

PM's address at the Inauguration of the 14th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention at Bengaluru on 8th January, 2017

Excellencies and friends,

To begin with, let me offer our deepest condolences to the people and government of Portugal on the passing away of Mr. Mario Soares, former President, Prime Minister, a great leader of Portugal and a global states-man. He was the architect of the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Portugal. We stand with Portugal in full support in this hour of grief.

Your Excellency, the Vice President of Suriname, Shri Michael Ashwin Adhin, Excellency the Prime Minister of Portugal, Dr. Antonio Costa,

Shri Vaju Bhai wala, Governor of Karnataka Shri Siddaramaiah ji,

Chief Minister of Karnataka, Honourable Ministers, Dignitaries from India and Abroad,

And the most important of all, the global family of overseas Indians.

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome all of you on this 14th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas. Thousands of you have travelled from far-off lands to join us here today. Millions more are connected through digital platforms.

This day is a celebration to mark the return to India of one of the greatest Pravasi's- Mahatma Gandhi.

ये एक ऐसा पर्व है जिस में एक प्रकार से ^{host} भी आप ही हैं, ^{guest} भी आप ही हैं। यह पर्व एक ऐसा पर्व है जिसमें उसकी विदेश में रहने वाली संतान से मिलने का अवसर है। अपनों को अपनों से मिलना, अपने लिए नहीं सबके लिए मिलना। इस ^{event} की असली पहचान आन-बान-शान जो कुछ भी है आप सब लोग हैं। आप का इस पर्व में सम्मिलित होना हमारे लिए बहुत-बहुत गर्व की बात है। आप सब का तहे दिल से स्वागत है।

We are celebrating this event in the beautiful city of Bengaluru. I wish to thank the Chief Minister, to the Ramayya Ji and his entire government for his assistance and efforts in organizing this event/ and making it a big success.

It is my particular pleasure to welcome Excellency the Prime Minister of Portugal, the Vice President of Suriname, the honourable Ministers from Malaysia and Mauritius to the event.

Their achievements, the name they have earned in their own societies and globally, are a great inspiration for all of us. It also reflects the success, glory and enterprise of Indian diaspora the

world over. There are over 30 million Overseas Indians living abroad. Their footprint is all over the world. But, Indians abroad are valued not just for their strength in numbers. They are respected for the contributions they make - to India and to the societies and countries where they live. In foreign lands and communities across the globe, irrespective of the path they take, and the goals they pursue, the Indian diaspora represents the best of Indian culture, ethos and values. Their hard-work, discipline, law-abiding and peace loving nature are role models for other immigrant communities abroad.

आप की प्रेरणा कई प्रकार की है, उद्देश्य अनेक हैं, आपके मार्ग भिन्न-भिन्न हैं, हर किसी की मंजिल भी अलग है लेकिन हम सबके भीतर एक ही भाव विश्व है और वो भाव जगत है भारतीयता। प्रवासी भारतीय जहां रहे उस धरती को उन्होंने कर्मभूमि माना और जहां से आए उसे मर्मभूमि माना। आज आप उस कर्मभूमि की सफलताओं को उसकी गठरी बांध करके उस मर्मभूमि में पधारे हैं जहां से आपको आपके पूर्वजों को अविरत् प्रेरणा मिलती रही है। प्रवासी भारतीय जहां रहे वहांका विकास किया और जहां के हैं वहां भी अपना अप्रतिम रिश्ता जोड़ करके रखा हो सके उतना योगदान किया।

Friends, for my governments and for me personally, engagement with the overseas Indian community has been a key area of priority. I have met and spoken to hundreds of thousands of our brothers and sisters during my travels abroad – in USA, UK, Australia, South Africa, UAE, Qatar, Singapore, Fiji, China, Japan, South Korea, Kenya, Mauritius, Seychelles, and Malaysia.

As a result, as a result of our sustained and systematic out-reach, there is new energy, keen desire and strong drive among Indian Diaspora to connect more extensively and deeply with India's social and economic transformation.

The remittance of close to sixty nine billion dollars annually by the overseas Indians makes an invaluable contribution to the Indian economy.

प्रवासी भारतीयों में देश के विकास के लिए अदम्य इच्छाशक्ति है; वे देश की प्रगति में सहयात्री हैं। Co-traveler हैं। हमारी विकास यात्रा में आप हमारे एक Valuable साथी हैं, Partner हैं, stakeholder हैं। कभी चर्चा हुआ करती थी Brain-Drain. हर कोई सवाल पूछता था Brain-Drain, और मैं उस समय लोगों को कहता था तब तो न मुख्यमंत्री था न प्रधानमंत्री था जब लोग कहते थे कि Brain-Drain, Brain-Drain हो रहा था तो मैं कह रहा था क्या बुद्धु लोग ही यहां बचे हैं क्या? लेकिन आज मैं बड़े विश्वास के साथ कहना चाहता हूं हम लोग जो Brain-Drain की चर्चा करते थे वर्तमान सरकार के initiatives उस Brain-Drain में से भी Brain-Gain के लिए है। हम Brain-Drain को Brain-Gain में बदलना चाहते हैं और वो सब आप सबकी सहभागिता से ही संभव होने वाला है और होके रहने वाला है ये मेरा विश्वास है।

NRI's and PIO's have made outstanding contributions to their chosen fields. Among them, there are politicians of stature, scientists of repute, outstanding doctors, brilliant educationists, economists, musicians, famous philanthropists, journalists, bankers, engineers and lawyers. And, sorry! Did I mention our well known Information Technology professionals? Tomorrow, 30 overseas Indians will receive from the President, the prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards, which recognize contributions made by them in various fields, both in India and abroad.

Friends, E-respective of their background and profession, the welfare and safety of all Indians abroad is our top priority. For this, we are strengthening the entire eco-system of our administrative arrangements. Whether it is on loss of their passports; need for legal advice, medical assistance, shelter, or even transportation of mortal remains to India. I have directed all Indian embassies to be proactive to address problems of Indian nationals abroad.

Our response to the needs of the Indian nationals overseas is defined by Accessibility, sensitivity, speed and promptness. 24 by 7, help-lines by Indian Embassies; 'Open House' meetings with Indian nationals; consular camps; twitter seva for passport services; and use of social media platforms for immediate access; are some of the measures that we have put in place to convey a clear message that we are there for you when you need us.

The security of Indian nationals abroad is of utmost importance to us. हम पासपोर्ट का colour नहीं देखते हैं, खून का रिश्ता सोचते हैं। In institutions of distress faced by Indian nationals, we have reached out to ensure their safety, rescue and repatriation. Our External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj ji, has particularly been proactive and prompt in reaching out to distressed Indians abroad using social media.

Under Operation "संकट मोचन" in July 2016, we evacuated over one hundred and fifty Indian nationals from South Sudan within 48 hours. Prior to that, we evacuated several thousands of our citizens from conflict situations in Yemen in well-coordinated, smooth and swift co-operations. And the last two years – 2014 and 2016, we facilitated the repatriation of over ninety thousand Indian nationals from nearly 54 countries. Through the Indian Community Welfare Fund we have assisted more than eighty thousand Indian nationals abroad who were in contingency situations.

Our aim is that for every Indian abroad, home should never be far away. हम लोग छोटे तब सुनते थे मामा का घर कितना दूर तो बोले दीया जले उतना दूर। भारत कितना दूर, उसको लगना चाहिए दीया जले उतना दूर, इतनी निकटता उसको महसूस होनी चाहिए। दुनिया के किसी भी देश में क्यों न रहता हो, उसको ये अपनापन महसूस होना चाहिए। For those workers who seek economic opportunities abroad, our effort is to provide maximum facilitation and ensure

least inconvenience. Our motto is: "सुरक्षित जाएँ, प्रशिक्षित जाएँ, विश्वास के साथ जाएँ". For this, we have streamlined our systems and taken several measures to safeguard emigration of Indian workers. About six lakh Engineers emigrants have been granted Emigration Clearance online for overseas employment through registered recruitment agents. Online registration of foreign employers on e-Migrate portal has been made mandatory.

And, the grievances, complaints and petitions of the migrant workers continue to be addressed online through e-Migrate and "MADAD" platforms. We are also taking strict action against illegal recruitment agents in India. Prosecution sanctions by CBI or State Police against illegal agents; and increase in the amount of Bank Guarantee deposited by the recruiting agents from Rs.20 lakhs to Rs.50 lakhs; our some of the steps in this direction. To ensure that the migrating Indian workers enjoy better economic opportunities, we will shortly launch a skill development program - the "Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana" targeted at Indian youth who seek overseas employment.

कभी-कभी जो पहली बार विदेश जाते हैं, ज्यादा पढ़े-लिखे नहीं हैं; अगर उनका वहां के देश की आवश्यकता के अनुसार यहीं पर उसका 15 दिन, एक महीने का कोर्स हो, उसकी development हो। मान लीजिए वो किसी देश में house keeping के काम के लिए जा रहा है, अगर यहां उसकी training होगी तो बड़े विश्वास के साथ जायेगा। और इसलिए ये "प्रवासी कौशल विकास योजना" भारत से बाहर जाने वाले लोग एक value-added अवस्था में जाएं जिसके कारण एक नया विश्वास पैदा हो, उस दिशा में हम प्रयास कर रहे हैं, और उससे मुझे लगता है जो गरीब तबके के लोग छोटे-छोटे काम करने के लिए जा रहे हैं, उनको ज्यादा लाभ होगा। कुछ लोगों को उस देश के कुछ sentences हैं, कुछ उस देश के manners हैं, कुछ cultural चीजें सीखने की जरूरी होती हैं। वो भी कितने ही पढ़े-लिखे व्यक्ति क्यों न हों, उसको काम आती हैं; उस पर भी हम बल दे रहे हैं, जिसको हम soft-skill कहते हैं। तो ऐसी व्यवस्थाएं जिसके कारण भारत का व्यक्ति विश्व में पैर रखते ही उसको कुछ भी पराया न लगे, औरों को भी वो अपना लगे और उसका आत्मविश्वास उस उंचाइयों को पार करने वाला हो जैसे वो सालों से उस भूमि को जानता है; वहां के लोगों को जानता है; वो तुरंत ही अपने आपको set कर सकता है, तो उस रूप में उसकी चिन्ता, व्यवस्था हम कर रहे हैं।

Friends. We have a special bond with the Indian Diaspora which is living in the Girmitya countries – who are deeply and emotionally attached with their place of origin. We are aware of difficulties faced by Persons of Indian Origin from these countries in obtaining an OCI Card if they moved abroad four or five generations ago. We acknowledge their concerns and have made efforts to address these issues.

I am glad to announce that starting with Mauritius, we are working to put in place new procedures and documentation requirements so that the descendants of Girmitiyas from this country could become eligible for OCI Cards. We remain committed to addressing similar difficulties of PIOs in Fiji, Reunion Islands, Suriname, Guyana and other Caribbean States.

Like my request at the last Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, I would again encourage all PIO Card holders to convert their PIO Cards to OCI Cards. मैं बोलता रहता हूँ आग्रह भी करता हूँ, लेकिन मैं जानता हूँ कि आप लोग बहुत व्यस्त हैं और इसीलिए ये शायद काम रह जाता है। तो आपकी इस व्यस्तता को देखते हुए, I am happy to announce that we have extended the deadline for such conversion from 31 December 2016, until June 30, 2017 without any penalty. From least of January this year, beginning with airports in Delhi and Bengaluru, we have also set up special counters at immigration points in our airports for OCI Card holders.

Friends, Today, there are about 7 Lakh Indian students/ pursuing academic programs abroad. और मुझे भली भाँति ज्ञात है कि विदेश में रह रहा हर भारतीय, भारत की प्रगति से जुड़ने के लिए आतुर है। उनका ज्ञान, विज्ञान और भारत के ज्ञान का मिलन, भारत को आर्थिक प्रगति को असीम उंचाईयों पर ले जायेगा।

मेरा सदैव यह प्रयास और विश्वास रहा है कि सक्षम तथा successful प्रवासियों को भारत की विकास गाथा से जुड़ने का सम्पूर्ण मौका मिलना चाहिए, खास तौर से विज्ञान तथा तकनीकी क्षेत्रों में and technology के field में।

इसके लिए हमने कई कदम उठाये हैं। One of them is that the Department of Science and Technology is launching Visiting Adjunct Joint Research Faculty or VAJRA scheme which enables NRIs and overseas scientific community to participate and contribute to research and development in India. Under the scheme an overseas Indian can work for one to three months in an institution in India. And, that too, at good terms और सब से महत्पूर्ण है कि प्रवासी भारतीय इसके द्वारा देश की प्रगति का एक अहम् हिस्सा बन सकता है।

Friends, it is my firm belief that connect between India and over-seas Indians should be sustained and enriching for both. To meet this goal, in October last year, महात्मा गाँधी की जन्मदिन पर, I had the honour of inaugurating the Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra in New Delhi. This Kendra is dedicated to the over-seas Indian community. We want it to become a symbol of the global migration, experiences, struggles, achievements and aspirations of the Indian Diaspora. I am confident that the Kendra will become another important platform for crystallizing ongoing efforts of the government to redefine its engagement with the over-seas Indian community.

Friends, हमारे प्रवासी भारतीय कई पीढ़ियों से विदेशों में हैं। हर पीढ़ी के अनुभव ने भारत को और सक्षम बनाया है। जैसे नए पौधे पर हमारे भीतर अलग से एक स्नेह उभर आता है, उसी तरह विदेश में रह युवा प्रवासी भारतीय भी हमारे लिए अनमोल हैं, विशेष हैं। हम प्रवासी भारतीयों की युवा पीढ़ियों से, young Pravasis से करीबी और मज़बूत और संपर्क और गहरा बनाना चाहते हैं।

To provide the young Indian-origin youth an opportunity to visit their Motherland and reconnect with their Indian roots, culture, and heritage— we have expanded the Government’s Know India Program, under which for the first time, six groups of young over-seas Indians are visiting India this year.

I am very happy to know that 160 of these young over-seas Indians are here today to participate in the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas. A special welcome to the young Pravasis— I hope that on returning to your respective countries, you will remain connected with us, wherever you are, and visit again, again and again India. Last year, the first edition of the online quiz competition for young overseas Indians called “Bharat ko Jaano” saw participation of more than 5000 young NRIs and PIOs. In the second edition this year, I hope to see the participation of at least fifty thousand young overseas Indians.

Young Friends, will you please help me in this mission? Will you please help me in this mission? Are you ready to work with me? Then why we can stop at 50 thousands?

Friends, आज भारत एक नयी प्रगतिशील दिशा की ओर अग्रसर है। ऐसी प्रगति जो न केवल आर्थिक है अपितु सामाजिक, राजनैतिक, और शासकीय भी है। आर्थिक क्षेत्र में, PIOs तथा NRIs के लिए FDI norms पूरी तरह liberalized है और FDI की मेरी दो परिभाषाएं हैं, One definition is FDI means foreign direct investment, and second is first develop India. Investments by PIOs on non-repatriation basis; and by companies, trusts and partnerships owned by them, are now deemed to be domestic investment at par with investments made by resident Indians. हमारे कई ऐसे programs हैं, जैसे Swachh Bharat, Mission Digital India, Start up India, जिनसे प्रवासी भारतीय भारत के सामान्य व्यक्ति के प्रगति से सीधा जुड़ सकते हैं। There are some amongst you who like to contribute in businesses and investments. Others may feel more comfortable supporting through contributions made to Swachh Bharat, Namami Gange and others.

Some others may feel motivated to spare their valuable time and efforts in volunteering in India helping the under-privileged or contributing to capacity building programs in various sectors.

We welcome all your efforts that seek to strengthen India’s partnership with the over-seas Indian community. I also invite you to visit the exhibition in the Pravasi Bharatiya congention (PBD

Convention) which gives you a glimpse of some of the flagship programs that we have been implementing and see how you can partner with us.

Friends, यहां आने के बाद आपने सुना होगा, देखा होगा हमने भ्रष्टाचार के खिलाफ, काले धन के खिलाफ corruption और black money के खिलाफ एक बहुत बड़ा बीड़ा उठाया है। black money तथा corruption हमारी राजनीति तथा देश तथा समाज तथा शासन को धीरे, धीरे, धीरे, धीरे खोखला करता रहा है। और ये दुर्भाग्य है कि black money के कुछ राजनैतिक पुजारी हमारे प्रयासों को जनता के विरोधी दर्शाते हैं। corruption और काले धन को समाप्त करने में भारत सरकार की नीतियों का जो समर्थन प्रवासी भारतीयों ने किया है उसके लिए मैं आपका अभिनन्दन करता हूँ, आपका साधुवाद करता हूँ, आपका धन्यवाद करता हूँ।

Friends, Finally, I would like to say that as Indians, we have a common heritage that brings us all together. And, no matter where we may be around? Where we may be around the globe, it is in that common bond that we are strong. और इसलिए मेरे प्यारे देशवासियों आपने जो सपने संजो के रखे हुए हैं, आपके सपने हमारे संकल्प हैं और हम सब मिल करके उन सपनों को साकार करने के लिए अगर व्यवस्था में बदलाव जरूरी हो, अगर कानून नियमों में बदलाव की जरूरत हो, साहसिक कदम उठाने की जरूरत हो, हर एक को साथ लेकर चलने के लिए जो कुछ भी करना पड़े, करने की आवश्यकता हो ये सब करते हुए मैं विश्वास से कहता हूँ 21वीं सदी हिन्दुस्तान की सदी है। बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद ।

Thank You and Jai Hind.