

**Welcome Remarks by High Commissioner H.E. Mr. B.N. Reddy, on  
the celebration of *Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas* at High Commission of  
India**

[7 January 2018]

विश्व हिंदी दिवस एवं प्रवासी भारतीय दिवस के अवसर पर मैं आप सबका अभिनंदन करता हूँ ।

**PM's Message on World Hindi Day**

"संस्कृत की एक लाड़ली बेटी है हिंदी..  
बहनों को साथ लेकर चलती है हिंदी..  
जन-जन की भाषा है हिंदी..  
भारत की आशा है हिंदी..  
जिसने पूरे देश को जोड़ा,  
वो मज़बूत धागा है हिंदी ।"

यह मेरे लिये अपार हर्ष का विषय है कि यहाँ के स्कूलों में हिंदी भाषा एक विषय ना होते हुए भी, आप स्वयं गृहशिक्षा के माध्यम से बच्चों को हिंदी भाषा का ज्ञान दे रहे हैं, तथा विदेश में हिंदी भाषा के बढ़ावे में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान निभा रहे हैं ।

समयाभाव के कारण आज हम कुछ चुनिंदा प्रतिभागियों को ही मंच पर आमंत्रित कर पाये । आपकी जानकारी के लिए बताना चाहूंगा कि कल हिंदी भाषा प्रतियोगिता में .....से ज्यादा प्रतिभागियों ने भाग लिया । आइये, एक बार ज़ोरदार तालियों के साथ हम उन सबका उत्साहवर्धन करें ।

मुझे आशा है कि जल्दी ही हमारे हाइ कमीशन के पुस्तकालय में हिंदी भाषा की बहुत सारी पुस्तकें उपलब्ध होंगीं, जिनका अध्ययन करके आप सब लाभान्वित हो सकते हैं ।

**Dear Friends,**

Today we are celebrating the World Hindi Day as well as the *Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas*.

At the outset, I would like to convey my deep appreciation to two speakers Mrs. Shashi Mahajan and Dr. Shabihul Hassan for presenting their speeches.

I also take this opportunity to complement Dr. Shabihul Hassan on his appointment as the Board Member of FCT Primary Healthcare Development Board by the President of Nigeria. I think Dr. Hassan deserves a round of applause for receiving this distinction from the Federal Government of Nigeria. There can be no occasion than today - *Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas* to recognize this contribution by a prominent Indian in Nigeria.

The Government of India attaches high importance to recognize the contributions made by Indians living abroad – a true manifestation of it has been the holding of PBD regularly in India. It has now been decided to hold the PBD once in every two years in a city outside Delhi to enable sustained and substantive engagement. In the intervening year, smaller, outcome-based PBD Conferences are organized in New Delhi on issues of concern to the Indian Diaspora. Parallely, the Regional PBDs are held outside India in countries that have sizeable Indian diaspora. As we speak the 9<sup>th</sup> Regional PBD is going on in Singapore to coincide with the celebrations of ASEAN-India 25 years of engagement.

The next *Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas* will be held in January 2019 in India. I encourage you all to register to participate in the event, which for the first time will be held in Varanasi.

## **Friends,**

It is also the time to reflect on the significant changes effected for improving the engagement of Government of India with Indian communities living abroad.

As you are aware, the Government of India merged the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs with the Ministry of External Affairs in early 2016 as part of streamlining of the work and effective coordination of activities associated with overseas Indians.

Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi ji reinvigorated Government of India's engagement with Indian communities living abroad. Hon'ble Mrs Sushma Swaraj, Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs has been at the forefront of providing relief to Indians in distress and also in evolving several welfare measures. I encourage you to visit the website

of the Ministry of External Affairs specially relating to overseas Indian affairs for details of various schemes launched recently as well as those already in operation.

The inauguration of *Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra* in New Delhi by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India in October 2016 is a landmark development. It is reflective of Government of India's keenness to create a home for visiting PIOs as well as NRIs, and a reiteration of its commitment to the welfare of overseas Indian community. I encourage you to visit the permanent exhibition at the Kendra whenever you visit India. There is provision for accommodation for visiting PIOs and NRIs.

**Friends,**

I once again thank you for joining us this evening for joint celebration of World Hindi Day and the *Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas*. I assure you that the High Commission will continue to engage with the Indian community in Nigeria to promote Indian culture and diversity in an effective manner. We also look forward to your active participation in our events.

I thank you.

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