changes and providing feedback to the PGE Division and Ministry of External Affairs to continuously enhance emigration processes and safeguard emigrant interests.

iii) Emigration of ECR Category Passport Holders

2.18 Emigration of ECR category passport holders is regulated by way of grant of Emigration Clearance by any of the 16 POEs. This is for employment in any of the 18 notified ECR countries, namely, Afghanistan, Bahrain, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Presently, granting of Emigration Clearance has been suspended for Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen due to prevailing conditions there.

iv) Safeguards for Emigrants

2.19 Various safeguards are in place within PoE offices to ensure that the clearance process is not misused or circumvented by illegal recruitment agencies or unauthorized intermediaries.

- a. Digital verification: All the Emigration Clearances (ECs) are applied and processed through the e-Migrate portal only, ensuring that only authorized agents registered with the Ministry can apply for EC. The Bureau of Immigration (BOI) will not allow a passenger to board a flight/vessel if EC clearance is not granted via the e-Migrate system, preventing unauthorized emigration.
- b. Regular audits: Periodic audits of clearance processes and decisions help identify and address any discrepancies or irregularities.
- c. Strict recruiting agent (RA) registration: A rigorous vetting process (compulsory police and degree verification) is in place for registering and renewing Recruiting Agent licenses.
- d. Initiating actions: Show cause notices are issued to registered RAs involved in illegal activities. Those violating provisions of the Emigration Act 1983 are suspended as necessary. Additionally, actions are taken against illegal/unregistered RAs in coordination with local police under various provisions of the Emigration Act.
- e. Surprise inspections: Unannounced checks on RAs deter illegal activities and ensure compliance.
- f. Coordination with law enforcement: Working closely with police and cybercrime units to tackle fraudulent practices reinforces the integrity of the emigration process. Similarly regular coordination is maintained with BOI officials to discuss patterns/trends in emigration and sharing details of violations with each other.

2.20 PoE offices play a vital role in assisting emigrants who face exploitation, abuse or other forms of distress once they are abroad. The PoE offices issue show cause notices to registered RAs as and when grievances against them are registered. The registration certificate (RC) of those violating provisions of the Emigration Act 1983 are suspended as deemed necessary. Additionally, actions are taken against illegal/unregistered RAs in coordination with local police under various provisions of the Emigration Act. The PoE offices work closely with state police and cybercrime units to tackle fraudulent practices and to reinforce the integrity of the emigration process. Similarly regular coordination is kept with BOI officials to discuss patterns in emigration and sharing details of violations

with each other. Various activities undertaken by the PoE offices to assist the emigrants are listed below:

- a. Helplines operated by PBSK: The helplines are managed by the Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendra (PBSK), which registers grievances from emigrants and forwards them to the concerned Protector of Emigrants for further action.
- b. Coordination with Indian Missions and RAs: Upon receiving grievances, the PoE ensures that Recruiting Agents (RAs) assist emigrants by fulfilling their contractual obligations. Simultaneously, PoE recommends that Indian Missions ensure Foreign Employers (FEs) adhere to their commitments.
- c. Facilitating communication: PoE facilitates communication between emigrants and their families, keeping them informed about the situation and actions taken.
- d. Legal assistance: PoE provides support in legal matters, including addressing contract violations and ensuring fair treatment of emigrants in coordination with the concerned Indian Mission.
- e. Resolution through RAs: PoE works with RAs to resolve issues faced by emigrants and ensure compliance with contracts and regulations.
- f. Continuous engagement: The PoE maintains direct contact with individual emigrants raising grievances and remains engaged until the issue is satisfactorily resolved.
- g. Maintaining distress databases: PoE maintains a comprehensive database of distress cases, enabling informed follow-up and policy improvement.
- h. Action against erring parties: PoE initiates action through issuing Show Cause Notices (SCNs) or suspending the licenses of employers or agents involved in exploitation, abuse, or other illegal practices.
- i. Recovery of dues: PoE assists in recovering overdue payments and compensation for emigrants facing financial exploitation.
- j. Registration and categorization: Upon receiving a complaint, PoE registers and categorizes the case, coordinating with relevant stakeholders (Embassy, RA, employer) for resolution.
- k. Follow-up and closure: PoE provides regular updates to the family of emigrant and ensures proper documentation of the resolution and closure of the case.

v) Co-ordination between PoE and Indian Missions

2.21 The PoE office directly coordinates with the Consular and Labour Wings of Indian Missions to ensure the welfare of emigrants. PoE office serves as the nodal field office of MEA for matters related to emigration and associated grievances and is well-positioned to engage with state police and local administration, acting as a vital link between Indian Missions, the emigrant's family, and local authorities. The PoE regularly coordinates with Indian Embassies and Consulates abroad on following issues:

- a. Regular information exchange: PoE offices maintain regular communication with Indian embassies and consulates to stay updated on local labour laws and working conditions.
- b. Sharing of emigrant data: Emigrant data is shared with Embassies and Consulates to facilitate easy tracking and assistance when needed.
- c. Joint monitoring: Collaboration with our Embassies and Consulates abroad for monitoring employers and workplace conditions helps ensure emigrant welfare.
- d. Collaborative grievance handling: PoE offices and Embassies/Consulates work together to address grievances and resolve issues faced by emigrants.
- e. Recruiting Agents (RA) and Foreign Employer (FE) compliance: Upon receiving grievances, PoE ensures that RAs assist emigrants by fulfilling contractual obligations. Similarly, in cases where required, PoE suggests Indian Missions to ensure FEs meet their commitments.
- f. Crisis liaison: PoE offices act as a liaison between families in India and emigrants abroad during crises situation, facilitating communication and support.
- g. Repatriation coordination: In crisis situations, PoE offices coordinate with the Embassies and Consulates for the safe repatriation of emigrants.
- h. Crisis communication: PoE offices help disseminate crisis-related information and updates to families and stakeholders.
- i. Handling death cases: In case of death, PoE works closely with Indian Missions for the timely dispatch of mortal remains. It acts as the first point of contact between the emigrant's family and agencies abroad. POEs further work in assisting the family in obtaining insurance claims by coordinating with Missions to gather necessary legal and medical documents.

vi) Regulation of Recruitment to Overseas Jobs

2.22. Since Recruiting Agents (RA) are required to obtain Registration Certificate (RC) from the PGE before they can engage in recruitment of Indian workers for overseas employment, the Committee desired to know in details as to how the procedure works. In response, it was conveyed that the Ministry takes appropriate measures and issues guidelines from time to time to regulate the registered Recruiting Agents (RAs) in the country. As per Section 10 of the Emigration Act, 1983, no person/agency can function as Recruiting Agent (RA) without a valid Registration Certificate (RC) issued by the Registering Authority i.e. Protector General of Emigrants (PGE).

2.23. The process of registration of RA is done through a web-based application i.e. e-Migrate portal which brings all the stakeholders, including the RAs, Foreign Employers (FEs) and the prospective emigrants on a common platform. As per the Emigration Rules 1983 (as amended from time to time), no RA shall collect from the prospective emigrant the service charges more than the prescribed amount, in respect of services rendered by it to that emigrant and the RA shall issue a receipt to the emigrant for the amount collected by it in this regard. Whenever, any complaint against a registered RA is received, a Show Cause Notice (SCN) is issued to the concerned RA, under Section 14 of the Emigration Act, 1983, directing them to resolve the complaint. In case, the RA fails to respond to the SCN or reply is not found to be satisfactory, their RC can be cancelled or suspended for 30 days as per Section 14 (2) of the Emigration Act, 1983. The order of suspension can be revoked by the Competent Authority only after consultation with all the stakeholders and after ensuring that the complaint has been fully resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant.

2.24. Ministry also publishes a list of unregistered RAs on the e-Migrate portal. Advisories/alerts on fraudulent/illegal recruiting agents are also hosted on this portal. Ministry also takes action against illegal migration through unregistered/illegal RAs with the support of concerned State Governments.

2.25 Certain Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Jordan, Bahrain, Lebanon, and Indonesia issue guidelines and relevant information in accordance with their local labour laws to cover visa sponsorship, medical insurance, flight tickets and similar other benefits by the employer of these countries to the foreign employees. This is ordinarily governed by the contract between the employer and the employee. To

prevent exploitation of Indian workers by Foreign Employers (FEs), the Government has fixed the Minimum Referral Wages (MRW) to regulate the wages of Indian migrant workers seeking employment in the ECR countries. Ministry enforces the MRW through the offices of Protector of Emigrants (POEs). POEs while granting the mandatory Emigration Clearance (EC), in accordance with Section 22 of the Emigration Act 1983, read with Rule 15 of Emigration Rules, checks wage offered by the Foreign Employers (FEs) and deny the EC if the wage so offered is below the fixed wage.

2.26 In reply to a question in Lok Sabha on 20 December 2024 on the fake job offers from various countries and the exploitation of young job aspirants by scamsters, it was given as below:

“As and when complaints against the illegal agents/dubious firms luring Indian youth in false recruitment offers through various channels are received, such matters are referred to the State police for investigation and prosecution under the relevant legal provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and other legislation in place including the ones enacted by the some State Governments. In the cyber domain, action is also taken against illegal recruiting agents in association with Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C), MHA and State Police authorities. Requests to take down social media posts of illegal Recruiting Agents from all over India have been regularly shared with I4C.

Ministry also issues advisories through e-Migrate portal, social media handles and other modes of publicity about the perils of fake job rackets and ways to prevent the same. Till October 2024, a total of 3,094 unregistered agents in country have been notified on the eMigrate portal.

The awareness campaign on safe and legal migration through e-Migrate portal is carried out by the Ministry across the country from time to time by conducting workshops, trainings, information sessions, digital campaigns for media groups, police officials and law enforcement agencies, local administration, aspiring recruiting agents, entrepreneurs and general public. During these sessions awareness on emigration regulations, schemes beneficial for emigrants like Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY), Pre-Departure Orientation Training (PDOT), e-Migrate portal and various advisories issued by Indian Embassies are brought to the notice of all stakeholders including job seekers, and advise them to verify all antecedents of Recruiting Agents before accepting any kind of employment offer and not be enticed and entrapped in the fraudulent job offers”.

(vii) Illegal Migration

2.27 On being asked about the steps being taken by the Ministry to streamline the recruitment processes of workers and promote legal migration, it was replied in a written submission as below:

“With the rise of fraudulent and illegal migration, Ministry of External Affairs has been making concerted efforts to educate prospective emigrants about the perils of illegal migration. Protector General of Emigrants office in the Ministry has been working on varied activities aligning e-Migrate portal with other Ministries and with similar Governments portals of the host

countries for skilling and mapping overseas opportunities and promoting the legal migration in order to boost sustainable employment eco-system and entrepreneurship opportunities for Indian workforce.

The portal has been a success since its launch in 2015 by facilitating around 42 lakh migrant workers employed abroad, registering more than two lakhs Foreign Employers and 2,000 plus registered recruiting agents within India. In order to facilitate prospective emigrants especially those from rural areas, a new scheme was launched in December 2017 to encourage registration of recruiting agents (RA) from small cities, towns, and distant villages. Earlier, recruiting agents/agencies were mainly concentrated in large cities, which caused a significant inconvenience and challenge to prospective emigrants in addition to exposing them to the dangers of illegal channels of migration.

This Ministry through various Missions and Posts abroad always encourage migrant workers to register their complaints/grievances related to employment, overcharge by recruitment agents, tortures and harassment, non-payment of salaries, etc. on MADAD and e-Migrate portals to facilitate redressal by taking them up with concerned authorities. Ministry has been making efforts to educate migrant youths about the perils of illegal channels.

A campaign titled 'Surakshit Jayen Prashikshit Jayen' (Go Safe, Go Trained) was launched in 2018 to raise awareness and facilitate safe and legal migration. The goal is that well-informed migrant youths will be able to seamlessly integrate and have a safe and productive stay abroad. During the 17th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD) Conference held in Indore, Madhya Pradesh in January 2023, PM Modi launched a postal stamp with the motto 'Surakshit Jayen Prashikshit Jayen' to spread awareness about safe and legal migration.

To promote legal migration, Ministry has also taken several initiatives such as Pravasi Bhartiya Bima Yojna (PBBY), and revising the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) guidelines etc. to ensure safety and welfare of migrant workers. PBBY was launched in 2017 to provide an insurance cover of Rs. 10 Lakhs in case of accidental death or permanent disability and other benefits at a nominal insurance premium of Rs 275 (for two years) and Rs 375 (for 3 years).

Separately, the Ministry has been working with several state governments and stakeholders to disseminate information on the Indian Diaspora and foreign jobs and to spread awareness about safe and illegal migration through MEA's state outreach programs from time to time. Such outreach programs were organized in Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Assam and West Bengal in 2021; in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Telangana in 2022; Bihar and Uttarakhand in 2024. They were also requested to pro-actively check the growth of illegal agents and to take strict actions against them including launching awareness campaigns in vernacular medium for wider coverage and adaptation.

2.28 Regarding the recruitment of female domestic workers, the representative of the Ministry submitted as under during the briefing of the Committee:

"At this moment, the recruitment of female domestic workers is only through the 12 State-run recruitment agents. We have not yet allowed the private recruitment agents to come into this process. Since 2016, it has been kept like this so that they are not exploited. Basically, the domestic social workers going to the ECR countries have to only go through the State-run RAs.

2.29 The 13 state-run recruiting agencies are :

- (a) NORKA Roots;
- (b) Overseas Development and Employment Promotion Consultants (ODEPC) of Kerala;
- (c) Overseas Manpower Corporation Ltd. of Tamil Nadu;
- (d) Uttar Pradesh Financial Corporation(UPFC) of Uttar Pradesh;
- (e) Overseas Manpower Company Andhra Pradesh Limited (OMCAP) of Andhra Pradesh;
- (f) Telangana Overseas Manpower Company Limited (TOMCOM), of Telangana;
- (g) Rajasthan Skill & Livelihoods Development Corporation (RSLDC), of Rajasthan;
- (h) Karnataka State Unorganised Workers Society Security Board (KUWSSB) of Karnataka
- (i) Karnataka Vocational Training & Skill Development Corporation (KVTSDC) of Karnataka;
- (j) M/s Pan IIT alumni Reach for Jharkhand Foundation of Jharkhand and Bihar State
- (k) Overseas Placement Bureau of Bihar
- (l) World Skill Centre,
- (m) Punjab Ghar Ghar Rozgar & Karobar Mission

2.30 Women who are ECR (Emigration Clearance Required) passport holders can travel abroad to ECR countries for employment only if they are 30 years and above through 13 State Government recruitment agencies.

2.31 Adding further on the steps to curb illegal migration, the representative of the Ministry deposed as below during the briefing :

“Our emigration team here are regularly sensitizing the State police authorities and the State Government authorities because the moment the Mission is able to inform us or we are able to track down which is the illegal agent that has taken these people away, we immediately send it to the State Government because it has to be ultimately handled by the State Government. We also try to have a regular mechanism of having some dialogue with the concerned State Governments from where we get the maximum number of problems of illegal migration happening. Finally, it has to be a State Subject because the State has to look at it. We tell the State that this particular agent has been found. Our website also has the list of illegal agents that we have identified and put out. Of course, the regular agents are also mentioned there” .

(viii) Deportation of illegal immigrants from United States

2.32 In the wake of deportations of illegal migrants back to the country from the United States and probable mass deportations in the future, the Committee had desired to know whether the

Government of India has any provisions for addressing the humanitarian concerns arising out of this exigency. It was responded to by the Ministry in a written reply as under:

“The Government of India is against illegal immigration, especially because it is linked to several forms of organized crime. For Indian nationals, not just in the United States of America, but in any part of the world, if they have illegally entered a country, or have legally entered but are overstaying the period of their visa validity, or have entered and living in a country without proper documentation, India will take them back, provided necessary documents or information is made available by the authorities of that country which would enable MEA along with order GOI agencies to verify the individuals nationality. Once it is verified that an individual is an Indian national, then the Government will facilitate their return to India.

The responsibility of reintegration of returned Indian deportees rests with the respective State governments from where the emigrants belong. Various State Governments have developed ways and means to reintegrate workers returning from abroad.

2.33 Regarding SoPs in place internationally or with other countries about the deportation of illegal migrants, it was informed that most countries have necessary SOPs in place to handle deportation-related matters. To handle deportations to India, an SOP has been put in place whereby MEA in coordination with other agencies in India undertakes nationality and security verification process. This process takes anywhere between 1-4 weeks depending on the kind of documentation provided by a foreign country. Following verification of the deportees, India sends a clearance to the country concerned as well as to the Indian Embassy / Consulate concerned to issue an Emergency Certificate, if required. If the number of deportees is large, as in the case of US, permissions are given to allow for deportation by chartered flights. Prior to receiving such flights, the sending side shares a passenger manifest, which is again scrutinized from the security and nationalist angle and then necessary clearances are issued.

2.34 In this back drop, the Committee specifically desired to know whether SoPs have been followed in the recent deportation from the U.S and if not, the action taken by the Government. The ministry of External Affairs in a written response stated as below:

“All deportation operations carried out by the United States via chartered / commercial flights are based on the SOPs as enumerated in the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Air Operations Handbook. The handbook lays down the rules for pre-boarding, embarking and disembarking of detainees / deportees on all chartered and commercial flights and the protocol for all required documentation. There has been no change from past procedure and the SOPs have been structurally followed for the flights undertaken by the US to date.

In accordance with the Use of Restraints Policy (No. 11155.1, Section 5.10, effective November 19, 2012), detainees transported by ICE Air aircraft will be fully restrained by the

use of handcuffs, waist chains, and leg irons during flights. Flight security personnel will restrain any individual aboard an ICE Air flight who poses a threat to the safety of the mission. Restraints will not be removed for any reason unless approved by the flight security.

The MEA is in constant touch with the US side and has repeatedly insisted on the deportees not to be shackled, particularly women and children. The US ICE has taken on board this request and for the second deportation flight undertaken on 15 February, 2025, women and children were not shackled”.

ix) Professionals Trapped in Job Rackets in Southeast Asia

2.35 On a specific query on the increasing cases of exploitation of Indian labour in Southeast Asia, particularly in fraudulent scam operations, the Ministry replied as below:

“It has come to the notice of the Government instances of dubious firms involved in fake recruitment job offers having lured Indian nationals mostly through social media channels to South-East Asian countries including Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao PDR and made them to carry out cybercrime and other fraudulent activities from scam centers operating in these countries. The exact number of Indian nationals stuck in these countries is not known as Indian nationals reach these scam centers on their own volition through fraudulent/unscrupulous recruitment agents/agencies and through illegal channels.

Government accords utmost priority to the safety, security and well-being of Indian nationals abroad. Government of India has raised this issue at political level with the host Government from time to time. Missions/Posts take up the issue of rescue and repatriation of Indian nationals actively with the local Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other concerned Government agencies of the host country like Immigration, Labour Department, Home Affairs, Defence and Border Affairs and law enforcement agencies. With the concerted efforts of our Embassies in the Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar, the number of Indian nationals including software engineers rescued till date is mentioned in the table below:

The Government has established various channels to enable Indian nationals abroad to reach out to the Mission/Post concerned in case they need any assistance. They can contact the Missions/Posts through walk-in interview, email, multilingual 24x7 emergency numbers, grievance redressal portal like MADAD, CPGAMS, and e-Migrate, and social media etc. The Ministry of Home Affairs has set up the ‘Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre’ (I4C) as an attached office to deal with all types of cybercrimes in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.

Ministry issues advisories and social media posts about the fake job rackets from time to time. Similar communications are also issued by the respective Indian Missions/Posts abroad through their official websites, social media handles and print media. Our Missions in South-East Asian countries issued various detailed advisories, upon receiving such information on Indian nationals being lured by fake job rackets in South-East countries, to job seekers, and advise them to verify all antecedents of recruiting agents and companies before accepting any kind of employment offer and not be enticed and entrapped in the fraudulent job offers in these countries.

Ministry, in coordination with the Indian Missions/Posts abroad and offices of Protectors of Emigrants in India, take quick and decisive action whenever instances of exploitation of job seekers by illegal agents come to notice. A list of 3,111 unregistered agents (till November 2024) has been notified on e-Migrate portal. This information is regularly

updated based on the complaints filed by the aggrieved individuals and based on the inputs received from our Missions/Posts abroad. The complaint against the illegal agents and the dubious firms luring Indian youth in false recruitment offers through various channels are regularly shared with the respective State Governments and other agencies such as I4C, MHA for suitable action. To spread awareness on cybercrime, the Central Government has taken steps which inter-alia include, dissemination of relevant information through SMS, I4C social media account, radio campaigns, engaged MyGov for publicity in multiple channels, organizing cyber safety and security awareness weeks in association with States/UTs, newspaper advertisement on digital arrest scams, announcements in Delhi Metros on digital arrest, and other modus operandi of cybercrimes.

| Country | No. of Indian National rescued |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Cambodia | 1091 |
| Lao PDR | 770 |
| Myanmar | 497 |

x) Rehabilitation of Returned Workers:

2.36 On being asked about the provisions for rehabilitation of returned migrants, Secretary (CPV & OIA) submitted as under:

“.....rehabilitation of returned workers is left to the State Governments concerned at this moment. At the Central Government level, I do not think there is any plan or any budget. I mean even during the Covid times also, the same policy was followed.”

2.37 The Ministry have further furnished that following data on Indian emigrant workers who have returned to India:

| Year | EC approved but not travelled | EC Approved and Emigrant has Departed from India | EC approved, Emigrant Traveled and Returned back to India |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| 2019 | 49257 | 125724 | 192567 |
| 2020 | 20904 | 30815 | 42295 |
| 2021 | 11805 | 52378 | 68335 |
| 2022 | 24768 | 196088 | 152071 |
| 2023 | 24164 | 268638 | 105366 |
| 2024 | 53546 | 267838 | 34467 |
| TOTAL | 184444 | 941481 | 595101 |

2.38 When the Committee sought to know about the steps being taken by the Government to facilitate their return and rehabilitation, the Ministry in their written response have submitted as under:

“Rehabilitation and return and employment of emigrants is a wide and cross-cutting area between various authorities. Ministry of Skill Development and Enterprise (MSDE) is providing

up-skilling and re-skilling opportunities to the youth, including returned emigrants, through various skilling initiatives such as Pradhan Mantri Kaudhal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Jan Shikshan Sansthan, National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS), and Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs).”

2.39 Noting the lack of reintegration programmes for returning migrants at national level, the Committee sought to know about the reasons for the lack of such programmes at the national level. The Ministry in their written reply have submitted that the responsibility of reintegration of returned Indian migrants rests with the State governments, from where the emigrants belong and various State Governments have developed ways and means to reintegrate workers returning from abroad.

2.40 Asked about how the economic reintegration of returning migrants can be facilitated, the Ministry have informed that during the pandemic, under the Vande Bharat Mission, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Civil Aviation, and Ministry of External Affairs jointly launched ‘SWADES – Skilled Worker Arrival Database for Employment Support’. The initiative aims at empowering the returning citizens with relevant employment opportunities by creating a database of qualified citizens based on their skill sets and experience to tap into and fulfill demand of Indian and foreign countries. The returning citizens are required to fill up an online SWADES Skills Card. The database thus generated has been integrated with India’s ASEEM portal. The portal provides employee connect for prospective employers.

2.41 The Committee, during examination of the subject has come to know that the State of Kerala took a proactive step in addressing emigrant issues by establishing specialized agencies for governance. Leading this effort, the Non-Resident Keralites Affairs (NORKA) department was created in 1996 to formulate welfare schemes for emigrants and address their problems.

2.42 This department is the only entity among Indian states with comprehensive economic reintegration programs tailored specifically for returning migrants. As the first and largest Non-Resident Indian (NRI) affairs department in India, NORKA sets the standard for other states to follow in migration welfare and governance. NORKA's welfare and reintegration programs for Non-Resident Keralites (NRKs) are frequently compared to those of migration policy leaders such as the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

2.43 One of NORKA's flagship initiatives is the Norka Department Project for Return Emigrants (NDPREM), launched in 2013 to assist returning migrants in establishing self-employment ventures. Through collaboration with 19 financial institutions, this program has benefited 8,945 returnees by providing the financial support necessary for their economic reintegration.

2.44 Another significant initiative is the Pravasi Bhadratha Scheme, introduced after the COVID-19 pandemic to support returnees affected by the global crisis. Since 2021, this scheme has benefited 14,166 individuals by offering livelihood opportunities through various loan programs.

2.45 To further support returning migrants, NORKA has established the Norka Business Facilitation Centre, providing expert guidance and assistance to Non- Resident Keralites looking to start or expand businesses in Kerala. This initiative has led to the creation of 474 new enterprises by returnees, fostering local economic development.

2.46 Additionally, NORKA introduced an Employment Incentive Scheme and a job-matching platform to connect returning migrants with potential employers. This platform helps integrate returnees into the labor market and facilitates their smoother transition back into Kerala's workforce.

2.47 Through these initiatives, NORKA ensures that the economic reintegration of returning migrants is not only supported but actively encouraged, allowing them to contribute meaningfully to Kerala's economy.

C. E- MIGRATE PROJECT

2.48 E-Migrate is a comprehensive e-Governance portal developed to facilitate safe and legal migration of Indian workers abroad. This initiative was taken to make the emigration process fast and transparent and to address various complaints

2.49 The e-Migrate project, launched in 2015, is designed to facilitate emigration of ECR category workers emigrating to notified countries for employment purposes. eMigrate (Version 2.0) was launched on 14 October, 2024 and has also been integrated with the Passport Seva Project (PSP) of MEA for validation of Passport details of migrant workers registering on this portal. It is also

integrated with the Bureau of Immigration (BoI) of the Ministry of Home Affairs for online validation of EC granted by POEs. The new portal has also been integrated with UMANG, Bhashini, Digilocker, SPV- CSC (Meity) DG Shipping systems and SBI e-payment gateway. The Portal provides for a contactless and paperless process for FEs (Foreign Employers) and Recruiting Agents (RAs) as a fully digitized B-2-B platform to conduct recruitment process. The portal also provides a comprehensive and online database of emigrants to Missions, RAs, FEs and insurance agencies to make the whole emigration cycle faster, transparent and allows authentication/ verification of credentials of all the stakeholders.

D. EMIGRATION BILL 2024

2.50 The proposed legislation on Emigration [Overseas Mobility (Facilitation and Welfare) Bill, 2024] seeks to replace the Emigration Act, 1983 which presents a long overdue opportunity to reform the recruitment process for seeking overseas employment. It aims to establish a hassle-free, robust, transparent and comprehensive emigration management framework that facilitates safe and orderly migration for Overseas Employment aspirants.

2.51 In this regard , it was submitted that the proposed draft is under internal consultation. After internal consultations, the draft will be put up for public consultation which will be followed up by Inter-Ministerial consultations along with the Draft Cabinet Note. Thereafter, the revised draft will be shared with the Ministry of Law & Justice (MoLJ).

2.52 Once the concurrence of MoLJ is obtained, the final draft will be sent for the approval of the Union Cabinet. Once the bill is finalized after internal and inter-ministerial consultations, the draft will be put up for 30 days public consultations.

2.53 During the briefing held on 27.11.24, the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs stated:

“With the objective to reform the recruitment process for seeking overseas employment, the Ministry of External Affairs is working on an Emigration Bill to replace the existing Emigration Act of 1983. This Bill aims to establish a robust, transparent and comprehensive emigration management framework to facilitate safe and orderly migration for overseas employment. It is still under discussion in the Ministry for the finalisation of a text. Thereafter, it will be put out for

public consultation, followed by inter-Ministerial consultations and thereafter submitted to the Cabinet for its approval”.

F. WELFARE SCHEMES FOR OVERSEAS INDIANS

2.54. The government accords high priority to safety and welfare of Indian citizens living abroad. Welfare schemes like Indian Community Welfare Fund, Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana, Pre-Departure Orientation Training, and so on and so forth are critical tools towards this objective.

i) Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY)

2.55 The Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY), is a mandatory insurance scheme for Emigration Check Required (ECR) category workers going to ECR countries for overseas employment. PBBY provides an insurance cover of 10 lakhs in case of accidental death or permanent disability and some other benefits at a nominal insurance premium of Rs. 275/ Rs. 375 for a period of two/three years.

2.56 The Scheme initially launched in 2003, has been amended in 2006, 2008 and was comprehensively revamped to become effective from August 1, 2017. The scheme now provides for global coverage irrespective of employer and location and has facility for online renewal. The revised scheme is simpler and more beneficial for emigrant workers and is aimed at ensuring an expeditious settlement of claims.

2.57 Furnishing the details of the benefits offered under the scheme, the Ministry of External Affairs in a written reply stated as under:

“Under the revised PBBY scheme, the insurance coverage is Rs.10 lakh in case of accidental death or permanent disability.

Other benefits of PBBY are: reimbursement of medical expenses upto Rs.1 lakh on hospitalization in emergencies, accidental injuries, sickness etc.; reimbursement of cost of transportation of mortal remains in accidental death along with cost of return airfare of one attendant; if the insured person falls sick or is declared medically unfit to continue or resume work and the service contract is terminated by the foreign employer within the first twelve months of taking the insurance cover, then the actual one way Economy class airfare to India shall be reimbursed by the Insurance company; one way return ticket to India in case of premature termination of contract by the employer for no fault of the employee; maternity benefit to a woman emigrant of a cover of Rs.35,000 to Rs.50,000, restricted to actual cost, and subject to certification by the Indian mission abroad; insurance coverage of maximum of Rs. 50,000/- in case of hospitalization of family during the period of policy, in case of death or

permanent disability of the insured worker; insurance coverage of a sum of Rs. 45,000/- in case of legal expenses incurred by the insurer on litigation relating to employment subject to certification by concerned Indian mission about the necessity of filing the case. The e-migrate portal facilitates on-line renewal of PBBY policy within 30 days of its expiry”.

2.58 Regarding on-line renewal of PBBY policy after the expiry of the stipulated 30 days period, it has been informed that the beneficiary can contact his Registered Agent to renew his policy or buy a new policy. The premiums for both buying a new policy and renewing the policy are same.

2.59 The Committee have been informed further that since its inception, 80,37,200 policies have been issued and 2197 claims were settled till November, 2024.

2.60 The number of insurance claims received, settled and pending for the last 5 years under the Scheme are as under:

| Financial Years | Claim Received | Claim Settled* |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 2020-2021 | 72 | 38 |
| 2021-2022 | 89 | 54 |
| 2022-2023 | 107 | 26 |
| 2023-2024 | 73 | 22 |
| Total | 418 | 156 |

** Settlement of PBBY claims is an on-going process. As such, number of unsettled claims at the end of a particular year may change, if they are settled during the following year. Secondly, the unsettled claims may also include claims not accepted/rejected by the insurance companies.*

2.61 According to the insurance companies, generally the claims are processed within 15 days of the receipt of the claim.

2.62 However, while observing that the number claims made since 2020 under the Scheme is very low and only 2197 claims have been settled out of 80,37,200 policies issued since its inception, the Committee desired to know the reasons for the same. It was then informed that the Number of claims under PravasiBhartiyaBimaYojana (PBBY) is perhaps on the lower side as the Scheme covers accidental death or permanent disability. Natural deaths are not covered under the Scheme. Cases of accidental death and permanent disability is not high and hence, the number of claims under PBBY is low.

2.63 It has been added further in this regard as under:

“Failure to comply with the conditions set in the insurance policy, including submission of claims in stipulated time frame, deficiency in submission of required documents, as indicated in the Policy , including any certificate, that may be required to be obtained from the foreign employer/Missions/Posts abroad etc. are stated to be the reasons for pendency of claims. As and when representations from the insured or nominee are received for delay or non-settlement of claims, they are taken up with the insurance companies for taking appropriate actions to redress the grievances and settle the claims expeditiously” .

ii) Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF).

2.64 The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) has been set up in all Indian Missions and Posts abroad to meet the contingency expenditure incurred by them for carrying out various on-site welfare activities for Overseas Indian citizens on a means-tested basis. The ICWF guidelines today have considerably expanded the scope of on-site welfare activities for the benefit of distressed Indian nationals that could be extended through the Fund.

2.65 The guidelines cover three key areas namely Assisting Overseas Indian nationals in distress situations (Boarding and Lodging, Air passage, Legal Assistance, Emergency Medical Care, Transportation of Mortal Remains), Community Welfare activities and Improvement in Consular services. They now also include provisions for setting of legal panels in countries with sizeable Indian Diaspora, payment of fines/penalty for petty crimes for release of prisoners and assistance to distressed Indian women abroad.

2.66 Since the year 2012 till June 2024, legal assistance by Indian Missions/Posts abroad has been extended to 4213 Indian nationals, Boarding & Lodging assistance has been provided to 1,76,557 Indian nationals, Emergency medical care provided to 10611 distressed Indian nationals, air passage to 38,463 stranded Indians, and 3808 mortal remains of Indian nationals were airlifted.

2.67 Year-wise data of collection and utilisation of the Indian Community Welfare for last 5 years is as under:

| Year | Funds Utilized (INR) | Fund Collection (INR) |
|-------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2019 | 709,866,1731 | 1,652,652,533 |

| | | |
|------|---------------|---------------|
| 2020 | 1,372,505,009 | 555,045,764 |
| 2021 | 370,756,312 | 670,826,058 |
| 2022 | 692,010,026 | 1,095,611,203 |
| 2023 | 612,838,403 | 1,230,491,767 |

2.68 Here under is the data on funds spent since 2012 till June 2024 by Indian Missions/Posts abroad in extending legal assistance to 4213 Indian nationals, Boarding & Lodging assistance to 1,76,557 Indians, Emergency medical care to 10611 distressed Indian nationals, air passage to 38,463 stranded Indians, and airlifting 3808 mortal remains of Indian nationals. Details are as under:

| Year-wise details of funds spent during 2014-2024 on ICWF assistance | | | | | |
|--|--|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| YEARS | | 2014 | | 2015 | |
| Sl.No. | HEADINGS | No. of Beneficiaries | Expenditure in INR | No. of Beneficiaries | Expenditure in INR |
| 1 | Boarding & Lodging | 5918 | 25,917,910 | 4014 | 29,147,175 |
| 2 | Emergency Medical Care, | 444 | 4,837,363 | 200 | 5,297,275 |
| 3 | Air Passage to Stranded Overseas Indians | 8665 | 332,753,313 | 8530 | 72,990,093 |
| 4 | Legal Assistance | 319 | 4,219,172 | 188 | 5,794,390 |
| 5 | Airlifting of Mortal Remains | 243 | 19,010,575 | 279 | 45,593,038 |

| YEARS | | 2016 | | 2017 | | 2018 | |
|--------|--|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Sl.No. | HEADINGS | No. of Beneficiaries | Expenditure in INR | No. of Beneficiaries | Expenditure in INR | No. of Beneficiaries | Expenditure in INR |
| 1 | Boarding & Lodging | 5892 | 41,517,882 | 7984 | 57,375,310 | 10939 | 89,085,116 |
| 2 | Emergency Medical Care, | 704 | 11,221,607 | 350 | 7,295,852 | 550 | 8,791,148 |
| 3 | Air Passage to Stranded Overseas Indians | 2253 | 122,659,828 | 2516 | 51,925,986 | 3735 | 66,568,191 |
| 4 | Legal Assistance | 184 | 4,406,254 | 734 | 9,258,433 | 478 | 7,115,756 |
| 5 | Airlifting of Mortal Remains | 302 | 35,243,060 | 326 | 50,846,614 | 409 | 57,119,091 |

| YEARS | | 2019 | | 2020 | | 2021 | |
|---------|--|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Sl. No. | HEADINGS | No. of Beneficiaries | Expenditure in INR | No. of Beneficiaries | Expenditure in INR | No. of Beneficiaries | Expenditure in INR |
| 1 | Boarding & Lodging | 10685 | 81,287,454 | 71879 | 144,261,549 | 20553 | 23,503,822 |
| 2 | Emergency Medical Care, | 949 | 8,714,188 | 4804 | 11,455,230 | 1117 | 17,289,515 |
| 3 | Air Passage to Stranded Overseas Indians | 2759 | 62,524,228 | 3146 | 115,464,434 | 2489 | 106,712,301 |
| 4 | Legal Assistance | 374 | 8,282,911 | 85 | 3,855,195 | 161 | 4,299,285 |
| 5 | Airlifting of Mortal Remains | 353 | 62,160,936 | 297 | 59,487,371 | 422 | 57,095,553 |

| YEARS | | 2022 | | 2023 | | 2024 (upto June 2024) | |
|---------|--|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Sl. No. | HEADINGS | No. of Beneficiaries | Expenditure in INR | No. of Beneficiaries | Expenditure in INR | No. of Beneficiaries | Expenditure in INR |
| 1 | Boarding & Lodging | 20184 | 53,551,115 | 15286 | 46,206,535 | 4227 | 25,991,599 |
| 2 | Emergency Medical Care, | 1165 | 11,146,036 | 280 | 16,721,039 | 52 | 3,535,265 |
| 3 | Air Passage to Stranded Overseas Indians | 2145 | 65,700,824 | 1607 | 48,253,639 | 621 | 16,469,553 |
| 4 | Legal Assistance | 387 | 6,735,508 | 602 | 119,688,527 | 655 | 3,807,737 |
| 5 | Airlifting of Mortal Remains | 507 | 86,544,256 | 433 | 88,721,880 | 239 | 64,393,773 |

*The break-up of expenditure for 2012 and 2013 is not available on record

2.69 ICWF is a self sustained fund. No budgetary support is provided by Ministry. The sources of the ICWF are (i) service charges on issuance of Visa/OCI/PIO card; Passport services and attestation of documents; (ii) Voluntary contribution by Indian community; and (iii) Income from interests accrued through investments and deposits. Additional requirement of funds by Missions/Posts, if any, are transferred from other Missions/Funds having sufficient funds, with the approval of the Competent Authority in the Ministry.

2.70 The existing ICWF Guidelines have considerable provisions for assistance of distressed overseas Indians and for community welfare. However, Ministry is working on to find out if the scope of the existing ICWF scheme could be enhanced.

2.71 In a written reply to a question on benchmark/criteria for utilisation of ICWF, it was submitted as below:

“The criteria for utilization of funds has been indicated in Para 3 of ICWF Guidelines in detail (ICWF Guidelines of 2017 with amendments is attached as **Annexure B**. A committee of three officers consisting DCM/DCG and officers dealing with Labour, Consular, Community Welfare or Administration is constituted in Missions/Posts to review the operations of the fund every quarter. The accounts of ICWF maintained at Indian Missions/Posts abroad are subject to audit by the Internal Audit Wing of the Office of the Pr. CCA, MEA and subject to Statutory Audit” .

2.72 In order to spread awareness regarding the ICW Fund and the assistance provided therein, Indian emigrant workers proceeding abroad are apprised during PDOT to get in touch with the nearest Indian Missions/ Post in case of emergencies, and the nature of assistance being provided by our Embassies and Consulates overseas. Missions/ Posts are also publicize assistance provided on their respective websites and social media handles, and the same is also done by the Ministry.

iii) Transportation of mortal remains of Indian citizens from abroad

2.73 The CPV Division in the Ministry of External Affairs is the nodal Division and has well-established mechanism/SOPs to coordinate with all Missions / Posts abroad to provide help to Indian nationals abroad in distress including in cases of deaths, local cremation/burial or transportation of mortal remains to their hometowns in India and settlement of insurance / compensation claims.

2.74 Transportation of mortal remains of Indians who die abroad, involves completion of certain formalities before the local authorities allow such body/bodies to be transported to India. In case the death is unnatural, police investigations are to be completed. There exists a singly window clearance in all Indian Missions/Posts for such cases.

2.75 As soon as the information about the death of an Indian national comes to the knowledge of the concerned Indian Mission/Post abroad, they take proactive action by seeking a report from the local Foreign Office and other concerned authorities regarding the cause of the death of the Indian national. Our Missions/Posts abroad inform the next of kin of the deceased Indian national, and

facilitate the transportation to India or local burial of mortal remains in accordance with the wishes of the family of the deceased.

2.76 Transportation of mortal remains of Indians involves the following steps:

- i) The family to nominate a person on their behalf to carry out all the formalities in foreign country, if they are unable to come to the foreign country to take over the mortal remain.
- ii) The Authorized person/ Employer/University Authority to inform the Insurance Company (if any).
- iii) The Authorized person/ Employer/University Authority to nominate a Transporter (in consultation with Insurance Company, if any).
- iv) To get the FIR copy from the Police authorities, if applicable
- v) Transporter to complete the formalities of Embalming, Encoffining& Quarantine of the mortal remains as soon as possible
- vi) The Authorized person/ Employer/University Authority/ Transporter to book an Air Ticket to India for transportation of mortal remains.
- vii) The authorized person needs to obtain the documents (FIR, if any, Medical Certificate/ Death Certificate, Original Passport, Embalming Certificate, Encoffining Certificate, Quarantine Certificate, Authority Letter by the family, List of belongings, Air Way Bill (copy or detail information) and provide to Embassy/ Consulate for Cancellation of passport of the deceased and issue of "Death Certificate and NOC".
- viii) The family also needs to authorize a person to collect the mortal remains at the Indian Airport on their behalf, if required.
- ix) For transportation of mortal remains, Indian Missions/ Posts need liaising with different authorities in the foreign country, viz.
 - (a) Medical report / death certificate issued from the hospital concerned;
 - (b) Police report (with English translation, if report is in some other language), in case of accidental or unnatural death;
 - (c) Consent letter from next of kin of the deceased for transportation of mortal remains;
 - (d) Issuing of No Objection Certificate (NOC) by the Mission / Post for transportation

- (e) Clearance and arrangements for embalming of mortal remains from the authorities concerned in the foreign country;
- (f) Clearance from local immigration/ customs department.

2.77 These procedures differ from country to country depending on the regulations in the specific country. Therefore, there is no fixed time frame for eventual transportation. Generally, the transportation of mortal remains is quicker in cases of natural deaths in comparison to the cases of unnatural deaths.

2.78 In normal circumstances, such cases are invariably processed between 3 to 14 days in cases of natural deaths. Generally, delays occur in cases of unnatural deaths where legal and police investigations have to be completed by local authorities. Delays also occur in cases where the nationality or identity of the deceased needs to be established. In some cases, DNA profiling has also been undertaken to confirm the identity of the deceased. In very few cases, the family of deceased is untraceable or unwilling to provide consent for transportation of mortal remains or local burial / cremation leading to delays.

2.79 Indian Missions/Posts incur expenditure out of Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) for transportation of mortal remains of deceased Indian nationals to India, under the provisions of ICWF guidelines. The year wise expenditure for the last five years is as follows:

| Year | Expenditure(in INR) |
|------|---------------------|
| 2019 | 6,21,60,937/- |
| 2020 | 5,94,87,371/- |
| 2021 | 5,70,95,553/- |
| 2022 | 8,45,83,770/- |
| 2023 | 2,32,51,964/- |

iv) Pre-Departure Orientation Training (PDOT)

2.80 Under the 'Surakshit Jaayein Prashikshit Jaayein' abhiyaan of the Government of India, the Pre-Departure Orientation Training Programme was launched by the Ministry of External Affairs in January, 2018 with an aim of enhancing soft skills of Indian emigrant workers, going abroad specially to Gulf and other ECR countries. Under this programme, the emigrant workers are given one day free

of cost orientation training aiming to help them to understand local rules and regulations of the destination country and their culture, tradition, language etc. Since the inception of the PDOT programme in 2018, a total of 1,72,220 emigrant workers have been imparted orientation training till 31st December 2024.

2.81 Financial assistance is given by the Ministry for the PDOT programme every year. Funds from the allocated budget are disbursed to the State government run departments/agencies on demand basis, which operationalise the scheme. Details of Budget allocation under PDOT head during last three financial years are as follows:

| Financial Year | Budget Grant (in INR) | Funds released to State Agencies (in INR) |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 2022-23 | 3 Crore (300 lakhs) | 0 |
| 2023-24 | 1.20 Crore (120 lakhs) | 79.77 lakhs |
| 2024-25 | 1 Crore (100 lakhs) | 16.08 lakhs (as on January 2025) |

2.82 Pre-Departure Orientation Training (PDOT) programmes are aimed at enhancing soft skills of Indian migrant workers largely going for work abroad especially to the Gulf region and Malaysia, in terms of culture, language, tradition and local rules and regulations of the destination country. One day long PDOT training also sensitizes migrant workers about pathways to safe and legal migration and various government programmes for their welfare and protection. The initiative has been a success and is being expanded further. The PDOT curriculum content has been standardized all over the country. Comprehensive PDO Manuals for Master Trainers have been developed in seven languages i.e. Hindi, English, Bangla, Malayalam, Punjabi, Tamil and Telugu. The Ministry launched online PDOT in April 2021 to reach out to prospective emigrants who live far away from PDOT centres. This initiative is helping us to deliver training for more number of migrants as classroom training almost stopped since onset of Covid-19 last year.

2.83 The PDOT training is imparted under two models:

- i. PDOT Centres operated by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) empanelled training partners under the Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojna (PKKY), a joint collaboration

under an MoU between Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and a grant of Rs. 10 crore was extended by MEA to MSDE.

- ii. PDOT Centres managed by State Government agencies. Ministry has been granting funds to State Governments to conduct PDOT Training to emigrant workers @ Rs. 500/- per candidate for in-person training and Rs. 100 for online training.

2.84 Since its inception, the budget allocation for PDOT is as follows:

| S.No. | Budget for PDOT | INR (in crores) |
|-------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. | 2017-18 | 0.5 crores |
| 2. | 2018-19 | 0.5 crores |
| 3. | 2019-20 | 3.0 crores |
| 4. | 2020-21 | 0.2 crores |
| 5. | 2021-22 | 2.0 crores |
| 6. | 2022-23 | 3.0 Crores |
| 7. | 2023-24 | 3.0 Crores |
| 8. | 2024-25 | 5 Crores |

2.85 There are 36 PDOT centers operational in 32 cities in UP, Rajasthan, Punjab, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Bihar, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka. Out of the 36 PDOT centers, opened by MEA in collaboration with MSDE and the State Governments, 14 centers are managed by NSDC and 22 by State Government Agencies. The list of PDOT centers under various jurisdictions of POEs is as follows:

| S. No. | Name of PoE | PDOT Centre |
|--------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. | POE Rae Bareilly (Uttar Pradesh) | Lucknow Gorakhpur |
| 2. | POE Jaipur (Rajasthan) | Jaipur Sikar Nagaur |
| 2. | POE Chandigarh (Punjab) | Mohali Jalandhar Amritsar |
| 4. | POE Mumbai (Maharashtra) | Mumbai (VideshBhawan) Mumbai (Andheri) Bhopal |

| | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 5. | POE Kolkata (West Bengal) | Kolkata Bhubaneswar |
| 6. | POE Hyderabad (Telangana) & Andhra Pradesh | Hyderabad Karimnagar Nizamabad Vijaywada Kadapa Vizag Kakinada Visakhapatnam |
| 8. | POE Chennai (Tamil Nadu) | Chennai (NSDC) Chennai NRT |
| 8. | POE, Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala) | Trivandrum |
| 9. | POE Cochin (Kerala) | Kochi, Ernakulam |
| 11. | POE Patna (Bihar) | Darbhanga Gaya Muzaffarpur Patna |
| 12. | POE Bengaluru (Karnataka) | Bengaluru |

2.86 The Ministry is in the process of opening more PDOT centres in major cities witnessing high emigration rate in the country to take the total number from 35 to 100 to cover parts of the country not covered so far including the north-eastern region. For new centers, we also expanding our partners beyond NSDC to include industry bodies such as CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM and Common Services Centre, e-Governance Service India Limited of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and work in close collaboration with states.

2.87 The Ministry launched online PDOT in April 2021 to reach out to prospective emigrants who live far away from PDOT centres. We have seen very positive responses from participants, especially women participants. This initiative is helping us deliver training for more migrants. The Ministry proposes to continue online PDOT training post-Covid and provide both online and in-person training options to prospective emigrants. The Ministry has also mandated to make mandatory PDOT for 50% of Emigration Clearances issued by all PoE offices.

Chapter III

Engagement with the Diaspora

Various policies and programmes are being undertaken by the Ministry of External Affairs for Engagement with Indian Diaspora. The Diaspora Engagement Division implements several Diaspora engagement schemes, including Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention, Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Conferences, Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award, Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, Know India Programme, Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children, Bharat Ko Janiye Quiz, Pravasi Rishta Portal and Promotion of Cultural ties with Diaspora. The Division also deals with marital disputes and child custody cases involving Overseas Indians, issues related to Indian students abroad, and miscellaneous grievances received from Diaspora

i) Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention

3.2 The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is one of the flagship events of the Government of India which has been celebrated since 2003 to recognize the contribution of Overseas Indian Community in the development of India and to celebrate Indian Diaspora's connection with its roots. The format of the PBD Convention was revised in 2015 with the main PBD Convention being held every alternate year with the participation of overseas Diaspora experts, policy makers and stakeholders.

3.3 The 18th PBD Convention was held in Bhubaneswar in Odisha from 8-10 January, 2025. For the last few years, the Government of India has been organizing the PBD Convention in partnership with one of the State Governments. The PBD Convention hosted in Partner State provides the opportunity to showcase the State's strengths to the Diaspora and helps in attracting investment and technology into that State.

3.4 On being asked about the reasons for revision of the format of PBD Convention in 2015, the Ministry in their written reply have submitted that the decision was made to primarily enhance the impact of the event by organizing it every two years instead of on an annual basis. The intention was to create a more comprehensive and detailed program for enhancing the depth and reach of India's engagement with its Diaspora and to effectively harness their potential to contribute towards India's growth story.

3.5 Asked about the States with which the Government of India has been partnering for organizing the PBD Convention, the Ministry in their written reply have furnished the following details:

“Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention from its inception in 2003 has been held 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 (Maharashtra) |
| 2006 | 7-9 January, 2006 | Hyderabad (erstwhile Andhra Pradesh) |
| 2007 | 7-9 January, 2007 | New Delhi |
| 2008 | 7-9 January, 2008 | New Delhi |
| 2009 | 7-9 January, 2009 | Chennai (Tamil Nadu) |
| 2010 | 7-9 January, 2010 | New Delhi |
| 2011 | 7-9 January, 2011 | New Delhi |
| 2012 | 7-9 January, 2012 | Jaipur (Rajasthan) |
| 2013 | 7-9 January, 2013 | Kochi (Kerala) |
| 2014 | 7-9 January, 2014 | New Delhi |
| 2015 | 7-9 January, 2015 | Gandhinagar (Gujarat) |
| 2017 | 7-9 January, 2017 | Bengaluru (Karnataka) |
| 2019 | 21-23 January, 2019 | Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh) |
| 2021 | 8-9 January, 2021 | Virtual |
| 2023 | 8-10 January, 2023 | Indore (Madhya Pradesh) |

3.6 The Ministry have furnished details of amount allocated and utilized under the Budget Head ‘Celebration of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas’ for the period 2019-20 – 2023-24. The same are under:-

(INR in Crores)

| FY | Amount allocated | Expenditure Incurred |
|---------|------------------|----------------------|
| 2019-20 | 9.12 | 9.15 |
| 2020-21 | 22 | 17.82 |
| 2021-22 | 5 | 0.45 |
| 2022-23 | 30 | 30.96 |
| 2023-24 | 15 | 14.39 |

3.7 Asked about whether the Ministry have any data on the level of participation of Indian Diaspora in the Convention, the Ministry have submitted that the participation of the Indian Diaspora in the Convention has been satisfactory with over 3500 on an average per edition and that the Government has taken various steps to further widen its engagement with the Indian Diaspora.

3.8 The revision of the format of the PBD in 2015 has enhanced participation of the Diaspora besides having participation from HoGs/HoSs & Ministers of Indian origin from other countries, renowned businessmen, eminent members of the Diaspora abroad and experts from various fields. The Ministry has endeavored to get Diaspora participants from various sectors and disciplines, including but not limited to, trade, business, youth, sports, science & technology, academics, research, engineering and culture; as well as from various segments of society, including youth Diaspora, migrant workers and women.

3.9 Asked about whether the Ministry has any data on the countries that ensured maximum participation in the PBDs, the Ministry have furnished the following participation data with respect to last two PBDs:

| Sl. No. | Country | 17th PBD (Indore) | 18th PBD (Bhubaneswar) |
|----------------|----------------|---|--|
| 1. | Mauritius | 578 | 339 |
| 2. | Qatar | 516 | 193 |
| 3 | UAE | 472 | 224 |
| 4 | Oman | 273 | 307 |
| 5 | Malaysia | 63 | 542 |

3.10 On a specific query to furnish data on number of Blue collar workers- Semi-skilled emigrant workers who participated in the last three PBDs, the Ministry in their written reply have submitted that they only have data in respect of number of participants from various countries.

3.11 When asked about the proactive steps being taken to ensure wider participation of semi-skilled or blue collared workers of the Indian Diaspora in the PBD, the Ministry in their written reply have submitted that Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention is a flagship Indian Diaspora engagement programme of the Ministry that is open to participation by all members of the Indian Diaspora, including the semi- skilled emigrant workers. The Ministry have assured that in all the previous PBD Conventions as well as in the 18th PBD Convention, dedicated segments have been incorporated in the programme that focus upon the importance of safe and legal migration and the challenges faced by emigrant workers abroad, and recourse initiatives undertaken by the Ministry towards the same.

3.12 Enquired about the concrete projects/initiatives/achievements that have emerged from the deliberations at the annual Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) held over the last two decades, the Ministry in their written reply have submitted that the action points emanating from each PBD Convention and

Conference are discussed and shared with Ministries concerned for integration into the overall policy frameworks of the Government. Some of the suggestions made during deliberations at the PBD and indeed incorporated in several new initiatives of the Government. It has been submitted that the continuous revision of the Government's migration policy, policy towards foreign nationals studying in India, changes in various Diaspora- related schemes, offering of scholarships to Diaspora children, cultural outreach programmes, implementation of VAJRA, PRABHASS, GIAN, SWADES, ASIM schemes are based on the suggestions made at the PBD Conventions of the past.

3.13 Asked about whether the Ministry prepares any Outcome Report of Pravasi Bharatiya Day Convention the Ministry have informed that as per past practice no Outcome Report is being prepared by the Ministry of PBD Convention.

ii) Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Conventions

3.14 Noting that the last Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas was held in Singapore in 2018, the Committee during the course of the evidence sought to know whether the Ministry has abandoned the policy of holding Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas. The Ministry, in their written reply, submitted that they have not abandoned the policy of holding Regional PBD. They have further stated that the Ministry has so far successfully organized 10 regional PBDs, with the last one being held in Singapore in 2018. Due to COVID pandemic, the Regional PBDs could not be held in 2020 and 2022. On being asked when the next Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is proposed to take place, the Ministry have informed that the same is expected to be organized in 2026.

3.15 During the course of interaction with the State Diaspora organizations, Secretary, NORKA explaining about the platform provided by the State Government of Kerala to the Non Resident Indians of the State submitted as under:

“We have an assembly or parliament of NRKs which we call as Lok Kerala Sabha. This started in the year 2017. In that, we have NRKs. They might be citizens all across the world but they are part of this parliament because they are NRKs for us. In that parliament, we also have NRKs from outside the State but within India. So, we have people from Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand etc.”

3.16 Explaining further about the functioning of the Lok Kerala Sabha, Secretary, NORKA submitted as under:

“xxx we want to constantly engage with our Diaspora. We don't want them to leave their roots in Kerala. For example, even though they become citizens in Canada or America, they still become part of investment in Kerala, they do businesses in Kerala and they have land in Kerala. So, they will have issues with the State Government. So, we want them to have a formal platform where they can contribute as well as air their concerns with us. We can also in turn help the Diaspora there. We have some eminent NRKs. They also help the Malayali community in those areas. Though they become citizens in their respective countries, they still identify themselves with this culture and they help others in the community. So, we also look at them as part of social support across the world.”

iii) Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA)

3.17 Pravasi Bhartiya Samman Awards' (PBSA) is the highest honour conferred on a Non-Resident Indian (NRI), Person of Indian Origin (PIO) or an organization or institution established and run by NRIs or PIOs. During the PBD Convention, the Hon'ble President of India honours around thirty (30) eminent Indian Diaspora members with this prestigious award. 'PBSA recognizes and honours the significant contribution by NRIs and PIOs within India or abroad for reasons such as exceptional social and humanitarian work, for contributions made towards India's development, for building bridges between India and their host country or for enhancing India's prestige in their home country. Till the 17th PBD Convention, 296 PBSA Awards had been conferred. List of the Awardees have been attached as **Annexure – C**.

3.18 Asked whether the Ministry has fixed any criteria for award of these Awards, the Ministry in their written reply have submitted that PBSAs are conferred to those PIOs and NRIs who have made a significant contribution for their achievements abroad and in India as detailed below:-

For Achievements Abroad:

- (a) Better understanding 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).

For Achievements Within India

- (a) Philanthropic investments and charitable work in India;
- (b) For contributions made towards India's Development.

3.19 Asked about the nomination and selection process of Awardees, the Ministry have submitted that nominations for the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award can be made by the following persons or organizations:

- a) Governors of States and Lt. Governors of Union Territories in India;
- b) Heads of Indian Diplomatic Missions/Heads of Indian Diplomatic Posts abroad.
- c) Chairman and Members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee dealing with the Ministry of External Affairs.
- d) The Executive Head of Prominent Overseas Indian Associations with nation-wide character as may be decided by the Ministry of External Affairs.
- e) Previous awardees of Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award
- f) Self Nomination

The Jury-Cum-Awards Committee can also make up to 6 suo-moto nominations.

Thereafter, a committee of officers, constituted by the Ministry of External Affairs, examine the nominations received with a view to ensure their completeness and draw up a short citation on each nominee to facilitate the work of the Jury-cum-Awards Committee. The Jury-Cum-Awards Committee is made of:

- a) Vice President of India (Chairman)
- b) Minister of External Affairs (Vice Chairman)
- c) Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister
- d) Home Secretary
- e) Foreign Secretary
- f) Five members nominated by the Prime Minister

- g) Secretary or Additional Secretary dealing with Overseas Indian Affairs matters in the Ministry of External Affairs

The recommendation of the Jury-cum-Awards Committee is then submitted to the Prime Minister and President for approval, who are the final deciding authority in the matter.

3.20 Asked whether alumni database of all PBSA awardees till date has been created, the Ministry have submitted that the same has been created by the Ministry along with their fields of specialization.

iv) Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children (SPDC).

3.21 SPDC was introduced in the academic Year 2006-07 for the children of PIOs and NRIs to enable them to pursue Undergraduate courses in Indian Universities/ Institutions and promote India as a centre of higher studies. The Ministry offers 150 scholarships every year under the scheme, out of which, 50 are reserved for Children of Indian workers in ECR countries. Under SPDC Scheme, financial assistance of up to US\$ 4000 towards tuition fee, admission fee and post admission services is provided for Undergraduate courses in professional and non-professional courses.

v) Know India Programme (KIP)

3.22 Know India Programme is an initiative launched in December 2003 by the Ministry for the Indian Diaspora between the age group of 21-35 years. The purpose of the KIP is to familiarize the People of Indian Origin (PIO) youth with contemporary India, through a three week orientation programme and provide them an exposure to the country of their origin. It aims to promote awareness on different facets of life in India and the progress made by the country in various fields e.g. economic, industrial, education, science & technology, communication and information technology and culture. Till now, 81 editions of KIP have been organised by the Ministry with participation by about 2922 members of youth PIOs from 54 countries.

3.23 While Briefing the Committee, the Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs submitted on Know India Programme:

“The “Know India Programme” has been successful in connecting the young members of the Indian Diaspora basically between the age of 21 and 35 years with their heritage roots and is an opportunity for them to witness the development strides of modern India.

Sir,the 79th batch of the Know India Programme is already in India and they comprise of 27 PIO journalists. This is for the first time we have got journalists who are Persons of Indian Origin, for them to see the modern India” .

3.24 The year-wise expenditure on the programme during the period 2022 till Jan 2025 has been furnished by the Ministry. The same is as under:

| S. No. | FY | Final Estimate (in Cr.) | Expenditure (In Cr.) |
|--------|---------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | 2022-23 | 3.00 | 3.70 |
| 2 | 2023-24 | 10.00 | 10.09 |
| 3 | 2024-25 | 10.00 | 5.19 (Till Jan 2025) |

3.25 Asked about the participation level from Girmitiya Countries, the Ministry have furnished the following information:

| S. No. | Country | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | Total |
|--------|----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| 1 | Fiji | 33 | 83 | 49 | 165 |
| 2 | Reunion Island (France) | 3 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| 3 | Guyana | 31 | 35 | 16 | 82 |
| 4 | Jamaica | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 5 | Mauritius | 51 | 89 | 51 | 191 |
| 6 | South Africa | 17 | 21 | 20 | 58 |
| 7 | Suriname | 30 | 28 | 19 | 77 |
| 8 | Trinidad and Tobago | 14 | 41 | 24 | 79 |
| Total | | 179 | 300 | 179 | 658 |

3.26 Asked about whether the Ministry is concerned about the relatively low participation in the Know India Programme the Ministry have in their written reply submitted that prior to the merger of the erstwhile Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) with MEA, the number of editions of KIP conducted was limited to two to four every financial year. As such, only 34 editions had been conducted in the first 13 years until FY 2015-16, attended to by about 1,053 participants. After the merger of the Ministries, the KIP guidelines were revised in 2016-17 to enhance participation of youth

Diaspora in KIP. Since then, the Ministry has started conducting six editions of KIP in every financial year. Subsequent to the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention in January 2023, the Programme was again revamped in FY 2023-24 with the approval of Hon'ble EAM. The coverage of the Programme was widened to increase the number of participants, and new elements were introduced and the scope of the programme was broadened to include showcase to the participants India's developmental strides in various sectors besides presenting to them India's industrial development and flagship initiatives of GOI. The Ministry is currently conducting eight to nine editions of KIP during each financial year since FY 2023-24.

3.27 Asked about specific measures being taken to enhance awareness and increased participation in the programme, the Ministry have submitted that the Know India Programme is one of the earliest and most successful programmes of the Government that facilitates direct engagement of the Government with the youth Indian Diaspora, most of whom visit their mother land for the first time under this scheme. As such, they have adopted a multi-pronged approach to increase awareness and outreach of the Programme amongst the youth Diaspora by effective utilization of the social media and digital platforms. The Ministry has also worked towards creating engaging content for the youth members of the Diaspora, such as videos, infographics, and interactive quizzes, to capture attention and share information in a more dynamic way. Indian Missions/ Posts abroad are also reaching out to the Indian communities in their jurisdiction to showcase the unique opportunity offered by this Programme.

3.28 The Ministry have further stated that the response of the youth Diaspora towards the Programme has been exceptionally positive. A KIP alumni database prepared by the Ministry has also been shared with Missions/ Posts abroad for continued engagement with these Diaspora members to ensure wider outreach of the Government of India overseas.

3.29 On being asked about the perception that the program focuses too heavily on showcasing tourist attractions, potentially overlooking deeper cultural experiences and social realities in India, the Ministry have in their written reply submitted that while designing the programme for the KIP participants in each edition, Ministry takes utmost care in ensuring that the participants get a comprehensive and holistic exposure to contemporary India and its achievements. They are also

provided with an immersive and enriching experience to connect with India's heritage and cultural wealth.

3.30 Key elements of the Know India Programme include presentations on the country's political process, economy, developments in various sectors like science & technology, pharmaceuticals, startup ecosystem, digital public infrastructure, JAM trinity, education, defence, agriculture & tourism, along with interactions with faculty and students at premier Universities/ Colleges/ educational institutions, and visits to industries and exposure to schemes like Skill India, Digital India, Aatmanirbhar Bharat, Make in India, etc. They also get an exposure to Vedantic, spiritual, religious & medicinal traditions of India like Yoga, Ayurveda, etc. The participants visit places of historical importance/monuments where they learn about the rich cultural legacy and heritage of India.

3.31 Adding to the above, the Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs deposed before the Committee during Oral Evidence on 04.02.25 as under:

“The 80th and the 81st editions of the “Know India Programme” were also held in December and January. Seventy-seven participants from 12 countries in these two editions participated. We actually had 40 in the 80th session and 37 in the 81st session and 12 countries in each. They visited Jaipur, Hyderabad, Agra and Bhubaneshwar besides historical and culturally significant sites in India. Most importantly, they had an opportunity to participate in the 18th PBD.”

vi) Bharat ko Janiye (BKJ) Quiz

3.32 Bharat Ko Janiye (BKJ) Quiz is an initiative of the Government of India to engage with the young overseas Indians residing outside India. The quiz is conducted to motivate overseas Indian and foreign youth to enhance their knowledge about India. The initiative was started in 2015 under the directive of the Hon'ble Prime Minister. The winners of the BKJ Quiz are selected under three categories, viz. Persons of Indian Origin, Non Residence Indians and foreign nationals and are invited to India to participate in the Bharat Ko Janiye Yatra (BKJY). Top 15 winners in two categories (NRI and PIO) are invited to visit India on a two-week long BKJ Yatra, starting with their participation in the 18th PBD Convention.

3.33 During Oral Evidence on 04.02.25, the Secretary (CPV & OIA), Ministry of External Affairs submitted further as under:

“The fifth Bharat Ko Janiye quiz was also held to strengthen the connection of the Diaspora with India, particularly the youth and foreigners who are interested in learning about India. A total of around 1,08,876 participants from 203 countries took part in the online quiz which was divided into two categories. One was for Non-Resident Indians and another was for Persons of Indian Origin and foreign nationals. Thirty winners, 15 in each category, were invited to visit India from 8th to 21st of January, including participation in the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas, providing them an opportunity to experience India’s heritage, culture and contemporary developments” .

3.34 As regards the level of participation under the Bharat koJaniye (BKJ) Quiz, the Ministry have given the following details:

| Quiz Year (Edition)s | Registration | Participation | Participation in % | Number of countries |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2021-22 (4 th) | 15,343 | 4,690 | 30.57% | 179 |
| 2024-25 (5 th) | 1,24,522 | 1,08,876 | 87.48% | 203 |

3.35 Giving details of the category wise participation, the Ministry have informed that the 5th BKJ quiz was conducted in two categories i.e. (i) NRIs and (ii) PIO/Foreigners, which is as under:

| S.No | Category | Registration | Participation |
|-------------|------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Non- Resident Indians (NRIs) | 83,936 | 74,197 |
| 2 | PIO/Foreign Nationals | 40,586 | 34,679 |

3.36 Asked about the steps being taken by the Ministry to ensure wider participation of the young overseas Indians, the Ministry in their written reply have submitted that the following steps were taken to ensure wider participation in the quiz:

1. Revamping of the Quiz: The BKJ Quiz was revamped in 2024 with an aim to increase the level of participation that had remained low since 2015. The following were the salient features of the revamped quiz:
 - (i) The quiz was streamlined into a single round online quiz, replacing the previous multi-stage format (online and offline), making it more convenient and exciting for participants.
 - (ii) To ensure wider participation of young overseas Indians, the age limit has been expanded to 14-50 years, from the previous range of 18-35 years.

- (iii) The number of questions was reduced to 30, from 100 in previous editions, simplifying the quiz while maintaining its challenge.
 - (iv) The quiz categories were simplified into two groups: (i) PIO/Foreign Nationals and (ii) Non-Resident Indians, for better categorization and clarity.
 - (v) A flexible feature was added, allowing participants to skip or flip up to 3 questions, enhancing the user experience and increasing engagement.
 - (vi) To make the quiz more interactive and engaging, multi-media questions (33%), such as text, image, audio, and video, were introduced in the 5th edition.
 - (vii) Keeping up with current trends, a user-friendly mobile application was developed this year for universal accessibility on smart phones. This technological expansion was aimed at providing seamless user experience for participants.
2. **Publicity:** In order to reach a broader audience and maximize participation, XPD Division undertook digital social media campaign through Missions/Posts abroad and the collective efforts ensured that quiz gained the visibility and momentum it needed to thrive. The notable elements of publicity were:
- (i) Missions were encouraged to reach out to schools and colleges, Diaspora organizations such as Indian associations, friendship groups, for enhanced participation by students, members of Diaspora and foreigners.
 - (ii) A media agency was hired to boost publicity of the quiz, particularly in high Diaspora countries through campaigns on major social media platform to reach a broader audience and maximise participation in the quiz.
 - (iii) A detailed digital media campaign was implemented. Digital creatives content such as short videos, reels, infographics, emailers, roll-ups, were provided to ensure aggressive social media campaign by Missions/Posts in their respective countries.
3. **Collaboration with Social Media Influencers:** In an effort to target specific demographics, such as students, younger generation, professionals, etc and to enhance participation and outreach, XPD Division collaborated with more than 100 social media influencers around the world to promote the quiz among their followers.
4. **Innovative steps:** Innovative measures were introduced to increase participation in quiz, such as

- (i) Digital Certificate to all participants regardless of their scores allowing them to display their achievements on social media and leave a lasting impression.
- (ii) A new “Challenge Friends!” feature was added to encourage friendly competition and make the quiz more enjoyable. Participants sharing the quiz with their friends creates a ripple effect, increasing reach and participation.”

vii) Promotion of Cultural Ties with Diaspora (PCTD).

3.37 PCTD was started in 2005 and under this initiative Ministry provides grants to Indian Missions/Posts abroad to support their initiatives aimed at strengthening ties with the Overseas Indian Community; to preserve, maintain and showcase their Indian heritage and culture. The scheme aims to nourish and strengthen the cultural bonds between India and its Diaspora and to reinforce the cultural identity of the persons of Indian origin. The Ministry has provided funds to 66 Missions/Posts across the globe under this scheme for CFY for engaging Diaspora to showcase the Indian culture, heritage and legacy. The Budget provided under PCTD in BE 2023-24 and 2024-25 was 6 crore and in BE 2025-26 it is enhanced to Rs. 6 crore. The funds released to Missions/Posts for financial year 2023-24 & 2024-25 are .Rs. 3,48,38000 and Rs. 3,80,50000 respectively.

3.38 The Committee enquired about the criteria for selecting PCTD events, and how the impact of these events is assessed. The Ministry in their written reply have submitted that they seek proposals from Indian Missions/Posts abroad for promoting cultural ties with Indian Diaspora at the start of each FY. The Missions/Posts abroad submit their proposals to support initiatives of the Overseas Indian community to foster their Indian connect through organization of various Indian festivals, cultural events such as food festivals, dance, music etc., Community get-togethers including with the youth members etc. The funds disbursed to the Indian Missions/Posts for supporting such activities create a positive impact on the Indian Community residing abroad and encourages them to stay connected with Indian culture and ethnicity.

3.39 Asked whether there are any plans to increase funding for PCTD to support a wider range of Diaspora, the Ministry have submitted that they have projected an amount of Rs. 5 crore in RE for CFY under the budget head PCTD for enhancing its disbursement to its Missions and Posts and Rs. 10 crores in BE 2025-26 for further enhancing support under PCTD to the Indian Diaspora.

3.40 Asked whether the projection of Rs. 10 crore for 66 Missions is sufficient according to the Ministry, the Ministry in their written reply have submitted that the Budgetary allocation under the Promotion of Cultural Ties with Diaspora (PCTD) has increased by about 30% in FY 2024-25, compared to FY 2022-23, in response to the increasing requests from Missions/ Posts abroad to support their initiatives to strengthen ties with the Overseas Indian Community. The growing Indian community living abroad increasingly expect and await Indian cultural events organized by the Indian Embassies and Consulates in their countries, and the Indian Missions and Posts find it difficult to meet these expectations with the limited resources available to them. Therefore, an RE proposal of Rs. 8 Crores was submitted by the Ministry, but only an amount of Rs. 4 Crores was approved in Revised Estimates for current FY 2024-25. Considering the growing demand as well as the limited availability of resources, an estimated expenditure of Rs. 10 Crores has been projected under PCTD budget for FY 2025-26.

viii) Videsh Sampark Programme- State Outreach

3.41 The Videsh Sampark Programme was started in 2017 as an outreach initiative of the Ministry of External Affairs aimed at engaging with the relevant stakeholders within the State Governments. It is aimed at laying the platform for organizing brainstorming sessions with State Governments on various challenges faced by the Indian Diaspora overseas and to enhance engagement with the Indian States to address the same. Under this programme, conferences are held in the State capital where MEA officials brief senior State Government officials and other stakeholders in the State about the initiatives, programmes and schemes propagated and implemented by the Ministry. The Ministry so far has conducted three programmes in the CFY 2024-25 with the states of Bihar and Tripura in August, 2024 and with Uttarakhand in September 2024.

3.42 The Committee sought to know how many Videsh Sampark Programmes have been conducted by the Ministry since its inception. The Ministry in their written reply have submitted so far Videsh Sampark Programmes have been conducted with State Government of Telengana in May, 2017, State Government of Maharashtra in August, 2017, State Government of Kerala in September, 2017, State Government of Gujarat in August, 2018, Madhya Pradesh in September, 2018, State Government of Karnataka in February, 2020, State Government of Punjab and Haryana in June,

2023, State Government of Bihar in July, 2024, State Government of Tripura in July, 2024 and State Government of Uttarakhand in September, 2024.

3.43 Regarding the response from the State Governments to the Programme, the Ministry have submitted that these programme have been productive and benefited the State Government Officials/Officers by increasing their understanding and awareness of the initiatives of MEA's engage programmes with Indian Diaspora, challenges faced by overseas Indians, especially workers, women and children, and grievance redressal mechanisms, along with other issues concerning trade, investment and foreign policy. It has also facilitated better coordination between the Union and the State Governments to resolve outstanding issues pertaining to the Indian Diaspora.

3.44 Asked about the challenges being faced by the Ministry in the conduct of the Programme, the Ministry have informed that there is no major challenge in conducting VSPs except to find mutually convenient dates to organise them in coordination with the State Governments.

3.45 Enquired about how successful the programme has been in achieving its objectives and whether any assessment has been done by the Ministry, the Ministry have stated that the utility of this Programme in sensitizing the State Governments on issues pertaining to the overseas Indians cannot be overstated. Nevertheless, Ministry is making continuous efforts to further increase the annual number of this Programme in coordination with the State Governments.

3.46 During interaction with the State Diaspora Organisations, the Principal Secretary, Department of NRIs' Affairs, Government of Punjab, submitted as under:

"The other issue is that our interaction with MEA is very minimal. Like we had this Pravasi Bharat programme, but the State Governments are not associated with it.

xxxx

There is hardly any *sampark*. So, I think there should be more association. The CM was invited, but the State Governments were not invited, neither had we had any area where we could put our viewpoints or there was any consultation. So, we feel that there should be more interaction between the State Governments at least on the issues concerning the States which have large population of NRIs.

3.47 Adding to the above sentiments, Secretary, NORKA submitted as under:

"....., we, the State Governments, feel the pulse of these emigrants because their families are here, their contacts are in the State Government. So, we feel the pulse of these NRIs. But unfortunately, because emigration is in the Union List, the Government of India generally has

a very centralized approach to this immigration issues. xxx, ... we would like more consultation and more contribution from the State Governments when it comes to emigration policies and schemes, especially those States which has a large number of emigrants. We feel that Centre and States should establish formal platforms and frameworks where we can work together in devising schemes as well as policies.”

3.48 When asked about the concerns raised by these State representatives, the Ministry have reiterated that they have been engaging with the State Governments on various issues pertaining to the welfare of NRIs including our migrant workers abroad. and assured that such engagements with the State Governments would be continued in future.

3.49 On a specific suggestion to have regular interactions with State Governments on NRI issues, Secretary CPV & OIA informed that concerned Joint Secretary etc. are in touch whenever the State Governments have any issues.

3.50 Asked about the concerns raised by the States regarding lack of response or acknowledgement from MEA regarding communications from State Governments related to international migration, the Ministry in their written reply have submitted that the Ministry have regularly and timely responded to the communications from various state authorities on the issue of emigration. The Overseas Employment Division is also working closely with the 13 state recruiting agencies (RAs) for facilitation of emigration through e-Migrate portal.

3.51 They have further submitted that the Protector of Emigrants (PoE) offices located in various states communicates regularly with the state government officials on various issues related to emigration. PoE office serves as the nodal field office of MEA for matters related to emigration and associated grievances and is well-positioned to engage with state police and local administration, acting as a vital link between Indian Missions, the emigrant's family, and local authorities. They work closely with the state law enforcement authorities and cybercrime units to tackle fraudulent practices, reinforcing the integrity of the emigration process. Currently there are 16 PoE offices in 15 states / UTs of India. For better coordination with state governments in the matters of emigration, Ministry has been exploring the possibility of opening of PoE offices in those states, where such offices currently do not exist. PoE Offices in Odisha, Jharkhand and Tripura have been opened recently.

ix) One Stop Centres

3.52 In 2021, Ministry of Women & Child Development and MEA collectively decided to set up OSCs in Indian Missions abroad with the objective of providing services like medical assistance, police assistance, legal aid, counseling, etc. for the benefit of distressed women. One Stop Centre (OSC) Scheme is under Nirbhaya Fund for safety, security and well being of distressed Indian women in countries abroad.

3.53 When asked about the reasons for delay in setting up of One Stop Centres, Secretary (CPV & OIA) during the sitting held on 27.11.2024 has submitted as under:

“The one stop centre was something which was being talked about for quite some time. Now, finally, the Ministry of Women and Child Development have approved and told us to set up one stop centres and this approval of their scheme only in October, 2024. So, we have immediately approached our concerned missions and asked them to come up with their proposals because only once we get the proposals from the missions post and share it with the Ministry of Women and Child Development. The funds would be allocated to operate.”

3.54 The Ministry have informed the Committee that the anticipated budgetary requirements have already been received from Missions/ Posts abroad, and the proposal is currently under process in the Ministry, pending financial concurrence.

3.55 Asked about the expected time line country-wise for setting up of One Stop Centres in Indian Missions abroad, the Ministry have informed that the nine Missions for which the One Stop Centres (OSC) have been approved to be set up have sent their updated financial proposals for setting up the OSCs in their respective countries from the next FY 2025-26. The Ministry expects to launch the scheme from the next Financial Year 2025-26.

3.56 During the course of evidence the Committee sought to know the current status of the One Stop Centres being set up under Nirbhaya Fund. The Ministry in their written reply have submitted that the proposal for setting up seven One Stop Centres with provision of shelter homes in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia (Jeddah and Riyadh) and two OSCs without shelter homes in Toronto and Singapore for distressed women were approved by the Empowered Committee under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister, Women and Child Development on 23.10.2024. The Ministry expects to launch the scheme from the next Financial Year 2025-26.

3.57 The Committee sought to know about the stop gap set ups available for distressed Indian women in countries abroad. The Ministry in their reply have submitted that Indian Missions and Posts abroad are helping distressed Indian women overseas by providing them Boarding and Lodging, return air passages, legal assistance, emergency medical care, etc. on means-tested basis through the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF).

3.58 Asked what platforms are currently available for distressed Indian women to reach out to the Consulate or the Ministry for assistance, it has been submitted that various platforms like e-mail, CPGRAMS, MADAD, 24*7 helplines, Open Houses etc that are available for the distressed Indian women to reach out to the Consulate/Mission or Ministry for assistance.

3.59 The Committee also sought to know about the measures being taken to enhance awareness about these platforms among the Diaspora. The Ministry, in their written reply, have stated that they along with Missions/Posts abroad, are duly advertising these outreach mechanisms through websites, social media platforms etc so that distressed Indian women can reach out to them to seek assistance.

x) Engagement with Students

3.60 During the course of various sittings of the Committee, one of the major concerns which arose related to safety and security of Indian Students abroad. The Ministry have stated that providing safety and security to Indian students abroad is one of the top most priorities of the Government of India. Indian Missions/Posts abroad maintain regular contacts with Indian students enrolled in Universities abroad Indian Missions/Posts abroad encourage Indian students to remain connected on a regular basis and make all possible efforts to respond to the outstanding issues faced by them on a priority basis. The grievances of the students are responded to almost on a real time basis through telephone calls, walk-ins, emails, social media, 24x7 emergency helplines, open houses and the MADAD Portal. Any complaint received from the Indian students abroad are taken up with the concerned University/Institution and the host Government, as the case may be for requisite action.

3.61 The Ministry collect the data on number of Indian Students studying abroad on yearly basis

from Missions and Posts abroad. As per data available with the Ministry as on 01.01.2024, there are 17,79,097 Indian students studying in various Schools/Universities/Tertiary Institutions abroad.

3.62 Asked whether any data is kept regarding the return/stay of students going abroad, the Ministry have stated that no such data is maintained by them.

3.63 Indian Missions/Posts cannot keep track of the whereabouts of all Indian students studying abroad on a continuous basis. However, Indian Missions/Posts abroad do maintain regular contacts with Indian students enrolled in Universities abroad.

3.64 The Committee asked about the details of students from India who have been apprehended and lodged in foreign prisons and the steps taken to get their release. The Ministry have submitted that Government maintains data of all Indian nationals who get arrested or imprisoned in foreign countries. However, separate data for students is not being maintained.

3.65 Regarding students outreach, during the course of evidence on 04.02.2025, Secretary (CPV & OIA) apprised the Committee as under:

“Most of our embassies have been told that they must conduct programs in the beginning of the year so that they go to the various universities, colleges, wherever possible, and meet the incoming new students, talk to them, familiarize them with the local laws and requirements. So, the process of orientation programs for the students who have joined, by the Mission is an ongoing exercise which our Mission/Posts have regularly been doing, and they have been told, and often what happens, they conduct these programs and they put it out on the social media so that other colleagues who have not been able to join are familiar of what has been happening.

3.66 The Ministry further informed that the Indian Missions/Posts abroad invite students enrolled in various Universities under their jurisdiction for Welcome ceremonies organized almost as soon as they reach the foreign shores for pursuing higher studies. Heads of Indian Missions/Posts also organize Orientation Programmes for Indian students and brief them on challenges and threats, if any, that they may confront during their stay in the foreign lands and mechanisms to take counter active measures. Heads of Indian Missions/Posts and other senior Embassy officials also visit foreign Universities and Educational Institutions in their respective countries of accreditation to regularly

interact with Indian students and Indian Students' Associations to address their safety and welfare related issues.

3.67 Regarding SoPs in place for student outreach by our missions abroad, the Ministry in their written reply have submitted that currently, there is no SOP regarding student outreach by our Missions, but Indian Missions and Posts are mandated to actively engage with Indian students abroad, as described in the following point.

3.68 Concerned about safety of Indian students especially with the growing number of deaths reported especially in the US, the Committee enquired from the Ministry of the action being taken in the matter. The Ministry in their written reply have submitted as under:

"The safety and security of Indians abroad is one of the foremost priorities for the Ministry. Our Missions and Posts remain vigilant and closely monitor any such untoward incident. Such incidents are immediately taken up with the concerned authorities of the host country to ensure that the cases are properly investigated and the perpetrators are punished. These issues are also raised during meetings with Government officials of the countries concerned, including at the highest levels as appropriate. Any issue pertaining to Indians abroad is dealt by Missions/Posts on priority basis and distressed Indian nationals are provided all possible consular assistance, including emergency medical care and boarding/lodging, whenever required. The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) is set up in Indian Missions/Posts abroad for assisting overseas Indian nationals in distress situations on a means tested basis in deserving cases. The support extended under ICWF also includes transportation of mortal remains of Indian nationals who passed away abroad".

3.69 As per the data received from Indian Missions/Posts abroad, during the last three years, 14 Indian students died in foreign countries due to violence/attacks.

xi) Knowledge Sharing Programmes

3.70 The Government has launched various knowledge sharing programmes like VAJRA Faculty Scheme, PRABHASS and VAIBHAV to amplify India's scientific and technical knowledge through the contributions of its Diaspora community overseas.

VAJRA Faculty Scheme

3.71 The Visiting Advanced Joint Research (VAJRA) Faculty Scheme taps the expertise of International Faculty/ scientists/ technologists including NRIs and PIOs/OCIs in the highly competitive

areas of research and development by offering them adjunct/ visiting faculty positions in Indian Institutions/Universities.

Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark (PRABHASS)

3.72 Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark (PRABHASS) is an initiative to develop a database and a virtual platform to bring on board the Global Indian S&T Community to address the domestic social challenges/problems.

Vaishvik Bharatiya Vaigyanik (VAIBHAV) fellowship programme

3.73 The Vaishvik Bharatiya Vaigyanik (VAIBHAV) fellowship programme aims to foster collaboration between Indian Diaspora scientists and Indian academic and research institutions. All such schemes promote India's global positive image and influence by leveraging its Diaspora community.

xii) Assessment/ Evaluation of Diaspora Engagement Programmes

3.74 The Committee sought to know about the impact of the various policies and programs and the feedbacks received from the Diaspora on the same. The Ministry in their written reply have submitted that the Government is in regular touch with the Indian Diaspora across the globe. Indian Diaspora members as well as Missions/ Posts abroad from time to time provide feedback on various Diaspora engagement programmes. The general feedback from the Indian Diaspora on Ministry programmes of engagement with them has been positive, which is evident from various social media platforms. They have further informed that the feedback of the participants in each of the Diaspora Engagement Programmes are examined seriously and diligently to continuously improve such schemes. Such feedback also contributes to policy making at various levels.

3.75 Elaborating on the impact of the Diaspora engagement programmes of the Ministry, Secretary (CPV & OIA) during the sitting held on 27.11.2024 submitted as under:

“.... the xxx initiatives have helped the Ministry to nurture the connection of the Indian Diaspora with their homeland and enabled them to act as cultural ambassadors fostering goodwill and strengthening India's global influence”

3.76 The Committee further enquired as to whether the Ministry has carried out any assessment or evaluation of these programs. The Ministry in their written reply have submitted that an impact assessment study was conducted by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication on media awareness campaigns for safe and legal migration, run by the Government. Elaborating further they have stated that based on the observations and recommendations contained in the Impact Assessment Study of mass media campaign on safe and legal migration, Ministry has formulated a multi-pronged approach to improve upon this programme.

3.77 Elaborating, the Secretary (CPV & OIA), during the sitting held on 27.11.2024 stated as under:

“As far as the evaluation of the programmes are concerned, we look at the success in terms of the participation. For example, in the scholarship programmes, the number of participants that have joined, the numbers are increasing. We feel that the programme for the Diaspora Children's Scholarship Programme is somewhat successful. As far as the “Know India Programme” is concerned, xxx, in three months, we had three batches coming and, in each batch, we had 40 participants. We get more applicants but we are not able to take more than 40 because of administrative constraints. The kind of feedback we get from each one of them, they get so emotionally connected with the country, with the mother land of their forefathers. We feel that this is one of the most successful initiatives of the Ministry, and every year, we are trying to have at least 10 batches to cover 400 to 450.

xxx, the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, xxx, is now a biennial event. We get 3000 to 4000 participants who come for the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas almost every year. This year, the registrations have started and we are seeing registrations are taking place. So, it is one of the most famous and popular programmes that connect the Diaspora between themselves and get a huge participation. Independently, we have not undertaken any evaluation. xxxx. If I look at the utilisation of the budget and the participation that we see, xxx these two-three programmes, I would say that the programmes are successful.”

3.78 Asked whether regular assessments or evaluation are being carried out by the Ministry in respect of other programmes and schemes such as Videsh Sampark Programme, Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana, PDOT, Know India Programme etc., the Ministry have submitted as under:

“Know India Programme is one of the oldest and the most successful programmes of the Government that facilitates direct engagement of the Government with the young Indian Diaspora, most of whom visit their forefathers' motherland for the first time under this scheme. The response of the young Diaspora towards the Programme has been exceptionally positive. Many of the KIP beneficiaries continue to remain connected even after the end of the programme and positively recommend KIP to their friends. A KIP alumni database prepared by the Ministry has also been shared with Missions/ Posts abroad for continued engagement with these Diaspora members to ensure wider outreach of the Government of India overseas.

Through Videsh Sampark Programme, Ministry has been engaging with the State Governments on various issues pertaining to the welfare of NRIs including our migrant workers abroad. These programme, conducted with the State Governments, have been productive and benefited the State Government Officials/Officers by increasing their understanding and awareness of the initiatives of MEA's engagement programmes with Indian Diaspora, challenges faced by overseas Indians, especially workers, women and children, and grievance redressal mechanisms, along with other issues concerning trade, investment and foreign policy. Ministry has observed that this Programme has facilitated better coordination between the Union and the State Governments to resolve outstanding issues pertaining to the Indian Diaspora.

3.79 On being asked about the initiatives/steps being taken by the Ministry and the Indian Missions/Posts abroad to ensure wider dissemination of the various Schemes benefiting the Indian Diaspora, the Ministry in their written reply have submitted that Indian Missions/Posts abroad are making all out efforts to disseminate and popularize the programmes for the welfare of the Indian Diaspora through their websites, social media handles including Facebook and Twitter, community Whatsapp channels, virtual newsletters etc. Heads of Missions also hold meetings with the office bearers of the Indian Associations and prominent members of the Diaspora. Indian Associations have been requested to promote the RISHTA portal. Missions and Posts have also taken the initiative to explain the utility of the RISHTA portal to the India Diaspora during various community interaction such as during Hindi Divas, National Days, celebration of ICCR Foundation Day, ITEC Day, various Indian festivals, etc. The Ministry have informed that the response to the Portal has been picking up steadily and overseas Indians have now started interacting with the Missions through the Portal. They have further submitted that the portal is sought to be further tweaked to improve its functionality based on the suggestions received from stakeholders.

CHAPTER-IV

PORTALS FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH DIASPORA

A. GLOBAL PRAVASI RISHTA PORTAL

The Ministry of External Affairs launched the Global Pravasi Rishta Portal, a platform connecting Pravasis which include NRI, PIO & OCI card holders, with Government of India through the Missions and Posts abroad on 30 December 2020.

4.2 It is a two-way communication channel between the Government of India and the Indian Diaspora abroad and can be used for dissemination of information and creation of database of Diaspora based on voluntary registration. Currently, the Global Pravasi Rishta Portal is not functioning, as it is being merged with the other portals of the Ministry.

4.3 Regarding the non-functioning of the Global Pravasi Rishta Portal, the Ministry have submitted that the Global Pravasi Rishta Portal has been temporarily suspended due to malware attack susceptibility. The Ministry is working on the restoration of the Portal, or creation of an alternate application with similar scope at the earliest. One of the projected options for the same is merging the functions with other portals dealing with Diaspora engagement programmes of the Ministry.

4.4 Elaborating on the issue, Secretary (CPV & OIA), during the sitting held on 27.11.2024 submitted as under:

“We have 3-4 portals related to the Pravasi Bharatiya. We are undergoing a tendering process through which we will identify one company that will bring all these portals under one umbrella. So, it is not that the portals are going. The portals will be back very soon. As you know, it is a tender process which one has to go through to get all the approvals and we award the contract. So, the whole thing is going to come under one umbrella, but the same portals will again remain. Therefore, I want to assure the Members that the portals remain and the portals are not going. It is just a kind of a technical arrangement that instead of being scattered we bring it under one umbrella.”

4.5 Asked to provide the timeline for the completion of this merger and the expected re-launch, the Ministry in their written reply have submitted that the portal is expected to be re-launched within one

year. They have informed that Diaspora members abroad will however be able to register on the websites of Indian Missions/ Posts of their concerned jurisdiction.

B. MADAD (Consular Services Management System)

4.6 As part of the good governance initiative by the Government, an online comprehensive grievances redressal portal - MADAD - was launched in February 2015. It is accessible to all Indian nationals abroad in distress, including to those who have been stranded overseas due to various reasons. MADAD can be accessed through website (www.madad.gov.in) or through mobile app. All Indian Missions and Posts abroad and the MEA's Branch Secretariats in Chennai, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Mumbai are linked to this portal for consular grievance tracking and follow-up. Indian Missions/ Posts abroad take action on the complaints and update the status regularly. The MADAD Portal is regularly monitored at various levels.

4.7 The grievances being handled in MADAD comprise of a range of consular issues including repatriation, transportation of mortal remain, death compensation, work related problems, imprisonment cases, marital disputes, whereabouts unknown cases, consular services, passport issues, court cases, students issues etc. Multilingual Call Centres (Under PBSK), Student Registration, Prisoners Module, Integration with the portal "eMigrate", Integration with State Governments in India, Module for assistance through Indian Community Welfare Fund, etc. have been added to the scope of the portal.

4.8 Asked in how many languages the MADAD portal can be accessed, the Ministry have informed that MADAD is available in bilingual form and can be accessed in Hindi and English languages.

4.9 The Committee sought know how the MADAD portal help people in distress, especially students, if a student is unable to file a complaint in portal. The Ministry have submitted that all Indian nationals, whether in India or abroad, can register their grievances in MADAD Portal and . the relatives/ friends can file grievances on behalf of Indian national.

4.10 All grievances registered on the portal are automatically transferred to the concerned Mission/ Post who take up the matters with the concerned foreign government and its agencies for redressal of the matter.

4.11 Regarding efforts being made for timely disposal of public grievances, the Ministry have submitted that special efforts are being made to resolve the issues pertaining to MADAD Grievances by regular follow ups through e-mails, telephones and reviews/reminders on MADAD Portal itself. Apart from this, coordination with concerned Missions/Posts abroad is also maintained for time bound disposal of different grievances. Further to it, direct registration of grievances on MADAD Portal, Mobile App for MADAD is also available on iOS, Android and Windows platforms. Twitter Sewa (@meaMADAD) was also launched in March 2017 to regularly manage and promptly respond to different issues pertaining to Indian Citizen.

4.12 The Ministry have given the following details regarding the statistics of grievances handled on MADAD portal:

| Grievance Received | Grievances Resolved | Pending | Disposal % |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 92,874 | 88,887 | 3,987 | 95.70 |

4.13 The Country wise redressal status of the grievances is as under:

| S. No. | Country | Grievances Received | Grievances Resolved | Pending |
|--------|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------|
| 1 | Afghanistan | 152 | 131 | 21 |
| 2 | Algeria | 57 | 51 | 6 |
| 3 | Angola | 95 | 92 | 3 |
| 4 | Argentina | 12 | 12 | 0 |
| 5 | Armenia | 165 | 150 | 15 |
| 6 | Australia | 895 | 814 | 81 |
| 7 | Austria | 50 | 45 | 5 |
| 8 | Azerbaijan | 37 | 35 | 2 |
| 9 | Bahrain | 1723 | 1688 | 35 |
| 10 | Bangladesh | 215 | 210 | 5 |

| | | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|------|------|----|
| 11 | Belarus | 22 | 20 | 2 |
| 12 | Belgium | 73 | 65 | 8 |
| 13 | Bhutan | 35 | 33 | 2 |
| 14 | Botswana | 17 | 17 | 0 |
| 15 | Brazil | 35 | 34 | 1 |
| 16 | Brunei | 67 | 63 | 4 |
| 17 | Bulgaria | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| 18 | Burkina Faso | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| 19 | Cabo Verde | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 20 | Cambodia | 210 | 188 | 22 |
| 21 | Cameroon | 19 | 16 | 3 |
| 22 | Canada | 1401 | 1330 | 71 |
| 23 | Chad | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 24 | Chile | 7 | 7 | 0 |
| 25 | China | 531 | 513 | 18 |
| 26 | Colombia | 21 | 19 | 2 |
| 27 | Cote Divoire | 80 | 76 | 4 |
| 28 | Croatia | 19 | 18 | 1 |
| 29 | Cuba | 6 | 5 | 1 |
| 30 | Cyprus | 52 | 50 | 2 |
| 31 | Czech Republic | 39 | 39 | 0 |
| 32 | Dpr Korea | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| 33 | Democratic Republic Of Congo | 134 | 115 | 19 |
| 34 | Denmark | 44 | 40 | 4 |
| 35 | Djibouti | 7 | 7 | 0 |
| 36 | Dominican Republic | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 37 | Egypt | 51 | 45 | 6 |
| 38 | Equatorial Guinea | 16 | 15 | 1 |
| 39 | Eritrea | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 40 | Estonia | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 41 | Ethiopia | 161 | 155 | 6 |
| 42 | Fiji | 31 | 31 | 0 |
| 43 | Finland | 37 | 35 | 2 |
| 44 | France | 290 | 282 | 8 |
| 45 | Germany | 589 | 563 | 26 |
| 46 | Ghana | 122 | 117 | 5 |
| 47 | Greece | 51 | 44 | 7 |

| | | | | |
|----|-------------|------|------|-----|
| 48 | Guatemala | 13 | 13 | 0 |
| 49 | Guinea | 7 | 4 | 3 |
| 50 | Guyana | 32 | 26 | 6 |
| 51 | Hungary | 40 | 38 | 2 |
| 52 | Iceland | 11 | 11 | 0 |
| 53 | Indonesia | 238 | 232 | 6 |
| 54 | Iran | 398 | 389 | 9 |
| 55 | Iraq | 335 | 321 | 14 |
| 56 | Ireland | 99 | 94 | 5 |
| 57 | Israel | 86 | 84 | 2 |
| 58 | Italy | 347 | 324 | 23 |
| 59 | Jamaica | 44 | 41 | 3 |
| 60 | Japan | 179 | 173 | 6 |
| 61 | Jordan | 114 | 111 | 3 |
| 62 | Kazakhstan | 52 | 43 | 9 |
| 63 | Kenya | 154 | 150 | 4 |
| 64 | Kuwait | 5905 | 5650 | 255 |
| 65 | Kyrgyzstan | 118 | 116 | 2 |
| 66 | Lao PDR | 11 | 10 | 1 |
| 67 | Lebanon | 75 | 73 | 2 |
| 68 | Liberia | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| 69 | Libya | 174 | 138 | 36 |
| 70 | Lithuania | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 71 | Madagascar | 30 | 25 | 5 |
| 72 | Malawi | 18 | 18 | 0 |
| 73 | Malaysia | 6178 | 5890 | 288 |
| 74 | Maldives | 273 | 265 | 8 |
| 75 | Mali | 18 | 18 | 0 |
| 76 | Malta | 16 | 14 | 2 |
| 77 | Mauritania | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 78 | Mauritius | 81 | 78 | 3 |
| 79 | Mexico | 44 | 44 | 0 |
| 80 | Mongolia | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 81 | Morocco | 9 | 9 | 0 |
| 82 | Mozambique | 57 | 55 | 2 |
| 83 | Myanmar | 154 | 124 | 30 |
| 84 | Namibia | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| 85 | Nepal | 253 | 235 | 18 |
| 86 | Netherlands | 147 | 146 | 1 |
| 87 | New Zealand | 310 | 303 | 7 |

| | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|-------|-------|------|
| 88 | Niger | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| 89 | Nigeria | 435 | 412 | 23 |
| 90 | Norway | 36 | 35 | 1 |
| 91 | Oman | 3537 | 3391 | 146 |
| 92 | Pakistan | 308 | 279 | 29 |
| 93 | Palestine | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| 94 | Panama | 23 | 22 | 1 |
| 95 | Papua New Guinea | 10 | 10 | 0 |
| 96 | Paraguay | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 97 | Peru | 13 | 13 | 0 |
| 98 | Philippines | 279 | 258 | 21 |
| 99 | Poland | 144 | 138 | 6 |
| 100 | Portugal | 145 | 112 | 33 |
| 101 | Qatar | 14193 | 14085 | 108 |
| 102 | Republic Of Korea | 55 | 53 | 2 |
| 103 | Romania | 46 | 45 | 1 |
| 104 | Russian Federation | 284 | 250 | 34 |
| 105 | Rwanda | 11 | 11 | 0 |
| 106 | Sao Tome And Principe | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| 107 | Saudi Arabia | 31272 | 29593 | 1679 |
| 108 | Senegal | 61 | 59 | 2 |
| 109 | Serbia | 18 | 16 | 2 |
| 110 | Seychelles | 39 | 38 | 1 |
| 111 | Sierra Leone | 14 | 13 | 1 |
| 112 | Singapore | 829 | 810 | 19 |
| 113 | Slovakia | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| 114 | Slovenia | 6 | 5 | 1 |
| 115 | South Africa | 204 | 184 | 20 |
| 116 | South Sudan | 16 | 16 | 0 |
| 117 | Spain | 128 | 124 | 4 |
| 118 | Sri Lanka | 224 | 211 | 13 |
| 119 | Sudan | 104 | 100 | 4 |
| 120 | Suriname | 29 | 27 | 2 |
| 121 | Swaziland | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| 122 | Sweden | 82 | 73 | 9 |
| 123 | Switzerland | 68 | 63 | 5 |

| | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|-------|-------|------|
| 124 | Syria | 9 | 5 | 4 |
| 125 | Taiwan | 19 | 15 | 4 |
| 126 | Tajikistan | 14 | 13 | 1 |
| 127 | Tanzania | 161 | 158 | 3 |
| 128 | Thailand | 404 | 373 | 31 |
| 129 | The Republic Of Congo | 6 | 5 | 1 |
| 130 | Togo | 7 | 3 | 4 |
| 131 | Trinidad And Tobago | 13 | 6 | 7 |
| 132 | Tunisia | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| 133 | Turkey | 89 | 77 | 12 |
| 134 | Turkmenistan | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| 135 | Usa | 3537 | 3370 | 167 |
| 136 | Uganda | 102 | 96 | 6 |
| 137 | Ukraine | 223 | 214 | 9 |
| 138 | United Arab Emirates | 10098 | 9830 | 268 |
| 139 | United Kingdom | 1215 | 1171 | 44 |
| 140 | Uzbekistan | 54 | 45 | 9 |
| 141 | Venezuela | 12 | 12 | 0 |
| 142 | Vietnam | 83 | 79 | 4 |
| 143 | Yemen | 90 | 87 | 3 |
| 144 | Zambia | 71 | 52 | 19 |
| 145 | Zimbabwe | 14 | 13 | 1 |
| | Total | 92324 | 88544 | 3780 |

4.14 Noting that a large number of grievances are still pending in the Gulf Countries, Australia etc. the Committee sought to know about the reason for such pendency and the mechanism through which the Ministry proposes to resolve these. The Ministry in their reply have submitted that the number of grievances registered for a particular country generally is in proportion of the number of Indians residing in that country. As Gulf countries and Australia have a large number of Indians living and working there, it is expected that the registration of grievances and number of unresolved grievances at any point of time would be higher there as compared to other countries. Missions/Posts take all possible measures, within the ambit of local laws, to resolve the grievances.

4.15 In respect of Gulf countries, a total of 67132 grievances have been registered on MADAD portal since its beginning while 64629 of these have been resolved which translates to 96.27% resolution. For Australia, a total of 914 grievances have been registered on MADAD portal since its beginning while 858 of these have been resolved which translates to 93.87% resolution.

4.16 Elaborating further the Ministry have submitted that one important aspect of these grievances about the requests registered on the two portals (MADAD and CPGRAMS) and also directly received by Missions/Posts is that these relate to foreign entities. Prima facie, most of the grievances are not directly related to consular service being provided by the Mission/Post but relates to problems faced by Indians with a foreign government, foreign employer or foreign university etc. Missions/Posts have to take up the matter through the host government and its agencies for resolution as per the law of the land.

4.17 Many pending cases on MADAD Portal are due to incomplete information submitted by the complainants, non-cooperative compliance of foreign sponsors/employers/agencies etc. There are cases in which the role of Indian Mission is limited due to matter being sub-judice or those involving police investigation etc at the local level. These complexities contribute to a prolonged resolution time. In few cases, the relatives of Indian nationals, imprisoned for committing a crime abroad, file cases on MADAD and request for repatriation of their relative. Since these Indians are released after completing their sentences, there is no early resolution of the case.

4.18 The Missions/ Posts manage to resolve substantial number of cases through direct communication with the foreign parties involved and mediation with relevant agencies involved in specific cases etc. In addition to this, Missions frequently communicate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of concerned country through Note Verbale (official communications through letters, mails etc. wherever necessary). In some of the cases, Missions also provide legal assistance to Indians through list of empanelled lawyers (list of which is available on Mission's website). Since in a vast majority of cases filed on MADAD, the applicant has a grievance with foreign employer, foreign government agencies or foreign educational institutes and not with this Ministry or Indian Embassy, the resolution of the cases take time.

4.19 The Committee sought to know about the average time taken for redressal of a grievance on the MADAD Portal, the Ministry in their reply have submitted that the time taken for redressal of a grievance registered on the MADAD Portal depends on a number of factors including the response time from foreign employer and foreign governments. As per standard procedure, grievances received on portal are actively followed up and responded to on high-priority. MADAD has an inbuilt mechanism for identifying and escalating cases where the response is not received in time. Concerned Mission and Post abroad takes all necessary steps to resolve these cases as soon as possible. While the cases related to repatriation and transportation of mortal remains can be resolved in time, those relating to release or return of imprisoned Indians are difficult to resolve as they have to complete the legal process in foreign countries.

4.20 Elaborating further, the Secretary (CPV & OIA) during the sitting held on 27.11.2024 have submitted that:

“As far as the MADAD portal is concerned, if you look at the rate of resolution, most of the cases are resolved. Unless there is a real problem and one is involved in some judicial process and requires some kind of an approval of the local Government, that is where things get delayed in this process. Otherwise, the platform is such that it is monitored at all levels. We move very fast and try to resolve this. Usually, experience shows that wherever there is a judicial process somewhere involved, the things have got delayed and we have not been able to resolve the problem.”

4.21 On being pointed out that almost 4000 cases is not a small number, the Secretary submitted that it is a global picture and not confined to a single country.

C. CENTRALISED PUBLIC GRIEVANCE REDRESS AND MONITORING SYSTEM (CPGRAMS)

4.22 Parallel to the above mentioned MADAD Platform, the Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) portal has also been designed and developed by the Department of Administrative eforms & Public Grievances (DARPG). It was launched in June 2007. The Government of India has made every effort to systematize the nature of grievance redressal through various ways, i.e. feedback, letters, registered communications, emails, etc. These inputs may be submitted by mail, over the Internet, or in person.

4.23 The “Grievance Redressal” primarily includes the receipt and processing of complaints received from citizens in respect of matters related to Ministry of External Affairs in order to provide services more effectively and in time bound manner. After examination of the grievance, corrective action is taken by the PSP Division, in coordination with the concerned Division/Mission/Post.

4.24 Joint Secretary (PSP) is the nodal officer in respect of the public grievances received on CPGRAMS portal. The Ministry have informed that the Public Grievances are received through six modes on CPGRAMS:

- i. President’s Secretariat: Grievances received through President Secretariat’s Portal.
- ii. PM’s Office: Grievances received from PM’s Office.
- iii. Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances: Grievances received on the portal of Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances.
- iv. Directorate of Public Grievances: Grievances received on the portal of Directorate of Public Grievances in the Cabinet Secretariat of Government of India.
- v. Pension Cases: Grievances of pension related cases in respect of CPO Cadre and MEA officials are received at this portal.
- vi. Direct Receipts: Grievances received directly from the public.

4.25 Being the Nodal Agency, DARPG, monitors the grievances of various Ministries/ Departments including MEA and issues the necessary directions in respect of timely disposal of the grievances received on CPGRAMS portal during their monthly review meetings. The maximum time limit for redressal of a grievance is 21 days. Grievance redressal is a continuous exercise so timely disposal of public matters is ensured.

4.26 As regards the efforts being made for timely disposal of public grievances and clearing the pendency for smooth redressal and satisfaction of Indian Citizens who are in a distress abroad, the Ministry has submitted that dedicated Special Campaigns are being launched every year since 2021 for clearing the pendency and redressal of issues. Special Campaign 4.0 had been launched for the period between 02nd to 31st October, 2024. During the Special Campaign, Grievances had been marked for disposal during the first phase i.e. 16th to 30th September, 2024. Subsequently, dedicated efforts have been put forward for disposal of these grievances and clearing the pendency and informing the grievants through Mails, reminders on CPGRAMS Portal, telephone etc. The Ministry have informed that during the course of the campaign i.e. 02-31 October, 2024 there have been **264%**

rate of disposal for marked/ pending grievances. Till 12.11.2024, there are only 280 grievances pending from Mission/Post's end.

| Grievance Received | Grievances Resolved | Pending | Disposal % |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------|------------|
| 19,956 | 19651 | 285 | 99 |

4.27 Asked about the difference between the MADAD Platform and the Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) portal the Ministry in their written reply have submitted as under:

“Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) is an online platform available to the citizens 24x7 to lodge their grievances to the public authorities on any subject related to service delivery. On CPGRAMS portal ; citizens raise their grievances for early resolution related to services rendered by the concern various Government Departments. On this portal citizens can raise their problems, grievances, or pleas to the Central govt. and State Government Ministries and Departments. An applicant registers a grievance through CPGRAMS portal (www.pg.portal.gov.in) and tracks the status online. It is a single portal connected to all the Ministries/Departments of Government of India and States. The CPGRAMS portal has been designed and developed by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG). It was launched in June 2007. DARPG is the nodal Ministry to monitor the status of the grievance redressal in the CPGRAMS portal by the Ministries/Departments. The grievances received in the Department are forwarded to the Ministries/Departments concerned. Redressal of grievances is done by respective Ministries/Departments in a decentralized manner. During the year 2024 till 13 Dec 2024 Ministry of External Affairs(MEA) has received 14,840 grievances out of which 14173 grievances were disposed in timely manner with satisfactory rate of 96%.

MADAD is an online portal run by the Ministry of External Affairs for Indians residing outside India to register online grievances pertaining to the Consular Services offered by the Indian Missions/Posts abroad. Basically MADAD portal provides the support in resolution of the various kind of problems faced by the Indian Diaspora living abroad such as Asylum Cases, Imprisoned Abroad, Mortal Remains, No Obligation to Return India (NORI), Repatriation, Seafarer Issues, Students Studying abroad their issues, OCI Card etc. Consular Services Management System (MADAD) through Indian Missions/Post extends their help to resolve the above mentioned issues of the Indian Citizens living abroad. MADAD empowers Indian citizens to search Missions / Posts in foreign countries for registering their concern. Indian Diaspora can register and track grievances pertaining to the various Consular Services offered by the Indian Embassies at their portal on www.madad.gov.in.

4.28 Asked whether presence of multiple portals for grievance redressal of Indians abroad, can have an adverse effect of delaying grievance redressal due duplicate forums, the Ministry in their

written reply have submitted that while CPGRAMS portal deals with the grievances received from general public residing in the country and it basically handles the various grievances received with regard to the deficiencies in the various types of services rendered by the Government Departments i.e. Central or State, the MADAD portal is an extended hand of the MEA exclusively for the Indian Nationals living abroad to help them in foreign countries.

4.29 Asked about the percentage of increase of grievances registered in the portal during the last three years, the Ministry have furnished the following data:

| Public Grievances received in the CPGRAMS portal | | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Year | Received | Disposed | Percentage of Increase |
| 2022 | 18066 | 16999 | -9% |
| 2023 | 21739 | 20233 | 20% |
| 2024 | 17863 | 17092 | -17% |

D. E-SANAD SERVICES

4.30 E-Sanad portal was launched in year 2017. E-Sanad is an electronic service delivery platform for apostille and attestation of documents issued by Government of India aiming at contactless service to people with an objective to facilitate the applicants to file application (upload documents online, pay applicable fee online) on the portal and Ministry or RPO/Branch Secretariats can download the papers, verify it and paste apostille stickers or put attestation stamp, seal and signature and send them back to the applicant by Speed Post. Since its inception, a total 16,47,399 documents have been successfully processed by the Ministry so far and numbers are steadily increasing on year-to-year basis. As on date, more than 650 government institutions/ educational institutes are on-board with e-Sanad portal through digi-locker as well as backward integration.

4.31 The e-Sanad portal of the Ministry of External Affairs is a central portal and an applicant residing in any part of the country can access the portal and upload his/ her pre-authenticated documents online which are processed at New Delhi and sent back to the applicants by affixing Apostille sticker or attestation (as desired by the applicant) through Speed Post. The same

mechanism is also available to the any applicant abroad, where he or she can upload the pre authenticated document which will be delivered at the given address in India. As regards expansion of e-Sanad in states, it may be noted that 15 Passport Offices as well as 4 Branch Secretariat are also providing these services to the applicants making e-Sanad a pan-India platform.

4.32 Another aspect is that the applicants require authentication to be done from Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, as the same is a requirement by the host country and hence these services are applied at CPV Division, New Delhi. Our Missions/ Posts abroad also perform notarial functions where the Indian nationals can avail attestation/ authentication services in the most expeditious manner (same day in all cases except where documents are sent by post). Online appointment systems are also available to these applicants through the e-Sewa portal which is operational in all Indian Missions/Posts abroad since Nov 2020.

4.33 Asked about time taken by the Ministry to process apostille and attestation of documents submitted under E-Sanad portal, the Ministry have submitted that Usually, applications are processed within 7 working days once such documents reach MEA. It has been further stated that the duration for end-to-end services will vary depending on the time taken by individual Document Issuing Authorities (DIA) in verifying the documents submitted by the applicant

4.34 Asked regarding the details of RPOs/Branch Secretariats providing E-Sanad services pan India, the Ministry have furnished the following data :

As on 18 December 2024, the following RPOs are providing E-Sanad services pan India:

| Sl No | RPOs/Branch Secretariats providing services on E-Sanad |
|-------|--|
| 1 | RPO Ahmedabad |
| 2 | RPO Bangalore |
| 3 | RPO Bhopal |
| 4 | RPO Chandigarh |
| 5 | RPO Kochi |
| 6 | RPO Goa |
| 7 | RPO Lucknow |
| 8 | RPO Thiruvananthapuram |
| 9 | RPO/Branch Secretariat, Mumbai |
| 10 | RPO/Branch Secretariat, Kolkata |
| 12 | RPO/Branch Secretariat, Guwahati |
| 13 | CPV Division, MEA, New Delhi |

PART - II

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

1. Conversion of PIO Cards to OCI Cards

The Committee note that a Person of Indian Origin (PIO) is one who is presently holding a foreign passport and whose any of the ancestors was an Indian national while a Non-Resident Indian (NRI) is a citizen of Indian holding an Indian Passport and is ordinarily residing outside India. An OCI Cardholder is a person registered as Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) under section 7A of The Citizenship Act, 1955 and enjoys benefits like multiple entry, multi-purpose lifelong visa to visit India and parity with NRIs in financial, economic and educational fields except in the acquisition of agricultural or plantation properties. The Committee further note that the Scheme of PIO cards has been discontinued since 2015 and all PIO cardholders (handwritten and machine-readable) have been advised to convert their PIO card to OCI card before December 31, 2025. While appreciating the merger of PIO and OCI Cards, the Committee note that despite a decade of discontinuation of the PIO Scheme, there are still a large number of PIO Card holders who are yet to convert them to OCI cards. As per available data, only 51,58,262 OCI cards have been issued so far. Considering the fact that there are over 19.57 million PIOs spread across the globe, the response under the OCI Card Scheme has been slow and the number of OCI cards issued is far inadequate. The Committee, hence, feel that there is an urgent need to dispel any apprehensions that the overseas Indians may have in this regard and urge the Ministry to take proactive steps towards wider dissemination of the information that the process is not automatic and the PIO Card holders need to formally apply for an OCI card to receive a physical, machine-readable document as handwritten PIO cards are no longer accepted for travel due to international standards. Concerted efforts through social media platforms, Diaspora organisations, State Governments and other stakeholders

may be taken so as to ensure the completion of conversion of all PIO cards to OCI cards by the deadline of 31st December 2025.

(Recommendation No. 1)

2. Revocation / Denial of OCI Cards

The Committee understand that the OCI card issuance/revocation falls under the purview of MHA, while its implementation is done primarily through Indian Missions/Posts abroad. The Committee have come across concerns about revocation of OCI Cards, rejection of OCI Cards, denial of travel permission at airports, etc. from several quarters. In this regard, the Committee are of the view that the OCI Card carries with it an implicit promise of multiple entry, multi-purpose lifelong visa to visit India, etc. and actions dishonoring the same on flimsy reasons would damage the country's international image as a welcoming nation for its Diaspora and potentially impact economic decisions/discourage investment. The Committee, hence, desire that Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), in coordination with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), may chalk out procedural safeguards to ensure clear communication channels including regular updates on requests made, sharing of relevant information on suspected violations and collaboration on the decision making. They may also ensure consistency and due process while revoking/denying OCI Cards, with the MHA primarily handling the legal aspects and the MEA managing international communication.

(Recommendation No. 2)

3. Working on an Agreed Definition for 'Non-Resident Indians'

When it comes to Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), the Committee find that a common definition is lacking and multiple definitions are in vogue across the country or even between States. It is also different amongst the various Acts of the Government of India. The Committee are

of the view that multiplicity of definitions has a potential for multiple interpretations which in turn impacts the decision making process and accessibility of services. The Committee feel that there is an urgent need for a common definition of the term across the nation to avoid confusions. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry of External Affairs work towards proposing a common definition for the term 'Non-Resident Indians' which would be binding on all Acts as well as the State Legislations in tandem with other stakeholder Ministries/Departments.

(Recommendation No. 3)

4. Aadhaar Facilitation for Overseas Indians

The Committee note that Overseas Indians are facing difficulties in getting Aadhaar Cards in the country. The Committee have been given to understand that UIDAI, which is the competent authority in the matter has not made any arrangement for setting up Aadhaar facilitation centers outside India. Today, in India, Aadhaar is an essential document providing a portable proof of identity verifiable through Aadhaar authentication on-line anytime, anywhere. An Aadhaar Card is an essential document for literally every form of registration and transaction facilitating access to various services like banking, property transactions, healthcare and government benefits, especially when the card holders reside in the country for extended periods, while also streamlining processes like tax filing and KYC verification. The Committee are of the considered view that extending facility of Aadhaar cards to Overseas Indians will promote greater integration of Indians living abroad into the Indian society. The extension of the facility of Aadhaar cards to Overseas Indians will also align with the goal of creating a unified identity system in India, enabling them to participate fully in the country's economic and social activities while maintaining their non-resident status. The Committee, therefore,

urge the Ministry to work in coordination with UIDAI in identifying the bottlenecks involved, including procedural difficulties, technical grievances etc., and resolve the same.

(Recommendation No. 4)

5. Voting Rights to NRIs

The Committee are aware that through an amendment to Section 20A of the 'Representation of People Act 1950' in 2010, NRIs have been conferred limited voting rights. As per existing norms, NRIs who have enrolled in the voters list have to be present physically to cast their votes. Since travelling to India is an onerous task considering the logistical and practical problems involved, only a few among the registered voters come down for voting. The Committee feel that due to limitations in exercising their franchise, the issues/concerns of NRIs are being completely side-lined from electoral politics. The Committee are given to understand that the matter regarding grant of voting rights to NRIs is currently pending with the Ministry of Law and Justice (MoLJ). The Committee are further given to understand that the issue will also need amendments in the Representation of People Act 1950' and 1951 as well as engagement with national political parties before implementation. The Committee feel sad that despite being one of the largest emigrant populations in the world, direct involvement in India's electoral politics is limited for our NRIs though the right to vote is universally recognised as an important ingredient of a vibrant democracy. With ever growing technological advancements and capabilities, the Committee feel that solutions like Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) can be looked into for extending the voting rights of NRIs. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to vigorously pursue the matter with the Ministry of Law and Justice, the Election Commission of India and other stakeholders and come up with clear timelines for the reforms while keeping the Committee

apprised of the developments in the matter. The Committee will continue consideration of this question, in consultation with the authorities concerned.

(Recommendation No. 5)

6. Need for Authentic Data on the Indian Diaspora

The Committee note that as per the official records and inputs received from Missions and Posts, Indian Diaspora comprise of 15.85 million NRIs and 19.57 million PIOs and OCIs, adding to a total of 35.42 million in January 2024. However, as per the UN Population Division's estimate there were around 17.86 million Indian migrants in 2020 implying that the number of migrants would have significantly increased by now than the figures reflected by the Ministry. The Committee are concerned to note that the Ministry does not have any authentic data on the Indian Diaspora as registration with Indian Embassies is voluntary and the official data collection is restricted to Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries. The Committee have been surprised to note that despite being aware of the magnitude of the issue, no efforts are being made by the Ministry to address the same. While acknowledging that accurately tracking the large Indian Diaspora spread across the globe is a challenging task requiring enhanced data collection methods through regular surveys, census data, and collaboration with host countries, the Committee feel that lack of reliable data acts as a major hurdle in the international migration governance. In the absence of a comprehensive and up-to-date database, effective framing of programmes for migrants as well as proper delivery of welfare schemes for them would be challenging. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry together with the Bureau of Immigration may devise mechanisms to collect and collate reliable data on migrants and returnees on real time basis and apprise the Committee of the same.

(Recommendation No. 6)

7. Data Collection by Bureau of Immigration

Currently, the only available national-level migration data pertains to Emigration Check Required (ECR) category migrants. However, ECR category migrants are becoming a minority in the migrant population and the ECR data often lead to misrepresentation of international migration from the country. The Committee are aware that the most reliable data is that collected at various ports by Bureau of Immigration on various categories of migrants including temporary labour migrants, students, long-term migrants, etc. The Committee, hence, desire that data collection efforts by Bureau of Immigration at exit and entry points must be strengthened by adopting safe, secure technological platforms, supported by an effective monitoring mechanism. The data, thus collected may be shared with other stakeholders, especially other Central Government Departments and State Governments.

(Recommendation No. 7)

8. Comprehensive Labour Market Information Database

To facilitate future migration, the Committee desire that a comprehensive Labour Market Information (LMI) database for the Indian Diaspora should be developed. This database must include, but not be limited to, real-time data on employment trends, wage patterns, occupational sectors, skill mismatches and remittance flow among NRIs, PIOs and OCIs. Such data would not only improve migration management but also help migrants make informed decisions, matching their skills with available opportunities abroad. Strengthening such data collection and sharing mechanisms for the same is also essential for ensuring efficient and transparent migration governance.

(Recommendation No. 8)

9. Inward Remittances from NRIs

The Committee note that inward remittances from NRIs have witnessed a steady increase during the last three years and in 2023-24 it was 118.7 billion US Dollars. The Committee are aware that the hard power that the Non-Resident Indians wield through the money they send back to their families and relatives in India, bolster India's economy by fuelling consumption, enhancing foreign exchange reserves and ensuring macroeconomic stability. Considering the fact that NRI investments have emerged as a significant driving force in shaping the trajectory of the Indian economy by playing a pivotal role in catalyzing growth across various sectors, there should be consistent efforts to foster greater economic engagement with the Diaspora. Remittances being the second largest source of external financing after service exports and accounting for a significant chunk of India's GDP, the Committee desire that the Government should streamline online transfer platforms, reduce transaction fees, communicate government policies regarding NRI remittances, address taxation concerns, etc. to build trust and transparency. In addition to easing out business opportunities, the Government should promote other investment options available to NRIs in India, like mutual funds, stocks, and real estate. Above all, MEA should actively engage with NRI communities to understand their needs and concerns regarding sending money back to India.

(Recommendation No. 9)

10. Policy of 'Care, Connect, Celebrate and Contribute'

The Committee observe that India's Diaspora policy framework is centered around the four 'C's' namely Care, Connect, Celebrate and Contribute. The Committee note that the shift in the Diaspora policy was brought about with the merger of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs and the Ministry of External Affairs in January 2016. While acknowledging that the 4Cs uphold the welfare and protection of our Diaspora, connect them to their roots, and celebrate their achievements, the Committee feel that India's Diaspora policy is still at nascent stage. Much

needs to be done to tap into the potential of Indians living abroad and policy document on its Diaspora needs to be drafted by the Government. The Committee do not agree with the Ministry's perception that the diversity of Indian Diaspora does not permit formulation of a single, tight and unique policy. The Committee are of the considered view that lack of a dedicated Diaspora policy document hinders our ability to fully leverage the potential of the large overseas Indian community, impacting economic growth, foreign relations, knowledge transfer, and overall national development by limiting engagement with skilled professionals and investors living abroad, while also failing to adequately address the concerns and needs of the Diaspora population. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry bring out a policy document on Indian Diaspora in tune with their aspirations to serve as a guiding principle for deeper and wider engagement with the Diaspora community.

(Recommendation No. 10)

11. Working Group on Schemes/Programmes for the Welfare of Diaspora

The Committee note that a Working Group was constituted under the Chairmanship of Secretary (CPV&OIA) to analyze the objectives, working and challenges of various schemes/programmes/initiatives for the welfare of the Indian Diaspora and the group met for the first time on 22 December, 2021. However, no meeting is seen to have been held since then. The Committee underline that regular meetings of the Working Group are imperative for identifying potential issues in the implementation of schemes, facilitating communication between different departments, and making informed decisions to achieve better policy outcomes. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to ensure biannual meeting of the Working Group to analyze the objectives, working and challenges of various

schemes/programmes/initiatives for the welfare of the Indian Diaspora and intimate the Committee about the schedule worked out for holding the meetings.

(Recommendation No. 11)

12. All-of-Government Approach in Diaspora Matters

The Committee understand that India's engagement with its Diaspora has moved from 'All of Ministry approach' towards an 'All-of-Government approach' in which other wings of the Government, other Ministries and Departments as well as the State Governments are involved in all aspects of Diaspora affairs. The Committee have been informed that the collaborative model of 'All-of-Government approach' ensures that the diverse and evolving needs of the Diaspora are met more effectively by drawing on the expertise and resources of multiple government stakeholders. The Committee, however, note from the testimony received from the State representatives that the State Governments do not feel connected most of the time. Since the concerns of Indian Diaspora transcend Ministries and are largely State specific, the Committee recommend that regular consultations are held with States to align concerns/issues of the Diaspora with the policy priorities.

(Recommendation No. 12)

13. Missions as Home Away from Home.

The Committee are informed that the Indian Missions/Posts abroad works with the motto 'Indian Embassies: Home away from Home' and a robust system of grievance redressal which includes walk-in, email, multilingual 24x7 emergency numbers, grievance redressal portal like MADAD, CPGRAMS, e-Migrate, and social media etc. is in place in all Embassies. However, the Committee are concerned about the extent to which our missions abroad are accessible or

inaccessible to NRI workers and students. Despite having every mechanism possible to help and facilitate our Diaspora in our Missions, the experience of many members of the common Diaspora appears to be on the contrary. The Committee, therefore, recommend that all mission staff should be given specialized training in gender sensitivity, cultural awareness, labour laws, and rights of migrant workers to equip them provide more empathetic and informed support to our Diaspora facing diverse challenges abroad so that our Missions actually become 'Home away from Home'.

(Recommendation No. 13)

14. Handling Grievances of Diaspora

Keeping in view the fact that the Indian Missions/Posts are the direct link between India and its Diaspora community, the Committee desire that Embassies adopt standardized and transparent policies for handling grievances, ensuring that all cases are reviewed systematically rather than through ad-hoc consular outreach and contact. Responses should focus on addressing root causes and offering long-term solutions to migrant issues. The presence of multiple contact points and the lack of standardized operating procedures hinder timely resolution of grievances affecting migrants. The Committee, hence, desire that our Embassies should maintain a publicly accessible database that tracks complaints and ensure transparency in providing essential information including contact details of Nodal Officers.

(Recommendation No. 14)

15. Local Language Capacity in Missions

The Committee observe that there is not enough local language capacity in our missions in terms of the languages spoken by the migrant labourers. This lack of State-specific liaisons

within embassies complicates communication and delays necessary interventions. Though the Ministry has maintained that communication so far has not been a hindrance in addressing labour issues and that the officers/officials in the Ministry of External Affairs, coming from different States of India with diverse social background, have the ability to directly interact with the migrant labourers in their native language to address their issues, the Diaspora Organisations which cater to grievances affecting migrants at ground level belie the claim. The Committee feel that it is important to address the issue of local language capacity so that poor emigrants do not feel that they cannot understand what is being said to them by the representatives of their own country. Hence, the Committee desire that the Ministry take into consideration the language of the major Diaspora groups present in a particular country while deploying officers/staff in our Missions, especially in Gulf countries.

(Recommendation No. 15)

16. Community Welfare Wing in Missions

The Committee note that a dedicated Community Welfare Wing has been established in Missions and Posts where there is a sizeable Indian community. The Committee are of the view that such wings could facilitate closer contact between Indian Diaspora and Indian Missions/Posts. The Committee urge the Ministry do apprise them about the objectives achieved through such community welfare wings in Missions/Posts and establish Community Welfare Wing in all important Indian Missions/Posts on priority basis.

(Recommendation No. 16)

17 Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements on Transfer of Sentenced Persons

The Committee find that India has so far signed 31 bilateral Agreements on Transfer of Sentenced Persons with Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Egypt, Estonia, France, Hong Kong, Iran, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Maldives, Mauritius, Mongolia, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkiye, United Arab Emirates (UAE), United Kingdom and Vietnam, by virtue of which Indian prisoners lodged in foreign countries can be transferred to India to serve the remainder of their sentence and vice-versa. With India signing two multilateral conventions on Transfer of Sentenced Persons, namely Inter-American Convention on Serving Criminal Sentences Abroad and Council of Europe Convention on Transfer of Sentenced Persons, the Committee note that most of the countries in Europe, North America and South America are covered for the purpose. However, countries in Asia, Africa and few countries in Eastern Europe are yet to be covered by bilateral agreements. The Committee, hence, recommend that the Government, through the Ministry of Home Affairs, which is the nodal Ministry for this subject, may pursue, process and sign such agreement with the remaining countries.

(Recommendation No. 17)

18. Transfer of Sentenced Persons from Foreign Jails

The Committee find with dismay that despite having bilateral and multilateral agreements/conventions on Transfer of Sentenced Persons which covers several countries in Middle East, Europe, North America and South America, only 8 Indian prisoners were transferred from foreign countries to India in the last three years. This low success rate in bringing back Indian prisoners calls for an assessment of the efforts taken in this regard. Keeping in view the large number of prisoners languishing in foreign jails, the Committee desire that the Government study the obstacles in implementing the agreements/ conventions and, if need be, amend existing agreements or create new ones to facilitate smoother repatriation of prisoners. The Committee also stress the need to enhance diplomatic efforts

and negotiations with other countries to streamline the process of transferring prisoners and ensuring fair treatment for Indian nationals in foreign jails.

(Recommendation No. 18)

19. Implementation of Agreements on Transfer of Prisoners

The Committee note that at present 10,152 Indian prisoners including under-trials are lodged in foreign prisons. There are 12 countries where Indians are imprisoned in large numbers, viz., Bahrain (272), China (185), Italy (164), Kuwait (387), Malaysia (371), Nepal (1187), Oman (117), Qatar (740), Saudi Arabia (2647), Sri Lanka (143), United Arab Emirates (2479) and United Kingdom (288). The Committee have been informed that nine of these countries are covered under existing agreements on Transfer of Sentenced Persons and that MHA is working on negotiating such agreements with the other three countries, namely, Nepal, Malaysia and Oman. The Committee understand that the Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal Ministry for negotiating and implementing the agreements on transfer of sentenced persons. In view of the large number of Indians lodged in prisons abroad, the Committee desire that no efforts are spared in getting the agreements implemented and the Missions/Posts remain extra vigilant to ensure that the rights of the Indian prisoners in foreign jails are protected. At the same time, the nodal Ministry may continue to make efforts in right earnest to transfer more sentenced Indians, especially from the countries where they are lodged in large numbers.

(Recommendation No. 19)

20. Expeditious Finalisation of MMPAs and LMAs with Countries having large Indian Diaspora

The Committee find that India has signed Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreements/ MoUs (MMPAs) or Labour Mobility Agreements/ MoUs (LMAs) with several countries where the Indian Diaspora is present. MMPAs aim at harnessing India's demographic dividend and fostering mobility for our students, academics, business people and professionals. India has MMPAs signed with France, the UK , Germany, Australia , Austria, Italy and Denmark. The Labor and Manpower Cooperation MOUs/Agreements are in place with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Japan, Portugal, Mauritius, Israel, Taiwan and Malaysia. Further, to safeguard the specific interest of domestic workers in GCC Countries, agreements on Labor Cooperation for Domestic Sector have been signed with Saudi Arabia, UAE and Kuwait. However, the Committee note that we do not have any labour protection agreements with many countries where our Diaspora is in large numbers. Since it is extremely important to have legally binding agreements to protect the interest of our Diaspora while working across borders, the Committee recommend that the Government should actively engage in concluding more such agreements with destination countries, especially those with significant potential to offer benefits and opportunities for Indian nationals including skilled workers, professionals and students. They also desire that the ongoing discussions with various countries, particularly with countries in Europe and the Far East on MMPAs and LMAs may be finalized at the earliest under intimation to the Committee.

(Recommendation No. 20)

21. Impact Assessment of MMPAs and LMAs

The Committee acknowledge that Migration and Mobility Agreements (MMPAs) and Labour Mobility Agreements (LMAs) are aimed at providing safe and legal migration opportunities to Indian workers in potential employment destinations all over the world. However, the impact of such MoUs/Agreements and the manner in which they have translated into better deals and more job opportunities for potential migrant workers are not known. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should carry out an impact assessment of the existing Migration and Mobility Agreements and Labour Mobility Agreements while monitoring the implementation aspect of such MoUs/Agreements to ensure that the issues of interest of the migrant workers, including their grievances, are actually addressed through the said MoUs/Agreements’.

(Recommendation No. 21)

22. Bilateral Labour Agreements Safeguarding the Rights of Migrant Workers

The Committee desire that the Government should enter into Bilateral Labour Agreements (BLAs) and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with many more countries with clear stipulations regarding working condition, wages, accommodation, health care, repatriation rights and dispute resolution mechanism in the employment contract, monitoring of recruitment agencies, granting migrants equal rights as locals, etc. to safeguard the rights of migrant workers. The Committee further desire that the existing bilateral agreements on labour mobility should be strengthened through periodic monitoring and evaluation.

(Recommendation No. 22)

23. International Instruments for Protection of Diaspora

The Committee take cognizance that apart from bilateral arrangements on migration & mobility and labour migration, the Government is also deeply engaged with international and

multilateral organisations for enhancing the horizon of India's initiatives in fostering safe, orderly, and regular migration pathways. However, it is observed that India is not yet a party to any international instrument for protection of Diaspora. The reason for choosing not to become a party to certain specific instruments is based on the implications of such international convention/ instrument on national policies and priorities. While honouring our multifaceted approach allowing for flexibility and context-specific solutions that are responsive to the unique circumstances in different countries, the Committee are concerned about the limited range of bilateral agreements/MoUs and welfare measures we have in place as on date in comparison to the extent and spread of our Diaspora. Hence, the Committee recommend that the Government may actively explore ways to strengthen cooperation and collaboration on Diaspora-related matters at international as well as multilateral levels. Efforts may also be taken to examine the feasibility of being a party to key international instruments aimed at protecting and promoting the welfare of Diaspora communities which work to ensure humane treatment and address potential exploitation of migrant populations across borders.

(Recommendation No. 23)

24. Global Compact for Migration

The Committee find that India is one among the 152 countries that adopted the Global Compact for Migration, the first-ever UN global agreement on a common approach to international migration, in December, 2018. The compact strives for better management of migration at local, national, regional and global levels. Since the State Governments are the key stakeholders in the migration discourse, the Committee desire that a co-ordination

committee, including the Centre and State Governments, may be set up to ensure effective implementation of global compact objectives.

(Recommendation No. 24)

25. Setting up of More Protector of Emigrants (PoE) Offices

The Committee note that the process of emigration of Indian workers, with Emigration Clearance Required (ECR) category passports is regulated under the Emigration Act, 1983, which is administered by the Ministry of External Affairs through the Protector General of Emigrants (PGE). The Protector General of Emigrants oversees the functioning of all Protector of Emigrants (PoE) offices across India. As of now there are 16 offices of the Protector of Emigrants located Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chandigarh, Hyderabad, Cochin, Thiruvananthapuram, Jaipur, Raebareli, Patna, Bengaluru, Guwahati, Ranchi, Bhubaneswar and Agartala. However, the Committee note that PoE offices are not there in States like Gujarat and Telangana which account for a large number of emigrants. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry may explore the feasibility of establishing PoE offices in States where currently such offices do not exist in addition to setting up additional PoE offices in migration hotspots including States like Punjab, Kerala, etc. to ensure better outreach and support for emigrants.

(Recommendation No. 25)

26. Criminalization of Recruitment Malpractices

The Committee observe that the Recruiting Agents (RA) are required to obtain Registration Certificate (RC) from the Protector General of Emigrants (PGE) before they can engage in recruitment of Indian workers for overseas employment. The process of registration of RA is done through a web-based application, e-Migrate portal, which brings all the

stakeholders, including the RAs, Foreign Employers (FEs) and the prospective emigrants on a common platform. The Committee was further informed that the Ministry initiates action against agents involved in exploitation, abuse, or other illegal practices through issuing Show Cause Notices or suspending the licenses ,etc. and publishes the list of unregistered RAs on the e-Migrate portal. Till October 2024, a total of 3,094 unregistered agents in country have been notified. However, the proliferation of unregistered/illegal RAs and illegal migration through them is indicative of the lacunae in the existing system which is extremely disconcerting. The Committee are of the opinion that the penalties and fines provided for in the Emigration Act are insufficient considering the severity of crimes committed by unscrupulous recruiters. Hence, in addition to having a vigorous oversight mechanism for RAs, the Committee recommend that the Government should bring in provisions to effectively criminalize illegal recruitment practices and impose stringent punishment, including imprisonment, to address the widespread exploitation of migrant workers and to deter fraudulent recruitment practices.

(Recommendation No. 26)

27. Coordination Among Stakeholders in Cracking Fraudulent Practices in Emigration

The Committee have been informed that the Protector of Emigrants maintains close coordination with law enforcement agencies, like police and cybercrime units, to tackle fraudulent practices and reinforce the integrity of the emigration process. Similarly, regular coordination is maintained with Bureau of immigration for discussing patterns/trends in emigration and sharing details of violations with each other. However, the reality on ground speaks volumes on how the scamsters circumvent the efforts already in place. The Committee, hence, recommend that inter-agency co-ordination among law enforcement agencies and

inter- ministerial exchanges may be stepped up through frequent assessment exercises of all stakeholders to track down and prevent operations of illegal networks which dupe citizens with fake job offers.

(Recommendation No. 27)

28. Prioritization of State-Run Recruitment Agencies

The Committee find that in States like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, etc. there are Recruitment Agencies which have received license from the MEA and act as State recruitment agencies. As of now, there are 13 such State Recruitment Agencies in various States. In order to ensure safe and ethical recruitment practices, the Committee are of the opinion that the Government should prioritize such State-run recruitment agencies, which can even adhere to a zero-cost migration model, where employers bear the recruitment costs. They, therefore, desire that the Ministry to take it up with all high-emigration States to encourage them to have their own State- run Recruitment Agencies and replicate the best practices of the best performing States in this regard. In addition to working out ways and means to strengthen them, without prejudice to the rights of legitimate private recruitment agencies, the Government should also incorporate at least one State-run Agency into bilateral labour agreements to widen their scope and impact.

(Recommendation No. 28)

29. Recruitment of Female Domestic Workers Through State Recruitment Agencies

The Committee understand that since 2016, women who are ECR (Emigration Clearance Required) passport holders can travel abroad to ECR countries for employment only through 13 State Government recruitment agencies, if they are 30 years and above. These agencies are NORKA Roots and ODEPC of Kerala; OMCL of Tamil Nadu; UPFC of Uttar Pradesh; OMCAP of

Andhra Pradesh; TOMCOM of Telangana; RSLDC of Rajasthan; KUWSSB of Karnataka; KVTSDC of Karnataka; M/s Pan IIT alumni Reach for Jharkhand Foundation of Jharkhand and Bihar State and Overseas Placement Bureau of Bihar. Basically, only State-run Recruitment Agents have the mandate to recruit women domestic workers going to the ECR countries and the private recruitment agents are kept out of the process. The Committee consider this as a laudable step in ensuring this very vulnerable category of overseas job seekers are not exploited by private agents. However, the Committee are worried that the prospective domestic workers from most of the States are not lucky to be under this safety net and are at the mercy of unscrupulous agents. The Committee, hence, recommend that the Ministry may immediately take up with all the States to set up State-run Recruitment Agents, especially in States likes Punjab, Gujrat, Orissa and the North East. The Ministry should keep strict vigilance through the Protector of Emigrants that no loophole is there in the system and the private agents violating the provisions are punished strictly.

(Recommendation No. 29)

30. Outcome Oriented Awareness Campaigns Against Illegal Recruitment Practices

The Committee have taken note of the various efforts undertaken by the government to raise awareness about illegal recruitment practices including advisories/alerts, press releases, outreach activities, etc. But the ever-increasing instances of illegal migration highlights a persistent lack of awareness, necessitating alternative solutions to combat the issue. According to the Committee, the problem calls for a multi-pronged approach with MEA coordinating and working in tandem with several other Ministries for effectively organizing awareness campaigns. The Committee desire that in high-out emigration states, outcome-oriented campaigns in vernacular languages using local channels, social media platforms, civil

society organisations and Panchayati Raj Institutions may be resorted to for wider coverage and adaptation.

(Recommendation No. 30)

31. Deportation of Illegal Immigrants from United States

In the wake of deportations of illegal Indian immigrants back to the country from the United States and probable mass deportations in the future, the Committee had expressed their feelings in unequivocal terms about the humanitarian concerns surrounding the issue. In this regard, the Committee have been apprised that since India is against illegal immigration, the country is committed to taking back its national who is an illegal immigrant to another country. Further, it was informed that most countries have necessary SOPs in place to handle deportation-related matters and, accordingly, MEA too has an SOP in place, whereby nationality and security verification process is undertaken by MEA in coordination with other agencies. Responding to the Committees' shared feelings about detainees restrained by handcuffs, waist chains, and leg irons during flights by US Air Force, it was informed that the US actions were in accordance with the Restraints Policy No. 11155.1, Section 5.10, effective from November 19, 2012. The Committee were further informed that honouring the repeated requests from MEA not to shackle deportees, particularly women and children, in the second deportation flight undertaken on 15 February, 2025, women and children were not shackled by the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Though the Committee also view that it is the mandated responsibility of any government to take back its citizens who have entered and lived in a country without proper documentation, they desire that the Government should deal with situation in a more empathetic manner upholding the human rights of migrants and

explore ways and means to facilitate the return of such illegal immigrants to India without hurting their self-respect.

(Recommendation No. 31)

32. Reintegration of Returned Indian Deportees

The Committee have been informed that the responsibility of reintegration of returned Indian deportees rests with the respective State governments from where the emigrants belong. However, since involuntary returns and reintegration in countries of origin have repercussions on the human rights of migrants, the Committee are of the view that solid reintegration programs are required mainly by the Central Government to prevent those who have already been returned do not risk their lives by undertaking dangerous journeys again. Hence, they recommend specific and detailed re-integration programmes by the Government, integrating the inputs, expertise and experience of those States which have developed ways and means to reintegrate workers returning from abroad.

(Recommendation No. 32)

33 Streamlining Legal Migration

The Committee observe that E-Migrate is a comprehensive e-Governance portal developed to facilitate safe and legal migration of Indian workers abroad. The e-Migrate project, launched in 2015, is designed to facilitate emigration of ECR category workers emigrating to notified countries for employment purposes. The Committee are happy to note that e-Migrate (Version 2.0) was launched on 14 October, 2024 and was integrated with the Passport Seva Project (PSP) of MEA for validation of Passport details of migrant workers registering on this portal and with the Bureau of Immigration (BoI) of the Ministry of Home Affairs for online validation of EC granted by POEs. The new portal has also been integrated with UMANG, Bhashini, Digilocker, SPV- CSC (Meity) DG Shipping systems and SBI e-payment

gateway. The Portal provides for a contactless and paperless process to conduct recruitment process for FEs (Foreign Employers) and Recruiting Agents (RAs) as a fully digitized B-2-B platform. The portal also provides a comprehensive and online database of emigrants to Missions, RAs, FEs and insurance agencies to make the whole emigration cycle faster and transparent. While acknowledging the importance of e-Migrate portal as a transformation initiative of the Ministry of External Affairs aimed at making the emigration process easy, organized & humane, the Committee desire that the portal is kept up to date with easy to navigate provisions and free of technical glitches.

(Recommendation No. 33)

34. Make the Campaign 'Surakshit Jayen Prashikshit Jayen' More Meaningful

The Committee have been informed that, as per the Emigration Rules, the Recruitment Agent can collect only the prescribed amount in respect of services rendered from the prospective emigrant by giving a receipt for the amount collected and any act contrary to it, is punishable. But, a 2023 International Labour Organisation (ILO) report found that nearly 60 per cent of low-skilled Indian workers migrating to Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries paid exorbitant recruitment fees, leading to debt bondage. Though the Government has introduced the e-Migrate system to streamline ethical overseas recruitment, the Committee are sure that its effectiveness depends on accessibility and awareness. The Committee, therefore, desire that the campaign 'Surakshit Jayen Prashikshit Jayen' (Go Safe, Go Trained) live up to its name by highlighting the recruitment fees to be paid to agents, provisions for ensuring self protection,[—] etc. and strive for well-informed migrant youths who are prepared for a seamlessly integrated and safe stay abroad.

(Recommendation No. 34)

35. Need for a Mechanism to Track Labour Migration to Non ECR Counties.

The Committee find that the e-Migrate system captures key data related to the Emigration Check Required (ECR) category migrant workers right from when she/he applies for foreign employment in the system. Emigrant data is also shared with Embassies and Consulates to facilitate easy tracking and assistance when needed. However, the Committee note that the Government only tracks people moving to ECR countries with an ECR Passport and not migration to non ECR counties. Though the e-Migrate portal has also opened registration for non-ECR countries, such an online registration for Indian Emigration Check Not Required (ECNR) passport holders is voluntary and not mandatory. Hence, the data is not captured. While noting that the Government only tracks people moving to ECR countries with an ECR Passport, the Committee are convinced that it is quite important to have a mechanism to detect/track labour migration to even non ECR counties. Hence, they recommend that the Government may come up with possible options to capture the data despite the constraints faced and apprise the Committee of the same.

(Recommendation No. 35)

36 Professionals Trapped in Job Rackets in Southeast Asia

The Committee have noted instances of dubious firms involved in fake recruitment job offers having lured Indian nationals mostly through social media channels to South-East Asian countries including Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao PDR to keep them as bonded labourers to carry out cybercrime and other fraudulent activities from scam centers operating in these countries. Though the exact number of Indian nationals stuck in these countries is not known, the Committee have been informed that through concerted efforts, 1091 Indian national from Cambodia, 770 from Laos and 497 from Myanmar, including software engineers have been

rescued till date. This, further highlights the vulnerabilities faced by Indian job seekers, even professionals, in the hands of unscrupulous agents and middlemen. The Committee find that the advisories and social media posts about the fake job rackets or similar communications issued by the Ministry or respective Indian Missions/Posts abroad through their official websites are unable to prevent our nationals from getting enticed and entrapped in the fraudulent job offers in these countries. The Committee, hence, recommend that the Ministry may need to go much beyond mere listing out fake agents in its efforts to protect Indians from trafficking and cyber slavery. Even the educated Indian professionals need to be educated through all channels possible that genuine foreign employers usually require educational certificates attested by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) and the MEA and legitimate companies have professional websites with clear contact details and overall feedback from employees on platforms like Glassdoor or LinkedIn. Above all, the Committee desire that our embassies or consulates in the destination countries should always be available for assistance in verifying the employer through email or phone calls.

(Recommendation No. 36)

37. Integration of Returnee Migrants

The Committee note that as per the information available with the Ministry, about 5,95,101 emigrants have returned to Indian from foreign countries from 2019 to 2024. This is a significant number. This surge, largely driven by COVID crisis, economic disruptions, stricter immigration policies and a reduction in job opportunities abroad has created considerable reintegration challenges. The Committee note that a national level policy on re-integration of migrant returnees is still awaited. The Committee further note that Kerala is the only State in India that offers economic reintegration and welfare programmes for returning migrants, all of

which are worth emulating by other States and even other countries. The Committee are of the view that though the responsibility for rehabilitation of Indian migrants is currently placed on State Governments, with the Central Government providing neither logistical nor financial support, it is high time that this gap is addressed. To address this gap, the Government, in coordination with States, should develop a sustainable rehabilitation and reintegration policy with shared responsibilities between the Centre and State Governments. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Centre should assist State Governments through grants and soft loans to help integrate the returnee migrants into the domestic industries so that they continue to be economically productive. Such a collaborative approach only would ensure a more comprehensive and sustainable system for migrant reintegration across India.

(Recommendation No. 37)

38. Need to Prioritize New Emigration Bill

Keeping in view the contemporary global migration dynamics and the requirements of Indian citizens, the Committee have underscored the pressing need for a comprehensive legislative overhaul to replace the outdated provisions of the Emigration Act 1983 and the Committee find that a legislation on Emigration [Overseas Mobility (Facilitation and Welfare) Bill, 2024] for the same is on the anvil. This presents a long overdue opportunity to reform the recruitment process for seeking overseas employment. The Ministry has informed the Committee that the proposed draft is under internal consultation and, thereafter, will be put up for public consultation which will be followed up by Inter-Ministerial consultations along with the Draft Cabinet Note. Though the efforts to revamp the migration management framework through the introduction of a new Bill is commendable, the Committee are not happy with the delay in the process despite witnessing harrowing incidents of illegal emigration from our

country day in and day out. The Committee, hence recommend that the Bill should be prioritized and the Committee may be intimated about the timelines for presenting the new Bill in both houses of Parliament.

(Recommendation No. 38)

39. Consultations Required for Finalising the New Emigration Bill

The Committee understand that the proposed Bill to replace the Emigration Act, 1983 aims at establishing a hassle-free, robust, transparent and comprehensive emigration management framework that facilitates safe and orderly migration for Overseas Employment aspirants. However, to address the challenges posed by evolving landscape, wider consultations are required beyond putting it up for public consultation. In this regard the Committee urge that once the elements of the Bill are identified, specific consultations should be made with the Standing Committee, the State Governments and the Diaspora Organisations to make it a healthy Bill worthy of implementation.

(Recommendation No. 39)

40. Need to Address Student Migration in the Emigration Bill

The Committee also note that under emigration, the student migration is generally not covered and currently, the Emigration Bill does not cover student migration. But the Committee see from the available data and surveys that the student community form a sizeable per cent of all emigrants from the country. When irregular and unscrupulous recruitment elements misguide students about universities and job opportunities abroad, a large number of students end up doing menial jobs, not wanting to come back empty-handed and become a socio-economic problem in the countries from where they migrate. So, the

Committee desire that the Ministry should give due importance to student migration also in the new Emigration Bill and student recruitment agencies need to be put under the scanner.

(Recommendation No. 40)

41. Creation of a Centralised, Real-Time Migration Database

Effective policymaking requires robust migration data governance. While acknowledging that MEA's PoE offices track Emigration Clearance Required (ECR) data, and migration estimates exist from Census 2011 and the National Sample Survey 2020-21, the Committee note that a centralised, real-time migration database remains absent. They, therefore, recommend that under the proposed new legislation, the Government must make provision for establishing a national migration database or social registry, to track outgoing and returnee migrants, their skills, employment sectors, and remittance patterns. Integrating passport, visa and emigration data portals would positively aid policy formulation and social welfare provisioning.

(Recommendation No. 41)

42. Settlement of Claims under Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY) Scheme

Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY) is a mandatory insurance scheme initially launched in 2003 for Emigration Check Required (ECR) category workers going to ECR countries for overseas employment. PBBY provides an insurance cover of Rs. 10 lakhs in case of accidental death or permanent disability and some other benefits at a nominal insurance premium of Rs. 275/ Rs. 375 for a period of two/three years. The Scheme has been comprehensively revamped in 2017 with facility for online renewal. The Committee find with dismay that only 2197 claims have been settled out of 80,37,200 policies issued since its inception. From FY 20-21 to FY 23-24, out of 418 claims, only 156 have been settled showing a

dismal settlement ratio. Given the large number of migrants, having very limited claims seems odd to the Committee making them feel that there is a problem in the way the scheme is working. This is especially so, when the PBBY scheme provides for reimbursement of medical expenses up to Rs.1 lakh on hospitalization in emergencies, reimbursement of cost of transportation of mortal remains in accidental death along with cost of return airfare of one attendants, etc. This, the Committee feel might be on account of not honouring most of the claims by insurance companies on flimsy grounds. Since migrants workers are the most vulnerable section of the Diaspora community, the Committee are of the view that they should not be left at the mercy of insurance companies making the scheme infructuous. The Committee, hence, recommend that our missions should assist and guide the emigrant during the claim process and direct the insurance companies not to deny the claims without proper justification. Further, the missions may also help emigrants navigate the complaint process when their claims are not honoured. The Missions may also ensure that the cost of transportation of mortal remains in accidental death of an insured emigrant is reimbursed by the companies and apprise the Committee of the details of such reimbursement done in the last five years.

(Recommendation No. 42)

43. Utilisation of the Indian Community Welfare Fund

Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) has been set up in all Indian Missions and Posts abroad to meet the contingency expenditure incurred by them for carrying out various on-site welfare activities for Overseas Indian citizens on a means-tested basis. This is a self sustained fund without any budgetary support and sourced from service charges on issuance of Visa/OCI/PIO cards; Passport services and attestation of documents; voluntary contribution

by Indian community; and income from interests accrued through investments and deposits. The Committee note that the ICWF guidelines cover three key areas namely Assisting Overseas Indian nationals in distress situations (Boarding and Lodging, Air passage, Legal Assistance, Emergency Medical Care, Transportation of Mortal Remains), Community Welfare activities and Improvement in Consular services. However, the Committee are surprised to note that the overall utilisation of the Indian Community Welfare Fund is apparently less than fifty per cent of the collected fund despite sizeable Indian Diaspora in requirement of assistance on all aspects covered under the fund. It is felt that even after expanding the scope of the fund, not enough assistance could be extended to the distressed Indian nationals and, hence, desire to be apprised of the reasons for the same. The Committee, while underscoring the need for a more generous approach to the requirements of assistance by our Diaspora also desire that our missions should generate more awareness regarding the ICW Fund, the assistance provided therein and the way to get in touch with the Missions/Posts in case of emergencies rather than resorting to the plea that Indian emigrant workers proceeding abroad are apprised about ICWF during PDOT.

(Recommendation No. 43)

44. Setting Up of Legal Panels in Missions/Posts

It is seen that under ICWF, provisions are there for setting up legal panels in countries with sizeable Indian Diaspora, paying of fines/penalty for petty crimes for release of prisoners and assisting Indian women in distress. However, the Committee find that till June 2024 only 4213 Indian nationals were extended legal assistance from the fund. Keeping in view the fact that migrant workers and distressed Indian women are the most vulnerable sections of the Diaspora community and may not have the resources for legal assistance in case of need, the

Committee recommend that legal panels may be set up in all the Indian Missions/Posts having Diaspora community, irrespective of the size of the Diaspora and immediate legal assistance should be provided when requested for the same.

(Recommendation No. 44)

45. Expeditious Transportation of Mortal Remains

The Committee are informed that the CPV Division in the Ministry of External Affairs is the nodal Division to coordinate with all Missions / Posts abroad to provide help to Indian nationals in distress including in cases of deaths, local cremation/burial or transportation of mortal remains to their hometowns in India and settlement of insurance / compensation claims. Transportation of mortal remains involves completion of certain formalities by the local authorities before such body/bodies are allowed to be transported to India and, in case of unnatural deaths, police investigations are to be completed, the procedures of which differ from country to country resulting in no fixed time frame for eventual transportation. Though the Committee note that our Missions attach highest importance to the issue of expeditious transportation of mortal remains of Indians who die abroad, there are instances galore when extreme difficulties were faced by the kith and kin of the deceased in bringing the dead bodies back home. In view of the emotions involved in such cases, the Committee desire that the nodal division in MEA and the Missions/Posts abroad should accord utmost priority to ensuring expeditious transportation of the mortal remains by making all efforts needed to obtain the necessary clearances. In this regard, it would be advisable for all Missions to have a Death Registration Desk with a designated email id to be monitored all the time. The details of the same should be made available in the website of the Ministry and the Mission.

(Recommendation No. 45)

46. Fund for Transportation of Mortal Remains

The Committee are aware that the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) is used for transportation of mortal remains of deceased Indian nationals to India, under the provisions of ICWF guidelines. In 2002, an amount of Rs. 8,45,83,770/- was used for the same whereas in 2023, the expenditure incurred out of ICWF on transportation of mortal remains was Rs. 2,32,51,964/-. The Committee find from the data provided by the Ministry that since 2012 till June 2024, airlifting of 3808 mortal remains of Indian nationals were done by Missions/Posts using ICWF. The Committee are of the feeling that as of now Indian Community Welfare Fund is being utilized in limited cases which is evident from the small number of cases. According to the Committee, the right to get the mortal remains transported to the homeland at the expense of the Government, particularly with less well-off people should be recognized. While urging the empowerment of the Missions with adequate funds, the Committee desire that the procedure for utilizing the Indian Community Welfare Fund for transportation of mortal remains may be further simplified and the authorities vested with discretionary powers in our Missions to take action without awaiting clearance from New Delhi. Missions may also be sensitized to take a humane approach rather than a bureaucratic one in offering help, especially financial assistance, in such cases.

(Recommendation No. 46)

47. Extension of ICWF on Deaths of Students Abroad

The Committee have viewed that in many countries, especially in Gulf countries, philanthropic agencies as well as well meaning members of the respective communities extend assistance in transporting dead bodies. They have further observed that when children from poor families who have taken loans for study abroad die in accidents or otherwise, the

family falls into an extremely sad plight of not being able to afford to bring the dead bodies back or to repay the student loan they took for him. In those cases, the Committee desire the Ministry to explore whether it can be made a policy to make special provisions under the Indian Community Welfare Fund for meeting expenditures for the same.

(Recommendation No. 47)

48. PoEs as Actual First Point of Contact in Case of Deaths of Indians Abroad

The Committee have been informed that in case of death, Protector of Emigrants (PoE) works closely with Indian Missions for the timely dispatch of mortal remains and it acts as the first point of contact between the emigrant's family and agencies abroad. It was further given to understand that POEs also work in assisting the family in obtaining insurance claims by coordinating with Missions to gather necessary legal and medical documents. The Committee, however, are a bit apprehensive about the actual experience of many families who have faced the death of a bread winner abroad *vis-a-vis* the handholding offered by the PoEs in the respective States. The Committee, hence, desire PoEs to actually live up to what is being claimed by becoming the actual first point of contact between the emigrant's family and agencies abroad and in ensuring the settlement of their Insurance claims. The name and contact details of the nodal officer for the same from PoE should be prominently shown in the website. The Committee also desire to see the PoE-wise data of instances of dispatch of mortal remains and settlement of insurance claims handled by them during the last three years.

(Recommendation No. 48)

49. Utilization of Pre-Departure Orientation Training Programme Funds

Pre-Departure Orientation Training Programme was launched by the Ministry of External Affairs in January, 2018 under the ‘*Surakshit Jaayein Prashikshit Jaayein*’ campaign of the Government of India, for enhancing soft skills of Indian emigrant workers, going abroad specially to Gulf and other ECR countries. Under this programme, the emigrant workers are given one day free of cost orientation training aiming to help them understand local rules and regulations of the destination country and their culture, tradition, language etc. PDOT also sensitizes migrant workers about pathways to safe and legal migration and various government programmes for their welfare and protection. The Committee are given to note that since the inception of the PDOT programme in 2018, a total of 1,72,220 emigrant workers have been imparted orientation training till 31st December 2024 and financial assistance from the allocated budget is disbursed to the State government run departments/agencies. However, the Committee are startled to see that in 2022-23, out of the Budget Grant, nil was the funds released to the State Agencies in 2023-24, Rs. 79.77 lakhs out of Rs. 1.20 Crore was given out and in 2024-25, out of Rs. 1 crore Budget grant, only Rs. 16.08 lakhs have been released till January 2025. The Committee are really concerned about the performance of the scheme and hence recommend that a review of the PDOT scheme may be undertaken to identify the issues in its effective implementation under intimation to this Committee within three months.

(Recommendation No. 49)

50. Blue Print for Expanding PDOT

The Committee are aware that 36 PDOT centers are operational in UP, Rajasthan, Punjab, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Bihar, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka and out of them 14 centers are managed by National

Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and 22 by State Government Agencies. The Ministry has informed that they are in the process of taking the total number of PDOT centres to 100 by partnering with industry bodies such as CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM and Common Services Centre, e-Governance Service India Limited of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. The Committee are further informed that online PDOT has been launched in April 2021 to reach out to prospective emigrants who live far away from PDOT centres, especially women participants. While acknowledging that these initiatives will go a long way in delivering training for more migrants, the Committee are quite apprehensive about the actual implementation vis a vis tall claims on paper. The Committee, hence, recommend that there should be a clear blue print for expanding PDOT Centres and the status of opening them, may be apprised to the Committee, including in the north-eastern region. The Committee also desire to know the target for online and offline PDOT training programmes for the current year and the number of persons likely to be covered for both the trainings.

(Recommendation No. 50)

51. Revision and Updation of PDOT Manuals and Booklets

The Committee note that the PDOT curriculum content has been standardized all over the country and Comprehensive PDO Manuals for Master Trainers have been developed in seven languages i.e. Hindi, English, Bangla, Malayalam, Punjabi, Tamil and Telugu. In this regard, the Committee desire to be informed about the details of country-specific pre-departure handbooks/booklets prepared by the India Centre for Migration so far. They also recommend that these booklets are revised and updated periodically so that prospective

emigrants are acquainted with the latest rules and regulations of the destination countries as well as about safe and legal migration.

(Recommendation No. 51)

52. Outcome of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Conventions

The Committee note that the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is being celebrated since 2003 to recognize the contribution of Overseas Indian Community in the development of India and celebrate Indian Diaspora's connection with its roots. The biennial Convention provides a platform to the overseas Indian community to engage with the government and people of the land of their ancestors for mutually beneficial activities. These conventions facilitate networking among the overseas Indian community residing in various parts of the world and enable sharing of experiences in various fields. The Committee note that for the last few years, the Government of India has been organizing the PBD Convention in partnership with one of the State Governments and the recent ones were held in the cities of Gandhinagar (Gujarat), Bengaluru (Karnataka), Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Indore (Madhya Pradesh) and with the very latest being held in Bhubaneswar from 8-10 January, 2025. The Committee are however surprised to note that no Outcome Report of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is being prepared by the Ministry. The Committee fail to understand how in the absence of Outcome Reports the Ministry is able to assess tangible benefits or failure of the Convention or to make improvements in areas where it is lagging. To make PBDs meaningful and outcome oriented, beyond being just grand celebrations, the Committee recommend that the Ministry prepare Outcome Report and, to begin with, the Outcome Report of the 18th PBD held at Bhubaneswar may be prepared and placed before this Committee.

(Recommendation No. 52)

53. Participation in PBDs

The Committee note that on an average over 3500 members of Indian Diaspora participate per edition in the Convention. It is stated that the revision of the format of the PBD in 2015 has enhanced the participation of the Diaspora besides having participation from HoGs/ HoSs& Ministers of Indian origin from other countries, renowned businessmen, eminent members of the Diaspora abroad and experts from various fields. The Ministry has endeavored to get Diaspora participants from various sectors and disciplines, including but not limited to, trade, business, youth, sports, science & technology, academics, research, engineering and culture as well as from various segments of society, including youth Diaspora, migrant workers and women. The Committee are further informed that the participation in PBD celebration is open to all members of the Indian Diaspora, including the semi-skilled emigrant workers. The Committee, however, regret to note that the Ministry does not maintain any data detailing the profile or statistics about the jobs of the participants. In the absence of such data, the Committee apprehend that participation may be limited to high profile participants and the benefits of the Convention may not extend to the low / semi-skilled and blue-collar workers. The Committee desire that the Ministry evolve a mechanism whereby data with respect to the participants are collected and regularly maintained so as to ensure that the participation and involvement in these Conventions is accommodative of the vulnerable sections of the Diaspora community too.

(Recommendation No. 53)

54. Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Conferences (RPBDs)

The Committee note that Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Conferences (RPBDs) were being organised by the Ministry in different parts of the world to reach out to a vast majority of

our Diaspora, who, for various reasons, were unable to attend the main biennial event in India and benefit from its deliberations. The Committee further note the Ministry has so far successfully organized 10 regional PBDs, with the last one being held in Singapore in 2018. Due to COVID pandemic, the Regional PBDs could not be held in 2020 and 2022. The Ministry has further informed that the policy of holding Regional PBD has not been abandoned by them and that the next Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is expected to be organized in 2026. The Committee feel that Mini/Regional PBDs are a means to embrace and involve thousands more of Overseas Indians and utilize their potential to showcase India in the countries where the events are scheduled. Delay in conducting such events result in loss of opportunities for overseas Indians to connect and engage with their homeland. The Committee, hence, desire that Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2026 is organized without fail in a manner that compensates for the gap of eight years and the tentative plan for the same may be communicated to the Committee.

(Recommendation No. 54)

55. Loka Kerala Sabha

The Committee find that in 2017, the State Government of Kerala introduced the Loka Kerala Sabha, a platform designed to involve Non-Resident Keralites in policy making process. The Committee have been informed that the initiative allows Non- Resident Keralites from around the world to share their ideas, discuss issues, and submit policy suggestions directly to the Government of Kerala. Given that State Governments are often the primary entities interacting with migrants and managing migration-related challenges, the Committee welcome such initiatives as it empowers the Diaspora community to play an active role in shaping policies that impact their lives. The Committee urge the Ministry to encourage other State Governments

also, especially the ones with large Diaspora community, to look into the feasibility of providing similar platforms allowing NRIs from their State engage with their government and contribute to the society where their roots are.

(Recommendation No. 55)

56. Know India Programme

The Committee note that the Know India Programme was launched with the purpose of familiarizing the People of Indian Origin (PIO) youth between the age group of 21-35 years with contemporary India, through a three-week orientation programme and providing them an exposure to the country of their origin. It aims to promote awareness on different facets of life in India and the progress made by the country in various fields. The Committee note that 81 editions of KIP have been completed since its inception in 2003, with the participation of more than 2800 Indian Diaspora Youth from 54 countries. The programme was revamped to widen its scope and coverage and the Ministry is currently conducting eight to nine editions of KIP during each financial year since FY 2023-24. Considering the fact that the programme envisages direct engagement of the Government with the Overseas Indian youth, most of whom visit India for the first time, the Committee urge the Ministry to consider incorporating more diverse regional experiences, facilitating meaningful interactions with local communities, providing tailored learning tracks based on participants' interests while ensuring accessibility and inclusivity to a wider range of participants beyond merely a tourist's experience. The Ministry may also consider creating online platforms for KIP alumni to network, share experiences, collaborate on projects and offer mentorship opportunities to guide participants in applying their learning in their professional lives.

(Recommendation No. 56)

57. Participation of Girmitiya Countries in Know India Programme

The Committee note that the participation level of some of the Girmitiya countries is very low or nearly negligible in Know India Programmes. The Committee are concerned to note that in comparison to 2023-2024, participation of Girmitiya countries has decreased in 2024-25. The Committee urge the Ministry to utilize its embassies and consulates in Girmitiya countries to actively promote the programme through dedicated campaigns, information sessions and social media initiatives collaborating with community leaders/ organizations in these countries and tailor the programme itinerary to include cultural experiences related to the Girmitiya legacy.

(Recommendation No. 57)

58. Bharat KoJaniye (BKJ) Quiz

The Committee are aware that Bharat KoJaniye (BKJ) Quiz is an initiative of the Government started in 2015 to motivate overseas Indians and foreign youth to enhance their knowledge about India. The BKJ Quiz was revamped in 2024 with an aim to increasing the level of participation that had remained low since 2015. Accordingly, the age limit has been expanded to 14-50 years from the previous range of 18-35 years and the quiz was held for two categories PIO / Foreign Nationals and Non-Resident Indians. The Committee are happy to see that the efforts have resulted in the participation of a total of around 1,08876 from 203 countries in the 5th Edition of the Quiz and the top 15 winners in two categories (NRI and PIO) have been invited to visit India on a two-week long BKJ Yatra along with their participation in the 18th PBD Convention held in Bhubaneswar. The Committee hope that through effective publicity and collaboration with Social Media Influencers, etc. and taking innovative steps like issuing digital participation certificates, the Ministry is able to further enhance participation in the next

edition of Bharat Ko Janiye (BKJ) Quiz and motivate overseas Indians and foreign youth to enhance their knowledge about India.

(Recommendation No. 58)

59. Promotion of Cultural Ties with Diaspora

The Committee note that under the Promotion of Cultural Ties with Diaspora (PCTD), the Ministry provides grants to Indian Missions/Posts abroad to support their initiatives aimed at strengthening ties with the Overseas Indian Community to preserve, maintain and showcase Indian heritage and legacy. The scheme aims to nourish and strengthen the cultural bonds between India and its Diaspora and reinforce the cultural identity of the persons of Indian origin. However, the Committee note with dismay that the Budget provided for PCTD in both BE 2023-24 and 2024-25 was only Rs. 4 crores and the funds released to Missions/Posts for financial year 2023-24 & 2024-25 are Rs. 3,48,38000 and Rs. 3,80,50000 respectively. For BE 2025-26 the provision is Rs. 6 crores. The Committee wonder, how the Indian Missions and Posts are expected to organize cultural events with such limited resources available to them and are surprised that the Ministry had projected only Rs.10 crores for 66 Missions in the current FY despite knowing that it is difficult to meet the expectations of growing Indian community living abroad to organize cultural events by the Indian Missions in their countries with limited funds. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to make further improvements in its Budgetary projections taking into consideration the requests received from Missions/Posts and impress upon the Ministry of Finance to provide adequate Budgetary provisions so that the Missions are able to support their initiatives to strengthen ties with the Overseas Indian Community without being hindered by financial constraints.

(Recommendation No. 59)

60. Videsh Sampark Programme

The Committee note that the Videsh Sampark Programme aims at engaging with the relevant stakeholders within the State Governments. It gives a platform for organizing brainstorming sessions with the State Governments on various challenges faced by the Indian Diaspora overseas and to enhance engagement with the Indian States to address the same. The Committee have been informed that under this programme, conferences are held in the State capital where MEA officials brief senior State Government officials and other stakeholders in the State about the initiatives, programmes and schemes implemented by the Ministry. The Ministry is, in fact, enthused that the utility of this Programme in sensitizing the State Governments on issues pertaining to the overseas Indians cannot be overstated. However, much to the surprise and anguish of the Committee, it is observed during the examination of the subject that many States are left uncovered under the programme for years together as the Ministry has been conducting on an average one or two Videsh Sampark Programmes in a year. So far Videsh Sampark Programmes have been conducted with State Governments of Telengana in May 2017, Maharashtra in August 2017, Kerala in September 2017, Gujarat in August 2018, Madhya Pradesh in September 2018, Karnataka in February 2020, Punjab and Haryana in June 2023, Bihar in July 2024, Tripura in July 2024 and Uttarakhand in September 2024. The Committee feel that there is serious need to look into the schedule of Videsh Sampark Programme to ensure frequent and wider engagement/ consultation with the States. The Committee, urge the Ministry to look into the feasibility of conducting the programme zone-wise, so that representatives from more than one State can benefit from the engagement.

(Recommendation No. 60)

61. State Governments as Partners in Migration Management

The Committee are aggrieved to note that the States feel there is lack of concern on part of MEA with regard to matters relating to Indian Diaspora. The Committee are worried about minimal or, at times, no contact with States by MEA on issues relating to the welfare of NRIs, including those of migrant workers abroad. The Committee are aware that the Protector of Emigrants (PoE) offices located in various states serve as the nodal field office of MEA for matters related to emigration and associated grievances, acting as a vital link between Indian Missions, the emigrant's family, local authorities, etc. and is well-positioned to engage with the State police and administration. The Ministry has maintained that regular and timely response to the communications from various State authorities on the issue of emigration is ensured. However, the feedback in this regard is not so positive. Given the fact that State Governments are often the primary entities interacting with migrants and managing migration-related challenges, the Committee strongly feel that unless Ministry actively ropes-in the State Governments and make them partners, the Ministry will fail to achieve the objectives with regard to Diaspora management. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to formulate a strategy, designate officers who would be interacting with the State Governments and work towards cohesive collaboration with State Governments to achieve meaningful utilization of various welfare schemes for the Diaspora

(Recommendation No. 61)

62. Setting up of One Stop Centre (OSC) in Indian Missions Abroad

The Committee are aware that in 2021, the Ministry of Women & Child Development and MEA collectively decided to set up One Stop Centre (OSC) in Indian Missions abroad to provide emergency shelter, police help and medico legal assistance to women in distress. Further, it

has been apprised that the One Stop Centre (OSC) Scheme is under Nirbhaya Fund and the proposal for setting up seven OSCs with shelter homes in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia (Jeddah and Riyadh) and 2 OSCs without shelter homes in Toronto and Singapore have been approved by the Empowered Committee of the Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) on 23.10.2024. The Committee are concerned that even after 4 years since announcing the Scheme, not even one OSC could be opened abroad, despite repeated recommendations by this Committee. The Scheme seems to be imbued with official apathy and chronic delay which needs to be addressed at the earliest. The Committee strongly feel that the failure of this Scheme will undermine the ability of our Missions/Posts abroad to help women in distress. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry take proactive steps to accelerate the pace of implementation of the 9 OSCs in the countries as per approval during the FY 2025-26 itself and the Committee may be apprised of the progress in this regard.

(Recommendation No. 62)

63. Engagement with Indian Students by Missions Abroad

As per data available with the Ministry, there are 17,79,097 Indian students studying in various Schools/Universities/Tertiary Institutions abroad as on 01.01.2024. The Committee note that the Ministry collects yearly data on Indian Students studying abroad from Missions and Posts abroad, but information regarding their return / continued stay is not kept by the Ministry. The Committee are of firm view that non-availability of comprehensive data in respect of our students in a foreign country by our Missions is a lacuna and it is important to have authentic list that covers the bulk of our students. Moreover, without such imprint, our Missions/Posts will not be in a position to reach out to them in times of need/crisis. Having said this, the Committee urge Indian Missions abroad to actively engage with Indian students, encouraging

them to register on their portals, thus contributing to a more comprehensive data set. The Missions/posts may also partner with universities and student organizations to facilitate data collection and every event organized in the Missions should be utilized for collecting information

(Recommendation No. 63)

64. Timely Redressal of Students Grievances

The Committee have been informed that Indian Missions/Posts abroad encourage Indian students to remain connected on a regular basis and make all possible efforts to respond to the outstanding issues faced by them on priority basis. The Committee have been assured that the grievances of the students are responded to almost on a real time basis through telephone calls, walk-ins, emails, social media, 24x7 emergency helpline, open houses and the MADAD Portal. Any complaint received from the Indian students abroad is taken up with the concerned University/Institution and the host Government, as the case may be, for requisite action. The Committee however find that the students don't consider our Missions as easily approachable or friendly and that perception needs to change. It should be the endeavour of our Missions to win the confidence of our student community by minimising the response time to their grievances and striving for near complete resolution rates. The Committee may also be apprised of the Open Houses arranged by our Missions during the last three years, Mission-wise.

(Recommendation No. 64)

65. Standard Operating Procedures for Student Outreach

The Committee have been informed that the Indian Missions/Posts abroad invite students enrolled in various Universities under their jurisdiction for welcome ceremonies organized

almost as soon as they reach the foreign shores for pursuing higher studies. Heads of Indian Missions/Posts also organize Orientation Programmes for Indian students and brief them on challenges / threats, if any, that they may confront during their stay in foreign lands and mechanisms to take counter measures. Senior Embassy officials visit Educational Institutions, interact with Indian students and their associations. However, these efforts do not seem to yield much. Being a country having the highest number of students studying abroad, next only to China, the Committee urge the Ministry to put in place Standard Operating Procedures regarding student outreach and engagement by our Missions abroad. In the absence of such SOPs, emergency response mechanism of the Missions/posts in crisis situations would be far from effective.

(Recommendation No. 65)

66. Safety and Security of Indian Students Abroad

The Committee view Indian students studying abroad as brand ambassadors of the country. However, random instances of violence put their lives in danger. The Committee note that during the last three years, 14 Indian students have died in foreign countries due to violence/attacks. From a reply in the Parliament, it is seen that 403 incidents of death of Indian students abroad have been reported from 2018 till February 2024 due to various reasons including natural causes, accidents and medical conditions. The Committee desire that the Ministry take proactive steps to create some sort of safety net for our students by evolving a policy framework regarding the protection of Indian students, especially in conflict-prone areas across the world. The Ministry may also consider the creation and maintenance of a real time data base of students studying abroad as an essential component of their safety and security framework.

(Recommendation No. 66)

67. Assessment of Diaspora Engagement Programmes

The Committee have been informed that the general response from the Indian Diaspora towards Diaspora Engagement Programmes of the Ministry is positive and welcoming. It is further assured that the feedback of the participants in each of the Diaspora Engagement Programmes is examined seriously and diligently to continuously improve such schemes. This exercise also contributes to policy making at various levels. While appreciating Ministry's efforts towards improving Diaspora Engagement Programmes, the Committee further urge the Ministry to formalize annual assessment of each of these programmes by incorporating questionnaire survey of the beneficiaries with a focus on identifying areas of concern to them and also to ensure that these programmes remain aligned with the evolving needs and capabilities of the Diaspora population.

(Recommendation No. 67)

68. Dissemination of Information on Schemes for Diaspora

The Committee note that Indian Missions/Posts abroad are making all out efforts to disseminate and popularize the programmes for the welfare of the Indian Diaspora through their websites, social media handles including Facebook and Twitter, community channels, WhatsApp, virtual newsletters, etc. However, the Committee feel that there are sections of the Diaspora community who are still unaware of the welfare schemes for them. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry make concerted efforts to spread awareness amongst the Indian Diaspora about the various welfare programmes being laid out by the Ministry by

leveraging digital platforms, using community centres, places of worships, Diaspora organisations etc.

(Recommendation No. 68)

69. Global Pravasi Rishta Portal

The Committee note that the Global Pravasi Rishta Portal was launched with an aim to providing a platform for connecting Pravasis with the Government of India through the Missions and Posts abroad. The portal is a two-way communication channel between the Government of India and the Indian Diaspora abroad and can be used for dissemination of information and creation of database of Diaspora based on voluntary registration. However, the Committee are disappointed to note that the Global Pravasi Rishta Portal has been temporarily suspended due to malware attack susceptibility. It has been assured that the Ministry is working on the restoration of the Portal, or creation of an alternate application with similar scope at the earliest for which the tendering process is already underway and the portal is expected to be re-launched within one year. Since the Global RISHTA portal is one of the main platforms connecting Pravasis with the Government of India through the Missions and Posts abroad, the Committee desire that the process may be accelerated to ensure that the re-launch is done during this year itself.

(Recommendation No. 69)

70. Expansion of MADAD Portal in Regional Languages

The Committee note that MADAD is an online comprehensive grievances redressal portal launched as part of the good governance initiative by the Government. The portal is accessible to all Indian nationals abroad in distress, including to those who have been stranded overseas due to various reasons. MADAD can be accessed through website

www.madad.gov.in) or through mobile app. All Indian Missions and Posts abroad and the MEA's Branch Secretariats in Chennai, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Mumbai are linked to this portal for consular grievance tracking and follow-up. The Committee have been informed that the MADAD Portal is regularly monitored at various levels and Indian Missions/Posts abroad take action on the complaints and update the status regularly. The Committee find that the grievances being handled in MADAD comprise of a range of consular issues including repatriation, transportation of mortal remains, death compensation, work related problems, imprisonment cases, marital disputes, consular services, passport issues, court cases, students' issues, etc. Multilingual Call Centres (Under PBSK), Student Registration, Prisoners Module, Integration with the portal "eMigrate", Integration with State Governments in India, Module for assistance through Indian Community Welfare Fund, etc. have also been added to the scope of the portal. The Committee, however, note that MADAD is available bilingually in Hindi and English languages only. The Committee are of the considered view that this is definitely an impediment to a large number of overseas Indians who may not be able to put forth their grievance effectively in English and Hindi. The Committee desire that the Ministry may look into the feasibility of expanding the ambit of the portal, including in regional languages that are used by a significant number of Diaspora.

(Recommendation No. 70)

71. Resolution of Grievances through MADAD Portal

The Committee note that all grievances registered on the portal are automatically transferred to the concerned Mission/Post who take up the matters with the concerned foreign government and its agencies for redressal. The time taken for redressal of a grievance registered on the MADAD Portal depends on a number of factors including the response time

from foreign employer and foreign governments. The Ministry have informed that, as per standard procedure, grievances received on portal are actively followed up and responded to on high-priority. Further, MADAD has an inbuilt mechanism for identifying and escalating cases when the response is not received in time. Concerned Mission and Post abroad also take all necessary steps to resolve these cases as soon as possible. The Committee are, however, concerned to note that despite the best efforts of the Ministry there are still 3987 cases pending in the portal. The Committee desire that the Ministry make efforts to bring about qualitative and quantitative improvements in the grievance redressal system to reduce the response time and accelerate the settlement of cases, especially in the Gulf countries.

(Recommendation No. 71)

72. E- Sanad Service

The Committee note that E-Sanad is an electronic service delivery platform for apostille and attestation of documents issued by Government of India aiming at contactless service to people. The Committee further note that the e-Sanad portal is a central portal and an applicant residing in any part of the country can access the portal and upload his / her pre-authenticated documents online which are processed at New Delhi and sent back to the applicants by affixing Apostille sticker or attestation (as desired by the applicant) through Speed Post. The same mechanism is also available to any applicant abroad, where he or she can upload the pre authenticated document which will be delivered at the given address in India. The Committee note that currently 15 Passport Offices as well as 4 Branch Secretariats located in various States are providing these services to the applicants. Given that the service is in such high demand with number of applications being received by the Ministry steadily increasing on

year-to-year basis, the Committee desire that the Ministry may consider rolling out the E-Sanad services across India.

(Recommendation No. 72)

NEW DELHI
26 *March, 2025*
05 *Chaitra, 1946 (Saka)*

Dr. Shashi Tharoor,
Chairperson,
Committee on External Affairs

MINUTES OF THE FOURTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(2024-25) HELD ON 27 NOVEMBER, 2024

The Committee sat on Wednesday, 27 November, 2024 from 1600 hrs. to 1820 hrs. in Committee Room 'D', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

Present

Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Chairperson

Lok Sabha

Smt. D. K. Aruna
Shri Vijay Baghel
Shri Mitesh Patel Bakabhai
Shri Arun Govil
Shri Deepender Singh Hooda
Shri Navaskani K.
Shri Brijendra Singh Ola
Shri Asaduddin Owaisi
Shri Sanatan Pandey
Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad
Shri Y. S. Avinash Reddy
Smt. Aparajita Sarangi
Shri Arvind Ganpat Sawant
Ms. Praniti Sushilkumar Shinde
Ms. Bansuri Swaraj

Rajya Sabha

Dr. John Brittas
Smt. Kiran Choudhry
Smt. Sagarika Ghose
Dr. K. Laxman
Shri A. D. Singh
Kunwar Ratanjeet Pratap Narayan Singh
Dr. Sudhanshu Trivedi
Shri Rajeev Shukla

Secretariat

1. Shri Anjani Kumar - Joint Secretary
2. Smt. Reena Gopalakrishnan - Director
3. Ms. K. Muanniang Tunglut - Deputy Secretary
4. Ms. Maya Menon - Under Secretary

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Sh. Arun Kumar Chatterjee | Secretary (CPV&OIA) |
| Shri Aseem Raja Mahajan | Joint Secretary (Gulf) |
| Ms. Pratibha Parkar | Joint Secretary (Parl. & Coord.) |
| Shri Ankan Banerjee | Joint Secretary (Diaspora Engagement) |
| Dr. Binoy George | Joint Secretary (CPV) |
| Sh. Surinder Bhagat | Joint Secretary (OE&PGE) |
| Shri Anish Rajan | Joint Secretary (PSP-II) |
| Shri S. Koventhan | Director (PSP) |

2. The Chairperson welcomed the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs to the sitting of the Committee convened for briefing on the subject "Indian Diaspora Overseas, including NRIs, PIOs, OCIs and Migrant Workers: All Aspects of their Conditions and Welfare, including the Status of the Emigration Bill." After outlining the subject for deliberation, the Chairperson drew the attention of the witnesses to Direction 58 of the Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha regarding confidentiality of the proceedings.

3. Thereafter, Secretary, (CPV&OIA) gave a brief overview of the subject covering *inter-alia* the Diaspora policy of the Government, objectives and aims of the policy, the proposed 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention scheduled in January 2025, various welfare schemes of the Ministry, migration and mobility partnership agreements and labour manpower agreements entered into by the Government, mechanisms established by the Ministry to monitor grievances of Indian nationals abroad, the pre-departure orientation training programme, the e-migrate portal, status of Emigration Bill etc.

4. During the course of the briefing, Members of the Committee raised several queries which *inter-alia* included initiatives taken by the Government to harness the potential of the diaspora, various policies and programs undertaken by the MEA for the Diaspora, the non functioning of Global Pravasi Rishta Portal, pendency of grievance redressal cases in MADAD portal, criteria for Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, transportation of mortal remains of Indians from abroad, e-governance in immigration, facilities/platforms for distressed Indian women abroad, migration and mobility partnership arrangements with other countries, action taken by MEA in respect of Indians lodged in foreign jails, issue of cyber slavery of Indian IT professionals, issue of undocumented Indians in US, database of the migrant workers, steps being taken by MEA to address issues of exploitation, human trafficking and unfair labour practices faced by migrant workers abroad, rehabilitation of the returned workers, status of the Emigration Bill and the challenges faced in its drafting and introduction etc.

5. The representatives from the Ministry of External Affairs responded to the queries of the Members. The Committee also desired that replies may be furnished to the points raised by the members of the Committee at the earliest. The Chairperson then thanked the representatives of the Ministry for valuable and insightful inputs on the topic.

The Committee then adjourned

(The witnesses then withdrew)

A verbatim proceeding of the Sitting has been kept on record.

MINUTES OF THE NINTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2024-25)
HELD ON 21 JANUARY, 2025

The Committee sat on Tuesday 21 January, 2025 from 1100 hrs. to 1315 hrs. in Committee Room 'C', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

Present

Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Chairperson

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Deepender Singh Hooda
3. Shri Brijendra Singh Ola
4. Smt. Aparajita Sarangi
5. Ms. Praniti Sushilkumar Shinde
6. Ms. Bansuri Swaraj

Rajya Sabha

7. Smt. Kiran Choudhry
8. Dr. K. Laxman
9. Kunwar Ratanjeet Pratap Narayan Singh
10. Dr. Sudhanshu Trivedi

Secretariat

1. Smt. Reena Gopalakrishnan - Director
2. Ms. K. Muanniang Tunlut - Deputy Secretary
3. Ms. Maya Menon - Under Secretary

List of Organisations

NORKA ROOTS

1. Dr. K Vasuki, IAS - Norka Secretary
2. Shri Ajith Kolassery, - Chief Executive Officer

Department of NRIs Affairs, Government of Punjab

1. Sh. Dilip Kumar, IAS - Principal Secretary
2. Shri Rajpal Singh, IPS - DIG, NRI Affairs Wing, Punjab

People of Indian Origin Chamber of Commerce & Industry (PIOCCI), Delhi

1. Shri Munish Gupta, - Secretary & International Coordinator

Centre for Diaspora Studies Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar (Gujarat)

1. Dr. Naresh Kumar, - Chairperson & Professor

2. The Chairperson welcomed the representatives from NORKA Roots, Kerala, Department of NRI Affairs, Government of Punjab, People of Indian Origin Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PIOCCI) and Centre for Diaspora Studies, Gujarat to the sitting of the Committee convened for an interaction on the subject "Indian Diaspora Overseas, including NRIs, PIOs, OCIs and Migrant Workers: All Aspects of their Conditions and Welfare, including the Status of the Emigration Bill." After outlining the subject for deliberation, the Chairperson drew the attention of the witnesses to Direction 58 of the Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha regarding confidentiality of the proceedings.

3. Thereafter, representative from PIOCCI briefed the Committee, inter-alia on voting rights to NRIs, hardship being faced by OCIs and PIOs in getting an Aadhaar Card, expansion of Know India Programme, Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas, dual citizenship, etc. Thereafter, the representatives from Department of NRIs Affairs, Government of Punjab briefed the Committee, inter-alia on issues relating to repatriation of mortal remains of person who dies abroad, loan opportunity from banks for people who go abroad for employment, lack of specific data on NRIs, multiplicity of definition of the term 'NRI', lack of personnel in the Embassies who understand State nuances, NRI divorces, serving of summons to people residing outside India, etc. The representatives of NORKA Roots also apprised the Committee on the need felt for centralized approach to emigration issues, lack of consultation with the State Governments on emigration policies and schemes, aspects pertaining to proposed Emigration Bill, student migration, State Recruitment Agencies, upskilling of workers, lack of NRI data, lack of formal system for transport of mortal remains, need for national level reintegration policy for migrants, NRI prisoners in jails abroad, etc. Thereafter, representative from Centre for Diaspora Studies, Gujarat briefed the Committee on the need for setting up of international data resource centre on migration diaspora and a new centre/department in the field of migration and diaspora studies in universities or institution across India, etc.

4. During the course of the briefing, Members of the Committee raised several queries which inter-alia included perspective of the Diaspora organizations and State representatives on the various programmes offered by the Ministry of External Affairs, their take on the challenges being faced by the Indian Diaspora abroad, effectiveness of Videsh Sampark programme, action being taken by respective State Governments to raise awareness about the consequences of unlawful migration pathways and unscrupulous travel agencies and recruitment agents, access to national criminal databases, cybercrime involving NRIs, clarifications on concerns arising during NRI divorce cases, dual citizenship, representation of NRIs in the Parliament, voting rights to NRIs etc.

5. The representatives from the State and Diaspora Organizations responded to the queries of the Members. The Chairperson then thanked the representatives for valuable and insightful inputs on the topic. The Committee also desired that additional suggestions, if any, may be furnished to the Committee at the earliest.

The Committee then adjourned

(The witnesses then withdrew)

A verbatim proceeding of the Sitting has been kept on record.

MINUTES OF THE TENTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2024-25)

HELD ON 04 FEBRUARY, 2025

The Committee sat on Tuesday, 04 February, 2025 from 1530 hrs. to 1650 hrs. in Committee Room No. 62, Samvidhan Sadan, New Delhi.

Present

Dr. Shashi Tharoor - Chairperson

Lok Sabha

1. Shri Vijay Baghel
2. Shri Mitesh Patel Bakabhai
3. Shri Arun Govil
4. Shri Brijendra Singh Ola
5. Shri Sanatan Pandey
6. Smt. Aparajita Sarangi
7. Shri Arvind Ganpat Sawant

Rajya Sabha

8. Dr. John Brittas
9. Dr. K. Laxman
10. Dr. Sudhanshu Trivedi
11. Shri Rajeev Shukla
12. Shri Satnam Singh Sandhu

Secretariat

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|---|------------------|
| 1. | Shri Anjani Kumar | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. | Smt. Reena Gopalakrishnan | - | Director |
| 3. | Ms. K. Muanniang Tunlut | - | Deputy Secretary |
| 4. | Ms. Maya Menon | - | Under Secretary |

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. | Shri Arun Kumar Chatterjee | - | Secretary (CPV&OIA) |
| 2. | Shri Aseem R Mahajan | - | Joint Secretary (Gulf) |
| 3. | Ms. Pratibha Parkar | - | Joint Secretary (Parl. & Coord.) |
| 4. | Dr. K. J. Srinivasa | - | Joint Secretary (PSP) & CPO |

| | | | |
|-----|------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 5. | Dr. Binoy George | - | Joint Secretary (CVP) |
| 6. | Shri Surinder Bhagat | - | Joint Secretary (OE) & PGE |
| 7. | Shri Rajesh Parihar | - | Director (XPD) |
| 8. | Shri S. Koventhan | - | Director (PSP) |
| 9. | Shri Jitendra Rawat | - | Director (OE) |
| 10. | Shri Sanjeev Manchanda | - | Director (Policy) |
| 11. | Shri SRH Fahmi | - | Director (CPV) |

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs to the sitting of the Committee convened for taking oral evidence on the subject "Indian Diaspora Overseas, including NRIs, PIOs, OCIs and Migrant Workers: All Aspects of their Conditions and Welfare, including the Status of the Emigration Bill." After outlining the subject for deliberation, the Chairperson drew the attention of the witnesses to Direction 58 of the Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha regarding confidentiality of the proceedings.

3. Thereafter, Secretary, (CPV&OIA) gave the latest update on the subject covering *inter-alia* the Know India Programmes conducted, 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas convention held in Bhubaneswar in Odisha in January, 2025 and the various events organized during the convention.

4. During the course of the briefing, the members of the Committee raised several queries which *inter-alia* included lack of accurate data of Indian Diaspora, multiplicity of definition of the term 'NRI', concerns of State and Diaspora organizations about lack of engagement between the Central and State Governments and the diaspora organizations, lack of outreach to the States under the Videsh Sampark Programme, voting rights to NRIs, lack of a specific international instrument for the protection of the diaspora, concerns about accessibility of Indian missions abroad to NRI workers and students, lack of systematic engagement with students abroad pendency of grievances, deportation from US, usurping of NRI property, exploitation of female workers abroad especially in middle east, fraudulent NRI marriage concerns, OCI cards- their issuance, revocation and dishonour, language constraints in MADAD portal, status of one stop centres, action taken by MEA in respect of Indians lodged in foreign jails, issue of unregistered agents, Pravasi Bhartiya Divas organised in Bhubaneswar etc.

5. The representatives from the Ministry of External Affairs responded to the queries of the Members. The Committee also desired that replies may be furnished to the points raised by the members of the Committee at the earliest. The Chairperson then thanked the representatives of the Ministry for valuable and insightful inputs on the topic.

The Committee then adjourned

(The witnesses then withdrew)

A verbatim proceeding of the Sitting has been kept on record.

MINUTES OF THE EIGHTEENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2024-25) HELD ON 26 MARCH, 2025

The Committee sat from 1725 hrs. to 1800 hrs. in Committee Room No. 2, Extension Building, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

Present

Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Chairperson

Lok Sabha

Smt. D. K. Aruna
Shri Mitesh Patel Bakabhai
Shri Arun Govil
Shri Deepender Singh Hooda
Shri Brijendra Singh Ola
Shri Asaduddin Owaisi
Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad
Smt. Aparajita Sarangi
Shri Arvind Ganpat Sawant
Ms. Praniti Sushilkumar Shinde
Ms. Bansuri Swaraj
Shri Naveen Jindal

Rajya Sabha

Dr. John Brittas
Smt. Sagarika Ghose
Dr. K. Laxman
Ms. Kavita Patidar
Shri A. D. Singh
Kunwar Ratanjeet Pratap Narayan
Singh
Dr. Sudhanshu Trivedi
Shri Rajeev Shukla
Shri Satnam Singh Sandhu

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|---|------------------|
| 1. | Mr. Anjani Kumar | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. | Smt. Reena Gopalakrishnan | - | Director |
| 3. | Ms. K.M. Tunglut | - | Deputy Secretary |
| 4. | Ms. Maya Menon | - | Under Secretary |

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

| Sl no. | Name of the Officer | Designation |
|---------------|----------------------------|---|
| | Shri Vikram Misri | Foreign Secretary [Leader of Delegation] |
| | Shri Balasubramanian Shyam | Joint Secretary (BM) |
| | Ms. Pratibha Parkar | Joint Secretary (Parl & Coord) |
| | Ms. Priyanka Sohoni | Director (FSO) |

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the Sitting of the Committee.
3. The Committee took up for consideration the draft Report on the subject 'Indian Diaspora Overseas, including NRIs, PIOs, OCIs and Migrant Workers: All Aspects of their Conditions and Welfare, including the Status of the Emigration Bill.'
4. The Chairperson invited the Members to offer their suggestions for incorporation in the draft Report. The Members suggested some modifications. After deliberations the Committee adopted the draft Report with these modifications.
5. The Committee then authorized the Chairperson to finalize the Report incorporating the suggestions made by the Members and present the same to Parliament.

The Committee then adjourned.

ANNEXURE-A

| Data on Indian Diaspora Abroad (as of January 2023) | | | | | Data on Indian Diaspora Abroad (as of January 2024) | | |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------------------|--|-------------|-------------------------------|
| S.No. | Country/Territory | PIOs | NRIs | Total Overseas Indians | PIOs | NRIs | Total Overseas Indians |
| 1. | Afghanistan | 0 | 100 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2. | Albania | 6 | 450 | 456 | 7 | 450 | 457 |
| 3. | Algeria | 23 | 3800 | 3823 | 23 | 3800 | 3823 |
| 4. | Andorra | 200 | 50 | 250 | 200 | 50 | 250 |
| 5. | Angola | 65 | 2400 | 2465 | 67 | 2514 | 2581 |
| 6. | Antigua & Barbuda | 400 | 250 | 650 | 200 | 300 | 500 |
| 7. | Argentina | 1800 | 800 | 2600 | 1853 | 825 | 2678 |
| 8. | Armenia | 13 | 3000 | 3013 | 20 | 4500 | 4520 |
| 9. | Aruba | 400 | 600 | 1000 | 400 | 600 | 1000 |
| 10. | Australia | 626000 | 350000 | 976000 | 626000 | 350000 | 976000 |
| 11. | Austria & Montenegro & Holy See | 18200 | 14010 | 32210 | 18200 | 14300 | 32500 |
| 12. | Azerbaijan | 74 | 1481 | 1555 | 76 | 1007 | 1083 |
| 13. | Bahamas | 20 | 280 | 300 | 20 | 280 | 300 |
| 14. | Bahrain | 3822 | 308662 | 312484 | 3899 | 323908 | 327807 |
| 15. | Bangladesh | 0 | 7500 | 7500 | 0 | 7000 | 7000 |
| 16. | Barbados | 2500 | 600 | 3100 | 2500 | 600 | 3100 |
| 17. | Belarus | 144 | 1121 | 1265 | 147 | 927 | 1074 |
| 18. | Belgium | 10946 | 17207 | 28153 | 11396 | 17438 | 28834 |
| 19. | Belize | 1300 | 200 | 1500 | 1300 | 200 | 1500 |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|---------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 20. | Benin | 4 | 996 | 1000 | 4 | 996 | 1000 |
| 21. | Bhutan | 0 | 60000 | 60000 | 0 | 60000 | 60000 |
| 22. | Bolivia | 0 | 74 | 74 | 0 | 48 | 48 |
| 23. | Bonaire & Smaller Islands | 12 | 54 | 66 | 12 | 54 | 66 |
| 24. | Bosnia & Herzegovina | 2 | 13 | 15 | 2 | 20 | 22 |
| 25. | Botswana | 3000 | 9000 | 12000 | 3000 | 9000 | 12000 |
| 26. | Brazil | 632 | 983 | 1615 | 1002 | 3046 | 4048 |
| 27. | British Virgin Islands | 20 | 80 | 100 | 20 | 80 | 100 |
| 28. | Brunei Darussalam | 203 | 13797 | 14000 | 211 | 15000 | 15211 |
| 29. | Bulgaria | 121 | 700 | 821 | 103 | 700 | 803 |
| 30. | Burkina Faso | 350 | 150 | 500 | 350 | 150 | 500 |
| 31. | Burundi | 35 | 465 | 500 | 35 | 700 | 735 |
| 32. | Cambodia | 52 | 1750 | 1802 | 52 | 1753 | 1805 |
| 33. | Cameroon | 0 | 1000 | 1000 | 0 | 1000 | 1000 |
| 34. | Canada | 1347715 | 898050 | 2245765 | 1859680 | 1016274 | 2875954 |
| 35. | Cabo Verde | 0 | 100 | 100 | 0 | 25 | 25 |
| 36. | Cayman Islands | 100 | 700 | 800 | 100 | 900 | 1000 |
| 37. | Central African Republic | 0 | 50 | 50 | 0 | 70 | 70 |
| 38. | Chad | 0 | 120 | 120 | 0 | 120 | 120 |
| 39. | Chile | 2150 | 1851 | 4001 | 2150 | 1800 | 3950 |
| 40. | China | 1060 | 7400 | 8460 | 1060 | 7400 | 8460 |
| 41. | China (Hong Kong) | 11106 | 32796 | 43902 | 11350 | 32790 | 44140 |
| 42. | China | 442 | 4086 | 4528 | 501 | 5303 | 5804 |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------------|------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|
| | (Taiwan) | | | | | | |
| 43. | Colombia | 139 | 475 | 614 | 159 | 483 | 642 |
| 44. | Comoros | 178 | 42 | 220 | 178 | 42 | 220 |
| 45. | Congo (Democratic Republic of) | 5000 | 13000 | 18000 | 5000 | 15000 | 20000 |
| 46. | Congo (Republic of) | 0 | 850 | 850 | 0 | 850 | 850 |
| 47. | Cook Islands | 320 | 10 | 330 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| 48. | Costa Rica | 20 | 1011 | 1031 | 39 | 1011 | 1050 |
| 49. | Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) | 5 | 1617 | 1622 | 7 | 2738 | 2745 |
| 50. | Croatia | 29 | 88 | 117 | 29 | 11982 | 12011 |
| 51. | Cuba | 1 | 1139 | 1140 | 2 | 868 | 870 |
| 52. | Curacao | 800 | 700 | 1500 | 800 | 700 | 1500 |
| 53. | Cyprus | 342 | 6908 | 7250 | 367 | 14612 | 14979 |
| 54. | Czech Republic | 374 | 8546 | 8920 | 408 | 9090 | 9498 |
| 55. | Denmark | 2958 | 15534 | 18492 | 3187 | 17460 | 20647 |
| 56. | Djibouti | 4 | 1000 | 1004 | 8 | 1000 | 1008 |
| 57. | Dominica (Commonweal th of) | 500 | 40 | 540 | 500 | 40 | 540 |
| 58. | Dominican Republic | 0 | 33 | 33 | 0 | 57 | 57 |
| 59. | East Timor | 0 | 100 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 100 |
| 60. | Ecuador | 74 | 264 | 338 | 82 | 269 | 351 |
| 61. | Egypt | 392 | 3007 | 3399 | 392 | 3141 | 3533 |
| 62. | El Salvador | 1 | 20 | 21 | 1 | 20 | 21 |
| 63. | Equatorial Guinea | 0 | 250 | 250 | 0 | 250 | 250 |
| 64. | Eritrea | 1 | 200 | 201 | 0 | 172 | 172 |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 65. | Estonia | 428 | 1900 | 2328 | 428 | 1900 | 2328 |
| 66. | Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) | 40 | 1900 | 1940 | 40 | 1900 | 1940 |
| 67. | Ethiopia | 86 | 5900 | 5986 | 7 | 5900 | 5907 |
| 68. | Fiji | 313798 | 2283 | 316081 | 313798 | 2283 | 316081 |
| 69. | Finland | 10749 | 8245 | 18994 | 13114 | 8245 | 21359 |
| 70. | France | 90000 | 29000 | 119000 | 90000 | 29000 | 119000 |
| 71. | France (Reunion Island) | 300000 | 159 | 300159 | 300000 | 159 | 300159 |
| 72. | France (Guadeloupe) | 57000 | 180 | 57180 | 57000 | 180 | 57180 |
| 73. | France (Martinique) | 8000 | 90 | 8090 | 8000 | 90 | 8090 |
| 74. | France (St. Martin) | 1800 | 150 | 1950 | 1800 | 150 | 1950 |
| 75. | Gabon | 300 | 1200 | 1500 | 300 | 1200 | 1500 |
| 76. | Gambia | 20 | 2000 | 2020 | 20 | 2100 | 2120 |
| 77. | Georgia | 17 | 10122 | 10139 | 17 | 5750 | 5767 |
| 78. | Germany | 50542 | 358021 | 408563 | 52864 | 208000 | 260864 |
| 79. | Ghana | 309 | 10000 | 10309 | 321 | 15000 | 15321 |
| 80. | Greece | 1089 | 12300 | 13389 | 1514 | 33486 | 35000 |
| 81. | Grenada | 4500 | 200 | 4700 | 4500 | 200 | 4700 |
| 82. | Guatemala | 15 | 60 | 75 | 18 | 65 | 83 |
| 83. | Guinea (Republic of) | 47 | 1365 | 1412 | 51 | 1390 | 1441 |
| 84. | Guinea- Bissau | 0 | 200 | 200 | 0 | 300 | 300 |
| 85. | Guyana | 308000 | 700 | 308700 | 320000 | 1500 | 321500 |
| 86. | Haiti | 0 | 47 | 47 | 0 | 36 | 36 |
| 87. | Holy See | 30 | 15 | 45 | 30 | 15 | 45 |

| | | | | | | | |
|------|-------------------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 88. | Honduras | 2 | 30 | 32 | 2 | 30 | 32 |
| 89. | Hungary | 277 | 8457 | 8734 | 277 | 8457 | 8734 |
| 90. | Iceland | 544 | 301 | 845 | 104 | 528 | 632 |
| 91. | Indonesia | 4411 | 10000 | 14411 | 120000 | 14817 | 134817 |
| 92. | Iran | 418 | 5600 | 6018 | 445 | 10320 | 10765 |
| 93. | Iraq | 8 | 16500 | 16508 | 4 | 17100 | 17104 |
| 94. | Ireland | 30111 | 18500 | 48611 | 31386 | 30000 | 61386 |
| 95. | Israel | 85000 | 18000 | 103000 | 85000 | 20000 | 105000 |
| 96. | Italy | 38000 | 190000 | 228000 | 39170 | 167333 | 206503 |
| 97. | Jamaica | 68000 | 2000 | 70000 | 68000 | 5000 | 73000 |
| 98. | Japan | 1324 | 39373 | 40697 | 1548 | 46262 | 47810 |
| 99. | Jordan | 167 | 16540 | 16707 | 153 | 16897 | 17050 |
| 100. | Kazakhstan | 300 | 7770 | 8070 | 420 | 9815 | 10235 |
| 101. | Kenya | 60000 | 20000 | 80000 | 60000 | 20000 | 80000 |
| 102. | Kiribati | 50 | 2 | 52 | 50 | 2 | 52 |
| 103. | Korea (DPR) | 1 | 15 | 16 | 1 | 15 | 16 |
| 104. | Korea (Republic of) | 249 | 15219 | 15468 | 287 | 16714 | 17001 |
| 105. | Kuwait | 2134 | 924687 | 926821 | 2244 | 993284 | 995528 |
| 106. | Kyrgyzstan | 47 | 15985 | 16032 | 48 | 16550 | 16598 |
| 107. | Laos | 100 | 600 | 700 | 113 | 587 | 700 |
| 108. | Latvia | 60 | 2940 | 3000 | 100 | 2900 | 3000 |
| 109. | Lebanon | 37 | 3000 | 3037 | 40 | 3000 | 3040 |
| 110. | Lesotho (Kingdom of) | 1500 | 1500 | 3000 | 1500 | 1500 | 3000 |
| 111. | Liberia | 2 | 3000 | 3002 | 2 | 3000 | 3002 |

| | | | | | | | |
|------|----------------------------------|---------|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|
| 112. | Libya | 0 | 3000 | 3000 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 113. | Liechtenstein | 0 | 37 | 37 | 0 | 35 | 35 |
| 114. | Lithuania | 100 | 1500 | 1600 | 100 | 4470 | 4570 |
| 115. | Luxembourg | 663 | 4610 | 5273 | 813 | 4508 | 5321 |
| 116. | Macedonia | 9 | 44 | 53 | 8 | 29 | 37 |
| 117. | Madagascar | 7674 | 2826 | 10500 | 7674 | 2826 | 10500 |
| 118. | Malawi | 8500 | 8143 | 16643 | 8500 | 8143 | 16643 |
| 119. | Malaysia | 2753500 | 163127 | 2916627 | 2751000 | 163127 | 2914127 |
| 120. | Maldives | 131 | 27065 | 27196 | 135 | 27065 | 27200 |
| 121. | Mali | 3 | 450 | 453 | 3 | 558 | 561 |
| 122. | Malta | 150 | 12000 | 12150 | 250 | 18000 | 18250 |
| 123. | Marshall Islands | 2 | 14 | 16 | 2 | 7 | 9 |
| 124. | Mauritania | 0 | 310 | 310 | 0 | 310 | 310 |
| 125. | Mauritius | 863566 | 20222 | 883788 | 871140 | 23708 | 894848 |
| 126. | Mexico | 2650 | 8000 | 10650 | 2650 | 8000 | 10650 |
| 127. | Micronesia (Federated States of) | 0 | 35 | 35 | 0 | 35 | 35 |
| 128. | Moldova | 9 | 950 | 959 | 9 | 950 | 959 |
| 129. | Monaco | 43 | 10 | 53 | 43 | 10 | 53 |
| 130. | Mongolia | 9 | 100 | 109 | 9 | 100 | 109 |
| 131. | Montserrat | 200 | 15 | 215 | 200 | 15 | 215 |
| 132. | Morocco | 116 | 409 | 525 | 116 | 434 | 550 |
| 133. | Mozambique | 25262 | 3000 | 28262 | 25262 | 3000 | 28262 |
| 134. | Myanmar | 2000000 | 2500 | 2002500 | 2000000 | 2660 | 2002660 |

| | | | | | | | |
|------|------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 135. | Namibia | 70 | 450 | 520 | 70 | 450 | 520 |
| 136. | Nauru | 0 | 20 | 20 | 0 | 20 | 20 |
| 137. | Nepal | 4 | 700000 | 700004 | 4 | 700000 | 700004 |
| 138. | Netherlands | 197000 | 66000 | 263000 | 178000 | 50787 | 228787 |
| 139. | New Zealand | 130000 | 120000 | 250000 | 120000 | 150000 | 270000 |
| 140. | Nicaragua | 1 | 39 | 40 | 1 | 39 | 40 |
| 141. | Niger | 0 | 250 | 250 | 8 | 150 | 158 |
| 142. | Nigeria | 100 | 51700 | 51800 | 51700 | 100 | 51800 |
| 143. | Niue | 5 | 5 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 144. | Norway | 11697 | 10285 | 21982 | 10955 | 16890 | 27845 |
| 145. | Oman | 1808 | 673558 | 675366 | 1864 | 684771 | 686635 |
| 146. | Pakistan | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 147. | Palau | 0 | 29 | 29 | 0 | 29 | 29 |
| 148. | Palestine | 3 | 17 | 20 | 2 | 11 | 13 |
| 149. | Panama | 11000 | 4000 | 15000 | 11000 | 4000 | 15000 |
| 150. | Papua New Guinea | 55 | 4000 | 4055 | 62 | 4000 | 4062 |
| 151. | Paraguay | 400 | 200 | 600 | 400 | 200 | 600 |
| 152. | Peru | 174 | 181 | 355 | 180 | 192 | 372 |
| 153. | Philippines | 2316 | 147684 | 150000 | 2492 | 147518 | 150010 |
| 154. | Poland | 1100 | 20000 | 21100 | 1200 | 23000 | 24200 |
| 155. | Portugal | 10909 | 90000 | 100909 | 13682 | 90000 | 103682 |
| 156. | Qatar | 1533 | 817665 | 819198 | 1609 | 835175 | 836784 |
| 157. | Romania | 305 | 5700 | 6005 | 327 | 5700 | 6027 |
| 158. | Russia | 1750 | 30032 | 31782 | 2653 | 60172 | 62825 |

| | | | | | | | |
|------|--------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 159. | Rwanda | 60 | 2940 | 3000 | 60 | 2940 | 3000 |
| 160. | Saint Kitts & Nevis | 200 | 100 | 300 | 100 | 500 | 600 |
| 161. | Saint Lucia | 18600 | 550 | 19150 | 18600 | 550 | 19150 |
| 162. | Saint Vincent & The Grenadines | 6600 | 50 | 6650 | 6600 | 50 | 6650 |
| 163. | Samoa | 340 | 10 | 350 | 50 | 0 | 50 |
| 164. | San Marino | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 165. | Sao Tome and Principe | 1 | 20 | 21 | 1 | 20 | 21 |
| 166. | Saudi Arabia | 2912 | 2387004 | 2389916 | 2906 | 2460603 | 2463509 |
| 167. | Senegal | 20 | 2000 | 2020 | 20 | 2100 | 2120 |
| 168. | Serbia | 21 | 2500 | 2521 | 21 | 2800 | 2821 |
| 169. | Seychelles | 5047 | 8180 | 13227 | 5058 | 8180 | 13238 |
| 170. | Sierra Leone | 6 | 3000 | 3006 | 12 | 3000 | 3012 |
| 171. | Singapore | 300000 | 350000 | 650000 | 300000 | 350000 | 650000 |
| 172. | Sint Maarten | 3000 | 2170 | 5170 | 3000 | 2170 | 5170 |
| 173. | Slovak Republic | 51 | 1620 | 1671 | 51 | 2949 | 3000 |
| 174. | Slovenia | 57 | 313 | 370 | 86 | 822 | 908 |
| 175. | Solomon Islands | 0 | 20 | 20 | 0 | 20 | 20 |
| 176. | Somalia | 0 | 100 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 100 |
| 177. | South Africa | 1400000 | 60000 | 1460000 | 1640000 | 60000 | 1700000 |
| 178. | South Sudan | 0 | 10000 | 10000 | 0 | 900 | 900 |
| 179. | Spain | 14480 | 51440 | 65920 | 15986 | 51606 | 67592 |
| 180. | Sri Lanka | 1600000 | 6687 | 1606687 | 1600000 | 7500 | 1607500 |
| 181. | Sudan | 900 | 3450 | 4350 | 35 | 50 | 85 |

| | | | | | | | |
|------|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 182. | Suriname | 160000 | 150 | 160150 | 160000 | 160 | 160160 |
| 183. | Sweden | 18000 | 42000 | 60000 | 20000 | 40000 | 60000 |
| 184. | Switzerland | 8743 | 18541 | 27284 | 8996 | 17059 | 26055 |
| 185. | Syria | 0 | 80 | 80 | 0 | 97 | 97 |
| 186. | Tajikistan | 0 | 1500 | 1500 | 0 | 1800 | 1800 |
| 187. | Tanzania | 40000 | 15000 | 55000 | 40000 | 15000 | 55000 |
| 188. | Thailand | 125000 | 25000 | 150000 | 125000 | 25000 | 150000 |
| 189. | Togo | 10 | 659 | 669 | 10 | 973 | 983 |
| 190. | Tonga | 50 | 5 | 55 | 50 | 5 | 55 |
| 191. | Trinidad and Tobago | 548279 | 1266 | 549545 | 548279 | 1266 | 549545 |
| 192. | Tunisia | 31 | 80 | 111 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 193. | Türkiye (Turkey) | 231 | 2300 | 2531 | 223 | 3083 | 3306 |
| 194. | Turkmenistan | 4 | 100 | 104 | 4 | 105 | 109 |
| 195. | Turks & Caicos Islands | 50 | 200 | 250 | 50 | 200 | 250 |
| 196. | Tuvalu | 20 | 2 | 22 | 20 | 0 | 20 |
| 197. | Uganda | 2660 | 30000 | 32660 | 2660 | 35000 | 37660 |
| 198. | Ukraine | 708 | 2150 | 2858 | 726 | 2610 | 3336 |
| 199. | United Arab Emirates | 139 | 3554274 | 3554413 | 14574 | 3554274 | 3568848 |
| 200. | United Kingdom | 970969 | 369000 | 1339969 | 1495318 | 369000 | 1864318 |
| 201. | United States of America | 3450715 | 1796811 | 5247526 | 3331904 | 2077158 | 5409062 |
| 202. | Uruguay | 50 | 750 | 800 | 55 | 773 | 828 |
| 203. | Uzbekistan | 49 | 4200 | 4249 | 61 | 5939 | 6000 |
| 204. | Vanuatu | 306 | 10 | 316 | 15 | 0 | 15 |

| | | | | | | | |
|------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 205. | Venezuela | 19 | 24 | 43 | 19 | 33 | 52 |
| 206. | Vietnam | 91 | 2500 | 2591 | 462 | 7550 | 8012 |
| 207. | Yemen | 427 | 0 | 427 | 420 | 700 | 1120 |
| 208. | Zambia | 25000 | 5000 | 30000 | 25000 | 5000 | 30000 |
| 209. | Zimbabwe | 9000 | 500 | 9500 | 9000 | 1000 | 10000 |
| | Total | 18229230 | 15332054 | 33561284 | 19571375 | 15850612 | 35421987 |

ANNEXURE-B

OI-11012/13/2017-OIA I
Government of India
Ministry of External Affairs
[Overseas Indian Affairs Division]

Akbar Bhawan, Chanakyapuri,
New Delhi: 31th August, 2017

To

All Missions/Posts.

Subject: Revision in Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) guidelines

The Union Cabinet has approved revision of the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) guidelines. The revised scheme will come into effect from 01st September, 2017.

The revised guidelines expand the scope of welfare measures that can be extended through the fund. The service charges on consular services has also been modified and notified accordingly vide Gazette Notification dated 16 August, 2017.

The copy of revised guidelines as well as Gazette Notification is hereby attached for ready reference.


(Rajeev Sharma)

Deputy Secretary to the Government of India
24197978/24121528
6 ds1oia1@mea.gov.in

OI-11012/13/2017-OIA I
Ministry of External Affairs

Guidelines on Indian Community Welfare Fund
Established in Indian Missions/Posts abroad

1. Background

a. The 'Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) was established in the Indian Missions of 17 Emigration Clearance Required (ECR) Countries and Maldives after due approval of the Cabinet, vide letter No. OI-11012/25/2007- US(EP-I) dated 12th October, 2009 of the Ministry to meet contingency expenditure incurred by them for carrying out various on-site welfare activities for Overseas Indian Citizens in distress.

b. Revised guidelines for utilization of ICWF were issued with the concurrence of IFD vide Dy. No. 4476/Dir(F)/12 dated 04.08.2012.

c. After due consultations with the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance the following guidelines are being issued to enhance the utilization of the fund, expand the scope of activities and purposes for which the fund can be used, and enable activities for welfare of both distressed overseas Indians, and the Indian community.

2. Source of ICWF

2. i.a. **Service Charges** The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) set up in the Missions will have the following revised charges:

I Funds raised by the Indian Missions by levying a service charge on Consular Services as under:

- (i) For Visa, OCI/ PIO Cards – US \$3 /- per document rounded off in local currency to the next whole/round number
- (ii) For Passport Services – US \$2 /- per document rounded off in local currency to the next whole/round number
- (iii) For attestation of employment document – US \$2/- per worker rounded off in local currency to the next whole/round number
- (iv) Attestation of other documents and other miscellaneous consular services rendered by Mission (other than in death cases) – US \$2/- per worker rounded off in local currency to the next whole/round number

2.i.b. The charges so levied shall be in local currency rounded off to the next whole/round number. The official exchange rate prevalent at the time of such calculation shall be used, and shall not be changed thereafter during the Financial Year keeping in view that charges so levied are adequate to meet requirements of Missions/Posts and to build a suitable reserve to meet unforeseen contingencies. The service charge may be revised by this Ministry from time to time.

2.ii. Voluntary contributions by Indian community.

Missions/Posts may receive contributions into ICWF from local Indians or Indian community organizations and shall issue a receipt thereto indicating clearly the names and addresses of such contributors. Such receipts should be included in their monthly statement of ICWF accounts sent to MEA and PrCCA.

2.iii. **Income from deposits and investments:** If surplus ICWF funds are maintained in FDs, the interest accrued through the investment shall be deposited on yearly basis in the main ICWF corpus.

2.iv. **Existing welfare Funds operating in Mission/Posts** shall be merged with ICWF after performance audit of existing Fund by the O/o Principal Chief Controller of Accounts. A certificate in this regard will be furnished to MEA.

2.v **For Missions/Posts which have not set-up ICWF so far**, Ministry of External Affairs would provide budgetary support for setting up the ICWF in the Indian Missions to the tune of Rs. Five lakh annually, for three(3) years or till the period the fund becomes self sustaining, whichever is earlier. The amount would be limited to meet the deficit in financial resources of Missions, with due regard to the utilization of the amount released during previous years.

3. Criteria for Utilisation

3. i. ICWF funds can be used to assist only Indian citizens residing in the host country or those in distress while visiting a foreign country. Persons of Indian Origin and Overseas Citizens of India Card Holders are not eligible for individual financial assistance from ICWF.

3. ii. ICWF can be utilized for the benefit of Indian nationals in distress on a means tested basis provided the officer approving ICWF expenditure has satisfied himself that the beneficiary deserves to be assisted.

3. iii Ordinarily only such Indian National(s) who have entered the host country legally shall be eligible to receive benefits under this Fund. In cases where it is not so, assistance may be provided after HOM/HOP has recorded his satisfaction to the effect that the circumstances of the case necessitate providing assistance under ICWF.

4. Procedures for approval

4.i. Missions/Posts will consider requests from Indian nationals, written or verbal, for grant of assistance. All verbal requests shall be followed by written confirmation.

4.ii. Written proposals for expenditure from ICWF should originate from the Welfare officer/Consular officer/Community Affairs officer of the Mission/Post who will examine and submit them to the competent authority for approval with his/her recommendation, on a case-to-case basis. In Missions/Posts where such officers are not designated, the HoM/HoP may designate an appropriate level officer for proposing such assistance.

4.iii Approval of expenditure from ICWF will be at the level of HoM/HoP subject to ceilings specified for various ICWF related items of expenditure in Sections A, B and C of the Guidelines respectively. **HoM/HoP should ensure that ICWF shall not be used for routine activities or expenses for which budget spending is available.**

4.iv **HoM/HoP may formally authorize DCM/DHC/DCG** to approve requests for assistance from ICWF subject to an upper limit of

US\$ 2000 per case in ECR Countries;

US\$ 1000 per case in Other Countries.

4.v If HoMs/HoPs consider it necessary to deploy the Fund in most deserving cases, for services not indicated in these guidelines or if Mission/Posts' funds are not adequate to meet a contingency, they shall send a detailed self contained proposal, alongwith facts, justification etc. seeking prior approval of Ministry.

4. vi Proposals received from Missions/Posts will be considered in the Ministry, by a Committee comprising of following members:

- (i) Joint Secretary, OIA Division, MEA (dealing with ICWF);
- (ii) Joint Secretary (CPV), MEA; and
- (iii) Director (Finance) or DS (Finance), MEA.

4. vii The recommendation of the above Committee shall be submitted to Foreign Secretary. Proposals involving expenditure upto Rs. 25 lakhs can be approved by Foreign Secretary. Proposals involving expenditure beyond Rs. 25 lakhs shall be submitted to EAM for approval.

4. viii Requests for transfer of additional ICWF funds from other Missions/Posts (if there is shortage of funds in the ICWF account of the recipient Mission), to assist distressed overseas Indians during crisis/emergency situations, shall be submitted by HoM/HoP concerned, to the Ministry for approval of EAM.

5. Assistance from ICWF will be permissible for the following activities:

- a. Section 'A': Individual Financial Assistance for Indian nationals in distress
- b. Section 'B': Support for Community Welfare Activities
- c. Section 'C': Improvement in Consular Services

Section A

Individual Financial Assistance for Distressed Indian nationals

6. Boarding and lodging (B&L) for deserving distressed Indian nationals abroad on a means tested basis in Budget category or shelters run by Mission/Post or NGOs empanelled with Mission.

6.i. ECR countries : B&L for distressed Indian nationals upto 30 days extendable upto a maximum of 60 days by HoM/HoP, if circumstances so warrant. If period of B & L exceeds 60 days, prior approval of Foreign Secretary may be sought, indicating reasons for seeking extension, and the total cost to be incurred in each case.

6.ii. Other countries: B&L subject to an upper limit of 30 days with approval of HOM/HOP. If period of B&L exceeds the above limits, extension can be done for a further period of not more than 30 days with prior approval of Foreign Secretary.

7. Air passage to India to stranded Overseas Indians.

7.i. Mission/Post can pay for one-way airfare by cheapest class on Air India or any other cheaper carriers having direct connection, on a means tested basis, for deserving distressed Indian nationals, from the country of departure of overseas Indian to the nearest airport/ first port of arrival in India with the prior approval of HOM/HOP.

7.ii. With prior approval of HoM/HoP, air passage to a Doctor /an attendant (for mortal remains) when local government mandates so or to accompany primary beneficiary in case of permanent disability or serious injury / illness of primary beneficiary, on recommendation of a doctor/hospital in the latter case. HOM/HOP to approve two-way airfare to the accompanying Doctor/or attendant of primary beneficiary.

8. Legal Assistance

8.i. **Eligibility:** On a means tested basis to deserving overseas Indian nationals who have committed minor crimes, offences or have been falsely implicated by their employer and put in jails; fishermen/seamen/sailors/Indian students in distress; and Indian women abandoned/ cheated / abused by their NRI/PIO or foreign spouses (upto seven years after their marriage) (Detailed guidelines are at Annexure-A).

Priority may be given to release of Indian nationals who have completed their prison sentence; filing bail applications in respect of those qualifying for bail; filing of applications for remission of sentences in cases of petty offences; assistance to Indian migrant workers who have been abused/cheated/tortured by their employer/sponsor/ insurance company.

8.ii. Missions/Posts may seek Foreign Secretary's prior approval, with proper justification, for legal assistance on a mean-tested basis to Indian nationals, charged for organized/serious crimes such as trafficking of arms and humans; murder; sexual

crimes or for trafficking of drugs (where there is reasonable ground to believe that the Indian national may not be at fault)etc.

8.iii. Appointment of panel of lawyers: GCC + Top 20 countries with major Overseas Indian national population, as per list enclosed at Annexure-B

Missions/Posts may appoint on basis of GFR principles, on annual contract, a panel of 3-5 local lawyers/firms proficient in local language and law, and who enjoy credibility and have commitment and experience to assist deserving Indian nationals in distress. Mission/Post may finalize a rate contract with the law firm for different legal services to be provided (including filing bail applications, petitions for remission of sentence; review of sentence; mercy petitions etc.).

Ministry should be informed about the appointment of the panel; and whenever there is any change in the panel appointed. Details of the law firms hired and rates charged by them shall be made available on the website of the Mission/Consulate.

8.Iv Financial Limits for Legal Assistance

HOM/HOP can authorize legal assistance subject to an upper limit of US\$10,000 per person/case, provided the recipient is not receiving such assistance from a third party, (employer, sponsor or family etc.) and the beneficiary does not have the means to pay for legal expenses. The amount includes expenditure on a trained, experienced local interpreter (empanelled by Embassy at specified rates agreed on a yearly basis) if court hearings are in local language.

Prior approval of Foreign Secretary shall be sought for providing legal assistance beyond the prescribed limits. Foreign Secretary can approve proposals upto US\$20,000. Proposals which exceed this amount shall be submitted to EAM for prior approval.

9. Transportation of Mortal Remains (TMR)

9.i. Expenditure on incidentals and airlifting mortal remains of deceased Indian national to India or local cremation/burial of deceased in such cases where the employer, sponsor or insurance company is unable or unwilling to do so as per the contract and the family is unable to meet the cost.

9. ii. Mission/Post may provide Free of Cost (FOC) letter to Air India/Indian Airlines or pay for the one way airfare for TMR from the concerned airport in the country of departure of remains to the nearest airport to the place of destination in India, in deserving cases on means tested basis. Wherever deemed necessary, the Mission/Post, with the approval of HOM/HOP, may also provide airfare by the cheapest class for a relative/attendant to accompany the mortal remains by the same flight.

9. iii. Mission/Post can pay for cremation / burial of deceased Indian national in the host country subject to authorization of HoM /HOP and family members where the situation demands so.

9.iv. Before payment is released HOM/HOP may satisfy himself that related expenditure cannot be borne under contract of deceased (with the employer/sponsor) or the insurance policy of deceased.

9.v. Mission/Post may pay for expenditure on embalming charges, and services charges of the agency which facilitates transportation of remains to India. Mission/Post may constitute a panel of such agencies on an annual basis, with rates (as commensurate with prevailing local rates) specified for different services provided or actual costs, wherever local government agencies are handling such work.

9. vi. Belongings of deceased: In ECR countries and Malaysia, based on request from the family of the deceased, HOM/HOP may authorise in deserving cases, payment for transportation (preferably by sea cargo) of important personal belongings of the deceased Indian national to the nearest port/airport in India, upto a maximum of 100 kgs as per actuals and approved rates of concerned Mission/Post foritspanelofpackers/forwardingagentswithanupperlimitofUS\$500percase.

10. Payment for small fines and penalties:

10. i. Providing payment of small fines & penalties in respect of Indian nationals for minor offences/crimes; for illegal stay in the host country where prima facie the worker is not at fault, and to enable release of Indian nationals from jail/detention center (and to enable his repatriation).

For illegal stay one-time payment of maximum of US\$2000 per case for no fault of Indian national.

For release from jails/detention centres, subject to an upper limit of US\$4000 per case.

Payment shall be made by Indian Mission/Post on behalf of Indian national directly to concerned authorities and not to the Indian national.

Prior approval of Ministry to be obtained for such payments to Indian nationals involved in serious and organized crimes such as trafficking of drugs (where there is reasonable ground to believe that the Indian national may not be at fault), arms and humans; and sexual crimes.

11. Emergency Medical Care:

11.i HoM/HoP may authorize emergency medical care to overseas Indians who are involved in an accident (with serious life threatening injuries) have life-threatening medical conditions or suffer a serious disability, if the employer/sponsor/insurance company is unwilling to meet expenses or the family is unable to meet the cost (on means tested basis) or unable to reimburse expenses to Mission/Post).

Missions shall set up a panel of hospitals (with rate contract for specific services for medical care and medical emergencies) which can be recommended to distressed

Indian nationals availing assistance under ICWF. Panel of such hospitals to be separate from that of the panel for diplomatic staff of Mission.

MEA should be informed about the appointment of the panel; and whenever there is any change in the panel appointed by Mission/Post. The details of the panel hospitals hired on contract by the Mission and the rates charged by such hospitals for different medical care services shall be made available on the website of the Mission/Consulate.

11.ii. Expenditure by Missions/Posts in such cases should be for specific medical procedures only subject to an upper limit of US\$5000.

11.iii. Any expenditure beyond this amount and upto an upper limit of US\$10,000 is subject to prior approval of Foreign Secretary. Proposals which exceed this amount shall be submitted to EAM for approval with proper justification. Proposals should contain an estimate of maximum expenditure to be incurred and should be for specific medical procedures, subject to a maximum amount that is indicated. No approvals would be given for open ended treatments.

11.iv. While making such payments or sending proposals to MEA, HoM/HoP may satisfy himself that the beneficiary does not have the means to pay, or does not hold an insurance policy under which such treatment can be undertaken; that the family has no means to pay; and that the employer/sponsor is unwilling to pay for medical expenses.

Section B Community Welfare Activities

12. Mission/Post is authorized to spend on community activities pertaining to the Indian community, subject to an overall upper limit of 10% in ECR countries and 7.5% Indian in other countries of total ICWF collection till the previous financial year on following items*:

12.i. For ECR Countries only: A one-time payment of a matching grant upto a maximum of US\$30,000 per asset can be paid by Mission/Post to support setting up assets/infrastructure such as shelter homes for distressed Indian nationals, crematoriums; and community centres for Indian nationals in ECR Countries. ICWF support in this regard will be a top-up contribution, to augment funding raised by the Indian community or other sponsors/organizations. Prior approval of Foreign Secretary shall be sought for proposals up to US\$40,000.

Where such facilities have already been set up, HOM/HOP can approve a grant of a maximum of US\$10,000 per asset per annum for expansion / upgradation of existing facilities.

12.ii Mission/Post is authorized to spend, subject to a maximum of US\$ 10,000 per annum, to promote Indian Culture for activities which include:

Indian cultural programmes organized by recognized Indian Diaspora organizations at major Indian Festivals, National Days of India; Indian culture Programs by recognized local artists or Indian artists based in India etc.

Payment of honorarium for teachers/faculty teaching Indian languages, art forms. The teachers can be from Indian Diaspora or local community. The students availing the facility shall pay nominal fee for hiring venue and administrative costs.

13. **Welfare activities for Indian students:** Missions/Posts shall organize an Annual Day for Indian students at Universities/educational institutions to discuss problems, issues faced by Indian students, including their visa, residence status, work permit, financial, welfare and other issues with participation of students. Senior officials of Mission/Consulate to preside over/organize such events.

Financial Limits (excluding expenditure for hospitality purposes):

Upto US\$ 1500 per annum- where students are less than 500

Upto US\$ 2500 per annum - where students are between 500-1000

Upto US\$ 5000 per annum - where students are between 1000-5000

UptoUS\$10,000perannum-wherestudentsarebetween5000-10000

Upto US\$ 15,000 per annum - where students are between 10000-20000

Upto US\$ 20,000 per annum - where students are more than 20000

** (under no circumstances, expenditure on Community Welfare Activities should include expenses towards extending hospitality)*

Section C Improvement in Consular Services

Mission/Post is authorized to spend on administrative expenses pertaining to schemes/welfare measures etc. with prior approval of HoM/HoP subject to an overall upper limit of 15% in ECR countries and 7.5 % in other countries of total ICWF collection till the previous financial year for following purposes:

For ECR countries only :

14.a Missions/Posts with prior approval of HoM/HoP, may hire a maximum of two local staff (on the same terms and conditions as contingency basis staff)for consular services and managing work relating to e-Migrate, Madad, Nationality Verification portals, etc for a period of one year. The engagement of local contingent staff should not be against local laws of the country. Necessary break in service should be given so as to ensure that these contingent staff do not claim any absorption or any other benefit under local laws. Proposals for extending the services of such local staff by additional periods of one year at a time should be sent to Foreign Secretary for prior approval.

14.b Hire vehicles on a need basis for visits to jails, police stations; detention centres; labour camps; welfare camps; shelters for distressed Indians; prisons; hospitals; morgues and to airports for deportation/repatriation of distressed Indian nationals) to handle increase in consular work.

14.c Hiring of local interpreters on a case-to-case basis for consular visits.

14.d Design, publication, translation costs of pamphlets by Mission/Post about local labour laws, regulations, norms, dos & don'ts, welfare measures pertaining to overseas employment in the host country subject to a maximum of US\$5000 per annum.

14.e Organizing labour camps / consular camps for interacting with Indian migrant workers and informing them about issues related to overseas employment; labour laws; welfare and protection measures of GOI, subject to a maximum of US\$5000 per annum excluding travel and stay costs. May incur an additional expenditure subject to a maximum of US \$ 5000 per annum towards creating awareness among the community for benefit of safe migration through media/workshops etc.

14.f Missions/Posts may setup 24 x 7 toll-free helplines, walk-in resource centres for providing information, advise, guidance on problems faced by distressed Indian nationals; and helping them register their grievance with the Mission/Post. Helplines or resource centres may also be set-up through a service provider, with competitive bidding as per GFR, with the approval of CPV Division.

14.g Development of e-Governance solutions, applications to address Consular/welfare matters (including centralized platforms by Ministry), subject to a maximum of US\$ 20,000 as one time cost and/or annual recurring cost of US \$5,000. While incurring such expenditure, Mission/Post must ensure that these e-Governance solutions and applications are compatible with existing MEA and other GoI e-portals and should not lead to duplication of effort.

Consular Expense: All Countries:

14.h Missions/Posts, with prior approval of HoM/HoP, may hire a maximum of two local staff on contingency basis for a period of not more than three months for consular work, in circumstances which result in sudden and unexpected increase in consular work due to unforeseen circumstances, such as natural disasters, war, civil war, evacuation, and political instability. The engagement of local contingent staff should not be against local laws of the country. Necessary break in service should be given so as to ensure that these contingent staff do not claim any absorption or any other benefit under local laws. These local staff, intended to deal with sudden/seasonal spikes in consular demand, would be in addition to the two local staff referred to in para 14.a above in respect of ECRc countries.

14.i Any extension of hiring of local staff beyond the periods specified above shall be subject to the prior approval of Foreign Secretary.

14.j Missions/Posts, with prior approval of HoM/HoP, may incur one-time expenditure on creation of infrastructure or asset within premises of Mission/Consulate to enhance amenities provided for Indian nationals in Consular/Reception area.

14.k One-time expenditure for overall improvement of Consular area (setting up tea/coffee vending machines, water dispenser, photocopier, TV & cable, computer, printer & internet kiosk in consular wing, and reception area of consular section (to be used by applicants) subject to an upper limit of US\$10000 per annum.

14.l Annual operational and maintenance costs related to such items/equivalent subject to an upper limit of USD \$ 5000 per annum.

14.m After lifetime of these items, new items/equipments can be purchased as per GFR provisions, with the approval of HoM/HoP.

15. Record about ICWF beneficiary

An endorsement shall be made in the Passport and PRIDE (*centralised database*) of ICWF Beneficiary as under:

The holder of this passport was the beneficiary of ICWF assistance for evacuation/other services provided by the Mission/Consulate in.....on DD/MM/YYYY

16. Administration and Financial Management

16.i. It is mandatory for every Mission/Post to open a separate personal deposit ICWF account in local currency entitled 'ICWF Account' for the purpose as prescribed in the Civil Accounts manuals.

16. ii. MEA may, on a proposal received from a Mission/Post and after consultation with IFD and Pr CCA, exempt the Mission/Post from opening or allowing it to close its existing ICWF account.

16.iii. Daily collection of ICWF surcharge will be deposited in the bank account on the next working day by the Accountant.

16. iv. HOM/HOP may constitute a Committee of three officers consisting DCM/DCG and Officers dealing with Labour, Consular, Community Welfare or Administration to review the operations of the fund every quarter.

16. v. A separate Cash Book will be maintained for ICWF with all receipts and withdrawals reflected, on the lines of the Cash Book being maintained under the existing procedures of Cash and Accounts.

16. vi. A Drawing and Disbursing Officer (DDO) of appropriate level with one other signatory to be decided by the HOM, will operate the PDA and will be responsible for all the transactions from the Fund.

16. vii. Release of Payments from ICWF shall be made only through cheques/DD/bank account/e-payment etc., on the basis of written approvals of the competent authority (in the Mission/Post/Ministry, as the case may be) duly supported with original invoices / bills etc., in respect of the service/assistance provided to the ICWF beneficiary, under appropriate receipt/acknowledgement, and, no direct cash payments shall be allowed to the beneficiaries of ICWF.

16.viii Missions/Posts, with approval of HOM/HOP, can build and maintain a Corpus Fund, for handling crisis and / or emergency situations, which may be equal to an amount not exceeding 50% of the funds collected in the ICWF account and invested in US\$ GBP or Euros, in staggered and multiple FDs in Indian PSU banks operating in host country or in local banks where Indian PSU banks are not operating. Interest accrued from FDs is to be deposited on yearly basis in the Corpus fund. If HoM/HoP is of the considered view that funds may be invested in FDs beyond 50% of the collection in the ICWF account, the same may be done with prior approval of the Ministry.

16.ix The Corpus Fund is to be built after maintaining sufficient balance for any unforeseen contingency that may arise.

16.x A statement containing a detailed account of collection and utilization of the fund will be submitted for each financial year, latest by 30th April of the following year, to the MEA by the Missions. A monthly update about utilization of ICWF funds under for various purposes will be uploaded on MADAD website's ICWF module.

16.xi Mission/Post shall maintain a register showing therein - month wise receipts with relevant information of the Depositor and brief description of the receipt. The Register will also show the quarterly balance of total collections made and expenditure made out of the funds for purposes of ascertaining the amount available for disbursement out of the fund. Vouchers pertaining to receipts and payments made out of the fund by the Missions will also be attached with the cash account for the month for reconciliation at the Office of the Pr.CCA, MEA and MEA.

16. xii All expenditure to be incurred on activities to be financed from the Fund as approved by the Ministry will be sanctioned by competent authority by following the normal procedure and copies of sanctions will be issued to all concerned including the Pay & Accounts Office.

16. xiii. In case of devaluation of local currency (due to war or a crisis of similar nature), HOM/HOP can authorize shifting ICWF funds to a separate US\$,GBP or Euro account (not Chancery account) under intimation to MEA (OIA Division, IFD and Pr. CCA), along with adequate justification.

17. **Imprest:** HOM/HOP may decide an appropriate advance sum of a maximum of US\$10,000/- as the Imprest amount under the custody of DDO or an Officer designated for the purpose. A separate account of expenditure of Imprest will be maintained in the Imprest Advance Register reflecting the details of expenditure, amount of advance recouped from time to time etc. The Register with all relevant details of expenditure on account of disbursement will be put up at least every quarter for periodical scrutiny of the HOM/HOP.

18. Audit of Accounts

The accounts of ICWF maintained at various Missions shall be audited by the Internal Audit Wing of the Office of the Pr.CCA, MEA and will also be subject to Statutory Audit.

19. Amendments to Guidelines

19.i. Amendments in these guidelines may be made by the Ministry of External Affairs in consultation with the Department of Expenditure.

19.ii. The above guidelines have been issued after consultation with Ministry of Finance / Department of Expenditure who concurred vide their OM No. 3(43) E.Coord/2007 dated 19th June, 2017. These guidelines shall become effective from September 1, 2017. All earlier guidelines issued or clarifications given by erstwhile Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs / Ministry of External Affairs shall be deemed to have been revoked.

Legal/financial assistance to Indian women deserted by their overseas Indian/foreigner husbands .

1. Objective:

1.1 The objective of the assistance under ICWF is to provide some financial assistance to needy Indian women in distress (who have been deserted by their overseas Indian/foreigner husbands) for obtaining counseling and legal services.

1.2 Counseling and legal services would be provided through credible Indian Women's Organizations/Indian Community Associations/NGOs identified for providing such services and empanelled with the Indian Missions.

2. Scope of and Eligibility for the Scheme:

2.1 Assistance under ICWF would be available to Indian women who have been deserted by their overseas Indian / foreigner husbands or are facing divorce proceedings in a foreign country, subject to the following conditions:-

(i) "Desertion" in the context of eligibility for providing financial assistance under the MEA's Scheme would mean the voluntary abandonment of the wife by her husband. Also, if the husband - by his words- and or actions compels the wife to leave the matrimonial home or stay away without reasonable cause, he will be guilty of desertion, though the wife has seemingly separated from him. Desertion is frequently coupled with non-support, which is a failure to provide monetary resources for those to whom such an obligation is due, denial of visa status for continued stay in the foreign country concerned, meting out harassment to a woman, where such harassment is with a view to coercing her or any person related to her to meet any unlawful demand for any property or valuable security or is on account of failure by her or any person related to her to meet such demand.

(ii) Coverage of the Scheme: Applicable in all Missions and Posts abroad.

(iii) The woman is an Indian passport holder.

(iv) The marriage of the woman has been solemnized in India or overseas with an overseas Indian or a foreigner.

(v) The term "Overseas Indian" in this case would include Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs).

(vi) The woman is deserted in India or overseas within seven years of the marriage; or

(vii) Divorce proceedings are initiated within seven years of marriage by her overseas Indian / foreigner husband, or

(viii) An ex-parte divorce has been obtained by the overseas Indian / foreigner husband within seven years of marriage and a case for maintenance and alimony is to be filed by her.

(ix) Assistance would not be available to a woman having a criminal case decided against her, provided that a criminal charge of Parental Child Abduction shall not be a bar if the custody of the child has not yet been adjudicated upon by a competent Court.

(x) The domicile of the Indian woman seeking relief under the Scheme may not be relevant for allowing the benefit.

(xi) Preference will be given to applicants on the basis of financial need.

(xii) The assistance will be limited to a maximum of US\$ 4000 per case. The assistance will be released to the empanelled legal counsel of the applicant or Indian Community Association / Women's organization / NGO concerned to enable it to take steps to assist the woman in documentation and preparatory work for filing the case.

ANNEXURE- B

(I) GCC Countries

1. Saudi Arabia
2. UAE
3. Kuwait
4. Oman
5. Qatar
6. Bahrain

(II) Countries with major Overseas Indian Population (NRIs) [excluding GCC Countries]

- 1 USA
- 2 Nepal
- 3 Singapore
- 4 UK
- 5 Malaysia
- 6 Australia
- 7 Canada
- 8 Italy
- 9 Philippines
- 10 Germany
- 11 New Zealand
- 12 South Africa
- 13 Bhutan
- 14 China
- 15 Hong Kong (SAR of China)
- 16 Nigeria
- 17 Spain
- 18 Russian Federation
- 19 Japan
- 20 Netherlands

EXTRAORDINARY
भाग II—खण्ड 3—उप-खण्ड (i)
PART II—Section 3—Sub-section (i)
प्राधिकार से प्रकाशित
PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY



704] सं.

नई दिल्ली, शुक्रवार, अगस्त 18, 2017/श्रावण 27, 1939

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS
NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the 16th August, 2017

G.S.R. 1027(E).— In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 8 of the Diplomatic and Consular Officers (Oaths and Fees) Act, 1948 (41 of 1948), the Central Government hereby makes the following Rules further to amend the Diplomatic and Consular Officers (Fees) Rules, 1949 namely:-

1. (a) These rules may be called the Diplomatic and Consular Officers (Fees) Amendment Rules, 2017.
- (b) They shall come into force w.e.f. September 1, 2017.
- (c) These will be applied to all Indian Diplomatic Missions/Posts where Indian Community Welfare Fund has been set up.
2. In the Diplomatic and Consular Officers (Fees) Rules, 1949, for Schedule-1, clause 11 the following shall be amended as:-

| Matter in respect of which an additional fee is leviable in | Scale of Fee (in US\$) [Rounded off in local currency to the next whole/round number] |
|--|--|
| 11. (i) Visa and OCI cards (ii) Passport (iii) Attestation of employment document (iv) Attestation of other documents and other Misc. Consular services (other than in death cases) | US \$3/- per document US \$2/- per document US \$2/- per worker US \$2/- per worker |

Note: Principal rules published vide Notification No. 420-con. dated 8th November, 1949 and subsequently amended by:-

- (i) Notification No. GSR 1977 dated 14-11-1967
- (ii) Notification No. GSR 817(E) dated 13-10-1976
- (iii) Notification No. GSR 326(E) dated 02-04-1979
- (iv) Notification No. GSR 862(E) dated 01-11-1985
- (v) Notification No. GSR 688(E) dated 15-10-1993
- (vi) Notification No. GSR 712(E) dated 18-11-1993
- (vii) Notification No. GSR 912(E) dated 20-12-2001
- (viii) Notification No. GSR 256(E) dated 28-03-2007
- (ix) Notification No. GSR 541(E) dated 09-08-2007
- (x) Notification No. GSR 752(E) dated 15-10-2009
- (xi) Notification No. GSR 398(E) dated 12-05-2010
- (xii) Notification No. GSR 254(E) dated 23-03-2011
- (xiii) Notification No. GSR 325(E) dated 18-04-2011

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ANNEXURE-B**Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awardees**

| Sl. No. | Country | Name | Year of the Award | Field |
|----------------|----------------|--|--------------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Canada | Shri Ujjal Dosanjh | 2003 | Public Affairs |
| 2 | Guyana | Sir Shridath Surendranath Ramphal | 2003 | Public Affairs |
| 3 | Hong Kong | Dr. Hari N. Harilela | 2003 | Business |
| 4 | Kenya | Shri Manilal Premchand Chandaria | 2003 | Business |
| 5 | Malaysia | Dato Seri S. Samyvellu | 2003 | Public Affairs |
| 6 | Mauritius | R. T. Hon'ble Sir Anerood Jugnauth | 2003 | Public Affairs |
| 7 | Oman | Shri Kanaksi Gokaldas Khimji | 2003 | Business |
| 8 | South Africa | Prof. Fatima Meer | 2003 | Public Affairs |
| 9 | UK | Lord Navnit Dholakia | 2003 | Public Affairs |
| 10 | USA | Shri Rajat Gupta | 2003 | Management |
| 11 | Fiji | Shri Mahendra Pal Chaudhry | 2004 | Public Affairs |
| 12 | Guyana | H.E. Bharat Jagdeo | 2004 | Public Affairs |
| 13 | Kenya | Shri Fitz Remedios Santana DE Souza | 2004 | Public Affairs |
| 14 | Kuwait | Dr. Mariam Chisti | 2004 | Public Health |
| 15 | New Zealand | Smt. Sukhi Turner | 2004 | Public Affairs |
| 16 | Oman | Shri P. Mohammed Ali | 2004 | Business |
| 17 | UK | Lord Meghnad Desai | 2004 | Public Affairs |
| 18 | USA | Prof. Dipak C. Jain | 2004 | Management |
| 19 | USA | Dr. Kalpana Chawla (Posthumously) | 2004 | Astronaut |
| 20 | USA | Dr. Narinder Singh Kapany | 2004 | Business |
| 21 | USA | Shri Shashi Tharoor | 2004 | Literature |
| 22 | Zimbabwe | Justice Mr. Ahamed Mossa Ebrahim | 2004 | Public Affairs |
| 23 | Fiji | Shri Vijay Singh | 2005 | Sports |
| 24 | Germany | Prof Alokeranjan Dasgupta | 2005 | Poetry |

| | | | | |
|----|-------------------|--------------------------------|------|----------------------|
| 25 | Hong Kong | Shri M. Arunachalam | 2005 | Business |
| 26 | Philippines | Dr. Sant Singh Virmani | 2005 | Agricultural Science |
| 27 | South Africa | Ms. Amina Cachalia | 2005 | Public Affairs |
| 28 | South Africa | Shri Ahmed Kathrada | 2005 | Public Affairs |
| 29 | Tanzania | Sir (Dr.) J.K. Chande | 2005 | Public Affairs |
| 30 | Trinidad & Tobago | Shri Basdeo Panday | 2005 | Public Affairs |
| 31 | UAE | Shri Yusuffali M.A. | 2005 | Business |
| 32 | UK | Lord Bhikhu Chhotatalal Parekh | 2005 | Political Science |
| 33 | UK | Shri Vikram Seth | 2005 | Literature |
| 34 | USA | Prof Sunil Khilnani | 2005 | Political Science |
| 35 | USA | Dr. Sam Pitroda | 2005 | Technology |
| 36 | USA | Prof. Jagdish Bhagwati | 2005 | Economics |
| 37 | USA | Shri Manoj Night Shyamalan | 2005 | Films |
| 38 | Guyana | Shri Yesu Persaud | 2006 | Business |
| 39 | Hong Kong | Shri Rusy M. Shroff | 2006 | Business |
| 40 | Israel | Shri Eliahu Bezalel | 2006 | Agriculture |
| 41 | Mauritius | Shri Abdool Raouf Bundhun | 2006 | Public Affairs |
| 42 | Philippines | Smt. Pratima Kale | 2006 | Rural Development |
| 43 | Qatar | Shri C. K. Menon | 2006 | Community Leadership |
| 44 | Reunion Island | Shri Jean-Paul Virapouille | 2006 | Public Affairs |
| 45 | Saudi Arabia | Dr. Majid Uddin Kazi | 2006 | Medicine |
| 46 | Seychelles | Dr. V. Ramadoss | 2006 | Community Leadership |
| 47 | South Africa | Shri Sisupal Rambharos | 2006 | Philanthropy |
| 48 | Thailand | Shri Shivnath Rai Bajaj | 2006 | Business |
| 49 | UK | Sir Gulam Kaderbhai Noon | 2006 | Business |
| 50 | USA | Dr. Sudhir Parikh | 2006 | Community Leadership |
| 51 | USA | Shri Niranjana S. Shah | 2006 | Community Leadership |
| 52 | USA | Shri Fareed Zakaria | 2006 | Journalism |
| 53 | Canada | Shri Dave Sukhdip Singh Hayer | 2007 | Public Affairs |

| | | | | |
|----|-------------------|---|------|-------------------|
| 54 | Fiji | Sir Moti Tikaram | 2007 | Public Affairs |
| 55 | Germany | Shri Sibabrata Roy | 2007 | Community Affairs |
| 56 | Jamaica | Shri Kenneth S. Benjamin | 2007 | Business |
| 57 | Kenya | Shri Pheroze Nowrojee | 2007 | Community Affairs |
| 58 | Malaysia | Tan Sri Dato Dr. K. R. Somasundram | 2007 | Public Affairs |
| 59 | Portugal | Dr. Abdool Magid Abdool Karim Vakil | 2007 | Business |
| 60 | South Africa | Shri Billy Nair | 2007 | Public Affairs |
| 61 | UAE | Shri Syed M. Salahuddin | 2007 | Business |
| 62 | UAE | Dr. B.R. Shetty | 2007 | Business |
| 63 | UK | Lord Diljit Rana | 2007 | Business |
| 64 | USA | Shri Gopal Raju | 2007 | Media |
| 65 | USA | Shri Nirmal K. Sinha | 2007 | Community Affairs |
| 66 | USA | Dr. P. Jayaraman | 2007 | Culture |
| 67 | USA | Dr. M. Anirudhan | 2007 | Business |
| 68 | Australia | Shri Neville Joseph Roach | 2008 | Community Service |
| 69 | Bahrain | Dr. Ravi Pillai | 2008 | Business |
| 70 | Japan | Shri A. P. S. Mani | 2008 | Community Service |
| 71 | Mauritius | Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam | 2008 | Public Service |
| 72 | New Zealand | Judge Ajit Swaran Singh | 2008 | Public Service |
| 73 | Saudi Arabia | Shri Rafiudin Shamsudin Fazulbhoy | 2008 | Community Service |
| 74 | Sweden | Shri Bicky Chakraborty | 2008 | Business |
| 75 | Trinidad & Tobago | National Council of Indian Culture (NCIC) | 2008 | Community Service |
| 76 | UAE | Shri Krishnamurthy Kumar | 2008 | Community Service |
| 77 | UK | Lord Karan Bilimoria | 2008 | Business |
| 78 | USA | Dr. Thomas Abraham | 2008 | Community Service |
| 79 | USA | Dr. Joy Cherian | 2008 | Public Service |
| 80 | Bahrain | Shri Soman Baby | 2009 | Community Service |

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| 81 | Canada | Shri Deepak Obhrai | 2009 | Public Service |
| 82 | Madagascar | Shri Ylias Akbaraly | 2009 | Community Service |
| 83 | Malaysia | Tan Sri G. Vadiveloo | 2009 | Public Service |
| 84 | Mauritius | Shri Angidi Veeriah Chettiar | 2009 | Public Service |
| 85 | Oman | Shri P.N.C. Menon | 2009 | Philanthropy |
| 86 | South Africa | Shri Parmananthan 'Prema' Naidoo | 2009 | Public Service |
| 87 | Suriname | Shri Ramdien Sardjoe | 2009 | Public Service |
| 88 | The Netherlands | Shri Ram Lakhina | 2009 | Community Service |
| 89 | UAE | Shri J.R. Gangaramani | 2009 | Community Service |
| 90 | UK | Baroness Shreela Flather | 2009 | Public Service |
| 91 | USA | Prof. C.K. Prahalad | 2009 | Management |
| 92 | USA | Prof. Sumit Ganguly | 2009 | Public Service |
| 93 | Brunei Darussalam | Shri Mohinder Singh Bhullar | 2010 | Community Service |
| 94 | Fiji | Shri Yanktesh Permal Reddy | 2010 | Community Service |
| 95 | Japan | Shri Ryuko Hira | 2010 | Community Service |
| 96 | Japan | (Smt.) Dr. Ruby Umesh Pawankar | 2010 | Medicine |
| 97 | Oman | Shri Suresh Kumar Virmani | 2010 | Community Service |
| 98 | South Africa | Shri Pravin Jamnadas Gordhan | 2010 | Public Service |
| 99 | South Africa | Dr. Tholisiah Perumal Naidoo | 2010 | Community Service |
| 100 | Tanzania | Dr. Rajni Kanabar | 2010 | Medicine |
| 101 | Thailand | Shri Deepak Mittal | 2010 | Business |
| 102 | Trinidad & Tobago | Dr. Lenny Krishendath Saith | 2010 | Public Service |
| 103 | UAE | Dr. Azad Moopen | 2010 | Medicine |
| 104 | USA | Dr. Mani Lal Bhaumik | 2010 | Community Service |
| 105 | USA | Shri Ashok Kumar Mago | 2010 | Community Service |
| 106 | USA | Shri Upendra J. Chivukula | 2010 | Public Service |

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|-----|-----------------|--|------|-------------------|
| 107 | Australia | Prof. Veena Harbhagwan Sahajwalla | 2011 | Science |
| 108 | Canada | Ms. Lata Pada | 2011 | Arts |
| 109 | Hong Kong | Shri Harindrapal Singh Banga | 2011 | Business |
| 110 | Israel | Shri Hohammad Munir Nazir Hassan Ansari | 2011 | Community Service |
| 111 | Liberia | Shri Upjit Singh Sachdeva | 2011 | Community Service |
| 112 | Malaysia | Tan Sri Dato' Ajit Singh | 2011 | Public Affairs |
| 113 | New Zealand | Sir Anand Satyanand | 2011 | Public Affairs |
| 114 | Qatar | Indian Community Benevolent Forum, Qatar | 2011 | Community Service |
| 115 | Saudi Arabia | Dr. Mohiaddin Syed Karimuddin | 2011 | Community Service |
| 116 | Sri Lanka | Shri Mano Selvanathan | 2011 | Business |
| 117 | The Netherlands | Shri Saleh Wahid | 2011 | Community Service |
| 118 | UAE | Shri Mohan Jashanmal | 2011 | Community Service |
| 119 | UK | Baroness (Dr.) Sandip Verma | 2011 | Public Affairs |
| 120 | USA | Shri Ashook Kumar Ramsaran | 2011 | Community Service |
| 121 | USA | Dr. Rajiv Shah | 2011 | Public Affairs |
| 122 | Bahrain | Shri P.V. Radhakrishna Pillai | 2012 | Community Service |
| 123 | Cambodia | Prof. Sachchidanand Sahai | 2012 | Promoting India |
| 124 | Canada | Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce | 2012 | Public Service |
| 125 | Cote D' Ivoire | Shri Deepak Naraindas Shivdasani | 2012 | Community Service |
| 126 | Germany | Dr. Victor Shahed Smetacek | 2012 | Science |
| 127 | Indonesia | Shri Sri Prakash Lohia | 2012 | Business |
| 128 | Mozambique | Shri Jose Parayanken | 2012 | Business |

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| 129 | Oman | Shri Kiran Navinchandra Asher | 2012 | Community Service |
| 130 | Qatar | Mr. Hassan Abdulkarim Chougule | 2012 | Community Service |
| 131 | Singapore | H.E. Mr. S.R. Nathan | 2012 | Public Service |
| 132 | South Africa | Dr. Khorshed Noshir Ginwala - Rustomjee | 2012 | Public Service |
| 133 | Trinidad & Tobago | H.E. Ms. Kamla Persad Bissessar | 2012 | Public Service |
| 134 | Ukraine | Shri Rajesh Kumar Saraiya | 2012 | Business |
| 135 | USA | Prof. Surendra Kumar Kaushik | 2012 | Economics |
| 136 | USA | Dr. Kalpalatha Kummamuri Guntupalli | 2012 | Medicine |
| 137 | Australia | Australia India Society of Victoria | 2013 | Community Service |
| 138 | Germany | Prof. Dr. Gursharan Singh Chhatwal | 2013 | Science |
| 139 | Guinea | Mr. Ashok Shambhomal Vaswani | 2013 | Community Service |
| 140 | Kuwait | Indian Doctors Forum, Kuwait | 2013 | Community Service |
| 141 | Malaysia | Tan Sri Ravindran Menon | 2013 | Community Service |
| 142 | Mauritius | Mr. Rajkeswur Purryag | 2013 | Public Service |
| 143 | Mexico | Dr. Rasik Vihari Joshi | 2013 | Literature |
| 144 | New Zealand | Dr. Satendra Kumar Singh | 2013 | Community Service |
| 145 | Reunion Island | Mr. Gilbert Canabady Moutien | 2013 | Business |
| 146 | Saudi Arabia | Mr. Mohammed Rabeeh Karuvanthodi | 2013 | Business |
| 147 | South Africa | Mr. Ismail Ebrahim Ebrahim | 2013 | Public Service |
| 148 | UAE | Mr. Bava Pandalingal | 2013 | Community Service |
| 149 | UK | Ms. Patricia Maria Rozario | 2013 | Music |
| 150 | USA | Dr. Narendra Ramakrishna Kumar | 2013 | Healthcare |

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|-----|------------------|---------------------------------------|------|---------------------------------|
| 151 | USA | Mr. Subash Razdan | 2013 | Public Service |
| 152 | Australia | Ms. Senator Lisa Singh | 2014 | Public Service |
| 153 | Bahrain | Mr. Kurian Varghese | 2014 | Business |
| 154 | Canada | Mr. Vasdev Chanchlani | 2014 | Business & Public Service |
| 155 | Fiji | Ramakrishna Mission | 2014 | Community Service |
| 156 | France | Mr. Bikas Chandra Sanyal | 2014 | Education & Culture |
| 157 | Papua New Guinea | Mr. Sasindran Muthuvel | 2014 | Public Service |
| 158 | Saudi Arabia | Shri Shihabudeen Vava Kunju | 2014 | Community Service |
| 159 | South Africa | Mrs. Ela Gandhi | 2014 | Public Service |
| 160 | The Netherlands | Mr. Satnarainsing Rabin Baldew Singh | 2014 | Public Service |
| 161 | UAE | Dr. Shamsheer Vayalil Parambath | 2014 | Healthcare Business |
| 162 | UK | Mr. Shailesh lakhman Vara | 2014 | Public Service |
| 163 | USA | Dr. Parthasarathy Chiramel Pillai | 2014 | Science |
| 164 | USA | Ms. Renu Khator | 2014 | Education |
| 165 | Australia | Mrs. Mala Mehta | 2015 | Education and Community Service |
| 166 | Guyana | H.E. Mr. Donald Rabindernauth Ramotar | 2015 | Public Service |
| 167 | Mexico | Dr. Rajaram Sanjaya | 2015 | Scientific Research |
| 168 | New Zealand | Mr. Kanwaljit Singh Bakshi | 2015 | Public Service |
| 169 | Oman | Mr. Rajmal Parakh | 2015 | Social Service |
| 170 | Seychelles | Mr. Duraikannu Karunakaran | 2015 | Judicial Service |
| 171 | South Africa | Dr. Essop Goolam Pahad | 2015 | Public Service |
| 172 | UAE | Mr. Shah Bharathkumar Jayantilal | 2015 | Community Service |
| 173 | UAE | Mr. Ashraf Palarakunnummal | 2015 | Social Service |
| 174 | Uganda | Mr. Mahendra Nanji Mehta | 2015 | Public Service |

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| 175 | UK | Prof. Nathu Ram Puri | 2015 | Education and Community Service |
| 176 | UK | Lord Raj Loomba | 2015 | Public Service |
| 177 | USA | Mr. Satyanarayana Nadella | 2015 | Business Management |
| 178 | USA | Dr. Lulla Kamalesh | 2015 | Scientific Research |
| 179 | USA | Dr. (Mrs.) Nandini Tandon | 2015 | Management of Healthcare and Business |
| 180 | Australia | Dr. Gorur Krishna Harinath | 2017 | Community Service |
| 181 | Bahrain | Rajasekharan PillaiValavoor Kizhakkathil | 2017 | Business |
| 182 | Belgium | Antwerp Indian Association | 2017 | Community Service |
| 183 | Brunei | Nazeer AhmedMohamed Zackiriah | 2017 | Community Service |
| 184 | Canada | Mukund Bhikhubhai Purohit | 2017 | Business |
| 185 | Djibouti | Nalinkumr Sumanlal Kothari | 2017 | Community Service |
| 186 | Doha | Dr. Raghavan Seetharaman | 2017 | Business Management |
| 187 | Fiji | Vinod Chandra Patel | 2017 | Social Service |
| 188 | France | Raghunath Marie Antonin Manet | 2017 | Arts & culture |
| 189 | Israel | Dr.Lael Anson E.Best | 2017 | Medicine Science |
| 190 | Japan | Prof. Sandip Kumar Tagore | 2017 | Arts & Culture |
| 191 | Libya | Ariful Islam | 2017 | Community service |
| 192 | Malaysia | Dr. MuniandyThambirajah | 2017 | Education & Community service |
| 193 | Mauritius | Hon'ble Pravind Kumar Jugnauth | 2017 | Public Service |
| 194 | Portugal | H.E.Mr.Antonio Luis Santos da Costa | 2017 | Public service |
| 195 | Saudi Arabia | Ms. Zeenat Musarrat Jafri | 2017 | Education |
| 196 | Singapore | Singapore Indian | 2017 | Community service |

| | | Association | | |
|-----|-------------------|---|------|------------------------------------|
| 197 | Sweden | Mr. Carni Balaraman Sanjeev | 2017 | Medicine |
| 198 | Thailand | Susheel Kumar Saraff | 2017 | Business |
| 199 | Trinidad & Tobago | Winston Chandarbhan Dookeran | 2017 | Public Service |
| 200 | UAE | Vasudev Shamdas Shroff | 2017 | Community Service |
| 201 | UAE | India Social and Cultural Centre, Abu Dhabi | 2017 | Philanthropy and Community Service |
| 202 | UK | Rt. Hon'ble Priti Patel | 2017 | Public Service |
| 203 | UK | Neena Gill | 2017 | Public Service |
| 204 | USA | Hari Babu Bindal | 2017 | Environmental Engineering |
| 205 | USA | Dr. Bharat Haridas Barai | 2017 | Community Service |
| 206 | USA | Nisha Desai Biswal | 2017 | Public Affairs |
| 207 | USA | Dr. Mahesh Mehta | 2017 | Community Service |
| 208 | USA | Ramesh Shah | 2017 | Community Service |
| 209 | USA | Dr. Sampatkumar Shidramapa Shivangi | 2017 | Community Leadership |
| 210 | Australia | Nihal Singh Agar | 2019 | Social Service |
| 211 | Bhutan | Rajinder Nath Khazanchi | 2019 | Civil Engineering |
| 212 | Canada | Ramesh Chotai | 2019 | Business |
| 213 | China | Amit Waikar | 2019 | Business |
| 214 | Egypt | Indian Community Association in Egypt | 2019 | Community Service |
| 215 | France | Malini Ranganathan | 2019 | Academics & Arts |
| 216 | Guyana | Guyana Hindu Dharmic Sabha | 2019 | Community Service |
| 217 | Italy | Bitthal Das Maheshwari | 2019 | Business |
| 218 | Jamaica | Guna Sekhar Muppuri | 2019 | Medical Science & Entrepreneurship |
| 219 | Kenya | P. V. Sambasiva Rao | 2019 | Technology |
| 220 | Kenya | Prakash Madhavdas Heda | 2019 | Medical Science |
| 221 | Kuwait | Rajpal Tyagi | 2019 | Architecture |

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|-----|----------------|---|------|-------------------------------|
| 222 | Myanmar | Banwarilal Satya Narayan Goenka | 2019 | Business Management |
| 223 | New Zealand | Bhavdeep Singh Dhillon | 2019 | Business |
| 224 | Norway | Himanshu Gulati | 2019 | Public Service |
| 225 | Oman | Vinodan Verambally Thazhikuniyil | 2019 | Business |
| 226 | Poland | Jagadeswara Rao Maddukuri | 2019 | Entrepreneurship |
| 227 | Qatar | Purnendu Chandra Tiwary | 2019 | Training & Simulation |
| 228 | South Africa | Swami Saradaprabhananda | 2019 | Community Service |
| 229 | South Africa | Anil Sooklal | 2019 | Diplomacy |
| 230 | Switzerland | Rajendra Kumar Joshi | 2019 | Science |
| 231 | Tanzania | Shamim Parkar Khan | 2019 | Public Service |
| 232 | UAE | Surender Singh Kandhari | 2019 | Business |
| 233 | UAE | Zulekha Daud | 2019 | Medical Science & Business |
| 234 | UAE | Girish Pant | 2019 | Business |
| 235 | Uganda | Rajesh Chaplot | 2019 | Chartered Accountancy |
| 236 | USA | Gita Gopinath | 2019 | Academics |
| 237 | USA | Chandra Shekhar Mishra | 2019 | Science |
| 238 | USA | Kiran Chhotubhai Patel | 2019 | Medical Science |
| 239 | USA | Gitesh Jayantilal Desai | 2019 | Structural Engineering |
| 240 | Armenia | NGO Cultural Diversity for Peaceful Future | 2021 | Promoting Indian culture |
| 241 | Azerbaijan | Dr. Rajani Chandra D'Mello | 2021 | Medicine |
| 242 | Bahrain | Mr. Baburajan Vava Kalluparambil Gopalan | 2021 | Community Service |
| 243 | Botswana | Mrs. Jamal Ahmad | 2021 | Business |
| 244 | Cameroon | Mr. Janakiraman Ravikumar | 2021 | Closer ties with India |
| 245 | Czech Republic | Mr. Debashish Chaudhuri | 2021 | Art and Culture |

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|-----|------------------|---|------|---------------------------|
| 246 | Ethiopia | Mr. Mohammed Husein Hasanali Sardharwala | 2021 | Business |
| 247 | Fiji | Sai Prema Foundation | 2021 | Community Service |
| 248 | Germany | Dr. Balasubramanian Ramani | 2021 | Education |
| 249 | Hong Kong | Mr. Lal Lokumal Chellaram | 2021 | Business |
| 250 | Japan | Dr. (Prof.) Muralidhar Miryala | 2021 | Science & Technology |
| 251 | Japan | Mr. Rajib Shaw | 2021 | Education |
| 252 | Maldives | Mr. Salil Panigrahi | 2021 | Tourism |
| 253 | Mexico | Dr. Ravi Prakash Singh | 2021 | Science & Technology |
| 254 | Netherlands | H.E. Mr. Eugene Rhuggenaath | 2021 | Public Service |
| 255 | New Zealand | Hon'ble Ms. PriyancaRadhakrishnan | 2021 | Public Service |
| 256 | Nigeria | Indian Cultural Association (ICA) | 2021 | Community Service |
| 257 | Qatar | Dr. Mohan Thomas Lazarus Pakalomattom | 2021 | Medicine |
| 258 | Reunion (France) | Mr. Jean Regis Ramsamy | 2021 | Media & Community Service |
| 259 | Saudi Arabia | Mr. Siddeek Ahmed | 2021 | Business |
| 260 | Sudan | Dr. Anil Kumar Chotalal Mithani | 2021 | Medical |
| 261 | Suriname | H.E. Shri Chandrika persad Santokhi | 2021 | Public Service |
| 262 | Switzerland | Dr. Sachi Gurumayun | 2021 | Biotech Agronomy |
| 263 | Thailand | Mr. Vashdev Tikamdas Purswani | 2021 | Business |
| 264 | UK | Resham Singh Sandhu | 2021 | Public Service |
| 265 | USA | Mr. Arvind Phukan | 2021 | Environment Technology |
| 266 | USA | Ms. Nilu Gupta | 2021 | Promoting Indian Culture |
| 267 | USA | Federation of Indian Associations NY, NJ & CT | 2021 | Community Service |
| 268 | USA | Dr. Sudhakar | 2021 | Medicine |

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| | | Jonnalagadda | | |
| 269 | USA/ Singapore | Dr.MukeshAghi | 2021 | Business |
| 270 | Australia | Prof. Jagadish Chennupati | 2023 | Science & Technology/ Education |
| 271 | Bhutan | Prof. Sanjeev Mehta | 2023 | Education |
| 272 | Brazil | Prof. Dilip Loundo | 2023 | Art & Culture/Education |
| 273 | Brunei Darussalam | Dr. Alexander Maliakel John | 2023 | Medicine |
| 274 | Canada | Dr. Vaikuntam Iyer Lakshmanan | 2023 | Community Welfare |
| 275 | Croatia | Mr. Joginder Singh Nijjar | 2023 | Art & Culture/Education |
| 276 | Denmark | Prof. Ramjee Prasad | 2023 | Information Technology |
| 277 | Ethiopia | Dr. Kannan Ambalam | 2023 | Community Welfare |
| 278 | Germany | Dr. Amal Kumar Mukhopadhyay | 2023 | Community Welfare/Medicine |
| 279 | Guyana | H.E. Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali | 2023 | Politics/Community Welfare |
| 280 | Israel | Ms. Reena Vinod Pushkarna | 2023 | Business/Community Welfare |
| 281 | Japan | Dr. Maqsooda Sarfi Shiotani | 2023 | Education |
| 282 | Mexico | Dr. Rajagopal | 2023 | Education |
| 283 | Poland | Mr. Amit Kailash Chandra Lath | 2023 | Business/Community Welfare |
| 284 | Republic of Congo | Mr. Parmanand Sukhumal Daswani | 2023 | Community Welfare |
| 285 | Singapore | Mr. Piyush Gupta | 2023 | Business |
| 286 | South Africa | Mr. Mohanlal Hira | 2023 | Community Welfare |
| 287 | South Sudan | Mr. Sanjaykumar Shivabhai Patel | 2023 | Business/Community Welfare |
| 288 | Sri Lanka | Mr. Sivakumar Nadesan | 2023 | Community Welfare |
| 289 | Suriname | Dr. Dewanchandrebbhose Sharman | 2023 | Community Welfare |
| 290 | Switzerland | Dr. Archana Sharma | 2023 | Science & Technology |
| 291 | Trinidad & Tobago | Justice Frank Arthur Seepersad | 2023 | Community Welfare/Education |
| 292 | UAE | Mr. Siddharth Balachandran | 2023 | Business/Community Welfare |

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| 293 | UK | Mr. Chandrakant Babubhai Patel | 2023 | Media |
| 294 | USA | Dr. Darshan Singh Dhaliwal | 2023 | Business/Community Welfare |
| 295 | USA | Mr. Rajesh Subramaniam | 2023 | Business |
| 296 | Uzbekistan | Mr. Ashok Kumar Tiwary | 2023 | Business |
