

**08**

**COMMITTEE  
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
(2021-22)**

**SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA**

**MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**DEMANDS FOR GRANTS  
(2021-22)**

**EIGHTH REPORT**



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI**

*MARCH, 2021/PHALGNA, 1942 (Saka)*

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**MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
DEMANDS FOR GRANTS  
(2021-22)**

**Presented to Lok Sabha on 17 March, 2021**

**Laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 17 March, 2021**



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI**

***MARCH, 2021/PHALGUNA, 1942 (Saka)***

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## COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2020-21)

### 1. Shri P.P. Chaudhary, Chairperson

#### Lok Sabha

2. Smt. Harsimrat Kaur Badal
3. Shri Abhishek Banerjee
4. Shri Kalyan Banerjee
5. Kunwar Pushpendra Singh Chandel
6. Shri Dileshwar Kamait
7. Shri Suresh Kumar Kashyap
8. Smt. Preneet Kaur
9. Smt. Meenakashi Lekhi
10. Smt. Goddeti Madhavi
11. Smt. Poonam Mahajan
12. Shri P. C. Mohan
13. Ms. Chandrani Murmu
14. Shri Ritesh Pandey
15. Dr. K. C. Patel
16. Shri N.K. Premachandran
17. Shri Navneet Ravi Rana
18. Shri Soyam Babu Rao
19. Shri Manne Srinivas Reddy
20. Shri Ram Swaroop Sharma
21. Shri Rebaty Tripura

#### Rajya Sabha

22. Shri K. J. Alphons
23. Smt. Jaya Bachchan
24. Smt. Misha Bharti
25. Shri P. Chidambaram
26. Shri Swapan Dasgupta
27. Shri Ranjan Gogoi
28. Shri Kapil Sibal
29. Shri Abdul Wahab
30. Shri Brij Lal\*
30. Vacant#

#### Secretariat

1. Shri P.C.Koul - Additional Secretary
2. Dr. Ram Raj Rai - Director
3. Shri Paolienlal Haokip - Additional Director
4. Ms. Smita Singh - Assistant Committee Officer

\* Shri Brij Lal has been nominated to the Committee *w.e.f.* 23.12.2020.

# Shri Shamsher Singh Manhas retired *w.e.f.* 10.02.2021

## **INTRODUCTION**

I, the Chairperson of the Committee on External Affairs having been authorized by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present this Eighth Report of the Committee on External Affairs (2021-22) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2021-22.

2. The Committee heard the views of the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs at their Eighteenth Sitting held on 24 February, 2021.

3. The Committee wish to express their gratitude to the officers of the Ministry of External Affairs for placing before them the material and information that the Committee desired and also appearing before the Committee for placing their considered views before them in connection with the examination of Demands for Grants (2021-22).

4. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their Twentieth Sitting held on 16 March, 2021.

5. The Minutes of the Sittings of the Committee held on 24 February, 2021 and 16 March, 2021 are given in Appendix-I and II to the Report.

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

**NEW DELHI**  
**16 March, 2021**  
**25 Phalgun, 1942 (Saka)**

**P.P. CHAUDHARY**  
**Chairperson,**  
**Committee on External Affairs**

## CHAPTER I

### ANALYSIS OF DEMANDS FOR GRANTS FOR THE YEAR 2021-22

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) formulates and conducts India's foreign policy within the framework of our values and principles of fostering international peace and cooperation with the overall objective of meeting India's strategic aims and aspirations as well as to secure our national interests. In pursuance of its mandated objectives, the MEA headquarters in New Delhi is assisted by 196 Missions and Posts abroad; its Branch Secretariats and Passport Offices in India; and Autonomous Bodies funded by it. The Ministry is also supported by other Ministries and State Governments who also contribute to India's international engagement in consultation and coordination with MEA.

**1.2** Under the Constitution of India [Article 113 (2)], estimates of expenditure is submitted to Lok Sabha in the form of Demands for Grants. The Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs (Demand No. 18) was presented on 10 February, 2021.

#### I. OVERALL BUDGETARY ALLOCATION

**1.3** MEA's budget allocation in Budget Estimates (BE) 2020-21 was Rs. 17346.71 crore. The allocation in Revised Estimates (RE) 2020-21 is Rs. 15000.00 crore and the actual expenditure of the Ministry in FY 2020-21 (*up to January 2021*) was Rs.12083.25 crore. The allocation in BE 2021-22 is Rs 18154.73 crore. The total budgetary allocation for the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) during the last five years along with the Budget Estimates (BE) and Revised Estimates (RE) Actuals & shortfall/excess in utilization of RE for the respective years is as follows:

(Rs. in crore)

Year	BE	RE	Actual Expenditure	Increase/Decrease at RE Stage	Actual Expenditure increase/Decrease vis-à-vis RE
2016-17	14662.66	13426.00	12753.37	-1236.66	-672.63
2017-18	14798.55	13690.00	13749.73	-1108.55	+59.73
2018-19	15011.00	15582.00	15526.32	+571	-55.68

<b>2019-20</b>	17884.78	17372.27	17272.05	-512.55	-100.22
<b>2020-21</b>	17346.71	15000.00	12083.25*	-2346.71	
<b>2021-22</b>	18154.73	-	-	-	-2916.75*

\*up to January, 2021

**1.4** The budgetary allocation in BE 2021-22 is 4.66% more than BE 2019-20 and 21% more than RE 2020-21. When asked about the expenditures for which enhanced allocations have been provisioned at the RE BE 2021-22 stage, the Ministry provided the following details.

(Rs. in Crores)

<b>Enhanced allocation in RE 2020-21</b>		
<b>Heads</b>	<b>BE 2020-21</b>	<b>RE 2020-21</b>
<b>Maintenance cost of Aircrafts of Air India for VVIP travel</b>	150.00	230.81
<b>Other International Organisation</b>	45.00	50.00
<b>United Nations Organisations</b>	320.00	398.00
<b>Contribution to SAARC Secretariat</b>	8.00	12.00
<b>Aid to Nepal</b>	800.00	880.00
<b>Aid to Myanmar</b>	300.00	350.00
<b>Aid to Latin American Countries</b>	20.00	22.00
<b>Capital Outlay on Housing</b>	150.00	350.00
<b>Enhanced allocation in BE 2021-22</b>		
<b>Heads</b>	<b>BE 2020-21</b>	<b>BE 2021-22</b>
<b>Embassies &amp; Missions</b>	2994.06	3240.07
<b>Special Diplomatic Expenditure</b>	2800.01	3000.01
<b>Entertainment of Dignitaries</b>	284.19	299.12
<b>ICCR</b>	290.00	300.00
<b>International Co-operation</b>	1084.56	1149.97
<b>Aid to Bhutan</b>	2884.65	3004.95



<b>Aid to Nepal</b>	800.00	992.00
<b>Aid to Myanmar</b>	300.00	400.00
<b>Aid to Other Developing Countries</b>	120.00	130.00
<b>Investment Promotion And Publicity Programme</b>	250.00	270.00
<b>Aid to Eurasian Countries</b>	45.00	100.00
<b>Aid to Latin American Countries</b>	20.00	40.00
<b>Aid to Seychelles</b>	140.00	160.00
<b>Capital Outlay on Housing</b>	150.00	350.00

**1.5** Explaining the reasons behind the substantial reduction in RE 2020-21 as compared to BE 2020-21, the Ministry stated that it projected a budgetary demand of Rs. 18256.59 cr for RE 2020-21 to Ministry of Finance, along with detailed justifications. The basis of these demands was explained in detail during discussions with Secretary (Expenditure) in October 2020. The demand projection was added by exhaustive unit wise discussions with respective Divisions, careful assessments of progress in projects and realistic expectation of efficient utilization in FY 2020-21. The RE 2020-21 allocation to the Ministry was Rs. 15000 cr, *i.e.* 82.16 % of MEA's demand, which is highest in last 5 years. Consistently Ministry's RE and BE demand-allocation differential has improved indicating realistic projections and constructive appreciation of Ministry's requirements by Ministry of Finance.

**1.6** The Committee enquired whether in the opinion of the Ministry of External Affairs, the RE allocation was sufficient for fulfilling its expanding mandate. The Ministry in a written reply stated that it undertook an assessment of the funds requirements for various heads in the MEA budget for suitable re-appropriation of allocation within the RE 2020-21 ceiling of Rs. 15000 cr, with identified savings being re-allocated to heads that needed enhancement, to ensure that the on-going projects, schemes and programmes are not adversely impacted. The quarterly budgetary and expenditure assessment instituted by the Ministry in the form of Quarterly Budget Management Meetings have aided the useful repurposing of budgetary distribution with the priority towards Ministry's development partnership portfolio.

**1.7** Elaborating upon the modalities for re-appropriation of funds, the Ministry in a written reply submitted that the required re-appropriation is undertaken after a detailed and careful assessment of requirements for the various heads in the MEA budget, in consultation with concerned Divisions and Spending Units, including through the modality of the Quarterly Budget Management Meeting (QBMM, chaired by the Foreign Secretary and the Financial Advisor of the Ministry), as per funds utilization status and implementation progress of projects, schemes and programmes, to suitably allocate funds within the budgetary ceilings conveyed by Ministry of Finance, so as to ensure that Ministry's ongoing projects, schemes, programmes and commitments have requisite funds. Re-appropriation of funds from one head to other is done with the approval of Ministry of Finance in terms of Delegated Financial Power Rules of Government of India.

**1.8** The details of the budgetary demands sought from the Ministry of Finance and the actual allocations made during the last three financial years are as follows:-

*(Rs. in Crores)*

<b>FY</b>	<b>BE Demand</b>	<b>BE Allocation</b>	<b>RE Demand</b>	<b>RE Allocation</b>	<b>Actuals</b>
2018-19	20873.40	15011.00	19762.73	15582.00	15527.70
2019-20	19965.57	17884.78	21173.50	17372.27	17272.05
2020-21	20873.40	17346.71	18256.59	15000.00	*12083.25
2021-22	22888.73	18154.73	-	-	-

*\* Expenditure upto January 2021*

**1.9** The details of allocations sought at supplementary Demands/Additional Demands during the year 2020-21 and the actual allocations given by the Ministry of Finance is as under:

*(Rs. in Crores)*

<b>Supplementary 2019-20</b>	<b>Demand</b>	<b>Allocation</b>
First Supplementary	141.02	141.02
Second Supplementary	0.02	0.00*

*\*yet to be approved by Parliament*

**1.10** The percentage of MEA’s budget allocation during 2021-22, as a percentage of the overall GoI budget is 0.52 %. The table illustrates the percentage of percentage of MEA’s budget allocation, as a percentage of the overall GoI budget for the past four years.

*(Rs. in Crore)*

	<b>BE 2018-19</b>	<b>BE 2019-20</b>	<b>BE 2020-21</b>	<b>BE 2020-21</b>
<b>MEA Budget</b>	15011.00	17884.78	17346.71	18154.73
<b>Overall GOI Budget</b>	2442213.00	2786349	3042230.00	3483235.63
<b>%</b>	<b>0.61 %</b>	<b>0.64%</b>	<b>0.57%</b>	<b>0.52%</b>

**1.11** In terms of percentage of MEA's budgetary allocation to the GOI budget, the allocation made to MEA is lowest for past four years. On being asked to state the reason for reduction of the budgetary allocations as a proportion of the Government’s overall budget, the Ministry stated that Ministry of Finance has not specified any reason regarding small % decrease (0.05%) in Ministry’s allocation while conveying budget figures for FY 2021-22. Ministry is cognizant of its budget allocation as a percentage of the overall budget of the Government of India. The overall share of Ministry’s budget in GOI’s budget is to be understood in terms of overall Government’s priorities and a “whole of government” approach to budgetary & expenditure management. Within the overall budgetary ceiling provided by the Ministry of Finance, allocation is made to various heads based on Ministry’s own priorities and realistic requirement of funds during the budgetary period.

**1.12** When asked about the steps taken up by the Ministry to obtain more allocation to raise alternative finances for carrying out its expenses, the Ministry responded that further, Ministry has been making constant endeavours to project its requirement of funds in a given year based on realistic and need-based estimation of schemes and projects so that our demand for funds is earnestly considered by the Ministry of Finance. These efforts have borne fruit and the gap between demand and allocation of budget has decreased over the years. Ministry of Finance made a robust allocation of Rs 18154.73 cr in BE 2021-22 which is the highest allocation till date. Ministry’s demand-allocation differential is the most favorable in RE 2020-21 and BE 2021-22. Further, Ministry closely liaises with other Ministries/Departments foe execution of

projects abroad in their respective technical domains, bringing at times additional funds from respective Ministries as well as technical knowledge to project execution.

**1.13** When asked about whether the allocation made to the Ministry satisfactory for completion of all Schemes/ projects/activities that are proposed during the financial year, the Ministry replied that it projected a budgetary demand of Rs. 22888.73 cr for BE 2021-22 to Ministry of Finance, along with detailed justifications. The basis of these demands was explained in detail during discussions with Secretary (Expenditure) in October 2020. However, allocation for BE 2021-22 conveyed in December 2020 by Ministry of Finance was Rs. 18154.73 cr, i.e. 79.32 % of MEA's demand. In terms of BE demand-allocation differential, this is the most favorable ratio for the Ministry in last many years.

**1.14** Regarding the steps taken by the Ministry to carry out a cross-country analysis of budgetary allocation made to Departments/Ministries responsible for conducting foreign policies of important countries across the globe, the Ministry stated that as recommended by the Hon'ble Committee, the Ministry commissioned a cross- Ministry as well as cross-country comparative study of budgetary allocations of Ministries/Departments with the mandate of managing foreign affairs to Research and Information System for economic development (RIS). The preliminary report of the study has been received from RIS and is being examined.

**1.15** Ministry further stated that it closely coordinates with other Ministries/Department in implementation of projects abroad, such as Ministry of Power, Ministry of Defence, Department of Science & Technology, Ministry of Road, Transport & Highways etc. along with maintaining close liaison with Ministry of Finance for seeking funds at various stages of the budgetary cycle, based on physical progress of projects.

**1.16** When the Committee highlighted that the Ministry had furnished the same reply last year and wanted to know the status of the preliminary Report, the Ministry informed that it has done a comprehensive assessment of the preliminary report submitted by RIS. Ministry is working with RIS to include more comparative study variables in the draft report to give a final shape to the report. It would be Ministry's endeavour to complete the report at the earliest.

**1.17** In their previous Demands for Grants Reports, the Committee had strongly recommended the Ministry to develop a well-defined and focused budgetary planning process so as to ensure that allocations sought are arrived at keeping in view achievable plans and projects and the absorption capacity of various units under the Ministry. The Ministry was further urged to consider the concept of Zero Based budgeting while drawing up their future projects.

**1.18** Enumerating the specific steps taken to develop a focused and well-defined budgetary planning process, the Ministry stated that allocations for Aid heads are made after undertaking a realistic spending assessment based on project implementation cycles, local conditions and physical progress for on-going projects, schemes and programmes; and based on project implementation timelines and cost estimates for planned projects, schemes and programmes. The Ministry has developed a rigorous mechanism of Quarterly Budget Management Meeting, which is chaired by Foreign Secretary himself. These budget management meetings are detailed exercise for head-wise evaluation of projects and evolving needs under various heads of Technical & Economic Cooperation as well as on the Non-Scheme head. For ongoing projects under the aid programs, the budgetary requirements are gauged based on inputs from the primary Divisions/Spending units which are collated and compared with the past utilization, work progress and pace of expenditure of the project. Aided by these budget management meetings as well as deliberations with various spending units at the RE and BE, a realistic budgetary estimates is drawn by the Ministry. For new projects, budgetary provisions are made as per estimates determined by project implementation timelines and cost estimates in their Detailed Project Reports. Allocations are then made to the extent of funds available within the overall budgetary provision made by Ministry of Finance. The selection of the projects to be undertaken under the Aid heads is an administrative decision which is taken by the Territorial Divisions and DPA in view of the political relations with the respective countries.

**1.19** The Committee further enquired about whether the Ministry has taken into account the idea of Zero Based budgeting while drawing up budgetary demands for FY 2021-22. The Ministry in a written reply stated that the overarching principle of zero-based budgeting guides the continuous evaluation and assessment of budgetary allocation as against funds utilization in Ministry's budget management. The result of sharper budgetary planning is reflected in RE and

BE demand vs allocation ratio being the most favorable in last many years, with RE 2020-21 (82% of demand) and BE 2021-22 (79.32% of demand). The Ministry will make more efforts in this direction to realize credible budgetary demands justified by past efficient utilization of funds and objective assessment of anticipated expenditures based on implementation progress. Ministry's endeavour would be to minimize the demand vs allocation ratio based on credible budgetary assessment and backed by efficient utilization of allocated resources.

**1.20** On the Committee's specific question on incorporation of the dimension of gender budgeting in proposing the budgetary demands of MEA, the Ministry submitted that the Ministry has made efforts to adopt welfare measures to support women of Indian origin who have been deserted by their overseas Indian spouses fraudulently, through the mobilization of the local Indian community in the endeavour and with some financial assistance from the Government. The objective of the scheme is to provide some financial assistance for providing legal services to needy women. A bill in this regard is also under consideration.

**1.21** During the oral evidence on 24 February 2021, the Foreign Secretary submitted:  
"The Ministry's overall budget allocation for 2021-22 is Rs. 18,154.73 crore against our demand of Rs. 22,888.73 crore. Thus, 79 per cent of our demand has been met. Our demand *versus* allocation differential has been decreasing, with FY 2021-22 differential being the most favourable. Our RE 2020-21 demand allocation ratio is 82 per cent, again, the highest in the last decade.

This has been achieved through more realistic and need-based assessment, as recommended by the Committee earlier. Secondly, we also believe that a closer consultative process with the Ministry of Finance has facilitated a better appreciation by them of the Ministry's expansive development assistance portfolio and requirement of funds thereof."

**1.22** Against a budgetary demand of Rs. 22,888.73 crore, the Ministry of External Affairs has been allocated Rs. 18,154.73 crore for BE 2021-22. The Committee observe that BE 2021-22 allocation is the highest ever allocation to the Ministry and is 4.66% more than BE 2020-21 and 21 % more than RE 2020-21 allocation. Notwithstanding

these figures, the percentage of MEA's budget during 2021-22 as a percentage of GOI's budget is merely 0.52%. While the increased allocation to MEA in absolute term is a fine development, however it is continuously slipping down as a percentage of the GOI's total expenditure. The Ministry's affirmative response to the Committee's query on adequacy of allocated budget indicates that the former has accepted budgetary constraint as a given reality. Keeping in view the extent and magnitude of India's diplomatic outreach and foreign policy objectives, the Committee strongly feel that the allocation is incommensurate and inadequate. Budgetary resources will play a determining role in India's pursuit of permanent seat at United Nations Security Council (UNSC) that require adequate global presence and expansion of diplomatic outreach. Provisioning of adequate finances is critical to ensure that India's global footprint and diplomatic outreach is not circumscribed. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the allocation to the Ministry of External Affairs, mandated with managing India's external relations, should further be suitably and appropriately enhanced from what is being provisioned now. The Ministry of External Affairs should make a strong case for the same.

*(Recommendation No. 1)*

1.23 The gap between budgetary demand and actual allocation to the Ministry of External Affairs at both the BE as well as the RE level have been a recurrent feature of MEA's Demands for Grants. The Ministry has informed that the two pronged approach of making realistic and need based assessment coupled with closer consultative process with the Ministry of Finance has yielded the most favourable BE allocation ratio with RE 2020-21 (82% of demand) and BE 2021-22 (79.32% of demand) to the Ministry. Owing to

**the reduction in budgetary allocation during RE 2020-21, the Ministry had to undertake re-assessment of fund requirements for budget heads.**

**The Committee are happy to learn that the Ministry's RE and BE demand-allocation differential has improved, demonstrating realistic projections and constructive appreciation of Ministry's requirements by the Ministry of Finance. The Committee urge that the Ministry should continue to make unrelenting efforts in narrowing down the RE and BE demand-allocation differential through credible budgetary demands justified by efficient utilization of funds and objective assessment of anticipated expenditures.**

*(Recommendation No.2)*

**1.24 Recognizing the significance of a focused budgetary planning process, the Committee have emphatically stressed upon the need to develop a well-defined and focused budgetary planning (including Zero-Based Budgeting). In its replies, the Ministry has informed that a rigorous mechanism of Quarterly Budget Management Meeting has been developed whereby detailed exercise for head-wise evaluation of projects under various Heads are carried out. Furthermore, the overarching principle of Zero-Based Budgeting guides the continuous evaluation and assessment of budgetary allocation as against fund utilization in Ministry's budget management. Appreciating the Ministry's efforts to incorporate the idea of Zero-Based Budgeting in the budgetary planning process, the Committee suggest that sustained endeavour should be made to make precise, objective and realistic demands by all Divisions/Spending Units to diminish the gap between budgetary demand and allocation.**



**The Committee note the lack of gender budgeting dimension in MEA's scheme of things. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to constitute a Gender Budget Cell in line with the 2007 Guidelines of the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance. In Committee's views a powerful instrument for achieving gender mainstreaming, the concept of Gender budgeting, must be integrated in the Ministry's policy formulation, implementation and review.**

*(Recommendation No.3)*

**1.25 While examining the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the past four years, the Committee have been recommending that the Ministry should conduct a cross-country comparative study of budgetary allocations of Ministries/Departments entrusted with the task of managing foreign affairs. In their initial replies, the Ministry submitted that the preliminary report of a study conducted by Research and Information System for economic development (RIS) is under examination. On further probing, the Ministry informed that a comprehensive assessment of the preliminary report has been completed and more comparative study variables are being included in the report.**

**The Committee do not approve such casual approach of the Ministry in furnishing replies to the Committee on such serious matters. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the findings of the preliminary Report should be furnished to the Committee instantly and final report should be compiled within three months. The Ministry should also ensure that the comparative data and figures are used to bolster its case for enhanced budgetary allocation in the next financial year..**

*(Recommendation No.4)*

## II. CLASSIFICATION OF BUDGET OF MEA

1.26 The Plan and Non-Plan classification has been discontinued since FY 2017-18. The budget classifications are now only in terms of Revenue and Capital heads and Scheme and Non-Scheme sections.

### A. Revenue & Capital

1.27 Allocations as per Revenue/Capital heads are given below:

#### Revenue And Capital

(Rs. In Crore)

Section	BE 2020-21	RE 2020-21	BE 2021-22
Revenue	16014.43	13744.10	16663.98
Capital	1332.28	1255.90	1490.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>17346.71</b>	<b>15000.00</b>	<b>18154.73</b>

1.28 In comparison to BE 2020-21, it can be discerned that there has been an increase in allocations under both the Revenue and Capital Sections during the BE 2021-22. Providing justifications for decrease in allocation at the RE Stage for 2020-21, the Ministry stated that it has been allocated RE 2020-21 of Rs 15000.0 cr as against demand of Rs 18256.59 cr (82.16% of demand.). While Ministry did receive a cut of Rs 2346.71 cr, it is also noted RE 2020-21 allocation is the most favorable demand-allocation ratio in many years. The reason for budgetary cut are varied, *inter alia* including significant impact of global COVID lockdown on our project execution in view of disrupted supply chains, man-power & material availability, extant cash management guidelines, all impacting our overall utilization of budgetary resources. Our own demand projection was tighter cognizant of aforesaid realities, project pace and realistic estimation of absorption capacities of spending units in current financial year. With project execution picking apace in Q3 and Q4, it is Ministry's expectation that allocated RE 2020-21 would suffice our requirements in CFY and with a healthy BE 2021-22 allocation of Rs 18154.73 cr (highest ever in absolute terms), our Scheme commitments to international partners would not be hampered for want of budgetary resources. Ministry undertakes a detailed and careful assessment of funds requirements for the various heads in the MEA budget, in consultation with concerned Divisions and Spending Units, as per funds utilization status and implementation progress of projects, schemes and programmes, to suitably allocate

funds within the RE 2020-21 & BE 2021-22 ceilings conveyed by Ministry of Finance, to ensure that Ministry's ongoing projects, schemes, programmes and commitments have requisite funds. Therefore, adjustments have been made in the allocations to various heads of MEA's budget to adhere to the overall RE and BE ceilings given by Ministry of Finance. Some of the adjustments made are as follows:

**a. Capital Section**

RE 2020-21: Reduced allocation under Loans to Bhutan based on physical progress of projects, actual pace of expenditure, local conditions, etc. However, allocation for Capital Outlay on Public Works and Housing is substantially increased to Rs. 645 cr from Rs. 500 cr in RE 2020-21.

**b. Revenue Section**

RE 2020-21: Allocation under Aid budgets heads have been rationalized based on progress of work in projects and funds utilization status, as well as the overall budgetary allocation, as shown below. Allocations under Investment Promotion and Publicity Programme, Eurasia, etc. have been maintained unchanged. However, allocations under Aid to Nepal, Myanmar, Other International Organisation, United Nation Organizations and Contribution to SAARC Secretariat have been increased.

**1.29** The Ministry also provided the schemes/projects/activities where allocations were rationalized as a result of the actual pace of expenditure and the overall budget allocation under RE 2020-21 is as follows

*(Rs. in crore):*

Schemes	BE 2020-21	RE 2020-21
Bhutan		
Grants	2052.37	1650.96
Loans	832.28	610.90
Mauritius	1025.00	650.00
Aid to Bangladesh	200.00	125.00
Aid to Sri Lanka	200.00	75.00
Aid to Maldives	300.00	175.00

Aid to Other Developing Countries	120.00	100.00
Aid to African Countries	350.00	225.00
Multilateral Economic Relations	20.00	9.72
Aid to Mongolia	2.00	0.58
Aid to Afghanistan	400.00	350.00
Chabahar Port	100.00	0.00
SAARC Programme	8.00	6.00
Aid to Seychelles	140.00	90.00
ITEC-Programme	220.00	90.00
Indo-Pacific Co-operation (ASEAN Multilateral)	45.00	30.00

<b>Non-Scheme</b>	<b>BE 2020-21</b>	<b>RE 2020-21</b>
Secretariat General Services	520.96	445.45
Training	25.95	16.77
Embassies And Missions	2994.06	2861.06
Special Diplomatic Expenditure	2800.01	2660.01
Passport & Emigration	1348.59	1057.84
Assistance to Autonomous Bodies and other Institutions	323.72	284.18
International Co-operation	1084.56	902.46
Demarcation of Boundaries	3.00	2.00
Other Schemes	10.01	7.42
Public Works	350.00	295.00
Expenditure relating to Pilgrimages abroad	1.00	0.14

**1.30** The schemes/projects/activities where allocations were rationalized due to overall allocation under BE 2021-22 as well as expected utilization in the next Financial year are as follows:

*(Rs. in crore)*

<b>Schemes</b>	<b>BE 2020-21</b>	<b>BE 2021-22</b>
----------------	-------------------	-------------------

Aid to Maldives	300.00	250.00
ITEC Programme	220.00	150.00
SAARC Programme	8.00	6.00
Multilateral Economic Relation	20.00	10.20
Indo Pacific Co-operation	45.00	40.00
Aid to African Countries	350.00	300.00
Aid to Mauritius	1025.00	900.00

<b>Non-Scheme</b>	<b>BE 2020-21</b>	<b>BE 2021-22</b>
Training	25.95	25.76
Passport & Emigration	1348.59	1328.63
South Asian University	325.00	314.00
Indian Council of World Affairs	16.50	16.00
Research and Information System for Developing Countries	13.00	12.62
India Centre for Migration	0.50	0.02
Awareness Campaign/media Plan	11.00	2.00
Celebration of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas	40.00	20.00
Demarcation of Boundaries	3.00	2.00
Other Schemes	10.01	6.02
Public Works	350.00	260.00
India Centre for Migration	0.50	0.25

**1.31** The projections made for Capital and Revenue section during the last three years including at the BE stage of 2020-21 are provided below

*(Rs. in Crores)*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Capital Projection</b>		<b>Revenue Projection</b>		<b>Total Projection</b>	
	<b>BE</b>	<b>RE</b>	<b>BE</b>	<b>RE</b>	<b>BE</b>	<b>RE</b>
2018-19	2249.40	1406.38	18624.00	18376.23	20873.40	19782.61

2019-20	1569.63	1735.04	21639.16	19438.46	23208.79	21173.50
2020-21	1794.69	1835.31	21863.04	16421.28	23657.73	18256.59
2021-22	2107.26	-	20781.47	-	22888.73	

## B. Scheme And Non-Scheme

**1.32** The following table indicates the budgetary allocation as per the Scheme and Non-Scheme Sections during the last three years:-

*(In Rs. Crore)*

Section	BE 2019-20	RE 2019-20	BE 2020-21	RE 2020-21	BE 2021-22
Scheme	8175.79	7246.01	7449.65	5756.16	7635.15
Non-Scheme	9708.99	10126.26	9897.06	9243.84	10519.58
<b>Total</b>	<b>17884.78</b>	<b>17372.27</b>	<b>17346.71</b>	<b>15000.00</b>	<b>18154.73</b>

**1.33** On being asked about the objectives for classification of the budget into Scheme and Non-Scheme, the Ministry stated that the ‘Scheme’ and ‘Non-Scheme’ classification has been made by Ministry of Finance, and is not specific to MEA. Ministry of Finance’s Budget Circular for FY 2017-18 in its introductory chapter states the following with regard to doing away with the Plan/Non-Plan classification (leaving the Scheme/Non-Scheme classification). A significant reform initiative in the budgeting process, announced by the Finance Minister in his budget speech of 2016-17, was the merger of Plan and non-Plan distinction in expenditure budgeting. This has been implemented from the budget of 2017-18. The reform had been initiated in light of the policy decision to do away with the term ‘Plan’ while distinguishing expenditure on socio-economic welfare programmes and schemes in the wake of abolition of Planning Commission. Besides, a notion had widely gained ground among the policy makers and officials across all levels that Plan expenditure is good and Non-Plan is bad. This bias in favor of Plan expenditure and against Non-Plan expenditure has led to a situation in which essential Non-Plan expenditure such as maintenance of assets, recruitment of doctors, teachers, etc. is neglected. This has also led to a motivation for showing higher Plan expenditure and higher Plan sizes both at Central and State levels. Further, several factors such as shift of focus of Plan expenditure from capital to revenue expenditure and the process of transferring

expenditure of old schemes to Non-Plan at the end of each Five-Year Plan means that a clear correspondence cannot be drawn between Plan and developmental expenditures.

**1.34** While explaining the significance of Plan and Non-Plan expenditure Ministry of External Affairs stated in a written reply that the Plan/Non-Plan bifurcation of expenditure has also contributed to a fragmented view of resource allocation to various programmes/schemes. With this fragmented distinction, it is difficult not only to ascertain cost of delivering a service but also to link outlays to outcomes. Outcomes and outputs of programmes depend on total expenditure, Plan and Non-Plan put together and merely on Plan expenditure. Plan and Non-Plan distinction in the budget is, therefore, neither able to provide a satisfactory classification of developmental and non-developmental dimensions of Government expenditure nor an appropriate budgetary framework. In the above context, the Government has decided to do away with the practice of classifying expenditure as ‘Plan’ and ‘Non-Plan’ in the Budget. The reclassification of expenditure under accounting heads will start from Budget 2017-18 and after the 12th Plan period (2012-17) comes to an end. With the removal of the Plan and Non-Plan distinction the focus of budgeting and expenditure classification will shift to revenue and capital, as has been envisaged in the Constitution of India. A clear distinction between capital and revenue expenditures is also essential for analytical purposes, transparency, and efficient policy decision-making.

**1.35** The details of allocations under the heads of Schemes as per the Ministry are as follows: -

*(Rs. in Crores)*

<b>Schemes</b>	<b>BE 2021-22</b>
Bhutan	
Grants	2124.20
Loans	880.75
Afghanistan	350.00
Aid to Bangladesh	200.00
Aid to Nepal	992.00

Aid to Sri Lanka	200.00
Aid to Maldives	250.00
Myanmar	400.00
Aid to Mongolia	2.00
Aid to African Countries	300.00
Eurasian Countries	100.00
Aid to Latin American Countries	40.00
Aid to Other Developing Countries	130.00
Aid for Disaster Relief	20.00
Chabahar Port	100.00
Aid to Mauritius	900.00
Aid to Seychelles	160.00
ITEC-Programme	150.00
SAARC Programme	6.00
Multilateral Economic Relation (MER) Programme	10.20
Indo-Pacific Co-operation (ASEAN Multilateral)	40.00
Investment Promotion and Publicity Programme	270.00
Aid for Cultural and Heritage Projects	10.00
<b>Total Schemes</b>	<b>7635.15</b>

1.36 The details of allocations under the heads of Non-Schemes are as follows: -

*(Rs. in crores)*

<b>Non-Scheme</b>	<b>BE 2021-22</b>
Secretariat-General Services	522.85
Embassies & Missions	3240.07
Passport & Emigration	1328.63
International Conferences/ Meetings	1.00
Entertainment Charges	299.12
Other Scheme	6.02
Public Works	260.00



Housing	350.00
Special Diplomatic Expenditure	3000.01
International Cooperation	565.97
Nalanda University	250.00
South Asian University	314.00
Demarcation of Boundaries	2.00
Celebration of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas	20.00
Expenditure relating to Pilgrimages abroad	1.00
Loss by exchange	0.01
Other Institutions	4.50
Training	25.76
Indian Council of Cultural Relations	300.00
Indian Council of World Affairs	16.00
Research and Information System for Developing Countries	12.62
India Centre for Migration	0.02
<b>Total Non-Scheme</b>	<b>10519.58</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>18154.73</b>

**1.37** On the Committee's query about the existence of a monitoring mechanism for keeping a check on expenditure under the aegis of the new categorization of expenditure under 'Scheme' and 'Non-Scheme' Heads, the Ministry replied that all expenditure is closely monitored and fund releases are made in line with implementation progress of projects, programmes and schemes, including through quarterly expenditure review meetings. There has been more intensive monitoring and review of the technical aid and development assistance projects in the past year, including at the level of the External Affairs Minister and Foreign Secretary. These reviews have identified the way forward for many projects where progress was slow. Further, due to the regular review and monitoring of MEA's scheme section at high levels, several new initiatives and projects have been identified in consultation with the

concerned beneficiary host governments, which would be getting finalized and operationalized in due course.

**1.38 After the discontinuation of the Plan and Non-Plan classification since Financial Year 2017-18, budget classifications are being done along two verticals – Revenue and Capital heads and Scheme and Non-scheme Sections. The Committee observe that there has been an increase in allocations under both the Revenue and Capital sections during BE 2021-22 and decreased allocations during RE 2020-21. According to the Ministry, there are varied reasons for reduced allocations which *inter-alia* includes disruptions in supply chains, manpower and material availability due to COVID-19 lockdown, extant Cash Management Guidelines, etc. The Committee observe that adjustments have been made in allocation under various budget heads of MEA to comply with the overall RE and BE ceilings given by the Ministry of Finance. While acknowledging the grounds for reduced allocations during RE 2020-21, the Committee are of the firm opinion that the current allocations under both Capital and Revenue sections would be inadequate. The Committee, therefore, strongly urge that the Ministry should undertake a detailed and careful assessment of funds requirements for various heads in MEA budget and make a case for enhanced allocation at the RE stage to cover up for the slow pace of progress last year due to Covid-19 pandemic.**

*(Recommendation No.5)*

**1.39 The Committee note that an allocation of Rs. 7635.15 crore and Rs. 10,519.58 crore has been made at BE 2021-22 for Scheme and Non-Scheme Sections, respectively. In terms of distribution about 42% of MEA's budget is on Scheme side, which primarily constitutes Technical and Economic Cooperation with other countries. The Non-Scheme**

Section includes Passport Sewa Project, Missions/Post abroad, obligatory as well as voluntary contributions to UN and other International Organizations.

The Committee are aware that both the Scheme and Non-Scheme sections are vital in their own right. However, by virtue of catering to international aid and assistance programmes that directly impinge upon our international credentials; the Committee are of the considered view that the Scheme section should be given requisite priority in budgetary allocations. The Committee are pleased to learn that there has been intensive monitoring and review of technical aid and assistance programmes in the past year, including at the level of External Affairs Minister and Foreign Secretary. These institutionalized reviews have led to identification of several new initiatives and projects. While maintaining a fine balance between our aid and non-aid outlays, the Committee are hopeful that the Scheme section will be kept unaffected from budgetary cuts. The Committee would recommend that the Ministry should ensure that funds are available for smooth and efficient implementation of our international projects without any cost and time over-runs. The Committee also desire that the Ministry should prepare a detailed timeline for initiation and completion of the newly identified projects and initiatives.

*(Recommendation No.6)*

### III. REVIEW OF PAST PERFORMANCE

1.40 The detail of the utilization of quarterly allocations during the last three years is as under:-

*Rs. in Crore)*

2018-19	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	Total
Allocation	3352.45	3352.45	3352.45	4953.65	15011.00
Utilization	4860.58	3493.12	3008.05	4164.57	15526.32

<b>2019-20</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Quarter</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Allocation</b>	3994.26	3994.26	3994.26	5902.00	SUM(LEFT)
<b>Utilization</b>	4353.59	5623.33	3436.49	3858.64	17272.05

<b>2020-21</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Quarter</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Allocation</b>	3874.09	3874.09	3874.09	5724.44	17346.71
<b>Utilization</b>	3586.43	3239.01	3965.03	1292.78*	12083.25

*\*up to January 2021*

**1.41** Specifying the steps taken/being taken by the Ministry for balanced expenditure during each quarter of the financial year the Ministry stated that in 2020-21, Ministry has ensured smooth and balanced pace of expenditure during each quarter. Cumulative expenditure in the first three quarters has been 21%, 39% and 62% of the BE 2020-21. The quarterly expenditure by the Ministry in FY 2020-21 was in consonance with Cash Management Guidelines of Ministry of Finance, placing a 20% ceiling on Q1 & Q2 expenditure. End December expenditure figure indicates Ministry had spent 72% of allocated budget fully satisfying Ministry of Finance instructions that expenditure in the final quarter should not be more than 33% of allocated budget [RE 2020-21].

**1.42** On whether any mechanism exists to ensure optimal utilization of budgetary resources during each quarter of the year, the Ministry replied that all expenditure is closely monitored and fund releases are made in line with physical and financial progress of projects to ensure that there is no parking of funds with implementing agencies. To ensure optimal utilization of budgetary resources during each quarter of the financial year, expenditure is closely and regularly monitored by the Financial Advisor in consultation with Divisional Heads, including through quarterly expenditure review meetings. During the quarterly expenditure review meetings the expenditure plans of the Ministry's various Divisions and Spending Units are discussed and the importance of ensuring balanced expenditure during each quarter of the financial year is emphasized. Divisions/Spending Units accordingly make all efforts to ensure

evenly paced expenditure, within the constraints of a majority of the spending being in foreign countries where diverse local conditions and varying project development and implementation schedules pose a challenge for alignment of expenditure to our own budget cycle.

**1.43** While tendering evidence before the Committee on 24 February 2021, the Foreign Secretary delved upon the expenditure pattern of the Ministry as under:-

“The Ministry has been consistently ensuring an even pace of expenditure throughout the year, in line with the Committee’s recommendations. This is reflected in the fact that the Ministry did not have to seek relaxation with regard to the Ministry of Finance’s ceiling on the fourth quarter expenditure being less than 33 per cent in the past three years. Even in the current financial year, the Ministry has ensured that Q1 and Q2 expenditure has remained within the 20 per cent ceiling in line with Cash Management Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Finance. Since the Ministry has already utilised over 72 per cent of its allocated budget till end of December 2020, the fourth quarter ceiling of 33 per cent would not apply. This is a result of the Ministry’s focussed approach towards sharper monitoring and expenditure management through its review meetings. We expect that due to evenly paced expenditure and re-appropriation, we will fully and judiciously utilise our budget allocation.”

**1.44** When asked about the economy of measures followed in budget utilization over the past few years, the Ministry stated that all instructions contained in various Circulars of Ministry of Finance towards economy measures, rationalization of expenditure, etc., are scrupulously followed by the Ministry. This being unusual year given COVID lockdown and Cash Management guidelines in place in consonance with country’s fight against COVID, Ministry’s efforts have been to keep establishment expenses to bare essentials. Hence the visits continue to be bare minimum. COVID restrictions afforded Ministry to improvise opportunities technologically and go virtual. A significant number of Bilateral Working Groups, Ministerial meetings including Virtual Summits and even project management committees were held virtually sustaining momentum of our diplomatic engagement despite COVID challenge. This also led to rationalization of expenditure involved in physical meetings and gatherings. Further replacement of official vehicles was deferred, except against

condemned ones, which was critically reviewed and concurred with the approval of Ministry of Finance. Creation of posts is avoided, and where functionally necessary, is done with the approval of Ministry of Finance. All expenditure is closely monitored and fund releases are made in line with physical and financial progress of projects to ensure that there is no parking of funds with implementing agencies. To ensure optimal utilization of budgetary resources during each quarter of the financial year, expenditure is closely and regularly monitored by the Financial Advisor in consultation with Divisional Heads, including through quarterly expenditure review meetings.

**1.45** In pursuance of the Committee's recommendation on improving financial management and spending pattern of the Ministry to avoid last quarter expenditure beyond the 33% ceiling and the 15% expenditure ceiling for March, the Ministry had submitted that Quarterly Budget Management Meetings were instituted. In this context, the Committee desired to know about the mechanism and agenda of these Meetings. In a written reply the Ministry stated that Quarterly Budget Management Meetings are chaired by Foreign Secretary. To ensure optimal utilization of budgetary resources during each quarter of the financial year, expenditure is closely and regularly monitored by the Financial Advisor in consultation with Divisional Heads, including through quarterly expenditure review meetings. During the quarterly expenditure review meetings, the expenditure plans of the Ministry's various Divisions and Spending Units are discussed and the importance of ensuring balanced expenditure during each quarter of the financial year is emphasized. Divisions/Spending Units accordingly make all efforts to ensure evenly paced expenditure, within the constraints of a majority of the spending being in foreign countries where diverse local conditions and varying project development and implementation schedules pose a challenge for alignment of expenditure to our own budget cycle. All expenditure is closely monitored and fund releases are made in line with physical and financial progress of projects to ensure that there is no parking of funds with implementing agencies.

**1.46** Highlighting the effectiveness of these newly instituted Meetings, the Ministry submitted that the mechanism of quarterly expenditure review meetings has been very effective in ensuring proper utilization of funds during each quarter. With Foreign Secretary himself

chairing the meetings, it affords supervision and review not only of expenditure management but also project execution at the highest level in Ministry. Effectiveness of this mechanism is evident from Ministry's total budget utilization annually being 98% over the past 5 years.

**1.47** The Ministry had also stated that it is planning to link IMAS 2.0 with Public Finance Management System (PFMS) to ensure seamless, real time reporting and monitoring of financial data. Updating the Committee about the status of their linkage, the Ministry stated that IMAS 2.0 (Phase-1) is expected to be ready for the roll out by 01 April 2021, in a phased wise manner. In a particular phase, 15-17 Missions have been planned to be migrated from IMAS 1.0 to IMAS 2.0 along with their legacy data. Partial integration of PFMS with IMAS 2.0 has been achieved in Phase-1. Instead of real time availability of the financial data, month-wise automatic updation of data with PFMS has been implemented. Subsequent integration with the PFMS has been planned in IMAS 2.0 (Phase-2), post complete implementation of IMAS 2.0 (Phase-1).

**1.48** Upon careful scrutiny of the budget documents and replies furnished by the Ministry, the Committee observe a smooth and balanced pace of expenditure during each quarter of the Financial Year 2020-21. The cumulative expenditure in the first three quarters have been 21%, 39% and 62% which is in consonance with the Cash Management Guidelines of Ministry of Finance. The Committee note that in order to ensure optimum utilization of budgetary resources, expenditure is closely and regularly monitored through quarterly review meetings. It is satisfying to note that the mechanism has resulted in effective budgetary utilization to the tune of 98% over past five years.

While acknowledging the prudent and optimum utilization pattern of MEA for BE 2020-21, the Committee would urge that the Ministry should continue its focused approach towards sharper monitoring and expenditure management through its review

**meetings. Such perfect budgetary utilization would certainly make a compelling case for enhanced budgetary allocation to MEA during RE 2021-22 as well as BE 2022-23.**

*(Recommendation No.7)*



**CHAPTER II**  
**SECTORAL ALLOCATIONS**

The allocation to major heads for the year 2021-22 is given below:

*(In ₹ Crore)*

<b>Major Head</b>		<b>Allocati on</b>
<b>Secretariat General Services</b>	Ministry's Secretariat expenses, expenses on hostels and residential complexes, foreign and domestic travel expenses, Public Diplomacy and Press Relations and Trade & Investment Promotion.	<b>522.85</b>
<b>External Affairs</b>	Foreign Service Institute, expenditure on India's diplomatic Missions and Posts abroad, Central Passport Organisation and Protector General of Emigrant, welfare of overseas Indians, hospitality to dignitaries, contributions to UNO and other international organisations, grants to autonomous bodies and institutions etc.	<b>9386.72</b>
<b>Technical and Economic Cooperation (TEC) with foreign countries</b>	India's aid and assistance programmes	<b>6754.40</b>
<b>Capital Outlay on Public</b>	Acquisition, construction and	<b>610.00</b>

<b>Works and Housing</b>	major renovation of GOI-owned Chanceries and residential properties abroad and offices in India	
<b>Advances to Foreign Governments</b>		<b>880.75</b>
<b>Total BE for FY 2019-20</b>		<b>18154.70</b>

## I. EMBASSIES AND MISSIONS

**2.2** The demands under the minor head ‘Embassies and Missions’ provides for expenditure on India’s representation abroad and functioning of Missions/Posts abroad. An outlay of Rs. 2994.06 crore was allocated during BE 2020-21 and it was decreased to Rs. 2861.06 crore at the RE stage. A provision of Rs. 3240.07 crore has been made in BE 2021-22. Providing the rationale behind increase in allocation at the BE for 2021-22, the Ministry submitted that keeping with the growing diplomatic outreach by Government of India and the need to expand our presence in various parts of the world, which are currently represented through concurrent accreditations, Government of India has already approved setting up of 18 new Missions by the Cabinet in March 2018 and 3 new Indian Missions in Estonia, Paraguay and Dominican Republic were approved by the Cabinet in December 2020. Ministry is in the process of establishing the reminder of the Missions. These allocations are also affected by the movement of the Rupee *vis-à-vis* foreign currencies, increase in salaries and allowance, local rents and taxes, etc. These factors accounted for increase in allocation at the RE stage for 2020-21 as well as BE for 2021-22

**2.3** The details of projections made by the Ministry, actual allocations made and expenditures incurred under the Head ‘Embassies and Missions’ during the past three years are provided as under:

(Rs. in Crore)

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Projection</b>		<b>Allocation</b>		<b>Actual Expenditure</b>
	<b>BE</b>	<b>RE</b>	<b>BE</b>	<b>RE</b>	
2018-19	2800.01	3053.62	2701.00	2678.81	2737.69

2019-20	3243.22	3060.07	2748.06	2910.56	2905.24
2020-21	3247.94	3103.69	2994.06	2861.06	2407.77*

\* Upton January 2021.

**2.4** The Committee enquired whether in the opinion of the Ministry, the available funds are adequate for smooth functioning of various Embassies and Missions abroad after the devaluation of Rupees *vis-à-vis* USD. In a written reply, the Ministry submitted that adequate funds are provided for the smooth functioning of Missions and Posts abroad, assessed in the light of utilization pattern and pace of expenditure.

**2.5** Given the budgetary constraints being endured by the Ministry, the Committee enquired about the steps being taken by the Ministry to rationalize the working and expenditure of Indian Missions/Posts abroad, the Ministry stated that the establishment expenditure by Ministry, including on Missions and Posts abroad, has been kept at the minimum possible. Ministry constantly reassesses requirement of funds towards ‘Embassies and Missions’ head and ensure that our Missions and Posts are able to fulfil Ministry’s priorities, commitments and immediate requirement of funds within the overall budgetary constraints.

**2.6** In view of the expanding ties between India and other countries and taking into consideration the Hon’ble Prime Minister’s visits abroad, the Committee asked about the plans of expansion in terms of establishing new Missions/Posts/Consulates/Indian Cultural Centres abroad. The Ministry responded that from time to time, it formulates proposals for opening of resident Indian Missions in countries where there are no Indian Missions at present. Opening of Indian Missions in these countries help expand India’s diplomatic footprint, deepen political relations, enable growth of bilateral trade, investment and economic engagements, facilitate stronger people-to-people contacts, bolster political outreach in multilateral fora and help garner support for India’s foreign policy objectives. Resident Indian Missions also help better assist the local Indian community and protect their interests. Expansion of global and diplomatic outreach is an important element in our objective of becoming a US\$ 5 trillion economy and in boosting growth and development of the economy in line with ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’. With this objective, 18 new Indian Missions were approved by Union Cabinet in

March 2018 and 3 new Indian Missions in Estonia, Paraguay and Dominican Republic were approved by the Cabinet in December 2020. Implementation of these decisions is underway. Further, the Ministry is in the process of expanding India's diplomatic presence in important partner countries, including in the neighborhood, the Latin American and Caribbean region, the Pacific Island region and Europe and proposals to this effect are under process.

**2.7** In keeping with the vision of Government of India of maximizing India's diplomatic presence abroad, the Union Cabinet in March 2018 accorded approval for opening of 18 new Indian Missions in Africa in a phased manner between 2018-2021. Conakry (Guinea), Djibouti (Djibouti), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), Brazzaville (Republic of Congo), Malabo (Equatorial Guinea) and Kigali (Rwanda) were covered in the first phase. Yaounde (Cameroon), Asmara (Eritrea) and Mbabane (Eswatini) were covered in the second phase. Monrovia (Liberia), Freetown (Sierra Leone) and Sao Tome (Sao Tome and Principe) were covered in the third phase. Nouakchott (Mauritania), Lomé (Togo) and N'djamena (Chad) were covered in the fourth phase and Mogadishu (Somalia), Bissau (Guinea Bissau) and Praia (Cape Verde) are being covered in the last phase. Of these, 15 Missions are in various stages of functioning and all efforts are being made to operationalise the last 3 Missions viz: Mogadishu, Bissau and Praia. The total budgetary implications at the end of four years are approximately INR 153.81 Crores.

**2.8** Responding to the Committee's query regarding the data on countries where there are no resident Missions currently, the Ministry stated that At present there are 48 countries where India does not have a resident Indian Mission or Post (**Annexure-I**). Countries are identified for opening of resident Indian Missions/Posts on the basis of potential for deepening strategic cooperation, pending commitments from the point of view of reciprocity, for signalling India's commitment to stepping up of diplomatic engagement with important countries/regions etc. Opening of a resident Indian Mission or Post is a time-taking exercise requiring internal planning and approvals as well as coordination and liaisoning with the host Government.

**2.9** On the rationale behind the decision for establishment of Embassies/Missions abroad, the Ministry stated that in recent years, there has been visible enhancement in India's standing

as a global power with advances in economic, scientific and technological arenas. There is widespread recognition of India as an emerging power and economy, growing interest from across the world in engaging with India, expansion of India's diplomatic outreach manifesting in India taking the lead in regional groupings, increase in number of high-level exchanges, bilateral agreements and MoUs signed, growth in economic and developmental cooperation through projects, and initiatives led by India on the international stage such as the International Solar Alliance, Coalition on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. India aspires to be a permanent member of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and to achieve that objective, our presence in all UN member countries is essential so as to coordinate our efforts in their Foreign Office. Like India which is a non-permanent member of UNSC currently, all other countries also become non-permanent members of UNSC every two years, and thus our presence in their capitals help us to achieve our objective of UNSC permanent seat.

**2.10** Further, the broad foreign policy vision of the Government is to maximize India's presence abroad in the most optimal manner. This has also been committed during the budget statement made by Finance Minister in the House of Parliament in July 2019. The objective of our foreign policy is also to build a conducive environment for India's growth and development through partnerships with friendly countries. Countries are identified for opening of resident Indian Missions on the basis of potential for deepening strategic cooperation, strong potential for bilateral trade and investment, strong Diaspora presence, bolster political outreach in multilateral for a, pending commitments from the point of view of reciprocity, and for signaling India's commitment to stepping up of diplomatic engagement with important countries/regions etc.

**2.11** The Ministry has informed that increase in budgetary allocation during BE 2021-22 is mainly due to opening of new Missions/Posts. The Committee desired to know about the detailed timeline for opening of these Missions. The Ministry replied that three new Indian Missions in Estonia, Paraguay and Dominican Republic were approved by the Cabinet in December 2020 and are to be opened and operationalized in 2021. Further, the Ministry is in the process of expanding India's diplomatic presence in important partner countries in the

neighborhood, the Latin American and Caribbean region, the Pacific Island region and Europe and proposals to this effect are under process.

**2.12** In their previous DFG Reports, the Committee have been urging that centralized monitoring mechanism should be established to ensure an efficient and timely delivery of services in the Indian Missions/Posts abroad. In response, the Ministry had stated that Performance Evaluation and Monitoring System (PEMS) portal is being revamped and the newly modified portal was expected to be launched soon. Furnishing the details of work completed on the newly modified portal on performance appraisal of Missions/Posts abroad, the Ministry informed as under:

“1. The process of revamping the PEMS (Performance Evaluation and Monitoring System) portal, a centralized monitoring mechanism to ensure an efficient on-site and off-site inspection of the functioning of our Missions/Posts abroad on an annual basis, is under process. The PEMS is not punitive but recommendatory in nature to improve the performance of Missions/Posts over time.

2. Based on extensive feedback and interactions with our Missions/Posts and various Divisions in the Ministry, a set of revised preliminary questionnaire has been devised. The main objective of the questions are to critically evaluate the activities/services and functioning of Indian/Posts abroad including political, economic, cultural and consular responsibilities.

3. The system will be fully implemented on a common digital platform being developed in the Ministry. Missions/Posts will be given a time-frame to upload their responses to the questions on portal. Thereafter, their responses will be evaluated in the Ministry.

4. Missions/Posts, which will have scores below average will be short-listed for physical inspection by a team from HQs. Missions/Posts, where the performance is average but could further increase its performance through guidance from Headquarters will be asked to take necessary corrective steps.

5. As far as accessibility of the information uploaded on the portal is concerned, it will be limited to specific users only.”

**2.13** The region-wise list of Mission/Posts in various parts of the world is given in **Annexure –II.**

**2.14** Regarding the plan to open new Missions/Posts in Latin America, the Ministry stated that with the objective of enhancing diplomatic presence in the Latin American and Caribbean region, a proposal to open new Indian Missions in Paraguay and Dominican Republic was moved by the Ministry and this was approved by the Union Cabinet in December 2020. These Missions are expected to be opened and operationalized in 2021, on priority basis. Further, the Ministry aims to open 5 more Missions in the Latin American and Caribbean region over the next few years and proposals to this effect are currently under process.

**2.15** On the issue of centralized monitoring mechanism at Headquarters to keep a check on the activities and to ensure efficient and fast delivery of services by various Indian Missions/Posts, the Ministry stated that the Directorate of General of Inspections (DGI) was set-up in 2014 to streamline the system of regular inspection of Indian Missions/Posts abroad. Ministry introduced a web-portal namely Performance Evaluation and Monitoring System (PEMS) in 2016 using a set of 60 binary questions for use as basis for selection of Mission/Posts for on-site inspections. The endeavour is to impress upon the Missions/Posts that their performance is under regular vigil and is being monitored at Headquarters. PEMS-I is being revised to make it more comprehensive and enable both on-site and off-site inspection.

**2.16** On being asked about a provision for regular inspections of the Indian Missions/Posts abroad, the Ministry replied that the Inspections were comprehensive in nature that included issues related to Administration, Establishment, Consular, Visa and Commercial issues, Finance and Accounting, Security, Communication, Cultural, Utilization of resources and various activities undertaken by the Missions/Posts in the last few years. Eight (08) Missions/Posts were inspected in 2018 and two (02) in 2019. However, due to COVID-19 pandemic, inspections of the Indian Missions/Posts could not be conducted during the last year.

**2.17** The Committee were keen to know whether any internal mechanism has been put in place to monitor the instructions issued by the Headquarters reach the Missions/Posts on time/immediately and are followed across its establishment, particularly regarding Consular

and visa services. The Ministry submitted that all the instructions regarding consular and visa services issued by the Ministry of External Affairs are conveyed to Indian Missions/Posts abroad immediately through email and other means of communication for compliance. The Missions/ Posts abroad submit prescribed periodical reports/returns in respect of visa and consular services to Ministry regularly, for monitoring delivery of these services. There is also digital portal such as MADAD, facilitating monitoring by the Ministry of consular grievances redressal by Missions/Posts abroad. There was no specific lapse during the last three years.

**2.18 The Committee note that the budgetary allocation under the head ‘Embassies and Missions’ has been enhanced from Rs. 2994.06 crore (BE 2020-21) to Rs. 3240.07 crore (BE 2021-22). As per the Ministry, the increased allocation is for opening of new Missions/Posts to expand our diplomatic outreach. In Committee’s view Missions and Posts constitute the vital interface not only between India and the respective country in which they are located but also serves as its connect with Indian diaspora. The Committee also understand that resident Indian Missions are opened on the basis of potential for deepening strategic cooperation, strong potential for bilateral trade and investment, strong Diaspora presence, bolster political outreach and for signaling India’s commitment to stepping up of diplomatic engagement with important countries/regions. The upward budgetary allocation under the head ‘Embassies and Missions’ is a satisfying development. However, the Committee find that like the overall trend in MEA’s Demands for Grants, there has been a mismatch between the budgetary projection and actual allocation under this head. The Committee also note the good pace of expenditure and budgetary utilization under this sub head during the past three years. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should actively seek to redress the sub-optimal allocation under this head with the Ministry of Finance at all levels. The**



**prudent expenditure pattern displayed by the Ministry should be cited as a valid ground for suitable improvement in allocation at the RE stage.**

*(Recommendation No.8)*

**2.19 Highlighting the significance of Missions and Posts, the Committee opine that opening of Indian Missions help in expanding India's diplomatic footprint, deepen political relations, enable growth of bilateral trade, investments and economic engagements, facilitate stronger people-to-people contacts, bolster political outreach in multilateral fora and help garner support for India's foreign policy objectives. The Union Cabinet had accorded approval for opening up of 18 new Indian Missions in Africa in a phased manner between 2018-2021. Of these 15 Missions - Conakry (Guinea), Djibouti (Djibouti), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), Brazzaville (Republic of Congo), Malabo (Equatorial Guinea) and Kigali (Rwanda), Yaounde (Cameroon), Asmara (Eritrea) and Mbabane (Eswatini), Monrovia (Liberia), Freetown (Sierra Leone), Sao Tome (Sao Tome and Principe), Nouakchott (Mauritania), Lomé (Togo) and N'djamena (Chad) are in various stages of functioning. Efforts are ongoing to operationalize the last three remaining Missions viz., Mogadishu (Somalia), Bissau (Guinea Bissau) and Praia (Cape Verde). Ministry has also informed that there are 48 countries where India does not have resident Indian Missions. Furthermore, the Committee also note that in December 2020, the Cabinet has approved opening of three new Indian Missions in Estonia, Paraguay and Dominican Republic.**

**Standing by the Ministry's own admission about the imperative of having presence in all UN countries for attaining our goal of UNSC permanent seat, the Committee strongly feel that India should have a resident Mission in all UN Member**

**countries. The Committee appreciate that opening of a resident Indian Mission or Post is a time-taking exercise which entails internal planning and approvals as well as coordination and liaising with the host Government. While lauding the timely completion of the 15 Missions in African countries, the Committee strongly recommend that the Ministry should complete the remaining three Missions in Africa and the newly approved 3 Missions in Latin America in 2021. The Ministry should also seek additional finances to that end, if required, at the RE stage.**

*(Recommendation No.9)*

**2.20 The Committee observe that the Directorate General of Inspections (DGI) was set up in 2014 in the system of regular inspection of Indian Missions/Posts abroad and in 2016 also introduced a web portal named Performance Evaluation and Monitoring System (PEMS) for selection of Missions/Posts for on-site inspections. But the Committee are astonished to note that after all these efforts, only eight Missions/Posts were inspected in 2018 and two in 2019 and during 2020 not a single on-site or off-site inspection took place. The Committee are not at all satisfied with such tardy progress in such an important process of performance evaluation and monitoring.**

**Emphasizing the imperative of periodic inspection and monitoring in increasing the efficacy of Indian Missions/Posts abroad, the Committee recommend that the Ministry should launch the revamped PEMS portal at the earliest since it has already missed several timelines. The Ministry should also compile an annual data on country-specific challenges faced by the Missions/Posts abroad so that the evaluation exercise could result in positive outcomes and suggestions.**

*(Recommendation No. 10)*

## II. PASSPORT AND EMIGRATION

**2.21** This sub-head caters to expenditure on Passport Offices, printing of travel documents, lease/purchase of passport printers, payments to State Governments and Union Territories for verifications, expenses of pre-departure orientation and skill upgradation of emigrant workers, etc. The allocation during BE 2020-21 was Rs. 1348.59 crore, which was decreased to Rs. 1057.84 crore at the RE stage. The budgetary allocation for BE 2021-22 has been decreased to Rs. 1328.63 crore.

**2.22** Justifying the reduced allocations under this minor head, the Ministry stated that the decreased projection at RE 2020-21 and in BE 2021-22 is primarily on slow progress due to Covid-19 pandemic under Printing and procurement of travel documents, Postal and Freight charges, Office expenses and Information Technology head for contractual commitments related to engagement of a new service provider for passport services. In addition, figures reflect anticipated expenditure on payments to States and UTs.

**2.23** The details of revenue Earning collected through Passport/Visa Services *vis- a- vis* allocation made in BE- RE during last three years are provided as under:-

*(Figure in Crores)*

Head Description	2018-19			2019-20			<b>2020-21*</b>		
	B.E	R.E	Actual	B.E	R.E	Actual	B.E	R.E	Actual
Passport Fee	2500.00	2700.00	2679.86	2700.00	2600.00	2522.71	2600.00	1500.00	1044.92
Visa Fee	D150.00	2200.00	2688.82	2300.00	2500.00	1792.11	2500.00	100.00	87.50

*\*Up to 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2021*

**2.24** In view of increased revenue earned through passport, the Ministry was asked the reason for its inability to convince the Ministry of Finance to obtain more funds for significant expansion of Passport Seva. In a written reply, the Ministry replied that the last 3 years trend shows that Ministry has been consistently allocating above Rs 1300 cr for Passport services.

The allocation has sufficed even in face of rapid expansion of passport services with opening of 426 PoPSKs in last 3 years only. Over the years, the issue of provision adequate allocation of funds has been taken up with the Ministry of Finance at various levels. The Ministry will continue to make more efforts in this direction to realize credible budgetary demands justified by past efficient utilization of funds and objective assessment of anticipated expenditures based on implementation progress.

**2.25** When asked about the details of the progress made in the work relating to establishment of PSKs/PoPSKs and the amount allocated for each project during 2020-21, the Ministry stated that as on 11.02.2021, there are 93 Passport Seva Kendras (PSK) and 426 Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSK) functioning under the supervision of the 36 Passport Offices in the country. This ensures extended reach to Passport applicants. 2 more POPSKs were opened during 2020-21 taking the total number of functional POPSK to 426. Rs. 290 crores was allocated under the Budget Head of ‘Information Technology’ in FY 2020-21 that was utilized *inter alia* for setting up POPSK during the CFY. No specific amount was allocated for the purpose of setting up POPSK.

**2.26** On whether there are any pending POPSKs due to insufficient funds, the Ministry responded that as of now, no PSK/POPSKs are pending due to inadequate funding.

**2.27** As regards the progress made so far in the direction of integration of Missions and Posts abroad with the Passport Seva Portal, the Ministry informed that 153 Missions/Posts abroad have been integrated with the Passport Seva system as on 11.2.2021. A list of these missions is at the **Annexure III**. Presently, integration work is under progress in 26 other Missions/Posts abroad.

**2.28** The Ministry further added that no separate budget has been earmarked for Missions/Posts integration. The expenditure on procurement of IT equipment is met out of the Budgetary Head of the Ministry under “2061.00.105.01.99.13 – Information Technology (OE)” in case adequate funds are not available in the Missions/Posts’ relevant Budget Head “2061.00.101.01.99.13 – Information Technology (OE).”

**2.29** On the Committee's query regarding the constraints being faced in the expansion of Passport Seva Projects, the Ministry states that the Passport Seva Project began in June, 2012 with the opening of 77 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) as determined in the Request for Proposal (RFP)/ Master Service Agreement (MSA) between the Ministry of External Affairs and the Service Provider M/s Tata Consultancy Limited (TCS). 16 PSKs and 426 POPSKs were added to the existing mechanism. Depending upon demand and requirement, more POPSKs would be scheduled in near future. So far, 8.67 crore passport and passport related applications have been received in India and abroad. Number of applications received in 2020 was about 66.80 lakhs. Since funding under the Information Technology Budget Head under 'Passport and Emigration' is necessary, lack of support under this head is the first challenge that is normally faced. Funds under this Head are necessary for the procurement of IT and non-IT related equipment.

**2.30** Shortage of personnel in Central Passport Organization (CPO) is another challenge. This shortage is acutely felt at the level of Superintendent who functions as 'Granting Officer (PGO).' There is also shortage of Assistant Superintendent, Senior Passport Assistants (SPA), and Junior Passport Assistant (JPA) who function as 'Verification Officer (VO).' Since the establishment of Passport Seva Programme has grown manifold, *i.e.* from 77 PSKs to additional 16 PSKs and 426 POPSKs, there is an acute shortage of verifying officers.

**2.31** When asked about the measures taken to make quantitative and qualitative improvements in the delivery of passport services in the country during 2020-21, the Ministry stated that as regards quantitative improvements, 2 POPSKs were added to the Passport Seva Programme (PSP) during 2020-21 raising the total number of POPSKs to 426. This provides greater reach to the citizens at their doorsteps for convenience and ease of Passport related services. In addition, the Passport Seva Programme has been extended to the Missions/Posts abroad in order to provide better and smoother service delivery experience to Indian Diaspora living abroad. Currently, 150 Missions/Posts abroad have been integrated into PSP and integration in several other Missions/Posts is in progress.

**2.32** As regards qualitative improvements, following enhancements have been undertaken to improve the service levels:

- I. Apply anywhere in India
- II. Apply, pay and book appointments through mPassport Seva Mobile App
- III. Enhancement in Passport Booklet design and quality
- IV. Electronic Exit letter and token issuance at PSKs providing paperless environment and promoting green initiatives of GOI.
- V. Centralized granting facility for better resource management ensuring greater productivity
- VI. 795 DPHq have been integrated with PSP system and mPassport Police App have also made the Police Verification (PV) process faster.

**2.33** The Committee desired to know about improvements in service delivery of passports both normal and Tatkaal passports to applicants. The Ministry provided the data as under:

<b>Type of Passport</b>	<b>2019 (in Days)</b>	<b>2020 (in Days)</b>
Normal (excluding PV time)	8	11 (*)
Tatkaal (excluding PV time)	4	2
Police Verification Time	18	18

*(\*) because of COVID-19 related lock down situation.*

**2.34** Regarding the outreach of passport services to far flung areas of North East and other hilly terrains, the Ministry stated that it is cognizant of the fact that far-flung and hilly areas need special attention, and in this process 14 POPSKs were established in North Eastern States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya and Manipur during 2018-19. One POPSK at Dharmanagar in Tripura was opened during the year 2019-20. These are in addition to 8 PSKs already functional in North-Eastern region, In addition, one POPSK was established in the State of Uttarakhand during the year 2018-19. Currently, there are 4 PSKs and 18 POPSKs in the States of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, UT of Jammu & Kashmir and the UT of Ladakh. One PSK and 6 POPSKs are functioning in Himachal Pradesh and one PSK and 6

POPSK are functioning in Uttarakhand. 2 PSKs and 5 POPSKs are presently functioning in the UT of Jammu & Kashmir and 1 POPSK in UT of Ladakh.

**2.35** On whether there exists a database containing details of passports issued to Indian citizens, the Ministry responded that a centralized database of passports (PRIDE – Passport Related Information Data Exchange) is maintained by MEA.

**2.36** Providing details about this database, the Ministry replied that The Passport Related Information Data Exchange (PRIDE) database was set up as part of the Passport Seva Project. It superseded the Passport Information System on Net (PISON) database set up by the National Informatics Centre (NIC). The legacy passport data has been transferred from PISON to PRIDE. Passport data currently being generated by the Passport Issuing Authorities (PIA) in India and abroad through the PSP system is directly fed into the PRIDE. The data of other Missions/Posts, which are part of Centralized Indian Passport Printing System (CIPPS), are updated into PRIDE the very next working day.

**2.37** When enquired about the Grievance Redressal Mechanism related to passport services, the Ministry stated that a robust Grievance Redressal Mechanism has been put in place by MEA in which a multi-lingual Call Centre with a toll-free number (1800-258-1800) operates in 17 languages on a 24x7 basis. This setup that works on Central Systems Platform caters to dissemination of information about Passport related services, including handling of grievances and citizens feedback. On an average, it handled about 9,000 calls *per* day in 2020. The Passport portal also has an email-based helpdesk where suggestions and grievances can be registered. Citizens can also monitor the status of their passport application/grievance online through this portal.

**2.38** They submitted that public grievances are handled by Passport Offices through the latest CPGRAMS version of Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (<https://pgportal.gov.in>) and the Passport grievances i.e. Service Request Number (SRN) received through Passport portal. Information and Facilitation Counters, Public Grievances Cell, complaint/suggestion boxes and Help Desks have been set up at strategic locations in PO and PSK. From the time of lodging the complaint on CPGRAMS, its disposal time is 60

days. Name, address and phone number of the Public Grievance Officer are prominently displayed in the PO/PSK and on the websites of PO. A Public Grievance Redressal Mechanism has been set up in all POs to enquire and redress any complaint from applicants within a time-frame.

**2.39** The Ministry has launched the 'mPassport Police' app for speedy submission of Police Verification Report (PVR) to bring down the time limit of verification to twenty one days. Furnishing details about the number of applications have been expedited by this process of Police Verification Report, the Ministry stated that the number of applications processed through 'mPassport Police' App in 2020 was 21, 04,503. Overall, 86, 88,180 passport applications have been processed through this App till 31.01.2021. This App is being used in 208 DPHq covering 4,668 Police Stations as on 31.01.2021. The States/UTs where 'mPassport Police' App has been launched, the average PVR submission time has been reduced to 18 days.

**2.40** On being asked about the technical constraints faced by the Passport offices in capturing the Police Verification Report (PVR) digitally, the Ministry submitted that the Passport Offices have not faced any constraints after the launch of 'mPassport Police' App. On the contrary, it has helped POs to ascertain the data entry, approval etc. done by the police authorities in the App including meta-data remarks mentioned by the filed verification officials against each PV questionnaire.

**2.41** On actual sanctioned strength and actual working strength of the Central Passport Organization (CPO), the Ministry informed that the sanctioned strength of the CPO cadre is 2,741. Presently, the working strength of the cadre is 1,789 as on 1.2.2021. In addition, 15 Technical and 6 Supporting staff are currently employed in Project Management Unit (PMU) of the Passport Seva Project.

**2.42** In their Second Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha), the Committee had desired to know about the progress made so far to fill up the vacant gazetted / non-gazetted posts in CPO. The Ministry stated that the difficulty in filling the vacant posts in CPO cadres stems from the extant Recruitment Rules. Direct recruitment is possible only in the grades of Office Assistant,



Junior Passport Assistant (JPA), Stenographer, Junior Translator and Assistant Superintendent. MEA has been indenting Staff Selection Commission (SSC) for recruitment in these grades as *per* available vacancies. Against an indent of 310 posts that was made in 2017, SSC has recommended 118 till-date leaving 192 posts yet to be filled. The Granting Officers are in the grades of Superintendent and Senior Superintendent where 100% recruitment is by promotion of Assistant Superintendent. These posts can't be filled by direct entry or by deputations. There is also shortage of Assistant Superintendents with requisite qualifying service to be promoted as Superintendent. Ministry has been regularly conducting Departmental Promotion Committees (DPCs) to promote eligible officials to the next grade. As an interim measure, Ministry has engaged 347 Data Entry Operators and 51 Office Assistants (MTS) through Outsourced Service Provider to ease the pressure created due to shortage of staff.

**2.43 The Committee observe that the budget head 'Passport and Emigration' caters to expenditure on Passport offices, printing of travel documents, lease/purchase of passport printers, payments to State and Union territories Governments for verification, expenses of pre-departure orientation and skill up-gradation of emigrant workers. The budgetary allocation under this sub-head has witnessed a decline from Rs. 1348.59 crore (BE 2020-21) to Rs. 1328.63 crore (BE 2021-22). As per the Ministry the reduction in projections and allocation is primarily on account of slow progress due to COVID-19 pandemic under printing and procurement of travel documents, Postal and Freight charges, Office Expenses and Information Technology head.**

**The Committee observe that the budget sub-head 'Passport and Emigration' caters to two diverse but crucial set of items and directly affect on public services delivery and welfare of Overseas Indians. Keeping this in mind, the Committee feel that provision of adequate funds is essential. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry should ensure timely delivery of public services in terms of passport and emigration**

support and if required, seek additional funds at the RE stage. The Committee also desire that Videsh Bhawans should be established as a one stop service center in every state capital. The Ministry should work out a detailed proposal in this regard and apprise the Committee at the soonest.

*(Recommendation No.11)*

2.44 The issuance of passports in a timely, seamless and hassle free manner is the most citizen-centric service provided by the Ministry of External Affairs. The Committee are also aware that there are 93 Passport Seva Kendras (PSK) and 426 Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPsK) functioning under the supervision of the 36 Passport Offices in the country to handle this important work. The Passport Seva Programme (PSP) has been extended to the Missions/Posts abroad in order to provide better and smoother service to Indian diaspora living abroad. So far, 153 Missions/Posts have been integrated into Passport Seva Project and integration of 26 other Missions/Posts is underway. It is seen that MEA maintains a centralized database of passports – Passport Related Information Data Exchange (PRIDE). It has established a robust grievance redressal mechanism with a multi-lingual call centre operating in 17 languages on a 24x7 basis. Additionally, a Public Grievance Redressal Mechanism has also been set up in all Passport Offices to attend and redress any complaint within a time-frame. The Ministry has further informed that in the States/UTs where mPassport Police app has been launched, the time of average Police Verification Report (PVR) has been reduced to 18 days.

The Committee are pleased to learn about a plethora of measures taken by the Ministry to make qualitative and quantitative improvements in passport services in

recent times. The vast expanse of our passport office network is laudable. The Committee, however, urge the Ministry to ensure that there is a PSK/POPks in every parliamentary constituency. While appreciating the progress made in integration of Passport Seva Projects (PSP) with Missions/Posts abroad, the Committee desire that the remaining Missions/Posts are integrated at the earliest. The Ministry should also make consistent efforts to encourage States/UTs to launch the 'mPolice App' so that the time taken for submission of Police Verification Report is reduced to the minimum.

*(Recommendation No.12)*

2.45 The Committee observe that the shortage of personnel is one of the key challenges faced by the Ministry in expansion of Passport Seva Project (PSP). Against the sanctioned strength of 2,741, the actual working strength of Central Passport Organization (CPO) is 1,789 (as on 01.02.2021). The difficulty in filling the vacant posts in CPO cadre is attributable to the extant Recruitment Rules, which allows direct recruitment only in the grades of Office Assistant, Junior Passport Assistant (JPA), Stenographer, Junior Translator and Assistant Superintendent. MEA has been indenting Staff Selection Commission (SSC) for recruitment in these grades as per available vacancies. Against an indent of 310 posts that was made in 2017, SSC has recommended only 118 persons till date. As an interim measure the Ministry has engaged 347 Data Entry Operators to ease the pressure created due to shortage of staff. During examination of Demands for Grants for the past few years, the Ministry had informed that a proposal for physical inspection and staffing study of CPO by the Staff Inspection Unit (SIU) of the Department of Expenditure has been sent to Ministry of Finance in November 2019. The Committee would desire to be apprised about the progress made in

**that regard. The Committee also recommend that the issue of human resource shortage must be taken up with Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) at the highest level and a lasting solution be worked out.**

*(Recommendation No.13)*

### **III. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

**2.46** As per the Brief furnished by MEA, allocation under this head is for obligatory contributions to UNO and other international organizations of which India is a member; Establishment of South Asian University (SAU) and Nalanda University (NU); and for expenses on celebration of Pravasi Bhartiya Divas and other schemes related to engagement with Indian Diaspora.

**2.47** An allocation of Rs. 1084.56 crore was made in BE 2020-21, which was decreased to Rs. 902.46crore at the RE stage. For BE 2021-22, an outlay of Rs. 1149.97 has been provisioned under this sub-head. Furnishing the reason for reduced allocation under this head, the Ministry stated that the reduced allocation at RE 2020-21 stage under this broad sub-head is essentially on account slow progress in construction works of South Asian University and Nalanda University in the wake of constraints on man-power, materials and disrupted supply chains. Obligatory international commitments towards UNO and Other International Organizations have been enhanced at RE 2020-21 as well as BE 2021-22. In case of South Asian University, the allocation of Rs. 325 crore in BE 2020-21 was reduced to Rs. 150 crore at the RE stage as construction work was slowed/halted due to the Covid-19 situation. The funds available with the university from the previous year were sufficient to meet the expenditure during FY 2020-21 and till date no expenditure has been incurred either from the BE or RE allocations of the current year. The reason behind the decrease of funds under RE 2020-21 under BIMSTEC is that on account of the impact of COVID-19, almost all the meetings were shifted to virtual mode. Several events/seminars that couldn't be held in virtual mode were cancelled/postponed and are likely to be taken up in FY 2021-22.

## A. South Asian University

**2.48** The budgetary allocation for the construction of South Asian University (SAU) has been decreased from Rs. 325.00 crore in BE 2020-21 to Rs. 150.00 crore at RE stage and Rs. 314.00 crore in BE 2021-22. The Committee enquired about the possible reasons for reduction in allocation under this sub-head at the RE 2020-21 and BE 2021-22 stage *vis-a-vis* BE 2021-22. The Ministry replied that allocation of funds to a user unit is made on the basis of estimates and trend of expenditure during the preceding period and fresh demand based on realistic projections for the next fiscal. In case of South Asian University, the allocation of Rs. 325 crore in BE 2020-21 was reduced to Rs. 150 crore at the RE stage as construction work was slowed/halted due to the Covid-19 situation. The funds available with the university from the previous year were sufficient to meet the expenditure during FY 2020-21 and till date no expenditure has been incurred either from the BE or RE allocations of the current year.

**2.49** The contribution made by SAARC Member States to the operational expenditure of South Asian University till date is as follows :-

Country	Contribution(US\$)
Afghanistan	2,608,000
Bangladesh	5,578,000
Bhutan	2,608,000
India	41,930,000
Maldives	2,867,000
Nepal	4,033,000
Pakistan	7,339,563
Sri Lanka	3,345,000
Total	70,308,563

**2.50** Besides the operational contribution mentioned above, India provides 100% capital expenditure of the university including 93.68 acres of land for construction of the permanent campus, construction cost of the project, purchase of furniture and equipment, rent for its temporary premises in Akbar Bhavan, New Delhi etc. The total contribution of India to SAU including its operational cost till date is about US\$ 225 million.

**2.51** Over the years, the Committee in their Reports has expressed serious concerns over the undue delay in the completion of the South Asia University campus project. Updating the Committee about the projected time line for completion of work, the Ministry stated that Package I of the Construction Project was completed in January 2016. Five buildings under Package II have been physically completed in December 2020 except testing and commissioning of mechanical and electrical equipment. Necessary steps are under way for obtaining occupancy certificate for these buildings. Overall progress of Package III consisting of seven buildings is 75% and is scheduled to be completed by September 2021. Package IV covering the remaining buildings has not been initiated yet due to ongoing litigation on some land pockets. The court cases are being pursued vigorously. Due to frequent NGT ban on construction activities in the NCR and labour migration due to Covid-19 pandemic, construction work was severely affected during the past one year. Necessary efforts are on to augment labour force and resume normal activity. The Project Review Committee holds regular meetings to expedite work.

**2.52** Apprising the Committee about the current status of construction of permanent campus of South Asian University, the Foreign Secretary during the course of oral evidence on 24 February 2021 submitted as under:

“In the South Asian University, there are four packages in terms of construction. One of the constraints of the University is that we have to move into physical premises. From what I understand, at least, out of the four packages, the first package was completed in 2016. Packages 2 & 4 have been initiated. There have been encumbrances due to litigation, clearance from the Forest Department, but our sense is that again we might be in a position where we can complete at least some of the physical infrastructure by the end of the year and have the students move in by the end of this year. I think that will be a major gain from that point of view.

**2.53** Regarding the efforts that are being made to expedite the construction of the South Asian University in a timely manner, the Ministry stated that due to various encumbrances on allotted land and delay in grant of statutory approvals/permission by various local government authorities, there has been a time overrun in the South Asian University construction project.

The work is divided into four packages. Under Package-I, construction of site office and boundary wall (Tendered value Rs 2.23 crore) has already been completed in January 2016. The work progress suffered further due to more encumbrances on land, frequent statutory NGT/environmental bans and COVID-19 lockdowns/restrictions. Under Package-II (tendered value Rs 401.38 crores), construction of five buildings (Faculty of Life Science and Earth Science, 3 blocks of Staff Housing, Club & Guest House and two Guard Houses) has been physically completed in December 2020 except testing and commissioning of mechanical and electrical equipment. Under package-III (tendered value Rs 588.39 crores, the construction work of another seven buildings (Administration building, Library, Institute of South Asian Studies, Faculty of Law and Humanities, Faculty of Physics, Chemistry, IT and Mathematics, Faculty of Art and Design and the Convention Center, Utility buildings including external development and landscaping) is 75% complete and is expected to be complete by September 2021. The remaining buildings (beyond Package-I, II, III) could not be planned due to various encumbrances on land, pending approval of DPR and covid-19 bans/lock down.

**2.54** Additionally, during the entire COVID-19 lock down with effect from 21<sup>st</sup> March 2020, about 1000 labourers were stranded at site labour camps, but no physical work could actually resume. After lockdown III, the government allowed resumption of construction works with in situ workers with effect from 4th May 2020. However, with simultaneous relaxation in inter-state travel, many of the stranded workers left for their native places. The labour force has still not been augmented to pre- lock down level. SAU team, along with PMC ensured very close monitoring and co-ordination with the help of Progress Review Committee (PRC). Through joint efforts of SAU, PMC all buildings under Package-II, that were scheduled to be completed in February 2020 have now been physically completed in December 2020. Work under Package-III is in progress. The progress of work as on Feb 2021 is about 75% and work is targeted to be completed by September 2021. Regular Progress Review Committee (PRC) meetings and review are being conducted with the agency at site to expedite the work. SAU & PMC has made huge efforts since 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2020 to salvage the project and the present progress has been achieved despite all odds.

## B. Nalanda University

**2.55** The allocations of Rs. 250.00 crore given at BE 2020-21 were reduced to Rs. 200.00 crore at RE 2020-21. The allocation at BE 2021-22 is Rs. 250.00 crore. On being asked about the progress of work of Nalanda University under each package, the Ministry provided package-wise status of construction work

Sl. No.	Package No.	Package Description	Contractor Name	Current status	Physical Progress (%)	Financial Progress (%)
1	1A	Construction of Internal Roads, Earthwork, Side Drains & Water Bodies	MGCPL	Completed	100.00%	100.00%
2	1B	Construction of Academic and Administrative Buildings (Non Residential Buildings)	NCCL	Work execution in progress	80%	79%
3	1C	Construction of Residential Buildings	JMC	Work execution in progress	52%	51.32%
4	2	Central Treatment Station, WTP, TTPS for Sewage Treatment Plant, Drinking water points etc	Sterling & Willson, Kolkata	Work is in progress.	41.92%	17.04%
5	3A	HVAC works for Outreach Buildings	Suvidha Engineers (I) Pvt. Ltd.	Work is in progress.	80.41%	42.73%
6	3B	Bio-gas based co-generation engine and Bio methenation plant		Tendering in process		
7	3C	HVAC system for residential & non-	Unique Engineer	Work is in progress.	16.50%	16.56%



		residential parcel	Pvt. Ltd.			
8	4A	High Side Electrical Work for Outreach Building	Sterling & Willson, Kolkata	Work is in progress.	88.49%	75.20%
9	4B	High side electrical work	Sterling & Willson, Kolkata	Awaiting drawings from Architect		
10	4C	5000 KW AC grid connected ground mounted solar PV system under EPC mode	BHEL	Awarded		
11	4D	DG sets for administrative and school building	ELMECH Engineers	Work is in progress	91.28%	77.47%
12	5A	Data cabling, networking, CCTV, FAS and ACS Works	Sterling & Willson, Kolkata	Work is in progress	65.65%	52.21%
13	5B	Audio and video systems for priority buildings	BECIL	Work is in progress	8.15%	7.83%
14	5B1	Audio and Video systems for the Part of the Priority Buildings	Future Netwings Solutions Pvt. Ltd.	Work is in progress.	71.05%	46.25%
15	5C	Audio and video systems for the buildings (Other than Priority Buildings)		Tendering in process		
16	6A	Supply & safe keeping of light fixture for various buildings of Non-	Sterling & Willson, Kolkata	Work is in progress	45.59%	28.31%

		residential parcel				
17	6B	Supply & safe keeping of light fixture for various buildings of Residential parcel		Tendering in process		
18	7A	Horticulture works for east part of proposed permanent campus	Vaish Construction, Punjab	Work is in progress	43.2%	18.21%
19	7B	Horticulture & landscaping works for west part of Campus		Tendering in process		
20	8A	Interior works for priority buildings	Diamond Power Projects Pvt. Ltd.	Work execution in progress	34.00%	21.83%
21	8B	Interior works for buildings (Other than Priority Buildings)		Tendering in process		
22	--	Construction of Boundary wall	Dayanand Pd. Sinha & Co.	Work execution started at site		
23	9	Construction of 2000 seater Auditorium in EPC mode		Tendering in process		
24	10	Central Library		Tendering in process		
25	11	Construction of Open Cafeteria		Tendering in process		
26	12	Construction of 500 User capacity Yoga cum		Tendering in process		

		Meditation Hall				
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**2.56** The Ministry informed that the major work package comprising 17 academic and administrative blocks, 22 utility and 8 campus amenities structures is over. Nearly 80% of the construction work is completed. The university has been functioning from its new campus since November 2019. The remaining work is expected to be completed in 2021-22.

**2.57** The Ministry further submitted as regards Nalanda University, we have made good progress. We just had a Review Meeting with the Vice-Chancellor and her team. The pace of work in that project is quite good. We have to understand that it is a fairly remote area and access is not that easy. Despite that, we have a fairly good number of students and international faculty that are there. Of course, I think the project will be completed within a period of less than four years from now. In fact, in the period from 2017-2021, we have gone from 0.3 per cent in 2017 to over 80 per cent of work up to January 2021, that is, in the last one year. So, work has been going on despite constraints.

**2.58** When asked about the monitoring mechanism to avoid further delays in the Project, the Ministry stated that the University has established a dedicated monitoring mechanism to ensure timely completion of the works as well as to ensure checks and balances. A team of around 35 Engineers and Supervisors from M/s MECON Limited, the Project Management Consultant of Nalanda University, a PSU under Ministry of Steel, GoI, is responsible for monitoring progress of the project as well as quality of the works. The University has constituted a Project Monitoring Committee to monitor and evaluate the progress and quality of works. The Committee reviews the project bi-monthly. The construction project is duly vetted and approved by the Building & Works Committee comprising of senior external technical experts and officers from MEA.

**2.59** Enumerating the opportunities explored by Ministry of External Affairs for channelizing contributions for the project from other countries which have signed MoU, the Ministry stated that contributions to the Nalanda University by its partner countries are voluntary. No contribution from any partner country except India has been received during the

past five years. The university had approached some of the partner countries to renew their contribution. However, no affirmative response has been received so far.

**2.60** With regard to the measures taken to expedite the construction of Nalanda University, the Ministry stated that the University started its academic activities in 2014 and actual construction commenced in May 2017. The time lag between 2014 and 2017 was due to selection of suitable architect for the project, preparation of Master Plan and Conceptual Drawing including Preliminary Estimate by the architectural consultant and tendering process for the work packages. Though there was a time overrun at the initial stage, the pace of progress in the construction project accelerated from 0.3 % in May 2017 to over 80 % (taking into account that roads and water bodies construction has been already completed) in January 2021 within a period of less than 4 years.

The University has established a dedicated monitoring mechanism to ensure timely completion of the works as well as to ensure checks and balances. A team of around 35 Engineers and Supervisors from M/s MECON Limited, the project Management Consultant of Nalanda University, a PSU under Ministry of Steel is responsible for monitoring progress of the project as well as quality of the works. The University has constituted a Project Monitoring Committee to monitor and evaluate the progress and quality of works. The Committee reviews the project bi-monthly.

Covid-19 pandemic and the attendant restrictions adversely impacted the Nalanda University construction project. However, the pace has picked up in the recent months. The remaining works are expected to be completed in 2021-2022.

**2.61** On the Committee's further query about the manner in which slow progress in the construction of these Universities will jeopardise our credentials for delivering of projects, the ministry responded that Both projects are being actually handled by the universities themselves. The reasons for delay have been enumerated above and justifiably so. However, they do not reflect on the Ministry's ability to deliver projects on time as the Ministry primarily provides finances for the projects regularly as per demand. The Ministry exercises oversight on the project through the Building Works Committee/Project Monitoring Committee.

**2.62** Providing details of the measures being taken to uphold the academic standards of the Universities, the Ministry stated that the selection of students for admission is made through an entrance test followed by an interview (for Ph.D.) across all SAARC nations. The university has been following this procedure since its inception maintaining the same uniform and high standards. So far as syllabus at SAU is concerned, there is a frequent and periodic review of curriculum, which in some Departments is done annually. The promotion of faculty members is linked to various mandatory academic components. At SAU, these components are comparable with any prestigious institution of the world.

The following initiatives have been taken by the University to improve academic standards:

- i. Academic Framework: A new Academic Framework has been created for various academic programs including Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Short programs offered by the university.
- ii. Curriculum innovation with a focus on cutting edge research in new frontiers of learning is continuous process.
- iii. New credit system at par with international standards with 64 credits for a Master's program has been implemented.
- iv. A Global Ph.D Programme with four year duration and 130 credits (Regular & Part-time) is offered.
- v. Interdisciplinary Cafeteria system with a number of electives on the menu is followed.
- vi. A new evaluation system with 50% end-semester examination and 50% continuous evaluation (midterm exam, seminars, projects and field works) is in place.
- vii. Short term programmes in Sanskrit, Korean, English have been introduced from Sept 2018.

**2.63** The budgetary allocation under the sub-head 'South Asian University' has witnessed a downward trend from Rs. 325 crore in BE 2020-21 to Rs. 150 crore at RE 2020-21 and to Rs. 314 crore in BE 2021-22. The construction work of SAU is divided into 4 packages –Package-I was completed in January 2016; Package-II was completed in December, 2020, Package-III is scheduled to be completed by September, 2021 and

package IV have not been initiated yet due to ongoing litigation on some land pockets. The Ministry has submitted that various encumbrances on allotted land and delay in grant of statutory approvals/permission by various local Government authorities has resulted in time over run in the South Asian University construction project. The Ministry has informed that due to frequent NGT ban on construction activities in NCR and labour migration due to COVID-19 pandemic, construction work was severely affected during the past one year. Regular Progress Review Committee (RRC) meetings are conducted with the agency at site to expedite the work. The Committee observe that the total contribution of India to SAU including its operational cost is about US\$ 225 million.

The Committee express deep concern over the persistent delay in completion of construction work of the permanent campus of South Asian university in the name of litigation in a small portion of land. In the considered opinion of the Committee, the tardy progress has visibly tarnished our capacity of leading regional initiatives. Highlighting the significance of timely implementation of projects, the Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the construction work of SAU should be completed as per schedule and no further time and cost overruns should be incurred. The Committee also desire that the academic credential of SAU should be maintained in terms of course curriculum, selection of students and faculty recruitment.

*(Recommendation No.14)*

2.64 The Committee note that an allocation of Rs. 250 crore has been provisioned for Nalanda University for BE 2020-21 as well as BE 2021-22. Regarding the progress in construction work of Nalanda University, the Ministry has submitted that despite a time

overrun at the initial stage, the pace of progress has accelerated from 0.3% in May 2017 to over 80% in January 2021. COVID-19 pandemic and the attendant restrictions had also adversely impacted the Nalanda University construction project. The pace of construction, however, has picked up and the remaining works are expected to be completed in 2021-22. The University has also established a dedicated monitoring mechanism for timely completion of the works. The Committee are of the firm view that the construction work of Nalanda University campus should be completed in 2021-22 without any delay. The Ministry should also ensure that the academic standards and curriculum are in keeping with the international image of the University.

*(Recommendation No.15)*

## CHAPTER III

### INDIA'S DEVELOPMENTAL COOPERATION

Development partnerships hold an important place in India's external engagement, particularly with reference to our immediate neighbourhood under the Government's Neighborhood First' and 'Act East' policies. While India's development cooperation initiatives have a long and enduring history, the nature and spread of such development assistance has, in recent years, expanded both geographically and sectorally. India's development cooperation aligns with the development priorities of its partner countries.

**3.2** The largest allocation in the Ministry's budget is for the major head 'Technical and Economic Cooperation (TEC) with other countries' through assistance as grants and loans. The budget head 'Technical and Economic Cooperation (TEC)' caters to India's aid and assistance programmes not only in India's immediate and extended neighborhood, but also countries in South East Asia, Central Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Indo-Pacific region. It also caters for Aid for Disaster Relief and contributions to various regional funds. Aid programmes are influenced by the dynamics of India's national interest, diplomatic engagements and political relations. The table below illustrates the details of aid and loans to countries.

**3.3** The table below illustrates the details of aid and loans to countries:

*(Rs. in crore)*

Sl.No.	Country	BE 2020-21	RE 2020-21	BE 2021-22
1.	Bangladesh	200.00	125.00	200.00
2.	Bhutan	2052.37	1650.96	2124.20
3.	Nepal	800.00	880.00	992.00
4.	Sri Lanka	200.00	75.00	200.00
5.	Maldives	300.00	175.00	250.00
6.	Myanmar	300.00	350.00	400.00
7.	Other Developing Countries	120.00	100.00	130.00
8.	Disaster Relief	20.00	20.00	20.00
9.	ITEC	220.00	90.00	150.00



10.	SAARC Programme	8.00	6.00	6.00
11.	African countries	350.00	225.00	300.00
12.	Multilateral Economic Relations Programmes	20.00	9.72	10.20
13.	Investment & Promotion	250.00	250.00	270.00
14.	Eurasian Countries	45.00	45.00	100.00
15.	Afghanistan	400.00	350.00	350.00
16.	Latin America	20.00	22.00	40.00
17.	Indo-Pacific Cooperation	45.00	30.00	40.00
18.	Mongolia	5.00	0.58	2.00
19.	Chabahar Port	100.00	00.00	100.00
20.	Mauritius	1025.00	650.00	900.00
21.	Seychelles	140.00	90.00	160.00

**3.4** Providing the parameters for proposing budget under the head ‘aid programmes’, the Ministry stated that allocations for Aid heads are made after undertaking a realistic assessment of needs & spending patterns, based on project implementation cycles, local conditions and physical progress for on-going projects, schemes and programmes; and based on project implementation timelines and cost estimates for planned projects, schemes and programmes. For ongoing projects under the aid programs, the budgetary requirements are gauged based on inputs from the primary Divisions/Spending units who are closely involved with the Implementing Agencies in monitoring the progress of work. The inputs thus received are collated and compared with the past utilization, work progress and pace of expenditure of the project. With this information, deliberations are conducted by Integrated Finance Division of the Ministry, with the Divisions to get realistic estimates of their demands. Similarly, for new projects, budgetary provisions are made as per estimates determined by project implementation timelines and cost estimates in their Detailed Project Reports. Allocations are then made to the extent of funds available within the overall budgetary provision made by Ministry of Finance. The selection of the projects to be undertaken under the Aid heads is an administrative decision, which is taken by the Territorial Divisions and DPA, in view of the political relations with the respective countries.

**3.5** The Ministry also furnished details about the percentage of MEA's total budget outlay that has been earmarked under the head 'Technical and Economic Cooperation' during the past three years.

*(Rs. in Crores)*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Budget Outlay (BE)</b>	<b>TEC (BE)</b>	<b>% age of BE</b>	<b>Budget Outlay (RE)</b>	<b>TEC (RE)</b>	<b>% age of RE</b>
<b>2018-19</b>	15011.00	5148.55	34.30	15582.00	5970.50	38.32
<b>2019-20</b>	17884.78	7333.79	41.01	17372.27	6619.78	38.11
<b>2020-21</b>	17346.71	6617.37	38.15	15000.00	5145.26	34.30

**3.6** The details of budgetary demands made, actual allocations given and utilization under this Head to various countries during the past three years are as under:

*(Rs. in crore)*

<b>Budget Heads</b>	<b>2018-19</b>			<b>2019-20</b>			<b>2020-21</b>		
	<b>BE Demand</b>	<b>BE Allocation</b>	<b>Actual Exp.</b>	<b>BE Demand</b>	<b>BE Allocation</b>	<b>Actual Exp.</b>	<b>BE Demand</b>	<b>BE Allocation</b>	<b>Actual Exp. up to Dec 2020</b>
<b>Aid to Bangladesh</b>	403.81	175.00	131.81	466.27	175.00	137.68	535.35	200.00	64.03
<b>Aid to Bhutan (Grants)</b>	2100.00	1813.50	1985.88	2562.40	2135.79	2041.41	2203.69	2052.37	1196.51
<b>Aid to Nepal</b>	1018.45	650.00	763.39	1452.35	1050.00	1198.26	1206.12	800.00	558.79
<b>Aid to Sri Lanka</b>	538.00	150.00	168.78	512.50	250.00	201.09	399.15	200.00	29.18
<b>Aid to</b>	194.18	125.00	439.40	417.22	400.00	134.41	844.90	300.00	80.19

<b>Maldives</b>									
<b>Aid to Myanmar</b>	800.71	280.00	376.22	954.78	400.00	162.30	914.94	300.00	281.69
<b>Aid to Other Developing Countries</b>	185.63	115.00	124.99	204.53	150.00	138.23	165.22	120.00	95.38
<b>Aid to African Countries</b>	768.81	200.00	339.98	1269.91	450.00	497.81	819.76	350.00	209.76
<b>Aid to Eurasian Countries</b>	47.59	30.00	29.52	38.65	45.00	29.89	60.97	45.00	15.22
<b>Aid to Latin American Countries</b>	44.06	20.00	10.02	35.00	15.00	12.16	61.18	20.00	11.52
<b>Aid to Afghanistan</b>	627.50	325.00	469.98	867.99	400.00	408.12	614.04	400.00	308.25
<b>Aid to Mongolia</b>	5.00	5.00	0.62	2.10	5.00	0.00	5.15	2.00	0.00
<b>Aid to Mauritius</b>	800.00	350.00	659.81	1544.33	1100.00	1100.00	1540.56	1025.00	393.52
<b>Aid to Seychelles</b>	600.00	300.00	99.80	145.41	100.00	24.50	81.24	140.00	12.30

**3.7** From the above table, we can clearly discern that there has been decrease in aid to countries like Maldives and it has been retained for Sri Lanka and Nepal in our neighbourhood. During the examination of Demands for Grants during the past two years and through the Action Taken Reports, the Committee had specifically recommended that the Ministry should refrain from reducing funds to aid to countries. The Ministry was asked to state the actions initiated by it to secure additional funds and the response of the Ministry of Finance. In a

written reply, the Ministry responded that as per the Hon'ble Committee's recommendation, allocations for various Aid heads are done through careful prioritization within available resources to ensure that none of our developmental work suffers any setback and all our commitments are implemented smoothly and speedily. For ongoing projects under the aid programs, the budgetary requirements are gauged based on inputs from the primary Divisions/Spending units who are closely involved with the Implementing Agencies in monitoring the progress of work. The inputs thus received are collated and compared with the past utilization, work progress and pace of expenditure of the project. With this information, deliberations are conducted with the Divisions to get realistic estimates of their demands, assessment based on project implementation cycles, local conditions and physical progress of projects.

**3.8** In response to specific query of the Committee about the actions initiated by MEA to save additional funds, the Ministry submitted in a written reply as under:-

The issue of provision of adequate allocation of funds is regularly taken up with the Ministry of Finance at various levels, including at the level of Minister, Secretary and Financial Advisor, apart from regular interaction at other levels. This has resulted in increase in Ministry's BE 2021-22 allocation from Rs. 17346.71 cr. to Rs. 18154.73 cr, a 4.71% YoY enhancement. The higher allocation for MEA in BE 2021-22 compared to previous years affords Ministry to effectively and speedily implement its ongoing project commitments as well as new project offtakes. Ministry will keep doing a dynamic and realistic assessments of funds for the Aid heads, in line with Committee's recommendation, and if required will seek additional funds from Ministry of Finance, including Supplementary grants or enhanced RE 2021-22 allocation.

**3.9** The Committee enquired whether in the opinion of the Ministry, the allocated amount is adequate to offset Chinese influence in neighbourhood. In a written reply, the Ministry submitted that India's relations with its neighbours stand on their own footing and are independent of the relations of those countries with third countries. The Government of India has a well-articulated policy of 'Neighbourhood First' with a focus on creating mutually beneficial, people-oriented, regional frameworks for stability and prosperity. The Government of India attaches high priority to our relationship with our neighbouring countries. These

engagements cover a wide canvas of subjects like projects on greater connectivity, improved infrastructure, strong cooperation in sectoral areas (like education, culture, trade & investments, defence and security) and broader people-to-people contacts. Adequate budgetary provision is one under international Scheme heads based on realistic assessment of ongoing projects as well as new commitments.

**3.10** Enumerating the existing mechanisms for coordination with other Ministries/Departments in implementation of projects abroad, the Ministry sated that in addition to reviews by External Affair Minister and Foreign Secretary involving all relevant stakeholders to assess implementation status, identify impediments and discuss measures for their resolution, there are various project-specific review mechanisms, such as: Review Committees chaired by the concerned Secretary; Working Committees comprising representatives of GoI and the host/beneficiary government; Task Forces comprising subject experts and implementing agencies; and, Joint Project Monitoring Committees comprising representatives of GoI and the host/beneficiary government. Meetings of these review mechanisms are held regularly as per requirement and progress of respective projects. Besides these review mechanisms, periodic monitoring and evaluation of projects and schemes is undertaken by the concerned Division in the Ministry in consultation with the implementing agencies.

The relevant Ministries and Departments of the Government of India are consulted on major aspects of undertaking and executing bilateral projects abroad. The feasibility study reports as well as the detailed project reports are shared with the relevant line Ministries to obtain their views and concurrence. The Project Management Consultant is appointed in consultation with the line Ministry concerned. As per the standing procedure for financial appraisal of the project through Public Investment Board or Delegated Investment Board or Standing Finance Committee the views of all concerned Ministries and Departments of Government of India are invariably sought in a time bound manner and are incorporated in the appraisal process. If required, inter-Ministerial meetings are held to resolve the differences and clarify the doubts. Indian Missions and Posts abroad are also involved in the monitoring and review process. Besides review meetings at different levels in MEA, inter-ministerial project review and monitoring meetings are held, including but not limited to PMO, Cabinet

Secretariat, Sectoral Group of Secretaries, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, Ministry of Defence etc. In complex projects which involve coordination among multiple stakeholders, inter-ministerial Project Monitoring Committees (PMC) are set up for close monitoring and regular review of the progress in the project.

**3.12** On the Committee's further query about the existence of a long term policy guiding and shaping our budgetary provisions for international commitments to various countries and regions, the Ministry replied that Grant Assistance projects in the friendly partner countries for capacity building assistance are implemented with the long-term goal of generating goodwill and converting the goodwill so generated into a positive influence or leverage to derive foreign policy objectives. These projects are firmly rooted in the underlying principles of South-South Cooperation, *i.e.* mutual benefit, solidarity, free of conditionality and voluntary and demand-driven cooperation. The *raison d'être* for implementation of these development assistance projects is impact and outcome assessment undertaken prior to conceptualization of such projects. Our approach to development assistance partnership with friendly countries is firmly rooted in beneficiary demand-driven project selection and implementation process which is fair, transparent and efficient.

**3.13** In the Annual Report, it is stated that the Development Partnership Administration is progressively developing the expertise required to handle projects in varied sectors and regions through the stages of project formulation, appraisal, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. When asked to illustrate the expertise developed so far for effective and timely implementation of international commitments, the Ministry informed that the Development Partnership Administration in the last nine years of its existence has developed expertise in implementation of projects in multiple ways, including but not limited to, streamlining the process and mechanisms for project formulation, appraisal, implementation monitoring and evaluation as well as adopting best practices and building in-house expertise of diverse domains relevant to the projects undertaken. The in-house expertise has been built through incorporation of experts from other specialists' cadres such as Indian Railways, Indian Telecom Services, and Indian Forest Service etc.

The development assistance projects are formulated after demand for specific sector is evinced by the host government. Thereafter, Feasibility Study/DPR are undertaken to assess the broad outlines of the proposed project. An inter-Governmental MoU is signed with the donee country assigning roles and responsibilities of each party. An implementing agency is selected either on nomination/competitive bidding basis. An agreement is signed between MEA and the implementing agency encompassing mode of implementation and milestone based payment criteria. At the time of commissioning of the project, a Project Monitoring Team comprising of members from the Ministry/Mission, implementing agency and host government certifies the fulfilment of contractual obligations by respective parties to the Agreement, after a site visit. Technical experts are deputed to the CEITs/VTCs for a minimum period of two years for handholding and training of local master trainers for seamless transfer to local authorities after Indian support is withdrawn.

3.14 China referring to making serious headway in infrastructure projects in our neighbourhood, when the Committee asked about the strategy devised to meet this challenge, the Ministry responded that the Government of India attaches high priority to our relationship with our neighbouring countries. India's relations with its neighbours stand on their own footing and are independent of the relations of those countries with third countries. The Government of India has a well articulated policy of 'Neighbourhood First' with a focus on creating mutually beneficial, people-oriented, regional frameworks for stability and prosperity. These engagements cover a wide canvas of subjects like projects on greater connectivity, improved infrastructure, stronger cooperation in sectoral areas (like education, culture, trade & investments, defence and security) and broader people-to-people contacts.

**3.15** A mechanism called Project Preparation Facility (PPF) has been set up by India to assist its development partner countries towards preparation of Project Formulation Reports (PFR) for viable projects. PPF would provide consultancy support on grant basis to requesting Governments for project formulation. The Committee wanted to know the details of governments who have sought PPF during last two years. The Ministry stated that in the past two years the following countries have sought assistance under the PPF mechanism: Madagascar, Sierra Leone, Papua New Guinea, Guyana and Namibia.

**3.16** While tendering evidence before the Committee, the Foreign Secretary has stated that the review and monitoring mechanism for international projects have been institutionalized. When asked to provide details of the institutionalized mechanism, the Ministry stated that the international projects are being reviewed and monitored through institutional mechanisms such as Joint Project Monitoring Committees (JPMCs) and Project Steering Committees. Our major projects in Mauritius and Maldives are regularly reviewed by JPMCs which include the concerned Minister in-charge in Mauritius/ Maldives in addition to the MEA, Indian line Ministries and the Indian Missions abroad. This helps in local facilitation and streamlining of local permissions which are very helpful for expediting the implementation of the projects.

Bilateral review meetings are held twice a year with key recipient countries of India's Lines of Credit (LOC) to monitor the progress of the projects. The numbers of countries with which Bilateral LOC Review meetings are held have been increased in the recent past. A comprehensive review of the projects with all stakeholders concerned is undertaken during this meeting to ensure steady progress of the projects and to identify and address the bottlenecks, if any. In addition to this, project-level meetings are held at regular intervals to monitor the progress of each project under the Lines of Credit and address project-specific issues.

**3.17** Enumerating the challenges faced by the Ministry in implementation of development partnership in other countries, the Ministry stated that the projects may face certain issues like delays in land acquisition and approval of local permits by the borrowing governments, occasional reluctance & apathy of the host governments, challenges of procurement & vendor selection processes in varied legal & economic eco-systems and acquisition of unencumbered land from host governments etc. Apart from this projects in certain countries also face delays due to political uncertainties, security threats, socio-economic crisis, natural calamity etc which present additional challenges in execution of the project. The other challenge that confronts is non-provision of budgetary support/funding mechanism by the host government towards sustainability of the project, once initial Indian support is withdrawn.

**3.18** The Committee also desired to know whether the Ministry has conducted a study on the impact of the development partnership in bolstering our relationship with the concerned countries. The Ministry stated that as mandated by the Indian Development and Economic Assistance Scheme (IDEAS) of 2015 governing the Government of India's Lines of Credit, a



Comprehensive Project Completion Report is submitted by the borrowing government providing a socioeconomic impact assessment of the project. This mechanism is further being institutionalized in the forthcoming revision of IDEAS guidelines of 2021.

**3.19** In view of budgetary constraints, the Committee were curious to know whether capacity building can be considered as a relatively prudent and effective way of extending our developmental partnership. The Ministry responded that ITEC is the flagship programme for Government of India's capacity building efforts in friendly foreign countries. It is firmly rooted in the underlying principles of South-South Cooperation, i.e. mutual benefit, solidarity, free of conditionality and voluntary and demand-driven cooperation. Focused on human resource development, ITEC also serves as a great tool for India's soft power diplomacy and is now recognized as a strong brand name in the field of capacity building assistance. ITEC serves as a policy tool to meet India's international commitments made at various multilateral fora/agencies. Other development partnership projects for capacity building, e.g., CEITs/VTCs also serve as potent tools for realizing our foreign policy objectives.

**3.20** **The Committee are aware that development partnership constitute a central plank of our foreign policy, and has continuously expanded in scope and outreach. The budget head 'Technical and Economic Cooperation' covers expenditure related to India's aid and assistance programmes. Following the overall budget trend of MEA, allocation under this head has grown from Rs. 6617.17 (BE2020-21) to Rs.6754.40 (BE2021-22). The Committee note that budgetary demands under this head are prepared after undertaking a realistic assessment of needs and spending patterns, based on project implementation cycles, local conditions and physical progress to effectively implement the ongoing projects commitments as well as new off takes. The Committee observe that the Covid-19 pandemic and resultant restrictions have adversely affected the implementation of ongoing projects in different partner countries.**

Over the years, the Committee have underscored the imperative of making the budgetary allocation under this head more predictable and consistent. The Committee are happy to learn that in pursuance of its recommendation, the budget head 'Technical and Economic Cooperation' has been suitably allocated. The Committee hope that with the gradual easing down of Covid restrictions, the various ongoing projects will gain momentum and more allocation might be required for swift implementation of ongoing projects in Financial Year 2021-22. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should seek additional finances, if required, from the Ministry of Finance, including supplementary grants or increased RE 2021-22 allocation so that lack of funds do not hinder developmental assistance.

*(Recommendation No. 16)*

3.21 The Committee note that development partnership projects are rooted firmly in the underlying principle of South-South Cooperation, viz. mutual benefit, solidarity, free of conditionality, voluntary and demand driven cooperation. The assistance is implemented with the long-term goal of generating goodwill and generating a positive leverage to drive foreign policy objectives. The Committee, however, feel that the fluctuating budgetary demands and allocations convey a different picture. The Committee are happy to note that international projects are being reviewed and monitored through institutional mechanisms such as Joint Project Monitoring Committees (JPMCs) and Project steering Committees as well as to effectively handle India's developmental aid project Development Partnership Administration (DPA) has been created. The Committee also note that various challenges often impede the execution of international projects, including delays in land acquisitions and approval of local

permits; procurement challenges; occasional reluctance and apathy of host governments; political uncertainties security threats; natural calamity, etc. Keeping these extraneous challenges in mind, the Committee desire that the Ministry should undertake an assessment and accordingly re-orient our approach for project formulation, appraisal, implementation monitoring and evaluation, to overcome such challenges. In the firm opinion of the Committee, the Ministry should frame a developmental aid policy alongwith a separate aid disbursal body/subsidiary organ within DPA with a specialized and focused mandate of streamlining and evaluating the various projects.

*(Recommendation No. 17)*

3.22 Given the considerable importance of India's aid and assistance in South Asia and our pronounced policy of 'India's Neighbourhood First Policy', the Committee welcome the increase in allocation for Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Myanmar which covers a wide spectrum of sectors such as projects on greater connectivity, improved infrastructure, strong cooperation in sectoral areas and broader people to people contacts. However, the response of the Ministry regarding the burgeoning Chinese presence in the neighbourhood, is generic and irrelevant. The Committee feel that the Ministry's oblivious attitude to the growing Chinese presence in our neighbourhood is short-sighted and unrealistic. The Committee, therefore, suggest that the Ministry should take a well informed position in this regard and ensure that our aid projects in our neighbourhood are given utmost priority with adequate fund allocation and expeditious implementation aimed at strengthening our presence and influence in the neighbourhood.

*(Recommendation No. 18)*

## **A. AID TO BANGLADESH**

**3.23** The budgetary allocation made under the sub-head 'Aid to Bangladesh' was Rs. 200 crore during BE 2020-21, which was reduced to Rs. 125.00 crore in RE 2020-21. The allocation at BE 2021-22 has been earmarked as Rs. 200 crore. Enumerating the reasons for reduction in allocation at the RE stage for 2020-21, the Ministry stated that the RE 2020-21 allocation was reduced based on actual pace of project implementation, budget utilization pattern in current financial year. BE 2021-22 has been retained at Rs 200.0 cr, in anticipation of accelerated pace of project execution, as COVID19 restrictions gradually relax. Appropriate provisions have also been made for new commitments such as *Vaccine Maitri*.

**3.24** On being asked the Ministry furnished a detailed note on the status of ongoing developmental projects in Bangladesh as under:

### **1. Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link in Bangladesh**

This is a cross-border rail connectivity project to connect the existing station of Agartala in India to the Gangasagar station in Bangladesh. The total route length of the proposed alignment is 12.031 km, 5.453 Km of the proposed rail link is in India and 6.578 Km is in Bangladesh. India agreed to fund the construction of Akhaura-Agartala rail link under grant assistance during the visit of Prime Minister of Bangladesh to India in January 2010. The MoU for the Rail link was signed on 16 February 2013. The Project was approved on 21.07.2016 by the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, GOI.

The Bangladesh portion of the link is being funded by Ministry of External Affairs as Grant. Indian Portion of the link is being funded by Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DONER). Till date physical progress of 42.50 % and financial progress of 38.70% has been achieved. The project has been delayed by multiple factor including short working period due to prolonged monsoons season, COVID pandemic and the weak financial position of the Contractor appointed by the Government of Bangladesh. The project is likely to be completed by Dec 2021.

**2. India Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline (IBFPL) – GoI is laying a pipeline of 130 Kms from Siliguri Marketing Terminal (SMT) of the Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) in India to Parbatipur Depot of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) in Bangladesh for**

transportation of Gasoil (HSD). Out of the 130 km of pipeline approx. 5.46 km length of pipeline alignment is aligned within India while the remaining approx. 124.89 km of the pipeline alignment is aligned in the territory of Bangladesh. The total cost of the project is Rs 285 Crs of which Rs 93 Crs has been disbursed. The project is likely to be completed by September 2021.

**3. Dredging in Indo-Bangladesh Inland Water Transit & Trade Protocol Connectivity, Sirajganj- Daikhawa & Ashuganj-Zakiganj -** A 7 years dredging project was started in 2019 on two stretches in Bangladesh costing Rs 245 Crs of which 15 Crs has been disbursed.

**4. High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) –**HICDPs in several areas of education, health, water, culture, urban development, disaster management and community welfare etc are also being implemented. These include projects such as construction of school/college buildings, laboratories, dispensaries, deep tube wells, community centres, renovation of historical monuments/buildings etc. In total, 84 HICDPs have been undertaken, of which 68 have been completed. In the FY 2020-21 Division has already disbursed USD 28.9 million.

**5. Humanitarian Aid & Disaster Relief-** Bangladesh expects our support in handling Rohingya crisis at the logistical, governmental and multilateral level as and when required or requested. Ministry delivered five separate tranches of aid till date—including food, medicine, clothes, winter wear, cooking fuel and stoves, and solar street lights--amounting to nearly US\$ 6.4 mn. The fifth tranche of aid, consisting of sewing machines, tents etc, was delivered on Feb 27, 2020.

**6. New Projects/Commitment announced in CFY & their value**  
**Supply of 109 ambulances to Bangladesh:** Under this project, GOI will provide 109 Basic Life Supply (BLS) ambulances in various hospitals in Bangladesh as a humanitarian gesture at estimated cost approx. Rs. 33 crore. The ambulances are expected to be delivered between March-June 2021.

**3.25** The projects alongwith timelines that will be initiated or completed in Bangladesh during 2021-22 are as follows:

1. **Bangladesh Portion of the Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link:** It is a cross-border rail connectivity project to connect the existing station of Agartala in India to the Gangasagar station in Bangladesh and MoU was signed between GOI and GOB in February 2013. Bangladesh Portion, which is being funded by Ministry of External Affairs as grant assistance was approved at a cost of Rs. 392.52 Crore. The project is being implemented by IRCON ISL. Physical Progress of 42.50% has been achieved in the project and it is likely to be completed by end of 2021.

2. **Supply of 109 ambulances to Bangladesh:** Under this project, GOI will provide 109 Basic Life Supply (BLS) ambulances in various hospitals in Bangladesh as a humanitarian gesture at estimated cost approx. Rs. 33 crore. The ambulances are expected to be delivered between March-June 2021.

**3.26** The Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link Project was initiated to provide better connectivity between India and Bangladesh. In their Demands for Grants Reports, the Committee have been firmly recommending that this project should be expedited without any delay and adequate funds should be allocated for the same. When asked about the present status of this project , the Ministry stated that Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link is a cross-border rail connectivity project to connect the existing station of Agartala in India to the Gangasagar station in Bangladesh. MEA is handling the 6.578 km long Bangladesh portion on the rail link. Till date Physical Progress of 42.50% has been achieved. Sufficient funds have been provided for the project by MEA and shortage of the funds is not a problem. The project has been delayed by multiple factor including short working period due to prolonged monsoons season, COVID pandemic and the weak financial position of the Contractor appointed by the Government of Bangladesh. Ministry is assisting the contractor through our Project Management Consultant, M/s IRCON ISL to expedite the work. The project is expected to be completed in 2021.

**3.27** While tendering evidence before the Committee on 24 February, 2021, the Foreign Secretary submitted as under:

“In Bangladesh, key projects ongoing include the Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link, dredging of Kushiara and Gomti rivers, construction of the India-Bangladesh Friendship pipeline

and several High Impact Community Development Projects in the areas of education, health, water, culture, urban development, disaster management, and community welfare. These include projects such as construction of school/college buildings, laboratories, dispensaries, deep tube wells, community centres, renovation of historical monuments and buildings, etc. In total, 84 HICDPs have been undertaken, of which 68 have been completed. In 2020-21 development assistance worth 28.9 million dollar has been disbursed. Further, we will be extending grant assistance in the form of supply of 109 ambulances with deliveries expected in March-June this year. India has extended Made in India vaccine as a grant assistance of 20, 00,000 doses to Bangladesh. An aid to Bangladesh allocation in the BE 2021-22 has been kept at Rs. 200 crore. India has also extended about 8 million dollars in Lines of Credit to Bangladesh, the largest for any of our partner countries in three separate credit lines at uniquely concessional rates. The areas include power generation and transmission, rail and road transport, and infrastructure creation including Economic Zones, etc. This is mainly related to our own connectivity initiatives in Bangladesh. The first ever defence Line of Credit of 500 million dollar has been extended. 46 projects have been covered under these LoCs, of which 14 have been completed.”

**3.28 The Committee observe that the budgetary allocation under the minor head ‘Aid to Bangladesh’ for the year BE 2021-22 has been kept at Rs. 200 crore which was the same in BE 2020-21. However, at the RE 2020-21 stage, the allocation was reduced to Rs. 125 crore, based on actual pace of project implementation. The slow pace of implementation of projects under this head during the past three years is disconcerting. There are several key ongoing projects in Bangladesh such as Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link, dredging of Kushiara and Gomti Rivers, construction of India Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline, Humanitarian assistance and several High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) in the area of education, health, water, culture, urban development disaster management and community welfare. Regarding the status of**

**Akhaura Agartala Rail Link, the Ministry has submitted that the project has been delayed by multiple factors including short working period, COVID pandemic and weak financial position of the contractor appointed by the Government of Bangladesh. Till date, physical progress of 42.50% and financial progress of 38.70% has been achieved. The project is likely to be completed by the end of 2021. The Ministry has also informed that the India Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline is likely to be completed by September, 2021.**

**The Committee express their strong disapproval of the utilization by the Ministry under this sub-head. In view of the tardy implementation of the various projects, the Committee would strongly recommend that the Ministry should take adequate measures to ensure full utilization of budgetary allocation and timely completion of all ongoing projects in Bangladesh, particularly the Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link Project.**

*(Recommendation No. 19)*

## **B. AID TO BHUTAN**

**3.29** Government of India's aid and assistance programmes in Bhutan are currently covered under both Revenue and Capital Heads with Grants coming under Revenue and Loans coming under Capital sections of the budget. The funds under the Grants head are utilized for various development projects including hydroelectric power projects, development subsidy to Bhutan, subsidy to Power Grid Corporation of India for drawal of power from Chukha hydroelectric project, payment to IOC for supply of kerosene oil and liquefied petroleum gas to Bhutan at a subsidized price, excise duty refund to Bhutan, projects/schemes under Project Tied Assistance framework, scholarships to Bhutanese students in various institutions in India etc. Allocations are made keeping in view the progress of work in various schemes/projects in Bhutan.

**3.30** The Committee wanted to know about the latest loan to grant ratio *vis-à-vis* Bhutan based on BE 2021-22. The Ministry stated that the loan to Grant ratio for the hydropower projects in Bhutan is fixed. For Puna-I, the ratio is 60:40, for Puna-II, the ratio is 70:30 and for



Mangdechhu, the ratio is 70:30. The Loan to Grant ratio as per the draft demand of BE 2021-22 of INR 3014.17 Cr [Capital (Loan) of INR 880.75 Cr and Revenue (Grant) of INR 2133.42 Cr] is 29:71. The majority of Grant component, however, includes projects other than Hydro-power projects. As per past practice, the loan to grant ratio is maintained during the fund releases. The latest position with regard to Loan: Grant for HEPs is tabulated below:

<b>Name of HEPs</b>	<b>Loan (% of total funds released so far)</b>	<b>Grant (% of total funds released so far)</b>
Punatsangchhu-I	60.00	40.00
Punatsangchhu-II	69.19	30.81
Mangdechhu	70.00	30.00

**3.31** An allocation of Rs. 2124.20 crore was made under this head during BE 2021-22, which is the highest developmental cooperation to our neighbouring country. Explaining the reasons for increased allocations under this head, the Ministry stated that an amount of INR 2884.65 Cr was allocated under 'Aid to Bhutan' head during BE 2020-21. The increase in allocation was mainly due to the expected release of funds for Mangdechhu HEP upon firming up of the final completion cost, payments towards Associated Transmission System in HEPs, and release of funds towards Punatsangchhu-II HEP, which has come back on track after suffering severe geological challenges.

**3.32** On being asked whether the allocated funds are adequate for the completion/ progress of the projects, the Ministry replied that an amount of INR 2261.86 Cr has been allocated under 'Aid to Bhutan' head at the RE stage of CFY 2020-21, which is adequate for the expenditure during CFY 2020-21. There would not be any fund release in r/o Mangdechhu HEP in the CFY as its final completion cost is yet to be finalized. The total budget allocation for Punatsangchhu-I HEP, which has suffered severe geological challenges, was reduced on account of lesser fund requirements as projected by the Project Authority based on the project's progress. Also, works in ongoing HEPs have been progressing at a slower pace due to the COVID-19 situation. Accordingly, Ministry has ensured that fund release to the GoI assisted HEPs in Bhutan are kept aligned with project implementation progress to avoid any parking of funds.

**3.33** Details of various ongoing projects in Bhutan along with the funds allocation for each project, timeframe for completion and the status of each Project are provided as under:-

**HEPs:**

S. No.	Project/ Scheme	Approved Value	Scheduled date of completion	Current Status
1.	Mangdechhu (720 MW HEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INR 2896.3 Cr (as per DPR at March 2008 PL)</li> <li>• RCE of INR 4020.63 Cr (Approved in March 2016)</li> <li>• 2<sup>nd</sup> RCE of INR 4672.38 Cr (Approved in Sep 2017)</li> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> RCE of INR 5012.63 Cr (Approved in March 2019)</li> <li>• Completion cost (at August 2019 PL) is under examination by the Ministry.</li> </ul>	Project has been commissioned. It was inaugurated in Aug 2019 by PMs of India and Bhutan.	Physical progress- 100%; Fund released so far: Rs. 5012.63 Cr
2.	Punatsangchhu-I (1200 MW HEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INR 3514.81 Cr (as per DPR at December 2006 PL)</li> <li>• RCE of INR 9375.58 Cr (Approved in July 2015)</li> </ul>	June 2019	Physical progress- 87.19% (as of Jan 2021); Fund released so far: INR 8045.38 Cr  <i>*The Project has been delayed due to geological surprises.</i>
3.	Punatsangchhu-II (1020 MW HEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INR 3777.8 Cr (as per DPR at March 2009 PL)</li> <li>• RCE of INR 7290.62 Cr (Approved in July 2016)</li> </ul>	2018-19	Physical progress- 89.50% (as of Jan 2021); Fund released so far: INR 7050.463 Cr

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2nd RCE (at Jan 2020 PL) is under examination by the Ministry.</li> </ul>		<i>*The Project has been delayed due to geological surprises.</i>
4.	Kholongchhu (600 MW HEP)	INR 3868.870 Cr (DPR completion cost)	Pre-construction activities in progress.	INR 173.7817 Cr has been released by MEA towards DGPC's equity till date.

**Non-HEPs:** GoI is implementing Projects including Project Tied Assistance and Small Development Projects in Bhutan under the GoI's committed assistance of INR 4500 Cr to Bhutan's XII Five Year Plan for 2018-23 (Approved by Union Cabinet in December 2018). Out of the INR 4500 Cr, INR 2800 Cr have been allocated for Project Tied Assistance, INR 850 Cr for Small Development Projects and INR 850 Cr for Programme Grant.

**3.34** Briefing the Committee about the 'Aid and Assistance to Bhutan', the Foreign Secretary during the course of oral evidence on 24 February, 2021 submitted as under:-

"Bhutan has traditionally been the largest recipient of our financial assistance for strategic reasons that the Committee is well aware of. The Government has made a commitment of Rs.4,500 crore towards Bhutan's 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan period from 2018 to 2023, besides providing Rs.400 crore as transitional Trade Support Facility. Plan commitments of Rs.4,500 crore comprises of Rs.2,800 crore for project tied assistance, Rs.850 crore for small development projects and Rs.850 crore for programme grant. About 77 projects under Project tied Assistance and 524 under Small Development Projects are being implemented virtually covering all areas of socio-economic development, ranging from agriculture, infrastructure, ICT, health, education, capacity building and culture. Given our unique relationship with Bhutan, India provided essential medicines, medical supplies, test kits, X-ray machines, etc. in the wake of COVID-19. Bhutan was the first country to receive 1,50,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine in the first phase of Vaccine Maitri. Among the on-going Hydroelectric Power Projects, Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Power Project was completed and inaugurated in

August 2019 and a Concession Agreement was signed for 600 MW Kholongchu Joint Venture project in June 2020. We hope to resolve the challenges of geological surprises, which have confronted construction of Punatsangchhu-I and Punatsangchhu-II Hydroelectric Power Projects. India is also working together with Bhutan on joint development of small satellite.”

**3.35** On being asked about the details of the development of small satellite, the Ministry provided that space is a new and promising area of bilateral cooperation between India and Bhutan. During the visit of Prime Minister Modi to Bhutan in August 2019, both sides had agreed to collaborate on the joint development of a small satellite for Bhutan. A Joint Working Group was formed with members from ISRO and Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST), Department of Space, GoI and Department of Information Technology and Telecommunication (DITT), Royal Government of Bhutan to implement the project and other related activities. In this regard, ISRO has proposed a budget of Rs. 21 crore for design, realization, launch and Ground Station realization and training of Bhutanese officials. Four Bhutanese engineers have completed phase-I training at ISRO Hqrs., Bengaluru from 18.01.2021 to 28.02.2021.

**3.36 India has extensive development partnership with Bhutan and budgetary allocations are provisioned under both Revenue and Capital Heads. An allocation of Rs. 2124.20 crore has been provided under the head ‘Aid to Bhutan’ for BE 2021-22. Apart from the Hydroelectric projects, Government of India is implementing Project Tied Assistance and Small Development Projects in Bhutan and this allocation has been kept aligned with project implementation progress. The Committee are happy to learn that India and Bhutan are collaborating on joint development of a small satellite for Bhutan. The Committee also observe that in line with our special relations with Bhutan, India has ensured continuous supply of trade and essential items to Bhutan, despite COVID-19 related lockdowns. India’s developmental partnership with Bhutan has been**

**multifaceted and unique. The Committee are hopeful that the deepening engagement in traditional as well as non-traditional areas will grow with the inclusion of satellite development. The Committee desire that the Ministry should continue to prioritize our special relationship with Bhutan by completion of all the ongoing projects in a time bound manner without any parking of funds.**

*(Recommendation No. 20)*

### **C. AID TO NEPAL**

**3.37** Under the sub-head 'Aid to Nepal', the budgetary allocation for BE 2020-21 was Rs. 800.00 crore and it was increased to Rs. 880.00 crore at the RE stage. The allocation under BE 2021-22 is pegged at Rs. 992.00 crore which is 24% more than BE 2020-21. When asked about the reasons for the increase in allocation under this head during both RE as well as BE Stage, the Ministry stated that timely implementation of ongoing bilateral projects in Nepal is a priority for Government of India. In this regard, the allocation under sub-head 'Aid to Nepal' has increased from INR 800 crore for BE 2020-21 to INR 992 crore for BE 2021-22, *i.e.* an overall increase of INR 192 crore. The main reason for this increase in allocation is that, some of the major ongoing development and infrastructure projects in Nepal are in the final stages of completion and also expected to be completed in FY 2021-22. Hence, additional funds will be required for reimbursement to the Government of Nepal and final settlement of bills to the respective consultants and contractors to ensure their smooth execution. Additional funds were sought during RE stage for the financial year 2020-21, as additional funds were required for Post-Earthquake reconstruction projects, the Terai Road Project and for the unforeseen expenditure in the procurement of medical supplies for Nepal as grant assistance, to fight Covid-19 pandemic.

**3.38** The details of GOI projects in Nepal that have been initiated or completed during the last three financial years are as follows:

#### **1. Construction of four Integrated Check Posts (ICPs)**

India and Nepal signed a MoU in August 2005 for construction of four Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) namely Birgunj, Biratnagar, Nepalgunj and Bhairahawa in Nepal along the India-Nepal Border under GoI's Grant-in-Aid. Their Status is as under:

**Birgunj:** Completed and handed over to Government of Nepal in March 2018. The project was jointly inaugurated by both the Prime Ministers of India and Nepal in April 2018.

**Biratnagar:** Completed and handed over Government of Nepal in January 2020. The project was jointly inaugurated by both the Prime Ministers of India and Nepal in January 2020. Project is currently under Defect Liability Period till April 2021.

**Nepalgunj :**The ICP is under construction since November 2020 and expected to complete by November 2022.

**Bhairahawa:** The appointment of Project Management Consultant/ executing agency is currently under process.

## **2. Nepal Bharat Maitri Pashupati Dharmashala**

The project for construction of Nepal Bharat Maitri Dharmashala at Pashupati Temple Area Complex was completed in August 2018 and jointly inaugurated by Prime Ministers of India and Nepal on August 31, 2018. The scope of the work included construction of a three storied Dharmashala building with modern amenities for the pilgrims visiting the Pashupatinath temple at the approved cost of Rs 18.56 crores

3. More than 46,000 houses were reconstructed in two districts of Nepal under GoI's total assistance of US\$ 150 million, as part of the post-earthquake reconstruction package to Nepal. Other major GOI-assisted projects in Nepal initiated during the last three financial years are as follows:

- a) Construction of 02 nos. of cross-border rail links under Phase I is under implementation at Jogbani (India)-Biratnagar (Nepal) (Rs 238.83 Cr.) and Jayanagar (India)-Bardibas (Nepal) (Rs 548 Cr.);
- b) Preliminary Engineering-cum-Traffic survey for the new broad gauge rail line between Raxaul and Kathmandu was undertaken in FY 2018-19 and work is underway for conducting Final Location Survey of the rail line at a sanctioned cost of INR 39.72 crores ;

- c) Upgradation of 10 nos. of roads under Terai Roads project is being undertaken under new 'GOI funded-GON implemented' modality at a cost of INR 500 crore;
- d) Integrated Check Posts at Nepalgunj and Bhairahawa in Nepal are being implemented at a cost of INR 421.68 crore;
- e) Nepal-Bharat Maitri Polytechnic in Hetauda is under construction at a cost of INR 38.53 crore;
- f) Preparation of Tender document for construction of National Police Academy at Panauti, Nepal at an estimated cost of INR 657.45 crore is underway;
- g) Post-earthquake reconstruction work is underway in health, education, and cultural heritage sectors with grant component of US\$ 250 million.
- h) Under the mechanism of Joint Commission on Inundation and Flood Control, the Ministry extends economic assistance every year for the construction of river embankments on cross border rivers flowing from Nepal to India (work on 3 rivers, viz. Kamla, Lalbakeya, Bagmati, was completed in 2018; work on 3 rivers, viz. Khando, Banganga and West Rapti, is ongoing)

Every year, the Ministry extends assistance to High Impact Community Development Projects or HICDPs (formerly Small Development Projects) programme for the implementation of projects each costing less than NPR 5 crore (INR 3.125 crore approx.) in critical sectors such as health, education and community infrastructure development.

**3.39** Allocation at RE 2020-21 was enhanced to meet expenditure for the post-earthquake housing reconstruction project, medicine and equipment aid COVID and progress in Terai Roads project under the revised modality. In BE 2021-22, the allocation has been made keeping in view the requirement of funds for settlement of bills of Operation Maitre, Post-earthquake reconstruction in housing and education sector, vaccine aid apart from regular ongoing projects such as Integrated Check Posts at Biratnagar; cross-border rail links; embankment construction on Nepalese rivers; Small Development Projects; supply of electricity; scholarships etc. In this connection, the Committee dsired to know about the number of houses have been reconstructed in Nepal in Post earthquake period and the targets and timeline. The Ministry responded that as part of the post-earthquake reconstruction package to Nepal, an amount of US\$ 150 million [US\$ 100 million as grant, and US\$ 50

million as LOC] was allocated to support reconstruction in housing sector in Nepal. The Government of Nepal has allocated 50,000 earthquake affected beneficiaries in Gorkha and Nuwakot districts of Nepal to the Government of India. As per the agreed modality, the Government of Nepal is responsible for implementation while the Government of India will provide funding and socio-technical consultancy support for the project. Housing reconstruction project has achieved substantial progress since its commencement in 2018. Over 46, 000 GoI-supported houses have been completed till date.

**3.40** The details of various ongoing development projects in Nepal under the Ministry’s ‘Aid to Nepal’ budget head, along with the progress and expected timeline for completion, are tabulated below:

SN	Project	Approved Cost	Timeline / Target	Progress
<b>‘Aid to Nepal’ budget head</b>				
1.	Integrated Check Post under Phase-II at Nepalgunj, Nepal	Rs. 189.20 crore	The construction period for the ICP is 24 months from the date of commencement of the project and expected to complete by November 2022.	The executing agency M/s RajdeepBuildcon Pvt. Ltd. is appointed in September 2020. The contractor is mobilising its resources after the approval of masterlist of machineries by the Government of Nepal in November 2020.
2.	Integrated Check Post under Phase-II at Bhairahawa, Nepal	Rs. 232.48 crore	The implementation of ICP Bhairahawa is recently taken up. The construction period for the ICP is 24 months from the date of commencement of the project and expected to	The appointment of Project Management Consultant is currently under process. The selection of executing agency will be taken up subsequent upon the



SN	Project	Approved Cost	Timeline / Target	Progress
			complete by 2023.	appointment of consultant.
3.	Terai Roads project	Rs. 500 crore	11 Road packages are completed and remaining 03 roads are scheduled to be completed in 2021	About 90% completed
4.	Post-earthquake reconstruction in housing sector	Rs. 700 crore [US\$ 100 million]	2021	Over 46, 000 GoI-supported houses have been completed till date, out of the 50,000 houses allocated by GoN.
5.	Post-earthquake reconstruction in education sector	Rs. 350 crore [US\$ 50 million]	2023 Total 71 educational institutions (schools/library) identified	08 schools have been completed. Work on 62 schools and one library is ongoing.
6.	Post-earthquake reconstruction in cultural heritage sector	Rs. 350 crore [US\$ 50 million]	2023 Total 28 cultural heritage sites identified	Preliminary assessment of 12 cultural heritage sites completed and 06 are in tendering stage.
7.	Jayanagar-Bijalpura-Bardibas rail link	Rs 548 Cr. Revised cost under review in M/o Railways	Stretch from Jayanagar to Kurtha (34.05 km) completed; construction of remaining portion of the rail-link is underway. Land from Bijalpura to Bardibas is yet to be handed over by	Being undertaken in <b>Phase-I</b> Physical Progress: <b>65.60%</b> Financial Progress: <b>98.8%</b>

SN	Project	Approved Cost	Timeline / Target	Progress
			Government of Nepal	
8.	Jogbani-Biratnagar rail link	Rs 238.83 Cr. Revised cost of Rs 373.87 Cr under approval stage	Stretch from Bathnaha-Jogbani-Nepal Customs Yard (8.5 km) completed; construction of remaining portion of the rail-link is underway. Rail Link is likely to be completed by Dec 2021.	Being undertaken in Phase-I Physical Progress: <b>76.90%</b> Financial Progress: <b>90%</b>
9.	National Police Academy at Panauti	Rs.657.45 crore	Tender document preparation is underway. Construction time estimated to be 3 years.	Construction of the project will commence after tendering.
10.	Nepal-Bharat Maitri Polytechnic college	Rs. 38.53 crore	2021	Project commenced in September 2019; over 18% progress achieved.
11.	Tanakpur Link Canal	Rs. 80.00 crore	2021	Survey/Excavation of Cross drainage works completed. Embankment filling of canal works and Raft foundation concreting of Head regulator works is under progress.
12.	Raxaul-Kathmandu rail link	-	-	Final Location Study (FLS) for the proposed Raxaul-Kathmandu rail link with Nepal was

SN	Project	Approved Cost	Timeline / Target	Progress
				initiated in October 2020 and is likely to be completed in 2021.

**3.41** On the Committee’s query regarding medicine and equipment related to COVID that India is providing to Nepal, the Ministry stated that the Government of India gifted one million doses of ‘Made in India’ COVID19 vaccines to Nepal on 21 January 2021 for the immediate requirement of Nepal’s healthcare and front-line workers. Government of India has gifted essential medicines, equipments and medical supplies amounting to over INR 15.8 crore (excluding vaccines) to Nepal for combating the Covid-19 pandemic. 23 tonnes of essential medicines were gifted to Government of Nepal (GoN) to fight against Covid-19 on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020. This consignment included 8.25 lakhs dosage of essential medicines, including 3.2 lakhs dosage of Paracetamol and 2.5 lakhs dosages of Hydroxychloroquine. On 17<sup>th</sup> May 2020, Pathodetect Covid-19 Qualitative RT-PCR Test Kits for 30,000 tests were gifted to Government of Nepal. In the end of May 2020, 20,000 gloves were gifted to Government of Nepal. Ten ICU ventilators were gifted by Indian Army to Nepali Army, on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2020. Further, on 8th November 2020, 28 ICU Ventilators were handed over to Minister of Health & Population, Nepal. GoI has also handed 4000 vials of Remdesivir to Government of Nepal.

**3.42** The Committee observe that there has been an improvement in budgetary allocation under the head ‘Aid to Nepal’ from Rs. 800 crore (BE 2020-21) to Rs. 992.00 crore (BE 2021-22). The main reason for enhanced allocation as furnished by the Ministry is that some of the major ongoing development and infrastructure projects in Nepal are in final stages of completion. The Committee are pleased to note that India has gifted one million dose of ‘Made in India’ COVID-19 vaccines to Nepal on 21 January, 2021 for the immediate requirement of Nepal’s healthcare and frontline workers. The Committee are optimistic that the Ministry will utilize the enhanced budgetary allocation

**for Nepal to complete the projects in their final stages of completion, without any time and cost overruns.**

*(Recommendation No. 21)*

#### **D. AID TO AFGHANISTAN**

**3.43** The budgetary allocation under the Head ‘Aid to Afghanistan’ was Rs. 400.00 crore for BE 2020-21 and it was reduced at RE stage to Rs. 350.00 crore. It has been pegged at Rs. 350.00 crore for BE 2020-21. Elaborating upon the reasons for decline in allocation during the RE 2020-21 and BE 2021-22, the Ministry stated that as a result of COVID-19 related restrictions imposed by national and local governments, various ongoing projects in Afghanistan have faced issues such as unavailability of manpower, materials, disruption of international supply chains etc causing unavoidable delays in ongoing projects. Since the payments to be released are based on the work completed, the utilization of funds has been lower than expected thereby leading to reduction in expenditure. Further due to restrictions imposed on travel, Afghan students and personnel could not arrive to pursue their studies and training courses in various Indian Institutes leading to lower utilization of allocated funds in those schemes.

**3.44** The status of completed and ongoing projects with allocation and actual expenditure are as follows: -

<b>Completed Project</b>		
<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Project Cost</b>
1.	Supply of 1.1 lakh MT (1.7 lakh tonne) of Wheat	Rs. 445 Crore
2.	Supply of 2000 MT of pulses	Rs. 16.10 Crore
3.	Afghan-India Friendship Dam (Salma Dam)	Rs. 1775.69 Crore
4.	Afghan Parliament Building	Rs. 969 Crore
5.	Construction of Power Substation at Doshi & Charikar	Rs. 186.71 Crore
6.	Restoration of Stor Palace	Rs. 38.76 Crore

		(US \$ 5.7 million)
7.	Supply of Medical equipment to IGICH Kabul	Rs. 17.16 Crore
8.	Construction of glazed tile plant for Blue Mosque in Mazar-e-Sharif	Rs. 0.52 Crore (US\$ 76,616)

<b>Ongoing Projects</b>			
<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Projects /Scheme</b>	<b>Original Demand forBE 2020-21 projected by DPA-III</b>	<b>Expenditure incurred in CFY till Jan 2021</b>
1.	Afghan India Friendship Dam	41.90	41.90
2.	O&M of Afghan India Friendship Dam	2.00	0.00
3	Parliament Building	4.77	4.77
4	Shahtoot Dam- Additional Tests	0.75	0.75
5	Supply of 75,000 MT of wheat	323.00	243
6	Establishment of Agriculture University (ANASTU)	5.00	0.23
7	Agriculture Fellowship Programme through DARE/ICAR	6.00	4.02
8	1000 Scholarship ICCR 2012-16	15.00	6.72
9	1000 Scholarship ICCR 2017-21	75.00	22.00
10	500 Scholarships for ANDSF martyrs Children	8.00	2.64
11	Rehabilitation of 16.9 km Road connecting Band-e-Amir to Bamyan-Yakawlang Highway	0.00	0
12	2.38 km road connecting Mazar-e- Sharif Airport to Kabul Char Saraka Road	0.00	0
13	High Impact Community	29.42	4.75

	Development Programmes		
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**3.45** On the Committee’s query, the Ministry furnished a status note on Shatoot Dam Project, road and high impact community projects in Afghanistan.

**Shahtoot Dam**

India agreed for construction of Lalander (Shatoot) Dam near Kabul under grant assistance on September 11, 2017. As per the DPR prepared by Afghan side in 2016, the estimated cost of the project was US\$ 236 million. Central Water Commission (CWC) updated the DPR at an estimated cost of US\$ 286 million. MEA on recommendation of Ministry of Jal Shakti appointed WAPCOS as PMC. WAPCOS was given work of Additional Survey & Investigations to determine the final technical parameters and estimated cost of the project. The study is underway and likely to complete by mid 2021. MoU for construction of the dam has been signed between India and Afghan governments on 09 February 2021.

**High Impact Community Development Programmes (HICDP’s)**

Phase I & II of SDPs was launched in July 2006 and June 2008 respectively for a total amount of USD 20 million. Phase III of SDP’s was announced during the PM’s visit to Afghanistan in 2011 and sanctioned in 2012 for a total amount USD 100 million. In December 2015, Prime Minister during his visit to Afghanistan announced an increase in SDPs outlay to USD 200 million by 2020. The Phase- IV with outlay of 80 million US\$ was announced by EAM in November 2020 at Donors Conference on Afghanistan. The MoU is expected to be signed in 2021.

**3.46** The Committee asked whether in the opinion of the Ministry, the reduction in budgetary allocations would impact our vital interests amid the impending political transition in Afghanistan. The Ministry replied that India’s developmental assistance to Afghanistan is a key pillar of the close strategic partnership with Afghanistan. Government of India remains committed to its wide-ranging development assistance to Afghanistan focused on reconstruction and development. The budgetary requirements were projected for the financial year taking into account specific status and anticipated utilization for various projects and initiatives. The reduction in BE at RE stage was due to unforeseen circumstances created by

Covid 19 pandemic induced restrictions and resultant problems. The Government attaches great importance to its relations with its neighbours, including Afghanistan especially in the current times.

**3.47** About the utilization of BE of Afghanistan the foreign Secretary stated during the oral evidence held on 24.02.2021 that, we have utilized 76 per cent of our BE for Afghanistan which is very significant. It is a neighbouring country going through a lot of turmoil and as a percentage of RE, it is almost 90 per cent utilization in Afghanistan. So, it is quite significant in those terms that we have.

**3.48** Regarding India's development assistance in Afghanistan, the Foreign Secretary during the course of oral evidence on 24 February 2021 submitted as under:

“India's development partnership assistance in Afghanistan of over US dollar 2 billion is widely acknowledged. We have successfully completed large infrastructural projects despite daunting logistical and security challenges. As a part of New Development Partnership, India and Afghanistan signed an MOU for the construction of Lalandar (Shahtoot Dam) in February 2021. We have completed humanitarian assistance of 75,000 MT of wheat during the period April-September 2020.

Having completed more than 400 projects in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan, India continued its steadfast support to the socio-economic development of that country by implementing a range of small development projects and High-Impact Community Development Projects. About one thousand scholarships, training and fellowships were extended to Afghan students. India also extended grant assistance of 500,000 doses of COVID vaccine to Afghanistan. The Indian Ocean Region has been a critical focus of the country's foreign policy and strategic interest and has also a significant budgetary share. Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Seychelles, and Maldives comprising part of the Indian Ocean Region, together have 20 per cent of our development partnership portfolio. Indo-Pacific Cooperation has been earmarked at Rs. 40 crore in BE 2021-22 and underscores our continued commitment to the Act East Policy and centrality of cooperation with the ASEAN.

**3.49** The Committee note that the budgetary allocation under ‘Aid to Afghanistan’ has been reduced from Rs. 400 crore in BE 2020-21 to Rs. 350 crore during both RE 2020-21 and BE 2021-22. As per the Ministry, the reduction in BE and RE stage was due to unforeseen circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and resultant problems. The Foreign Secretary informed that about one thousand scholarships, training and fellowships were extended to Afghan students in the past year. India also extended grant assistance of 500,000 doses of COVID vaccine to Afghanistan. The Committee note that MoU for construction of the Lalander (Shahtoot) Dam has been signed between India and Afghanistan on 9 February, 2021. The Committee are pleased to note that despite the ongoing pandemic, 76% of BE (2020-21) for Afghanistan has been utilized so far. The Committee know that India has successfully completed various large and small projects in Afghanistan despite daunting logistical and security challenges. In view of our exemplary past record in developmental aid and assistance to Afghanistan, the Committee desire that the Ministry should continue making concerted efforts to fulfill all our commitments to Afghanistan, particularly in the evolving political situation.

*(Recommendation No. 22)*

#### **E. AID TO SRI LANKA**

**3.50** The budgetary allocation under ‘Aid to Sri Lanka’ for BE 2020-21 was Rs. 200.00 crore. It was decreased to Rs. 75.00 crore at the RE stage. The budgetary allocation during BE 2021-22 has been kept at Rs. 200.00 crore. When asked about the reason for decreased allocation at RE 2020-21, the Ministry replied that the reasons for decreased allocation at RE 2020-21 are attributable to COVID-19 Pandemic. Immediately after the onset of the pandemic a country-wide lock down was imposed in Sri Lanka and India from March 2020. From March 2020 to June/July 2020, no construction activity could be undertaken at the project sites during this time. Hence, pace of progress of High Impact Community



Development Projects (HICDP) came to a complete halt. This Head is also used for meeting the expenditure of Indian Housing Project in Sri Lanka. The Phase-III (4000 Houses) of the project is currently ongoing and is nearing completion. Phase-IV (10,000 Houses) is yet to start. Almost most of the training programmes / courses including ICCR scholarships were cancelled. Accordingly, a downward projection was made at the RE stage.

**3.51** To the Committee's specific enquiry regarding the decline in budgetary allocation affect the ongoing projects in Sri Lanka, the Ministry replied that decline in budgetary allocation is not likely to affect the ongoing projects in Sri Lanka. GoI is committed to undertake developmental projects in Sri Lanka as per the priorities of GoSL. After relaxing of lock down in a phased manner in the country, pace of progress is picking up. The decline in budgetary allocation shall not affect the ongoing project on Indian Housing in Sri Lanka as Phase-IV (10,000 houses) of the project is likely to start in the next financial year. Accordingly, necessary adjustments have been made by seeking increased allocation at BE 2021-22 stage.

**3.52** Indicating the utilization of budget allocation for various projects in BE 2020-21. Utilization of budget allocation for various projects in BE 2020-21 is placed below:

<b>S. No</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>BE 2020-21 (in Crore INR)</b>	<b>Cumulative Exp. in FY 2020-21 till January 2021 (in Crore INR)</b>	<b>Projected Exp. in February- March 2021 (in Crore INR)</b>
1	Construction/Equipment and Vehicle for Faculty of Agriculture, University of Jaffna	0.21	0.003	0.00
2	Construction / Equipment and Vehicle for Faculty of Engineering, University of Jaffna	0.45	0.04	0.00
3	Construction of Rabindranath Tagore memorial auditorium at University of Ruhuna	0.19	0.00	0.19
4	Renovation of 27 Schools in Northern Province	10.15	0.43	0.50
5	Upgrading Saraswathy school in Pusselawa, Kandy (Construction)	3.33	0.42	0.00

<b>S. No</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>BE 2020-21 (in Crore INR)</b>	<b>Cumulative Exp. in FY 2020-21 till January 2021 (in Crore INR)</b>	<b>Projected Exp. in February- March 2021 (in Crore INR)</b>
	Upgrading Saraswathy school in Pusselawa, Kandy (Equipments)	0.75	0.00	0.02
6	Setting up of a training school for DaladaMaligawa, Palkelele, Kandy	6.07	1.76	1.00
7	Model Village project in 25 districts.	12.50	0.00	1.00
8	Gram Shakthi Housing Project-1 in Southern Province	12.50	0.74	0.62
9	Gram Shakthi Housing Project in Nothern Province	12.50	0.54	0.90
10	Gram Shakthi Housing Project-2 in Southern	12.50	0.17	0.90
11	ShobitaThero Housing Project, Anuradhapura	12.88	0.00	0.00
12	Construction of Surgical Unit Teaching Hospital Batticaloa	10.18	1.80	2.00
13	5000 metric ton cold storage in Dambulla	12.00	1.23	2.57
14	Construction of Building Complex and other infrastructure facilities at Swami Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies, Eastern University	11.45	0.000	0.00
15	Upgrading Schools in Plantation Areas	12.50	0.000	0.00
16	Upgrading Thondaman Vocational Training Centre at Hatton	8.29	0.93	1.07
17	Construction of Low cost housing unit in Mannar	12.00	2.35	1.50
18	Construction of 3200 Toilets at Batticaloa District	12.50	0.00	0.00
19	Establishment of Commercial Space for IT other professional services in Jaffna Town	10.40	0.00	0.00
20	Indian Housing Project Phase 3	24.00	18.55	0.50
21	Construction of 2889 Rain Water	1.00	0.15	0.00

S. No	Project Name	BE 2020-21 (in Crore INR)	Cumulative Exp. in FY 2020-21 till January 2021 (in Crore INR)	Projected Exp. in February- March 2021 (in Crore INR)
	Harvesting Units in Jaffna District			
22	Construction of multi ethnic school in Polonnaruwa	1.00	0.65	0.00
23	Training Programmes for Sri Lanka Defence Personnel, Police personnel ( approx 1700 slots) & ICCR Scholarships fro 135 Sri Lanka Students in India	38.08	0.05	8.00
24	Viability Gap Funding to Allaince Air for Chennai-Jafna Flights	7.64	1.67	2.00
25	Supply of HCQ tablets(air lifting bill)	0.00	0.47	0.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>245.07</b>	<b>31.95</b>	<b>22.77</b>

Also an expenditure of Rs.18.55 Crore has been utilized till date in FY 2020-21 under Indian Housing Project in Sri Lanka. Further, a payment worth Rs. 51 Lakh (approx.) is also under process in the current financial year.

**3.53** During the deliberations on demands for Grants, the Foreign Secretary gave a comprehensive view of India's aid to Sri Lanka as under:

“India's overall commitment of development assistance in the island nation, that is, Sri Lanka, stands at a total of around 3.5 billion dollars with close to 560 million being offered as grants. In Sri Lanka, two major projects have been completed including, the iconic Jaffna Cultural Centre and upgradation of Saraswathy Central College. Phase-III of the Indian Housing Project in Sri Lanka was initiated in August, 2016 which is now nearing completion. In addition, many High-Impact Community Development Projects are at different stages of implementation. India extended grant assistance of 500,000 COVID-19 vaccines to Sri Lanka.

The COVID-19 lockdown had a crushing impact on project implementation in the last financial year due to disruption in supply chains and logistical constraints and of course, due to non-availability of manpower. Despite that, India has been unwavering in our

development partnership with countries including Sri Lanka. We will be implementing a new range of projects including construction of transit housing project in Mannar, construction of 3400 sanitary units to enhance public health in Batticaloa District, and establishment of business centre for ICT incubators in Jaffna, etc. Our realistic expectation is that pace of project execution will accelerate in 2021-22 with a gradual easing off of supply chains.”

**3.54** The Committee observe that there has been a substantial reduction in budgetary allocation for Sri Lanka during RE 2020-21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry has submitted that the restrictions imposed due to COVID-19 led to a complete halt in progress of High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDP) as well as cancellation of training programmes/courses. The Committee are of the firm view that the reduced allocations for Sri Lanka should not affect our developmental projects in Sri Lanka. With the relaxation in Covid-19 pandemic and related restrictions arising out of it, the Committee expect that the pace of implementation of projects, particularly HICDPs and housing, will be restored. The Ministry should re-assess its budgetary requirements on the basis of progress made in the ongoing projects and seek additional finances, if required, at the RE stage.

*(Recommendation No. 23)*

## **F. AID TO MALDIVES**

**3.55** Under ‘Aid to Maldives’, an allocation of Rs. 300 crore was made during BE 2020-21 and the same was slashed to Rs. 175crore at the RE stage. During BE 2020-21, an allocation of Rs. 250 crore has been provisioned. Explicating the reason for decrease in budgetary allocation under this Head during both RE 2020-21 as well as BE 2021-22 *vis-à-vis* BE 2020-21, the Ministry stated that the outbreak of the Covid pandemic has taken an obvious toll on the pace of implementation of grant projects. Project contractors have faced challenges in procurement of material and manpower since March 2020. In spite of this, around 11 projects

under HICDP are under various stages of implementation. Under the Cash grant of 50 crores extended to the Maldives in March 2019, 10 projects have been completed while the remaining 8 projects are likely to be inaugurated over the next 2-3 months. ITEC courses which entail incoming and outgoing visits have been suspended since March 2020. As a consequence, expenses on airfare, hotel accommodation, DA, all of which are covered under the 'Aid to Maldives' budget head have reduced considerably for the year 2020-21. Although Maldivian participants are undergoing e-ITEC courses being offered since November 2020, the expenditure incurred on these courses is far less than that incurred on actual visits of the trainees to India.

**3.56** The Committee wanted to know whether the amount allocated is intended to be utilized for these ongoing projects. The Ministry submitted that the allocated amount, an amount of 200 + crores is expected to be utilized for ongoing and proposed projects viz. HICDP, DPR for Gan Airport project, Conservation of Friday Mosque, Police Academy in Addu, Construction of the Ministry of Defence Building etc.

**3.57** Construction of Police Academy has been a long standing Project. On being asked about the status note of this project, the Ministry submitted that this is the single largest grant project being executed by India in the Maldives. The total cost of construction of the National College for Policing and Law Enforcement (NCPLE) is Rs 198.05 Crore. The MoU was signed in September, 2012; actual work commenced in 2017. Presently, around 88 % of the project has been completed and work is progressing smoothly, despite the disruptions caused by the Covid pandemic in 2020. Construction work is underway since May 2017 in the project for the National College for Policing and Law Enforcement (formerly known as National Police Academy) in the Addu City in Maldives. The project is being financed with GoI's grant assistance and the National Building Construction Corporation (NBCC) is the Project Management Consultant. The original timeline for completion of the project was May 2019 but the project was delayed due to multiple factors, including political turmoil in the country, additional reclamation and shore protection works, prohibition on the export of stone aggregates from India since April 2017 and difficulties faced in getting sufficient work-permits from Maldives for workers and COVID-19 pandemic, The restrictions on movement of

personnel and machines have been phased out recently and work is proceeding at normal pace. The current physical progress is 86.5% and the project is expected to complete by May 2021. The project is expected to be inaugurated in April 2021.

**3.58** On ‘Aid to Maldives’ the Foreign Secretary made the following submission before the Committee on 24 February 2021:

“In Maldives, our project implementation, like any other country, took a toll due to outbreak of the COVID-19. Notwithstanding this, we expect to complete the construction of a major project, Police Academy in Maldives in 2021. The Government of India is financing the Greater Male Connectivity Project through a Line of Credit of 400 million dollars and a grant of 100 million dollars. The project involves the construction of 6.7 km long combination of bridge, causeway and road to connect Male, Villingili, Gulhifalhu, and Thilafushi Islands. It is one of the longest connectivity projects in the country and is expected to become the new economic lifeline for Maldives. India also extended financial support with treasury bills subscription worth US dollars 150 million in 2020 through the State Bank of India. About 30 High Impact Community Development Projects are being implemented through Indian Grant Assistance of which nine have been completed and inaugurated and two have been inaugurated in the last couple of days by the External Affairs Minister on his visit to Maldives. In addition, our development assistance includes development of cricket, restoration of the Friday Mosque, training of 650 Maldivian Civil Servants, parliamentary officials, customs officials, defence personnel, teachers, hospital managers, etc. More than 25 community level projects have been undertaken. India has also committed to supporting six large infrastructure projects in the Maldives through 800-million-dollar Line of Credit.”

**3.59** Like in other countries, the Committee notice that there has been a slowdown in project implementation in Maldives during the last financial year. An allocation of Rs. 200 crore has been provisioned for BE 2021-22. This allocated amount is expected to be utilized for ongoing and proposed projects such as High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDP), DPR for Gan Airport Project, Conservation of Friday

**Mosque, Police Academy in Addu, Construction of the Ministry of Defence Building, etc. The National College for Policing and Law Enforcement (formerly known as National Police Academy), which was slated to be completed by May 2019, has been delayed due to multiple factors. The Committee note that 88% of the construction of National College for Policing and Law Enforcement has been completed. The Committee strongly recommend that the expected deadline of 2021 for completion of the Police Academy is strictly adhered to. The Ministry should also adhere to the blueprint of all ongoing and proposed projects so as to ensure that the allocated amount is utilized fully.**

*(Recommendation No. 24)*

#### **G. AID TO MYANMAR**

**3.60** Aid to Myanmar during BE 2020-21 was Rs. 300.00 crore and the same was increased at the RE Stage to Rs. 350.00 crore. For BE 2021-22, allocation has been pegged at Rs. 400.00 crore. When asked about reasons for increase in allocation under this sub-head, the Ministry stated that the enhanced allocation of funds under ‘Aid to Myanmar’ in BE 2020-21 have facilitated in progressing the activities under various ongoing projects including Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project [KMTTP]. In addition, supply and installation of Coastal Surveillance radars to Myanmar costing Rs 232 cr is progressing well and is scheduled to be completed in FY 2021-22. The stalled proposal of 69 bridges under the Trilateral Highway has resumed with substantial progress on the road component. An enhanced BE 2021-22 allocation would cater to requirements of ongoing projects.

**3.61** On the Committee’s query about the manner in which the ongoing political turmoil affect our developmental projects in Myanmar, the Ministry responded that it is closely monitoring the developing situation in Myanmar. As of date, there has been no specific impact on our developmental projects in Myanmar. Work on the ongoing projects is progressing, subject to COVID restrictions. Ministry will continue to provide developmental and humanitarian assistance to Myanmar for the welfare of the people of Myanmar.

**3.62** The Committee desired to be updated about the progress of Kaladan Project, which will connect India's eastern seaboard with Myanmar's Sittwe Port. The Ministry responded that Kaladan Multi Modal Transit Transport (KMMTT) is a strategic connectivity project to connect the eastern ports of India with Myanmar by developing a port at Sittwe on the western coast of Myanmar and linking the Sittwe port with river channel and road to the Mizoram state of India. The project has two components: (i) Waterways component and (ii) Roadways component.

The Waterways component of KMMTT includes construction of a Port and an Inland Water Transport (IWT) Terminal at Sittwe; dredging of access channel and river channel at the Port, development of 158 Km long navigational channel along Kaladan River from Sittwe to Paletwa; construction of an IWT Terminal at Paletwa and construction of six 300-ton barges. The construction of Port and IWT terminations at Paletwa and Sittwe was completed in May 2017 and handed over to Government of Myanmar. Additional works such as construction of staff quarters, fuel bunkering, etc. at Paletwa, procurement of furniture, removal of 2 wrecks found in the access channel at Sittwe were also completed in December 2018. A port operator, M/s. A to Z Exim has been appointed jointly by the Government of India and Myanmar in December 2019 for the operation and maintenance of the port facilities. The port operator has commenced its operation from 01 February 2020. Efforts are being made to operationalize the port and IWT terminals by the first quarter of 2021.

The Road component of KMMTT includes a new green field road project of 109.2 km to be built from Paletwa in Myanmar to Zorinpui on India-Myanmar border (Mizoram) to double-lane NH specifications. The work was awarded to implementing agency in 17 March 2017. The execution of KMMTT project, especially the road component has been delayed due to security problems, ongoing insurgency and remoteness of the site, contractor bankruptcy and prolonged monsoon season in Myanmar. The latest political developments in Myanmar have also created uncertainties regarding the project and it is difficult to estimate a completion timeline for the project. In addition, a committee to expedite the Project has been formed which met for its first meeting on 2 February 2021.

**3.63** The Ministry also furnished status note on the various ongoing, completed and under progress projects in Myanmar since the last three Financial Years.



## 1. Trilateral Highway road connectivity Project in Myanmar

India has undertaken two projects in Myanmar under the Trilateral Highway that starts from Moreh in India to Mae Sot in Thailand through Myanmar (Total length of 1360 kms) on the request of Government of Myanmar.

(a) Construction of 120 kms of Kalewa-Yagyi road section to highway standard .

Construction work in the project is underway since May 2018. M/s National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is the Project Management Consultant (PMC) for the project. Current Physical progress is 27.70 %. The work is scheduled to complete by May 2022.

(b) Construction of 69 Bridges on Tamu-Kyigone-Kalewa (TKK) section of 150 kms.

The project was approved in December 2015 at the estimated cost of 371.58 crore. The appointed contractor was terminated in December 2018 due to unsatisfactory performance. The contractor thereafter approached Manipur High Court, which after hearing the matter dismissed the contractor's appeal and uphold the termination in August 2020. The PMC in the project is undertaking selection of new contractors for the project. MEA has also released USD 1 million to Government of Myanmar for interim repair and maintenance of the Bridges in September 2020.

## 2. India-Myanmar Centre for Enhancement of IT Skills (IMCEITS):

The Government of India (GoI) has been assisting the Government of Myanmar (GoM) for establishing and running the IMCEITS in Yangon since 2008. The project has gone through three phases. IMCEITS was set up with GoI's financial assistance by CDAC in 2008. Phase I of the project encompassed the setting up of the IMCEITS as a premier institution for advanced ICT training in Myanmar and issuance of joint certifications to the graduates. Joint certification to students by IMCEITS and CDAC continued till April 2010 as per the terms of the MoU between India and Myanmar. During the Phase-II (2013-2017), CDAC upgraded hardware of the Centre and accredited IMCEITS as CDAC's ATC with effect from April 2014 to March 2017. During Phase-III (2017-2020), IMCEITS was accredited as CDAC's ATC for a further period of 3 years. MEA is finalizing the extension of the fourth phase of the project to accredited IMCEITS as CDAC's ATC for another three years. A total of 2764 students have graduated from the center and 80-90 % have got jobs in various IT related companies in Myanmar.

3. Myanmar Institute of Information Technology (MIIT), Mandalay:

MIIT Mandalay has been established with India's grants assistance of Rs. 125.15 crore. International Institute of Information Technology Bangalore (IIITB) is the Project Management Consultant and provided mentorship for MIIT faculty since May 2015. The first batch of the graduates from the institute will pass out in the coming months. Under the faculty development program, a total of 89 faculty have been trained by IIITB.

4. Advanced Centre for Agricultural Research and Education (ACARE):

ACARE has been established with GoI's grants assistance of Rs 50.84 Crore through IARI. India's assistance includes supply of equipment, establishment of laboratories, providing technical support by deputing experts and training Myanmar students and faculty.

5. Upgradation of Women's Police Training Centre at Yamethin:

GoI's grant assistance for this project was announced during the visit of our Prime Minister to Myanmar in September 5-7, 2017. DPR has been prepared by CPWD and the tender documents are being prepared by CPWD.

6. Border Area Development Programme (BADP): An MoU was signed on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2012 between Government of India (GoI) and Government of Myanmar (GoM) for the India-Myanmar Border Area Development. According to the MoU, GoI will extend infrastructure and micro-economic development assistance to Myanmar through a grant-in-aid of USD 5 million per annum over a period of five years (Total USD 25 million). The funds are to be used for supporting the construction of small bridges, small power projects, upgradation of roads, and providing support in the fields of education, health, agriculture & agro-processing and community development sectors and providing related training. The projects are focused mainly in Chin State and Naga Self Administrative Zone (NSAZ). As of date, 141 projects have been undertaken in the first 4 phases. 24 projects are going to be implemented under the 5<sup>th</sup> phase.

7. Rakhine State Development Programme (RSDP): The MoU on Rakhine State Development Program was signed in December 2017. Through this program, the Government of India, is extending socio economic development assistance for projects pertaining to health, education, agriculture and allied activities to Rakhine State through grant-in-aid of USD 5

million per annum. The first phase of Rakhine State Development Program involved the construction of 250 modern pre-fabricated houses at a total cost of Rs 28.2 crores. India has also supplied 20,000 humanitarian kits of rice, noodles etc to Internally Displaced People in Rakhine State for Rs 7.7 crores. 12 projects, which involves building incinerator, solar projects, agricultural mechanization, provision of library materials (Indo -Japan cooperation) and road construction in Rakhine State under the second phase of Rakhine State Development Program are currently under implementation.

8. India-Myanmar Industrial Training Centres: Under 4 MoUs signed between India and Myanmar in May 2018, India is setting up two India-Myanmar Industrial training centres in Myanmar at Thaton, Mon State (Rs 14.22 crores) and Monywa, Sagaing Region (Rs 26.25 crores) and supporting the maintenance of two other industrial training centres, set up by us earlier, in Myingyan, Mandalay Division and Pakokku, Magway Region.

9. Earthquake damaged pagodas: In August 2016, a severe earthquake, has damaged many stupas and pagodas in Myanmar. During the visit of president of Myanmar in August 2016, technical and financial support was extended. ASI has started the conservation of the 12 pagodas ( estimated cost Rs 21 crores) in January 2020.

**3.64** Explicating the logic behind enhanced allocation to Myanmar in wake of ongoing domestic political turmoil there, the Foreign Secretary during oral evidence on 24 February 2021 clarified as under:

“ There was a question on Myanmar which is important. I think the question really was that should we be supporting and giving an allocation of budget for Myanmar when the military has taken over. It has been our stated policy that the current developments have adversely affected the transitional democracy, that India supports the rule of law and the restoration of democracy in that country, and that we will constructively engage to ensure that those objectives are met. In that context, I would say that we have a 1700-kilometre border with Myanmar, we have people-to-people links with Myanmar, we are undertaking huge connectivity projects for which we have already spent a lot of money, we have mobilised a lot of people and equipment there. Most of the money that we are referring to in our budget goes into the Kaladan Multipurpose Transit Transport Project,

the Trilateral Highway Project, the 69-Bridges project. These are linked to our own interests; they are not linked to Myanmar's interests. By stopping these projects because there is a change in Government, in some sense we will be taking steps against our own interests. Secondly, since a huge amount of money has already been expended, we cannot roll back. In any case, our position has always been that sanctions are an instrument that affects the common man; it should not be applied indiscriminately; and that we are not in favour of unilateral or UN-induced sanctions; and there are better ways to engage the current leadership and to ensure that they restore democracy at the earliest possible. In that context, we have been in very close touch with the civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi as well as the military leadership, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

As far as we are concerned, we are in touch with all concerned including democracy activists. We are playing a constructive role both within Myanmar and the international community, and the Security Council where we are currently members, in ensuring that we restore that essential balance in Myanmar and that democracy is restored in the earliest possible time but without in any way affecting our larger interest in that neighbouring country. I think we are the only country that has that ability. Most of Myanmar's other neighbours are not democracies and they do not recognise this factor, and countries that are sanctioning them and taking strong position against them are very far away.

**3.65 The budgetary allocation under 'Aid to Myanmar' was Rs. 300 crore during Be 2020-21, which was increased to Rs. 350 crore (RE 2020-21) and Rs. 400 crore (BE 2021-22). The Committee have noted the Ministry's assertion that an enhanced BE 2021-22 allocation would cater to ongoing projects including Kaladan Multimodal transit Transport project (KMTTP), supply and installation of Coastal Surveillance Radars, trilateral highways and so on. The Committee are aware that Myanmar is a vital component of our 'Neighbourhood First' and 'Act East' policies. Even with the political turmoil in Myanmar, the enhanced allocation is going to serve India's interests. The Committee are optimistic that the Ministry would be able to utilize the allocated amount**

**for expeditious and timely implementation of ongoing bilateral connectivity and social infrastructure development projects, particularly the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport project during the financial year 2021-22.**

*(Recommendation No. 25)*

## **I. AID TO AFRICAN COUNTRIES**

**3.66** The budgetary allocation under the Head 'Aid to African Countries', the BE 2020-21 was Rs. 350.00 crore which was reduced to Rs. 225.00 crore during RE 2020-21 stage. During BE 2021-22, the budgetary allocation has been pegged at Rs. 300.00 crore. Providing the reasons for decreased allocations under this head, the Ministry stated that the expenditure out of the budgetary allocations under the Head 'Aid to African Countries' is generally incurred on:

- (I) Setting up of Institutes;
- (II) Various Scholarships/Training Programmes including under IAFS-III;
- (III) ICCR Scholarships;
- (IV) Food Aid;
- (V) Medical aid including for equipment;
- (VI) Books;
- (VII) Vehicles;
- (VIII) Events/ Seminars/Studies/Visits;
- (IX) Cash Grants, etc.

For the Financial year 2020-21 an amount of Rs. 350 crore was allocated at BE stage under the Head, which was reduced to Rs. 225 crore at RE Stage.

**3.67** The Minister further added that the overall projection of funds for the financial year 2020-21 under the Head 'Aid to African Countries' were made with a view to incur expenditure on setting up/upgrade of various institutes, capacity building training programmes & scholarships (short term and long term), providing medical aid/books/vehicles/food aid and organising events/ seminars/ studies/visits/cultural exchange programmes, etc. as have been committed during the IAFS-I, IAFS-II and IAFS-III and had been ongoing. However, due to

the Covid-19 pandemic lock-down world over since March 2020, including in African countries and India, most of these activities came to a halt resulting in reduction in allocation under the Head to Rs. 225 crore for the financial year 2020-21 at RE stage. While Ministry was able to incur expenditure on ICCR Scholarships and DARE training programmes to the tune of Rs. 85.64 crore, medical aid to the tune of Rs. 30.09 crore and food aid to the tune of 16.49 crore, the funds mostly projected for setting up of various institutions, training programmes, visits under various programmes for distinguished visitors including to be undertaken by XP Division of the Ministry, could not be utilised, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic situation and travel restrictions. Due to global outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, regular offline/in-person courses under ITEC Program could not get underway in 2020-21, which was another factor for lesser expenditure this year, as compared to previous years.

**3.68** Several commitments were announced at highest political level in IAFS-III. When asked about the way in which such commitments were adhered to with the slashed budget, the Ministry responded that the commitments at the highest political level announced in IAFS-III was mandated to be implemented during the period 2015-2020. Several of the commitments made during IAFS-III which were required to be continued during 2020-21 including for setting up of institutions, training/scholarship programmes, are continuing to be implemented. In fulfilling the remaining commitments under IAFS-III, Ministry will endeavour to make it good in FY 2021-22. Five Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) in Zanzibar (Tanzania), Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea and DRC were announced under the IAFS mechanism at a total budget outlay of Rs. 27 crores. All these projects are at initial stages of implementation due to factors solely attributable to the host governments (failure to identify project site, security situation and other administrative reasons). VTC Project at DRC has been dropped due to total lack of interest shown by the local government and South Sudan VTC is awaiting clearance from our resident Mission in view of the security situation prevailing there. Such structural reasons have also led less than anticipated expenditure.

**3.69** The Committee desired to know whether a comprehensive review of all the projects announced so far under India-Africa Summit I and II has been completed in consultation with all the concerned Ministries/Departments. In a written reply, the Ministry submitted that all

Projects announced under IAFS I and II were reviewed in October 2015 during the IAFS-III Summit held in New Delhi. Progress in various projects is being reviewed regularly in consultation with all concerned Ministries and relevant stakeholders. There is no policy change so far as fulfillment of our commitment in completing the Projects in Africa.

**3.70** Further, the last Mid-term Review Meeting of the Strategic Cooperation Framework of IAFS-III was held in New Delhi on September 11-12, 2019 which comprised representatives from MEA, a Delegation from the African Union and representatives of African Diplomatic Corps including the IAFS Committee in New Delhi. The meeting was co-chaired by Secretary (ER) in MEA and Ambassador of the Republic of Mali and Chair of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) Sub-Committee of the Whole on Multilateral Cooperation (SCWMC) of the African Union. The Meeting took stock of the state of implementation of the cooperation areas of the IAFS-III, namely – Economic, Trade and Industry, Agriculture, Energy, Blue Ocean Economy, Infrastructure, Education and Skills Development, Health, Peace and Security, Multilateral Fora and Monitoring Mechanism. The Meeting also deliberated on the preparations of the IAFS-IV Summit which was to be held in 2020. While evaluating the progress made in achieving various targets set out by the leaders during the IAFS-III, the Meeting welcomed the tremendous enhancement of overall engagement between India and Africa. The African side, in particular, welcomed the considerable stepping up of visits at the highest level in the last five years (34 outgoing visits by President[13], Vice President [12] and Prime Minister [9] and around 100 incoming visits at ministerial level) and the elevation of bilateral relations with African countries to a much higher trajectory. The AU Delegation acknowledged the status of implementation of various commitments made under IAFS-III through the LoCs, Grants and capacity building initiatives. The Meeting welcomed the status of implementation provided by Indian side, particularly that more than US \$ 6.4 billion of LoCs out of the US \$ 10 billion LoCs committed in IAFS-III have been implemented; Grants assistance of more than US \$ 700 million against committed US \$ 600 million in IAFS-III have been disbursed; and the completion of more than 43,000 slots of training, scholarship and capacity building out of the total commitment of 50,000 slots in IAFS-III.

The VTC projects in Africa are on-going, except DRC and there are no reasons to review these projects as, of late, host governments have evinced reasonable interest for setting up these capacity building/skill development Centres but due to failure to identify and allocate project sites, grim security scenario and other administrative reasons, these projects are delayed.

**3.71** When asked the Ministry furnished the reasons for delay in setting up of projects committed under IAFS-I, II& III. There are pre-requisites like availability of land, building, electricity, water, security, etc. for setting up CGARDs and RTPs. Many times there are delays in getting these resources and various statutory clearances from the local governments, which are beyond the control of Government of India, resulting in delays in implementation. GoI, through our Missions, closely monitors the projects to resolve bottlenecks. Considerable challenges were faced in the implementation of the proposals to set up institutions in Africa. These include: long delays in decision making on choice of locations by host institutions (by the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities or the countries selected); sub-optimal choice of locations in several cases by host countries; lack of interest in several designated host countries; lack of funds with the host countries (mostly LDCs) to provide land/building/running costs as per the terms and conditions of the partnership model; and civil unrest.

**3.72** Despite these challenges, the Ministry ascertained that they have established a total of 7 Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) in Africa. We have also established 7 IT Centers, a CGARD Center, upgraded a Technology Centre and several other capacity building institutions. As part of grant assistance, India has also provided medicines, medical equipment, ambulances, NCERT books, vehicles, food grains, etc. Over US \$ 700 million has been incurred on various grant projects in Africa, since IAFS-III. The major reasons for delay in setting up of these VTC projects are failure to identify the project site, precarious internal security situation in South Sudan and DRC, administrative reasons, e.g., delay in finalization of local implementing agency, outbreak of local epidemic, etc.,. The Ministry has consistently made efforts to resolve all such issues mutually with the ultimate objective to establish these Centres at the earliest.



**3.73** When enquired about existence of whether there is any mechanism in the Ministry or at the level of the African Union to oversee the quality and pace of implementation of Projects, the Ministry responded that a mechanism exists between the Ministry and the African Union to oversee the quality and pace of implementation of Projects. The last Mid-term Review Meeting of the Strategic Cooperation Framework of IAFS-III was held in New Delhi on September 11-12, 2019 which comprised representatives from MEA, a Delegation from the African Union and representatives of African Diplomatic Corps including the IAFS Committee in New Delhi. The meeting was co-chaired by Secretary (ER) in MEA and Ambassador of the Republic of Mali and Chair of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) Sub-Committee of the Whole on Multilateral Cooperation (SCWMC) of the African Union. The Meeting took stock of the state of implementation of the cooperation areas of the IAFS-III, namely – Economic, Trade and Industry, Agriculture, Energy, Blue Ocean Economy, Infrastructure, Education and Skills Development, Health, Peace and Security, Multilateral Fora and Monitoring Mechanism. The Meeting also deliberated on the preparations of the IAFS-IV Summit which was to be held in 2020. While evaluating the progress made in achieving various targets set out by the leaders during the IAFS-III, the Meeting welcomed the tremendous enhancement of overall engagement between India and Africa. The African side, in particular, welcomed the considerable stepping up of visits at the highest level in the last five years (34 outgoing visits by President [13], Vice President [12] and Prime Minister [9] and around 100 incoming visits at ministerial level) and the elevation of bilateral relations with African countries to a much higher trajectory. The AU Delegation acknowledged the status of implementation of various commitments made under IAFS-III through the LoCs, Grants and capacity building initiatives. The Meeting welcomed the status of implementation provided by Indian side, particularly that more than US \$ 6.4 billion of LoCs out of the US \$ 10 billion LoCs committed in IAFS-III have been implemented; Grants assistance of more than US \$ 700 million against already committed US \$ 600 million in IAFS-III have been disbursed; and the completion of more than 43,000 slots of training, scholarship and capacity building out of the total commitment of 50,000 slots in IAFS-III. The need to resort to the mechanism as mentioned above was not felt as the delay is attributable to the specific internal dynamics of the host country.

**3.74** Elaborating upon the Pan Africa e-network Project, the Ministry stated that it was conceived by the then President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam in 2004, Government of India launched Pan Africa e-Network Project (PAeNP) to offer tele-education and tele-medicine in 2009. The project was approved by the Cabinet with an outlay of Rs. 542 crore and was successfully implemented by M/s TCIL from 2009 to 2017. This project was commissioned in 48 African Countries. Under Tele-education project, total 6962 degrees/ certificates were awarded by the leading Indian universities to the students of Africa. Also, under Tele-medicine project, total 771 tele-medicine consultations were offered from Indian Doctors of super specialty hospitals to African Doctors of nominated hospitals. Phase-2 of the Pan Africa e-Network Project is the e-VidyaBharati and e-AarogyaBharati Network Project (e-VBAB), which was approved by the Union Cabinet in October 2015, with a project cost of Rs. 951.22 crore, as part of our commitment towards providing quality education to African students at India- Africa Forum Summit-III (IAFS-III) held in New Delhi in October 2015.

M/s TCIL is the implementing agency for the e-VBAB Network project and an agreement to this effect was signed between TCIL and MEA in September 2018. The project was formally launched by Hon'ble EAM on 7 October 2019. So far, 17 African countries have joined the project, by signing country MoUs.

**e-Vidya Bharati:** The project aims to provide at least 15000 free education/scholarships over a period of 5 years to African learners for Certificate, Diploma, Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes in various disciplines. So far, 6 Indian universities have joined as partner universities and are providing tele-education under the project. The e-VidyaBharati portal (<https://ilearn.gov.in>), currently provides African learners access to 33 Online UG/PG/ Diploma/ Certificate Courses, offered by 6 approved Indian universities in various disciplines including business administration and commerce, healthcare, tourism, humanities and arts. In addition, short-term Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) are also offered through MHRD's SWAYAM portal. 1222 scholarships have so far been approved during the January and July 2020 academic sessions. For the January 2021 academic session, 2932 African learners have applied for scholarship for various courses.

**e-AarogyaBharati:** The e-VBAB Network Project will also offer Tele-Medicine services namely Continuing Medical Education (TM-CME) and Tele-Consultations (TM-TC) in the

African countries through select Super Specialty Hospitals/Institutions from India. The web portal for offering tele-medicine services has been under trial where tele-consultations were conducted in Zambia with PGIMER, Chandigarh as the Super specialty node in India. The tele-medicine portal is expected to be launched soon.

**3.75** The PAeNP project was launched in 2009 and was successfully concluded on 30<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2017. The total budget allotted for PAeNP was Rs. 588.54 crore over a period of 10 years. The actual expenditure under the project during the last 5 years was Rs. 96.11 crore.

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Expenditure incurred during the FY (Rs. In cr)</b>
2016-17	28.43
2017-18	34.16
2018-19	0.00
2019-20	33.52
2020-21	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>96.11</b>

However, Government of India approved the technological up-gradation and extension of PAeNP named as e-VidyaBharati & e-ArogyaBharati Network Project (e-VBAB) at a total cost of Rs. 865.02 crore to be disbursed over a period of 5 years. TCIL has been designated as the implementing agency for the e-VBAB Network project and an agreement to this effect was signed between TCIL and MEA on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2018. The project was formally launched by Hon'ble EAM on 07<sup>th</sup> October, 2019. The actual expenditure under this project during the last 5 years was Rs. 23.97 crore.

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Expenditure incurred during the FY (Rs. In cr)</b>
1	2019-20	21.88
2	2020-21	2.09
	<b>Total</b>	<b>23.97</b>

**3.76** Under PAeNP 48 countries of African Union were the member countries. So far, 17 countries have joined the phase-II of PAeNP (e-VBAB). Initially PAeNP was launched in 2009 for a period of 5 years at a total approved cost of Rs. 542.90 crore. However, the project was then extended many times and got concluded on 30<sup>th</sup> Sept, 2017. During the period there was

an escalation of Rs. 45.64 crore in the project value. e-VBAB Network Project was formally launched by Hon'ble EAM on 07<sup>th</sup> October, 2019 for a period of 5 years. There has not been any cost overrun in the Project since then.

There has not been any time overrun in the implementation of the tele-education component of the e-VBAB. However, it is pertinent to mention that the pilot phase of Tele-education had started with only short term courses in July 2019 session since approval of UGC was awaited for Indian Universities to offer online degree/diploma/certificate courses which was notified only in January 2020. It is also pertinent to mention that due to COVID 19 the timelines for academic sessions and examination activities have been extended by UGC.

Implementation of the tele-medicine component got delayed. The portal for the launch of Tele-consultation and Continued-Medical Education is to be launched in 2021. Due to COVID 19, the doctors in Africa and India expressed their busy schedule to deal with existing pandemic. In the meantime, the e-VBAB team had extensive deliberations on technical requirements of Tele-Medicine to overcome the challenges for better user experience. The trial run of Tele-Medicine Tele-Consultation (TM-TC) was conducted between Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education & Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh and University Teaching Hospital (UTH), Zambia using the prototype of e-Sanjeevani portal developed by CDAC. The challenges in the tele-consultations were noted for improving the experience in participating African hospitals. The trial run of Tele-Medicine Continued Medical Education (TM-CME) were organized using National Medical College Network (NMCN) portal with Uganda and Zambia.

**3.77** On the Committee's query about the decreased allocation to African countries the Foreign Secretary during oral evidence on 24 February, 2021 submitted as under:-

“I think some hon. Members had also mentioned Africa in terms of the decreased expenditure in Africa, I would say that despite the limitations posed by the pandemic and most of the continents were closed off after March-April last year because of the lockdown and restrictions, we managed to deliver medicines to 25 African countries during the period of the lockdown. We had students continuing their studies in India. We delivered medical equipment, books, vehicles to countries like Uganda. I am just giving one example. We supplied rice to Malawi,

Zimbabwe, Zambia. We supplied milk powder to Zambia. I think the hon. Member had mentioned why African countries were not specifically referred to. Of course, the head is 'aid to African countries'. I did refer to some of the countries under the head, but limitation of time prevented our going through each and every country. We supplied ambulances to Zimbabwe and Rwanda. We have set up the vocational training centres in Mozambique, Uganda and Rwanda. We have given cash grants to schools in Zambia. We gave cash grants for irrigation systems. Our aid in Africa is mainly spent on grant projects setting up institutes..."

**3.78** Responding to the Committee's query on sub-optimal allocation under the head 'Aid to Africa, the Foreign Secretary during oral evidence on 24 February 2021 submitted as under:

"Africa is a key foreign policy priority and our engagement has been intensifying. We are expanding our diplomatic footprint with the opening of five new Missions in Africa in 2020, with a commitment of opening 18 new embassies all across the continent. The overall allocation of Rs. 350 crore in BE 2020-21 under the Head 'Aid to African Countries' encompasses the range of projects including setting-up/upgradation of various institutes, capacity building training programmes and scholarships, providing medical aid/books/vehicles/food aid and organising events, etc.

During the last five years, 790 IT centres and seven vocational training centres have been completed. Our flagship projects – e-Vidyabharathi and e-Arogyabharati network is a technological upgrade and extension of the earlier pan Africa e-Network. So far, 15 African countries have signed the MOU to join the project. A steady allocation of Rs. 300 crore of BE 2021-22 has been kept under this head.

A total of 211 LoCs amounting to US\$ 12.85 billion dollars have been extended by the Government of India to African countries in varied sector such as power plants, hydroelectricity, power transmission and distribution networks, dams, roads, railways, ports, agriculture and irrigation, industrial units, skill development, civil construction etc. The Government of India is also undertaking several grant-in-aid projects in Africa such as supply of 27 mini-buses (30+1) seater buses to

Somalia, 10 ambulances to Tanzania, five ambulances to Mali and CT-Scan machine to Liberia. In West Asia, our sustained development assistance to Palestine for continues ranging in fields of capability building, IT, education, health etc. India supplied food supplies to Syria and relief material to Lebanon in the wake of blast in the chemical factory. India has extended 311 LoCs to African countries. I did mention that and US\$16.25 billion have been extended to Asian countries, US\$ 2.45 billion to countries in Latin America, Oceania and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

During 2020-21, 13 new lines of credit of about US\$ 1.9 were sanctioned for extending them to various countries and eight LoC projects have been completed during this year. ”

**3.79 The budgetary allocation under ‘Aid to African countries’ caters to setting up of institutes, various scholarships/training programmes; ICCR scholarships; food aid, books, medical aid, cash grants etc. An allocation of Rs. 300 crore has been provisioned for BE 2021-22. India’s partnership with Africa is based on a consultative model of cooperation and sharing of development experiences and is focused on addressing the priorities and needs of African countries. The three India Africa Forum Summits (IAFS-I, II and III) in 2008, 2011 and 2015 have further reinforced development partnership with the country. The Committee note that the progress in various projects under India Africa Summits is reviewed regularly in consultation with concerned Ministries and relevant stakeholders. The Committee notice that so far 17 African countries have joined the e-Vidya Bharti and e-arogya Bharti Network project (e-VBAB) which was approved in 2015 to provide quality education to African students.**

**The declining trend of allocation to African countries has been a source of great discontentment to the Committee. The Foreign Secretary asserted that Africa is a key foreign policy priority and our engagement has been intensifying, albeit the budgetary**

**allocations speak otherwise. The Committee strongly recommend that the budgetary allocation for African countries should be in alignment with the importance, size and extent of the region. There is an urgent need to intensify our diplomatic presence in the region. The Ministry should also take all requisite steps, including seeking enhanced allocation and effective utilization of funds, for expeditious implementation of our diverse ongoing projects in Africa.**

*(Recommendation No. 26)*

## **J. CHABAHAR PORT**

**3.80** This sub-head caters to expenditure for Chabahar Port in Iran. The allocation in BE 2021-22 has been kept same as BE 2020-21 based on anticipated progress of the project. Providing justification for slashing funds during RE 2020-21, the Ministry stated that the amount of 100 cr allocated to Chabahar Port couldn't be utilized during the financial year 2020-2021 as the equipment delivery got delayed because of COVID Pandemic induced restrictions and the skepticism regarding US sanctions amongst the port equipment suppliers. First batch of equipment i.e. two 140-tonne cranes for loading and unloading equipment was delivered to the Iranian government on January 31, 2021. The bills for the same along with other expenses amounting to 58.24 CR are under process and the payment will be made in this financial year.

**3.81** While giving testimony before the Committee on 24 February 2021, the Foreign Secretary clarified that:

“The issue of Chabahar port was raised and I think Rs. 100 crore which was allocated could not be utilized in the last and during this current financial year because equipment delivery was delayed because of the COVID. Of course, there were also some of the suppliers who we had contracted including Chinese suppliers did not supply because of unilateral sanctions imposed by the US. Although Chabahar port has been exempted by USA from sanctions, yet companies hesitate to supply because some of them feel that the will come under the ambit of sanctions. So, we are having some constraints there. A

mentioned was also made about a Chinese company which is ZPMC. They also further delayed supply of rail mounted quay cranes and this is the main equipment for which Rs. 100 crore were allocated. The first batch of equipment of 140 tonne cranes have just been delivered on 31<sup>st</sup> of January and bills worth Rs. 58 crore are under process. So, we are recovering in Chabahar. I would also say that we have done very well in Chabahar because we have moved very significant amount of cargo through Chabahar port. We have also done about 60,000 MT of wheat as a humanitarian supply to Afghanistan through Chabahar port and today we are trying to operationalize the international north-south transport corridor that goes from Chabahar port to Central Asia and then finally into Russia through Afghanistan. All these countries are interested. Recently in Russia I was told that Russians have a great interest in doing this. Our company CONCOR has already been nominated. The Russians have also nominated a company to operationalize this. I think a trial run is expected soon. I think for Chabahar port, the future seems to be good and we will continue to work on this aspect.

**3.82** On being asked about the progress made in construction of Chabahar Port as per the Status Report, the Ministry submitted that India handed over the first batch of equipment *i.e.* two 140-tonne cranes for loading and unloading equipment to the Iranian government on January 31, 2021. The cranes are part of a full consignment of six Mobile Harbour Cranes (MHC) worth about \$25million. These cranes have been sourced from an Italian company, Italguru. Chabahar port has emerged as the “connecting point” for the region to deliver humanitarian assistance during the COVID pandemic. India has used Chabahar port to ship our wheat assistance to Afghanistan. India shipped full consignment of 75000 MT of wheat given as humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan in 10 installments between April to September 2020. Till date, a total 1,10,000 tons of wheat and 2000 tons of pulses have been trans-shipped from India to Afghanistan. As part of ongoing humanitarian assistance, India also dispatched 20,000 MT of pesticide "Malathion 96% ULV" to help Iran deal with the locusts' crisis. The shipment of pesticide arrived in Chabahar port & was handed over to Iran on 14 July. The second batch of 20,000 MT of Malathion is expected to reach Chabahar Port by mid-February.

**3.83** Regarding the negative impact of fluctuations in budgetary allocations on connectivity projects like Chabahar Port, the Ministry stated as under:



- Chabahar Port is a strategic port which provides an alternative route to Afghanistan and Central Asia and connects these landlocked areas to sea.
- We had expressed interest to collaborate with Iran on the project as far back as 2003, US sanctions delayed any further engagement.
- Since the port is strategically significant, India sought exemption from US sanctions for the Chabahar Port which was obtained in 2019.
- An Indian company, India Ports Global Limited, took over port operations in December 2018 and has since handled containers, bulk cargo and heavy lift cargo vessels. In the recent past, there has been a rise in transit cargo for Afghanistan through Chabahar.
- During the visit of PM Modi to Iran in 2016, committed a grant of USD 85 million for development of Chabahar Port.
- It is Ministry's endeavour to ensure adequate budgetary allocation under the head based on utilisation of earlier releases, project pace etc. There has been considerable delay in the project because of fear of US sanctions amongst the international port equipment suppliers who are not forthcoming to participate in tenders related to equipping of Chabahar, floated by Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.
- India has proposed to include Chabahar in INSTC project, the first ever transport corridor project envisaged by India.

**3.84 The Committee note that under the sub-head 'Chabahar Port', an allocation of Rs 100 crore has been provided during BE 2021-22 which is same as BE 2020-21. However, nil allocation was provisioned during RE 2020-21. The justification offered by the Ministry for nil allocation at the RE stage was under utilization of allocated amount dueto delay in equipment delivery because of COVID pandemic induced restrictions and the skepticism regarding US sanctions on the port equipment suppliers. The Committee are glad to note that India has proposed to include Chabahar in INSTC project, the first ever transport corridor project envisaged by India.**

**Keeping in view the strategic importance of Chabahar port as an alternative route to Afghanistan and Central Asia, the Committee strongly feel that the allocation under this head should be steady and predictable. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should base our foreign policy on realistic terms. In the interest of our international credibility on delivering connectivity projects, the Ministry should allocate ample finances and also pursue a pro-active policy to constructively engage the Iranian side to accelerate the construction project on the basis of agreed timelines.**

*(Recommendation No. 27)*

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **ORGANIZATIONAL SET UP**

The Ministry of External Affairs is headed by the External Affairs Minister. He is assisted in the discharge of his functions by the Minister of State for External Affairs. The Foreign Secretary oversees the functioning of the Ministry at the official level. The MEA HQs in New Delhi is organized into Territorial and Functional Divisions, with Territorial Divisions overseeing and managing bilateral relations with specific foreign countries, structured regionally. Moreover, following the merger of the erstwhile MOIA with MEA, the administrative and Secretarial functions have been integrated in MEA's organizational set up.

**4.2** Allocations related to organizational structure is provided in the Major Head 'External Affairs' caters to Foreign Service Institute, expenditure on India's diplomatic Missions and Posts abroad, Central Passport Organisation and Protector General of Emigrant, welfare of overseas Indians, hospitality to dignitaries, contributions to UNO and other international organizations, grants to autonomous bodies and institutions etc.

**4.3** Apprising the Committee about the re-structuring of the organizational structure of MEA, the Foreign Secretary on 24 February, 2021 submitted as under:-

“...With a view to improving response mechanism and streamline decision-making, the organisational structure of MEA has been re-designed. Additional Secretaries in the Ministry have now been put in charge of multiple Divisions whose functional and territorial responsibilities overlap. This dynamic approach not only helps the Ministry in creating synergy amongst its Divisions, but also enables these officers to address issues of cross-cutting nature in a more effective manner. Such de-centralisation of certain key functions has been instrumental in generating more room for Secretaries to focus on strategic issues...”

**4.4** Highlighting the human resource constraints in the MEA, the Foreign Secretary during the course of oral evidence on 24 February, 2021 submitted as under:-

“...the Committee is aware of the human resources constraints of the Ministry. The Ministry regularly fills vacancies by a combination of direct recruitment through the

Civil Services Examination conducted by UPSC, examinations conducted by SSC and promotion from feeder cadres as per extant Rules. Vacancies at Diplomatic or Consular levels in Indian Missions abroad are regularly reviewed and officers appointed. Generally, gaps between the departure of incumbents and the arrival of their successors are kept to a minimum. The gap between our sanctioned strength and actual working strength mainly occurs due to delay in recruitment because of factors beyond the Ministry's control. To address the problem, we have taken a number of steps to augment our human resources. These include: we have increased our indent with the UPSC and over 200 officers have joined the Indian Foreign Service since 2014 by direct recruitment through the Civil Services Examination...

...Over 70 officers are expected to join the Ministry over the next years in line with the indents placed with the DOPT and UPSC for Civil Services Examination 2020 and 2021. We have reinforced our technical capacity by taking officers with domain expertise on deputation from line Ministries and Departments from the Government of India as well as specialised Civil Services, such as Railways, Forests, Customs, Revenue, Economic Service and Civil Accounts Service etc. We have engaged consultants as subject matter experts, knowledge partners including experienced retired Government officials as well as from the open market..."

**4.5** The Foreign Secretary further added that:

"...The Ministry of External Affairs suffers shortages at the staff level in the general cadre given their both direct recruit examination and limited competitive departmental examinations held by the UPSC and the SSC have not been held since 2016. There exist over 150 vacancies in the Section Officer's grade since 2016 since no exams have been conducted. Similarly, in all other grades of the IFS 'B' general cadre we are suffering due to delay in direct recruitment examination since 2018. Around 200 vacancies exist in the Stenographers' cadre due to delay in direct recruitment and limited departmental competitive exams since 2018. Over 15 per cent of the Ministry's total sanctioned strength is vacant given the delay in examinations. This has created anomalies not only in promotion but also in meeting the requirements of the Ministry. It may also be noted that the Ministry is taking affirmative action towards fulfilling the

growing functional requirements of the Ministry. The Ministry has undertaken the third cadre review for the Stenographers' cadre resulting in an increase in the cadre strength commensurate with the Ministry's growing needs for staff. This has been approved in January 2020-21. In addition to meet short-term requirements, the Ministry also engages outsourced personnel from the open market on temporary basis".

**4.6** The data on the number of women employees (at both Gazetted and non-Gazetted positions) within the MEA are as follows:

S. No	Male	Female	Total
<b>Gazetted</b>			
1	1638	390	2028
<b>Non-Gazetted</b>			
2	1506	222	1728

Currently India has 22 Lady Officers posted as Heads of Missions/ Heads of Posts.

**4.7** When asked about the reason behind such a skewed gender representation, the Ministry stated that the recruitment of officers is *via* competitive examinations conducted by UPSC/SSC in a completely transparent and fair manner as well as by promotion from feeder grades. There is no gender based reservation in direct recruitment or in induction and promotion. However, the Ministry has been open to both men and women in equal measure since its inception and has good gender balance with more and more women officers entering the Ministry in recent years. Gender equality is more a common practice than an exception as far as MEA is concerned. MEA has seen women officers who have risen in the ranks to assume positions of prominence not only at Headquarters but also in Indian Missions/Posts abroad. The total number of women officers in the Ministry at present is 612, with many of these occupying high level positions of decision making. Of these, there are nearly 22 women officers holding charge at Ambassadors/High Commissioners in various Missions/Posts abroad. Women officers have also held important positions representing India in prominent international organizations such as United Nations and its related organizations such as UNESCO, ESCAP, etc. In fact, woman officers have been the face of India at various UN fora of late, with many

of them presenting the country's stand quite articulately at the UN General Assembly in New York or at the United Nations in Geneva.

**4.8 The persistent under staffing of the Ministry of External Affairs have been a source of constant concern. During the course of oral evidence before the Committee, the Foreign Secretary had also underlined the problem of human resource constraints in the Ministry. Vacancies in the Ministry of External Affairs are filled by a combination of direct recruitment through the Civil Services Examination conducted by UPSC, examinations conducted by SSC and promotion from feeder cadres as per extant Rules. The Committee note that there has been revamping of the organizational structure of MEA at the topmost level with an objective to streamline the decision making process. The gap between the sanctioned strength and actual strength has created anomalies not only in promotion but also in meeting the requirements of the Ministry. The Committee observe that the Ministry has taken a series of affirmative action such as placing indent with Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT), Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and Staff Selection Commission (SSC); reinforcing technical capacity by taking officers with domain expertise on deputation from Line Ministries and Departments of Governments and engaging Consultants with expertise in various fields**

**Taking a serious view of this matter, the Committee feel that the justifications and actions taken by the Ministry to fill up the vacant posts are inadequate and unproductive. The Committee urge the Government at the highest levels to consider the human resource requirements of MEA favourably and also direct Staff Selection Commission (SSC) and Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) to fill up the enhanced number of direct recruitments on priority basis. The Committee would also recommend that the**

**Ministry should continue to create cadre/ induct expertise from other Ministries, academia, think tanks and the private sector, as needed to supplement its human resource with relevant domain expertise.**

*(Recommendation No. 28)*

**4.9 The Committee are appalled to discern the marginal representation of women within the Ministry of External affairs. According to the data furnished by the Ministry, of the 3756 officers (Gazetted as well as non-Gazetted posts) only 612 (16.29%) are women. Of these, there are only 22 women officers holding charge of Ambassadors/High Commissioners in various Missions/Posts abroad. On being enquired about the reason for such gender imbalance, the Ministry stated that the requirement of officers is done by a competitive examination conducted by UPSC and there is no gender-based reservation in direct recruitment or in induction and promotion.**

**The Committee find that the Ministry's justification for the gender imbalance within the organization attributing it to skewed intake ratio presents a dismal picture of foreign policy being regarded largely as masculine domain. Emphasizing the imperative of a gender balance within MEA, the Committee recommend that the Ministry should ensure improvement in internal practices on occupational equality including careers progression, promotion, training and appointments to higher ranks. The Ministry should also undertake a thorough and comparative cross-service analysis of the reason behind the skewed gender intake ratio and apprise the Committee about the findings of the same.**

*(Recommendation No. 29)*

**A. SUSHMA SWARAJ FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE (SSFSI)**

**4.10 Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) conducts in-service training for Indian Foreign Service Officers and other MEA personnel, courses for foreign diplomats, and other professional training courses. The budgetary allocation under the sub-head was Rs.**

25.95crore during BE 2020-21, which was reduced to Rs. 16.77 crore during RE 2020-21. An outlay of Rs. 25.76 crore has been made during BE 2021-22.The Ministry furnished the ‘Actuals’ for the last three financial years on training by the SSIFS is provided below:-

(Rs. in Crores)

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Actual Expenditure</b>
1	2018-19	23.82
2	2019-20	25.28
3	2020-21	6.03*

\* Upto January 2021.

**4.11** The Ministry added that while adhering to fiscal prudence, the gradual increase made in expenditure over the past three years has been owing to introduction of new training programmes for both Indian civil servants and foreign diplomats. (During current financial year 2020-21, the utilization of budget shows a declining trend due to COVID-19 lockdown, travel restrictions, etc.)

**4.12** Enumerating the measures taken by the Ministry to observe fiscal prudence by ensuring optimum utilization of budgetary allocation under the sub-head Training' the Ministry stated that while the number of courses run by the SSIFS and number of participants therein were raised progressively, catering to the newly introduced training programmes of a professionalized Institute, the budget utilization during the past three successive Financial Years 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20 under the measures of fiscal prudence was also optimal at 94.3%, 98.8% and 94.8%, respectively. SSIFS was able to introduce several new training programmes conforming to the emerging cadre and service requirements and also by extending international cooperation to new partners. SSIFS was able to meet enhanced budget allocations while maintaining Audit discipline.

**4.13** When asked about the steps being taken by the Ministry of External Affairs to professionalize FSI by inducting domain experts as well as faculty from foreign countries, the Ministry stated that Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) is tasked with training of IFS Officers, Foreign Diplomats and members of Indian Civil Services in foreign policy and



diplomatic skills through various training programmes and modules being run by the SSIFS in the areas of International Relations, Political Science, History, Management, Economics and International Law, Culture or related fields. It was decided during 2017 to create an Academic Wing in the Institute and induct domain experts for professionalizing the SSIFS and make it a world-class training institute in diplomatic studies. Accordingly, a six-member in-house Faculty with expertise in the identified areas has been placed in position effective 2018. The in-house Faculty is complemented by a Visiting Faculty invited from institutions of repute in the area of international affairs and also by Resident-Ambassadors. A professionalized SSIFS has thus been maintaining the high standards of training and learning programmes established through efforts of years for training of civil servants not only from India but also from abroad.

**4.14** The Committee wanted to know whether there is any proposal to introduce new training programmes or modify existing framework for training programmes during 2021-22. The Minister replied that there are some proposals to introduce new training programmes during 2021-22 after the COVID-19 subsides. SSIFS proposes to conduct for Foreign Diplomats, the Fellowship Programme on Environment and Climate Change once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. During 2021-22, SSIFS will also be continuing the newly introduced Familiarisation Programme for Resident Diplomats and the Special Training Programme for Officers of States & Union Territories on Economic and Commercial Diplomacy.

**4.15** Elaborating upon the measures have been put in place to incorporate feedback from trainees? Feedback for each course is gathered and analysed at two levels. During the course itself, participants give a written feedback on all sessions/speakers. At the end of each course, the participants give their overall written feedback and suggestions about various aspects of the course. A feedback session is also held for the participants at the end of the course which is chaired by the Dean with participation of Joint Secretary and Course Coordinators at the SSIFS where the participants share their feedback with them. Feedback from trainees is considered carefully and SSIFS endeavours to incorporate valuable suggestions from the trainees to the extent possible.

**4.16 The Committee observe that the budgetary allocation under the sub-head ‘Training’ was Rs. 25.95 crore during BE 2020-21, which was reduced to Rs. 16.77 crore during RE 2020-21. An outlay of Rs. 25.76 crore has been provisioned during BE 2021-22. Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) is tasked with training of IFS Officers, Foreign Diplomats and members of Indian Civil Services in foreign policy and diplomatic skills through various training programmes and modules. There has been an increasing demand for training programmes, both for Indian civil servants and foreign diplomats. Like other heads, the utilization of budget under this sub head has manifested a declining trend due to COVID-19 lockdown during the current financial year 2020-21. The Ministry has informed that there are some proposals to introduce new training programmes during 2021-22 after the COVID-19 subsides. The Committee also observe that a feedback mechanism regarding training module has been established. Recognizing the need for enriching human capital, the Committee feel that training should be given adequate fiscal space. The Committee desire that a continuous system of evaluation be established so that the inputs and feedback received from the trainees are suitably incorporated at regular intervals for value addition of the training programmes and accordingly the number of training programmes should also be enhanced with adequate budget allocation.**

*(Recommendation No. 30)*

**CHAPTER V**  
**OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS**

The budgetary allocations made to various schemes and programmes being implemented by MEA for the welfare and protection of the overseas Indians are as under: -

	<b>Name of Scheme</b>	<b>BE 2020-21</b>	<b>BE 2021-22</b>
(i)	Know India Programme	6.00	7.00
(ii)	Scholarship Scheme for Diaspora Children	10.00	10.00
(iii)	Promotion of Cultural ties with Diaspora	2.00	2.00
(iv)	Awareness campaign/media plan	11.00	2.00
(v)	Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI)	NIL	NIL
(vi)	Pravasi Bhartiya Divas Celebration	40.00	20.00

**5.2** Regarding the manner by which the Indian Diaspora is being urged to use their expertise time and investment in all their endeavours to strengthen the link between them and their origin country India, the Ministry stated that through Indian Missions and Posts abroad is regularly engage the Indian Diaspora in seeking its time, expertise and investment to develop a strong bond between the members of the Diaspora and their origin country. Through PBD Convention, PBD Conferences and every Regional PBD, Ministry of External Affairs has devised a mechanism wherein the Diaspora gets a platform at regular intervals to build linkages with India.

**5.3** When asked about the way in which the Ministry propose to put forth its soft power diplomacy of Indian Diaspora for facilitating India's growth, the Ministry submitted that it realizes the role that the Indian diaspora can play in India's growth and hence engaging the diaspora in every possible manner including soft power diplomacy which *inter-alia* includes cultural diplomacy. Efforts are being made to popularize Indian cuisine, culture, festivals, entertainment, art forms and various other elements of Indian heritage in which diaspora plays and will continue to play an important role. When Indian Diaspora, which has become an economic and political force in many of the countries of its adoption, connects back to India, it not only increases the standing of India in those respective host countries but also increases the

potential of growth of India through increased trade, investments, remittances, and above all increasing social and cultural capital of India.

**5.4** On being asked about the new advances and ventures being explored by the Ministry for engaging Indian Diaspora, the Ministry stated that Programmes such as Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children (SPDC), Know India Programme (KIP), and Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana (PTDY) are relatively new additions to the Ministry's initiatives in engaging the Indian diaspora. We have further added a new programme called “Videsh Sampark” to enhance the scope of the engagement with States to cover investment, trade and tourism. Ministry has also launched an outreach platform called the Global Pravasi Rishta Portal (RISHTA portal) to have a direct connect with the Indian Diaspora across the Globe.

**5.5** Furnishing details (including budgetary allocations) about the Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana (PTDY), the Ministry stated that “Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana” (PTDY) was started by the Ministry in 2018-19 as a special edition for elderly diaspora in the age group of 45-65 years under the Know India Programme series to connect them to the spiritual and religious heritage aspects of India. The programme is organised for the middle-aged PIOs from the seven Giritiya countries (Fiji, Guyana, Mauritius, South Africa, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago and Reunion Islands ) and helps them to visit India on an organized pilgrimage, paid for by the Government of India, and have an all-round exposure to various faiths in India. Two editions (with 40 participants each) have been organized in 2018-19 & 2019-20 each since the inception of the programme. The Government has so far conducted 4 editions of PTDY with the participation of 160 PIOs. Budgetary allocation under separate head has not been made for the PTDY programme as it is organised under the KIP. However, budget allocation for KIP has been enhanced due to addition of new programme of Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana (PTDY) since 2018-19. The expenditure on PTDY was Rs. 95, 78,000/- in 2018-19 and Rs. 83,88,000/- in 2019-20 excluding air-fare.

**5.6** About Global Pravasi Rishta Portal (RISHTA portal), the Ministry informed that in December 2020, Global Pravasi Rishta Portal has been launched by the Ministry of External

Affairs which will act as a dynamic communication platform between our diaspora, the Ministry and Missions abroad and will help in engaging Indian diaspora more intensively. The Portal is intended to make available informational data base of the diaspora; provide a basket of services of the host country to the Indian diaspora; and, share various schemes and services of Government of India. No separate budgetary allocation has been made for the RISHTA portal currently, as there is no envisaged expenditure at this stage, since it is the Ministry's in-house new online digital portal designed and maintained by the Ministry. However, in case the maintenance of the portal requires any expenditure, then the provision for the same will be made in future.

**5.7** A comparative analysis of the budgetary data of erstwhile MOIA with MEA is provided below:-

Schemes	MOIA			POST MERGER				
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Secretariat-General Services	21.94	33.95	19.38	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Protector General of Emigrants	6.87	6.41	11.30	15.76	14.82	17.09	17.60	20.08
Indian Development Foundation	2.00	2.00	0.85	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre	7.00	4.50	1.30	1.50	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
Overseas Workers Resource Centre	1.25	1.50	1.20	1.30	1.30	1.30	0.00	0.00
Labour Mobility Partnership	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00
Overseas Indian Centre	4.00	4.86	3.69	3.20	1.20	1.20	0.00	0.00
Indian Centre for Migration	5.00	4.00	3.04	0.10	0.05	2.50	0.50	0.50
Other Schemes (GiA-	1.00	1.00	0.76	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

General)								
Other Schemes (Other Charges)	12.00	6.00	1.50	3.50	2.00	3.92	4.00	4.00
Overseas Citizenship of India	2.38	2.85	0.50	1.50	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
Know India Programme	4.00	4.50	8.00	1.50	0.90	5.00	6.00	6.00
Scholarship Scheme for Diaspora Children	7.60	8.56	6.50	6.00	4.00	7.00	12.00	10.00
Promotion of Cultural ties with Diaspora	0.50	5.00	9.50	2.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Awareness Campaign/Media Plan	10.00	12.50	9.50	5.54	2.50	11.00	11.00	11.00
Pre-Departure Orientation and Skill upgradation of Emigrant Worker	0.05	1.00	0.50	0.01	1.00	0.50	5.50	7.00
Legal Assistance to Women facing problems in NRI Marriage	0.75	1.00	0.10	0.25	0.02	0.01	0.12	0.12
Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendra	0.00	20.00	20.00	10.00	10.00	5.00	1.00	1.00
Celebration of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas	8.00	13.00	7.53	5.00	10.00	10.00	39.12	40.00
Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra	20.00	15.00	12.00	7.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	45.00
Others	1.40	1.30	0.99	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>115.79</b>	<b>148.98</b>	<b>118.18</b>	<b>66.67</b>	<b>51.80</b>	<b>66.52</b>	<b>98.84</b>	<b>146.70</b>

**5.8** The Committee enquired about the constraints faced in execution of the schemes and programmes related to Overseas Indian Affairs after the merger of erstwhile MOIA with MEA. The Ministry stated that there have been no such constraints faced in execution of the schemes and

programmes related to Overseas Indian Affairs after the merger of MOIA with MEA. Following schemes were closed between 2014 to 2018:-

- (a) India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians (IDF-OI) was closed in March 31, 2018 to avoid duplication of work and to enhance the efficiency of other schemes.
- (b) Study India Programme (SIP) was closed in 2016 given the similarity of SIP with KIP (Know India Programme), it was decided to close SIP.
- (c) Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre (OIFC): Following merger of MOIA with MEA, functions related to promotion of investments by overseas Indians have shifted to DPIIT, and OIFC was closed down on 30 March 2017 with Cabinet approval.
- (d) Tracing the Roots scheme was reviewed in 2016-17 and it was observed that performance of the scheme was unsatisfactory with only 18 applications in 8 years. The scheme has therefore been closed with EAM's approval.

**5.9** COVID-19 Pandemic has impacted all aspects of our existence. Stating the problems faced by Overseas Indians during such times, the Ministry submitted that during current COVID-19 pandemic, lot of Indian nationals got stranded due to global lockdowns and cancellation of International flights. Under Vande Bharat Mission, over 3.2 million Indians have been evacuated to return to India. An online platform (REPAT portal) has been developed to monitor the developments. MEA and the Ministry of Skill Development had worked closely to manage mapping the skills of the returnees. Our Missions/Posts abroad proactively helped these distressed/stranded Indian nationals through Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF).

**5.10** Furthermore, ICWF is set up in all the Missions/Posts abroad to meet contingency expenditure incurred by them for carrying out various on-site welfare activities for Overseas Indian Citizens in distress. Fund is administered in accordance guidelines duly approved by Union Cabinet of India. However it's a self sustaining fund outside CFI with no budgetary support. Around INR 33 crores of funds is utilized to extend assistance to more than 150,000 Indians stranded due to Covid towards boarding & lodging, evacuation and repatriation, medical assistance, providing masks, food packets and dry ration.

**5.11** When asked about the steps taken by the Ministry to spread awareness about the various schemes and programmes relating to Overseas Citizens of India, the latter replied that the Ministry has been making efforts to spread awareness about the various schemes and programmes for the diaspora largely through the websites of the Ministry and the Missions. The Missions have been popularizing information about these programmes through their websites, social media platforms, and physical meet-ups with the diaspora community, and disseminating information among various diaspora associations. Domestically, State Outreach programmes are held with the State governments and other stakeholders to brief them about the various diaspora welfare measures of the Central Government so that the State NRI departments can further publicize the information regarding these schemes through their diaspora channels. The Ministry will now also propagate information about the diaspora schemes through the recently launched Global Pravasi Rishta Portal (RISHTA).

**5.12** Responding to the Committee's query pertaining to welfare of Overseas Indians, the Foreign Secretary during evidence on 24 February 2021 submitted as under:-

“One of the issues that came up was in terms of our spending for the welfare of overseas Indians. Here, I think during COVID times, it has to be kept in mind, we have extended very, very great facilitation for Indian nationals and persons of Indian origins during the COVID period through the Indian community welfare fund which does not come under the Budget because it is not a fund which is from the Consolidated Fund of India. This is based on the revenues that have been received from visa and passport fee and certain percentage of revenue is utilized for the welfare of the community. We have almost utilized all the funds available. We utilized Rs. 137 crore in 2020 for the benefit of Indian nationals in many countries mainly in Gulf, and also in different parts of the world. Over a period of time since 2014, we have done Rs. 447 crore, but in a short period of time in 2020, we have done Rs. 137 crore from COVID. 60 to 70 per cent visas today are e-visas. Payment is made electronically. It does not come to our Embassy, so we do not have this money under the Indian community welfare fund. We have made a suggestion to the Ministry of Home Affairs that a money collected under that also should come under that, so that we get more funds which we can use under ICWF. That proposal is under active consideration now and that can replenish the ICWF funds”.



**5.13 The Committee are aware that the Indian Diaspora has an impact on Indian foreign policy and they play a constructive role in facilitating India's developmental agenda and soft power projection. There are institutionalized mechanisms for regular engagement with the Indian Diaspora. Various schemes and programmes such as Know Inda Programme (KIP), Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children (SPDC), Celebration of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendra, Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana (PTDY), Global Pravasi Rishta Portal (Rishta Portal) etc are being executed for the welfare of Indian Diaspora. While comparing the budgetary allocation to various schemes and programmes that are being implemented for welfare of Indian Diaspora by erstwhile MOIA and by MEA now, the Committee observe a set pattern of arbitrary and constant allocation of funds. The Committee are also discerned that India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians (IDF-OI), Study India Programme (SIP), Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre (OIFC), Tracing the Roots Scheme were closed during 2014 to 2018, without citing any valid justification. Schemes and programmes are effective only when those reach the target audience. The Ministry has submitted that IT is making efforts to spread awareness about the various schemes and programmes through its website and Missions, social media platforms, State outreach programmes and recently launched Global Pravasi Rishta Portal (RISHTA).**

**In the considered view of the Committee, the objectives behind the merger of erstwhile Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs with MEA gets compromised, if adequate attention and fiscal space is not provided to the Diasporic community. The Committee would, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation that the Ministry should constitute a working group to assess all schemes and programmes for welfare of overseas**

**Indians and apprise them about its outcome within six months. The Committee also desire that the Ministry proactively engage with the State Governments to deepen the impact of information and awareness campaigns related to various schemes and programmes for engaging Indian Diaspora.**

*(Recommendation No. 31)*

**5.14 The Committee have noted that several Indian nationals were stranded due to Covid-19 pandemic related global lockdowns and cancellation of International flights and are glad to recognize the fact that over 3.2 million Indians have been evacuated to return to India under the Vande Bharat Mission. An online platform (REPAT portal) has also been developed by the Ministry to monitor the developments. MEA has worked closely with the Ministry of Skill Development to map the skills of the returnees. Indian Missions/Posts abroad proactively helped the distressed/stranded Indian nationals through the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF). The Committee note that ICWF is a self sustaining fund outside Consolidated Fund of India with no budgetary support. The Foreign Secretary drew attention of the Committee towards the possibility of using the money earned through e visas under ICWF. Currently, the payment of electronic visa goes to the Ministry of Home Affairs.**

**The Committee want to put it on record that the Ministry of External Affairs has played a commendable role in bringing back the Indian nationals during the Covid-19 pandemic. Through the Vande Bharat Mission, REPAT portal, usage of ICWF Funds and active involvement of Indian Missions/Posts, the Ministry has manifested exemplary sense of responsibility towards our Diaspora during such tough time. The Committee strongly endorse the Ministry's suggestion of channelizing the money earned through**

electronic visa into the ICWF so that more finances are at the disposal of the Ministry to extend support to Indian Diaspora and desire that steps should be taken to achieve the same.

*(Recommendation No. 32)*

#### **A. KNOW INDIA PROGRAMME**

**5.15** The objective of the Ministry's Know India Programme is to help familiarize Indian Diaspora youth, in the age group of 18-26 years, with developments and achievements made by the country and bringing them closer to the land of their ancestors. An allocation of Rs. 7 crore has been kept at BE 2021-22. The Committee wanted to know whether there is a proposal to increase the number of Know India Programmes and number of participants in these programmes. The Ministry responded that presently there is no proposal to increase the number of Know India Programmes and number of participants in these programmes.

**5.16** Details of the allocation and utilization of funds allocated under the KIP during the last three years along with the number of programmes projected and organized and the number of participants that took part are as under :-

(Rs. in Crore)

<b>FY</b>	<b>Fund Allocation (FE)</b>	<b>Fund Utilized</b>	<b>Number of Programmes Projected</b>	<b>Number of Programmes organized</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
2017-18	5.56	5.58	06	06	240
2018-19	7.00	7.70	09	09	368
2019-20	6.00	7.00	08	08	320

**5.17** When asked about the plans under anvil to improve the contents of KIP, the Ministry stated that the improvement of the Know India Programme is an ongoing process. The Ministry had sought inputs from various stakeholders and suggestions were incorporated in subsequent KIPs. Some of the new elements added to the KIP programme include visits to scientific

institutions such as BARC, ISRO, Nuclear Plants etc to give an exposure to scientific developments in India, visit to AYUSH, NITI Ayog, INVEST India, National Physical Laboratory etc. Regular feedback mechanism is in place to receive inputs from stakeholders. We have also added an element of State partnership. The Partner State has an important role in connecting the diaspora participants with their Indian roots. Besides arranging their visit to places of historic, cultural, industrial and tourist importance in the State, the State also arranges meeting with the leadership in the State Government. Participants also get exposure to the village/rural life as well as industrial tour in the states that they visit.

**5.18** The enhanced allocation of budget under KIP is due to addition of new element of Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana (PTDY) as a special KIP in the FY 2018-19 on the Know India Programme (KIP) lines to providing the elder generation diaspora from the seven Girmitya countries (*Fiji, Guyana, Mauritius, South Africa, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago and Reunion Islands*) in the age group of 45-65 year an opportunity to reconnect with their root and revamping of existing KIP module by adding following new activities :-

- (a) Provide T-Shirt to KIP Participants.
- (b) Visit to Kingdom of Dreams, Gurgaon (Theme Park).
- (c) Showcase Bollywood Movie.
- (d) Arranged a visit to Film City, Noida.

**5.19** The Committee are aware that the Know India Programme (KIP) is a flagship initiative of MEA to help familiarize Indian Diaspora youth, in the age group of 18-26 years, with developments and achievements made by the country and bringing them closer to the land of their ancestors. An allocation of Rs. 6 crore was made under this programme during BE 2020-21 which has been increased to Rs. 7 crore for BE 2021-22. The Ministry has informed that the enhanced allocation has been made due to addition of Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana (PTDY). This Yojana was started by the Ministry in 2018-19 as a special edition for elderly diaspora from the seven Girmitya countries (Fiji,

Guyana, Mauritius, South Africa, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago and Reunion Islands) in the age group of 45-65 years under the Know India Programme series to connect them to the spiritual and religious heritage of India. The Committee are happy to learn that based on inputs from relevant stakeholders, new elements such as Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana (PTDY) has been added to KIP. Given the limited budgetary allocation, the Committee fail to understand the manner in which the expansion will be incorporated. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry of External Affairs should seek more funds for Know India Programmes that have been received warmly by the Indian Diaspora at RE stage.

*(Recommendation No. 33)*

## **B. PRAVASI KAUSHAL VIKAS YOJANA**

**5.20** Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PKVY), a joint collaborative partnership between MEA and Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), aims at enhancing the skills set of potential emigrant workers in select sectors and job roles, in line with international standards, to facilitate their overseas employment. The scheme comprises two components. The first one is technical top-up training, involving recognition of prior learning, assessment and certification, to be provided by MSDE, through the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). The second one is a one day training programme on soft skills, called “Pre-Departure Orientation and Training (PDOT)”, to be imparted by MEA.

**5.21** Providing the details of the activities undertaken under this scheme during the past three years, the Ministry stated that Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2016 to implement Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PKVY) designed to offer skill training to Indians seeking jobs overseas. The scope of the MoU skill includes programme for potential migrants overseas including requisite awareness programs, technical top-up training and pre-departure orientation training and development of an ecosystem to facilitate overseas employment.

**5.22** PKVY also institutionalizes a framework to provide Pre-Departure Orientation Training (PDOT) to the Indian workers migrating overseas every year. A 160 hours variant of Pre-Departure Orientation Training (PDOT) consisting of country orientation, language and digital literacy was launched in 2017 under a pilot program for setting up India International Skill Centres (IISCs). The aim of setting up IISCs was to provide skill training and certification on international standards. Under the pilot phase, 14 centres were empanelled as IISCs. The Pilot phase was executed and successfully completed on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2018. Under the pilot program, 593 candidates were enrolled and 459 candidates were assessed on domain training as per international standards and Pre-Departure Orientation Training (PDOT) was delivered. Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) provided support for domain training through Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) provided support for Pre-Departure Orientation Training (PDOT) under the Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojna (PKVY) framework.

**5.23** A pilot program for 1-day PDOT was launched on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018 in two locations: New Delhi and Mumbai. 1 day – PDOT is a training given to potential Indian migrants before they leave India to work overseas for better acclimatization of migrant workers to the language, culture, environment, the emigration process, welfare measures and do's and don'ts of the destination country. As on January 2021, PDOT is operational in 30 centres across 27 cities (Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kochi, Trivandrum, Lucknow, Gorakhpur, Jaipur, Sikar, Nagaur, Mohali, Jalandhar, Amritsar, Kolkata, Bhubaneswar, Hyderabad, Karimnagar, Nizamabad, Vijaywada, Kadapa, Vizag, Kakinada, Patna, Darbhanga, Gaya, Muzaffarpur and Bengaluru). As on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021, PDO Training has been provided to more than 96,000 candidates.

**5.24** The budgetary allocation sought, allocations made and actual during the last three years under PKVY Head are as follows :

(All Figures in Crores)

<b>FY</b>	<b>BE</b>	<b>RE</b>	<b>Actuals</b>
2018-19	5	0.01	0
2019-20	0	0	0
2020-21	0	0	0

**5.25** An MOU was signed between MEA and NSDC in 2016 to provide institutionalized training and PDOT to migrant labourers under the Pravasiya Kaushal Vikas Yojana. Rs 10.0 cr was released to NSDC in March 2017. However, the said fund is yet to be utilized. Hence, budgetary allocation under the specific budget head of PKVY has not been made. Adequate budgetary allocation has been made for Pre-departure orientation training of labourers under the overall umbrella scheme of PKVY. As there is separate head for PDOT in DDG, no resources were separately given under PKVY.

**5.26** In its last Annual Report, the Ministry has stated about the performance review of Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PKVY) by Ministry of Skill Development and Training (MSDE). On being asked about the findings of MSDE, the Ministry stated that while detailed review report is awaited, MSDE has informed that on the basis of PKVY pilot project, a new scheme is being considered with new provisions of skill training under different value chain in due alignment to need of skilled manpower in different countries.

**5.27** The Pre-Departure Orientation Training (PDOT) programme was launched in January 2018 with an objective to give one-day soft skill training. Under PDOT Head, Rs. 50 lakh was allotted in BE 2018-19 and Rs. 20 lakhs were utilized. In 2019-20, an amount of Rs. 3 crores were allocated and Rs. 40 lakhs was utilised. In 2020-21, 20 lakhs was allocated and Rs.5.14 lakhs have been utilised. The following is tabulated below:

(All Figures in Crores)

<b>FY</b>	<b>BE</b>	<b>RE</b>	<b>Actuals</b>
2018-19	0.50	0.50	0.20
2019-20	5.50	3.00	0.40
2020-21	7.00	0.20	0.05

**5.28** As on January 2021, PDOT is operational in 27 cities of 12 States (Delhi, UP, Rajasthan, Punjab, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Telengana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Bihar and Karnataka). Out of the 30 PDOT Centres, opened by MEA in collaboration with MSDE and the State Governments, five new training centres at Bhubaneswar, Kolkata,

Trivandrum, Amritsar & Jalandhar has been opened in October 2020. Names of the 30 PDOT centres and the jurisdiction of POEs are as follows:

S.No.	Name of PoE	PDOT Centre
1.	POE Delhi <b>(Delhi)</b>	• Delhi (Okhla)
		• Delhi (Mandir Marg)
2.	POE Rae Bareilly <b>(Uttar Pradesh)</b>	• Lucknow
		• Gorakhpur
3.	POE Jaipur <b>(Rajasthan)</b>	• Jaipur
		• Sikar
		• Nagaur
4.	POE Chandigarh <b>(Punjab)</b>	• Mohali
		• Jalandhar
		• Amritsar
5.	POE Mumbai <b>(Maharashtra)</b>	• Mumbai (Videsh Bhawan)
		• Mumbai (Andheri)
6.	POE Kolkata <b>(West Bengal)</b>	• Kolkata
		• Bhubaneswar
7.	POE Hyderabad <b>(Telangana)&amp; Andhra Pradesh</b>	• Hyderabad
		• Karimnagar
		• Nizamabad
		• Vijaywada
		• Kadapa
		• Vizag
		• Kakinada
8.	POE Chennai <b>(Tamil Nadu)</b>	• Chennai (NSDC)
		• Chennai RRT
9.	POE Thiruvananthapuram <b>(Kerala)</b>	• Trivandrum



10.	POE Cochin( <b>Kerala</b> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kochi, Ernakulam</li> </ul>
11.	POE Patna ( <b>Bihar</b> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Darbhanga</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaya</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muzaffarpur</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patna</li> </ul>
12.	POE Bengaluru ( <b>Karnataka</b> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bengaluru</li> </ul>
13.	POE Guwahati( <b>Assam</b> )	Nil

Ministry has planned to open many more PDOT centres at major overseas Migration specific places in the country. As on 31<sup>st</sup> January, PDO Training to more than 96000 prospective emigrants have been imparted. To meet our target of imparting training to 5 lakh workers by 2022, an online PDOT model has been adopted, in addition to the present offline classroom training model.

**5.29 Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PKVY) is a joint collaborative partnership between MEA and Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) with the objective of enhancing the skills set of potential emigrant workers in select sectors and job roles, in line with international standards, to facilitate their overseas employment. The Committee observe that this Yojana has two components- technical top-up training, to be provided by MSDE and Pre-Departure Orientation and Training (PDOT) imparted by MEA. The Committee are astonished to note an MoU was signed between MEA and MSDE in 2016 to provide institutionalized training and PDOT to migrant workers under this scheme and Rs. 10 Cr. Was released to MSDE in March 2017 but the said fund is yet to be utilized and since then, the budgetary allocation for PKVY has been made till date. The performance review Report of PKVY is also awaited. The Ministry has informed that a new scheme is being considered by MSDE with new**

provisions of skill training under different value chain in due alignment with need for skilled manpower in different countries. This all shows that the Government is not genuinely serious towards the requirement of enhancing the skills set of potential emigrant workers. The Committee, therefore, desire that MEA should make sincere efforts in collaboration with MSDE and prepare a time-bound programme with set objectives to provide training to potential emigrant workers in specific sectors and job rules in line with international standards. The Committee also desire that sufficient fund should also be allocated for Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana at RE stage so that targets fixed in this regard are achieved and the scheme does not suffer more. The Committee also desire that as on January 2021, PDOT is operational in 27 cities of 12 States (Delhi, UP, Rajasthan, Punjab, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Telengana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Bihar and Karnataka) The Ministry has informed that there are plans to open many more PDOT centres at major overseas Migration specific places in the country. The Committee desire that MEA should take all initiatives to meet the target of imparting training to 5 Lakh workers by 2022 through online or offline classroom training models for Pre-departure Orientation Training Programme.

*(Recommendation No. 34)*

**CHAPTER VI**  
**AUTONOMOUS BODIES & INSTITUTIONS**

Allocation under the head ‘Autonomous Bodies and Institutions’ is towards Ministry’s Grants-in-Aid to Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Indian Council for World Affairs (ICWA), Society for Research and Information System for Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries (RIS) and other institutions such as International society for International Law. The allocations made to the institutions are shown in the table below :-

*(Rs. in Crores)*

<b>Assistance to Autonomous Bodies and other Institutions</b>				
<b>Sl.No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>BE 2020-21</b>	<b>RE 2020-21</b>	<b>BE 2021-22</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>ICCR</b>	<b>290.00</b>	<b>255.00</b>	<b>300.00</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>ICWA</b>	<b>16.50</b>	<b>13.00</b>	<b>16.00</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>RIS</b>	<b>13.00</b>	<b>12.46</b>	<b>12.62</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>India Centre for Migration</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0.02</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Other Institutions</b>	<b>3.72</b>	<b>3.72</b>	<b>4.50</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>323.72</b>	<b>284.18</b>	<b>333.14</b>

**6.2** The Indian Council for Cultural Relations was formally set up in 1950, with the primary objective of establishing, reviving and strengthening cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries. Its aims, as enunciated in the Memorandum of Association, are: to participate in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes relating to India's cultural relations with other countries; to foster and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries; to establish and develop relations with national and international organizations in the field of culture.

**6.3** Apprising the Committee about the activities of ICCR, the Ministry stated that the activities of the Council are decided and approved by its Governing Body, General Assembly and Finance Committee. These Bodies provide policy direction to the activities of the Council. These Bodies meet periodically to consider important aspects including Budget, Plan of Action

etc. The major activities and publications of the ICCR:

- Administration of scholarship schemes for overseas students on behalf of the Government of India and other agencies, and to supervise the welfare of international students;
- Grant of scholarships to foreign students to learn Indian dance and music;
- Exchange of Exhibitions;
- Organization of and participation in international seminars and symposia;
- Participation in major cultural festivals abroad;
- Organization of 'Festivals of India' abroad;
- Exchange of groups of performing artistes;
- Organization of lecture-demonstrations by performing artistes abroad;
- To organize the Distinguished Visitors Programme, under which eminent personalities from abroad are invited to India to interact with dignitaries, to deliver lectures and attend roundtable discussions and interact with opinion makers on issues of mutual interest;
- To establish and operate Chairs for Indian Studies in universities abroad;
- Presentation of books, art objects and musical instruments to institutions abroad;
- To provide the Secretariat for the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding; organization of the Annual Maulana Azad Memorial Lecture and the commemoration of Maulana Azad's Birth & Death Anniversaries;
- Operation of Indian Cultural Centres abroad and Regional Offices within India;
- Maintenance of a well-stocked library and the manuscripts of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad;
- Digitalization of rare manuscripts;
- Supporting Hindi related activities including publication of a Hindi magazine "Gagananchal";
- To undertake projects on behalf of the Ministry of External Affairs;
- To synergize with other Cultural institutions/agencies in related fields.

Publication of ICCR - Gagnanchal (Hindi Bi-monthly) journal for distribution in India and abroad;

**6.5** An allocation of Rs. 300 crore has been made in BE 2021-22 for ICCR. On being asked the Ministry specified the activities for which enhanced allocation has been made.

- (i) Scholarship Welfare Activities (255%)
- (ii) Incoming Exhibitions (170%)
- (iii) Distinguished Visitors Programme (100%)
- (iv) Academic Visitors Programme (100%)
- (v) Horizon Series & Other Programmes (184%)
- (vi) Festivals Abroad (4900%)
- (vii) Multimedia & Website (1000%)

**6.6** The details of allocation sought, made and actual to ICCR for the last three years as given below:

*(Rs. in Crores)*

Year	BE		RE	
	Demand	Allocation	Demand	Allocation
<b>2018-19</b>	309.94	255.00	286.18	235.00
<b>2019-20</b>	330.79	250.00	310.83	250.00
<b>2020-21</b>	389.22	290.00	260.00	255.00

**6.7** The Committee wanted to know whether in the opinion of the Ministry the allocated amount is sufficient to meet the expanding activities of ICCR. The Ministry responded that the budgetary demand and allocation for ICCR is done in close coordination with the various territorial Divisions as well as Plan of Action received from Missions and Posts. ICCR does a detailed exercise based on realistically achievable objectives in line with overall priorities of the government for effective cultural diplomacy. Demands of ICCR for increased budgetary allocation are considered within the overall budgetary constraints of the Ministry. The BE 2021-22 has been provisioned higher at Rs 300 crore (as compared to Rs. 290 cr. in 2020-21) in line with increasing significance of soft power projection of the country and ICCR's central

role in it. A decreased RE 2020-21 was made with realistic assessment that ICCR activities, in particular its programmes, have got impacted in wake of global COVID19 lockdown.

**6.8** Regarding extra budgetary resources are available with ICCR, the Ministry responded that ICCR is fully funded by MEA through Grants-in-Aid. Except for fee receipts from local students from ICC's abroad, which is a negligible amount, ICCR has no further source of funding to run its activities.

**6.9** On being asked about the efforts that are being made by ICCR to further generate additional resources, the Ministry stated that no substantial efforts have been made by ICCR for generating additional resources due to the fact that the Council is largely dependent on the Ministry's grant-in-aid to run its activities. Also ICCR has limited resources in terms of fee collected at ICCs abroad. However, the Council is exploring the possibility of carrying out activities on PPP Model in future.

**6.10** Providing the reason for gap in budgetary demands and allocations to ICCR, the Ministry stated that the budgetary allocation is made as per realistic assessment of the Council's budgetary needs, including available human resources & ongoing programs/activities and new initiatives planned. Demands of ICCR for increased budgetary allocation are considered based actual utilization pattern, current liabilities and the overall budgetary constraint of the Ministry. The BE 2021-22 has been provisioned higher at Rs 300 crore (as compared to Rs. 255 cr. in RE 2020-21) in line with increasing significance of soft power projection of the country and ICCR's central role in it.

**6.11** ICCR's Cultural Centres are the principal instrument of India's institutional outreach. On the Committee's query whether ICCR is in the process of opening more Indian Cultural Centers abroad during the upcoming financial year, the Ministry replied that yes, ICCR is in the process of opening its Cultural Centres in Washington and Paris. The Centres are expected to be operational by the end of this year.

**6.12** Elaborating upon the procedure for opening of these centres abroad and the appointments made thereon, the Ministry asserted that the concerned Mission is required to

provide detailed reasons and justification for opening of a new Cultural Centre such as local formalities for opening of new Cultural Centre, background information of Mission, information about city where Cultural Centre is proposed, details of Foreign Cultural Centres set up by other major countries, interest of general public about India in terms of art, culture, Bollywood, other Art forms and India-centric activities proposed for Cultural Centre etc. On the basis of all such information, the Council seeks the views/approval of Territorial Division, MEA for clearance, allocation of space norms, creation of posts (local and India based) and its budgetary provisions.

**6.13** Regarding the update on establishment of ICCR Cultural Centres in Washington and Paris, the Ministry submitted that ICCR is in the process of opening its Cultural Centres in Washington and Paris. Our endeavour would be towards early operationalization of the centres, which at this stage are undergoing renovation.

**6.14** As the principal organ for soft and cultural diplomacy of the Government of India, ICCR's activities are spread across the globe ranging from providing scholarships, organizing exhibitions, to performing and visual arts programmes. The Committee note that Rs 300 crore has been provisioned for ICCR for BE 2021-22 (as compared to Rs. 290 cr. in BE 2020-21). The Ministry has informed that the enhanced allocation has been made for scholarship, welfare activities, incoming Exhibitions, Distinguished Visitors Programmes, Academic Visitors Programmes, festivals abroad and Multimedia & Website. Based on the fact that ICCR activities have been affected in the wake of global Covid-19 lockdown, the budgetary allocation during RE 2020-21 was decreased. The Ministry clarified that no substantial efforts have been made by ICCR for generating additional resources to run its activities. Despite the limited allocation, the Committee found that it was not fully utilized. Keeping in view the broad spectrum of activities undertaken by ICCR, the Committee strongly feel the need for enhanced budgetary

allocation of ICCR. The Ministry is encouraged to explore the possibility of Partnerships and PPP Models for ICCR where the partners also put in resources for executing projects. ICCR should establish a mechanism for ensuring that the pace of expenditure is improved for better requisition of budgetary demands in the next fiscal. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Government should further increase the budgetary allocation for ICCR at RE 2021-22 and BE 2021-22 stage justifying the increasing significance of soft power projection of the country and central role of ICCR in it.

*(Recommendation No. 35)*

6.15 ICCR Cultural Centres constitute a key tool of India's cultural outreach abroad through their wide range of cultural, academic and intellectual activities. The Ministry has informed that the Cultural Centres in Washington and Paris are expected to be operational by the end of this year. The Ministry has submitted that establishment of a new cultural centre is dependent on a variety of factors which includes local formalities for opening of a new Cultural Centre, background information of Mission, information about the city where a Cultural Centre is proposed, details of Foreign Cultural Centres set up by other major countries, interest of general public about India in terms of art, culture, Bollywood, other Art forms and India-centric activities proposed for a Cultural Centre, etc. The Committee would recommend that the Ministry should ensure that the Cultural Centres in Washington and Paris are operational by end of 2021 positively. The Ministry should also empanel artists from the widest possible variety of Indian languages/dialects and cultures so that India's diversity is richly showcased abroad.

*(Recommendation No. 36)*



## **Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) and Research and Information System (RIS)**

### **A. Mandate, Activities and Publications of ICWA**

**6.16** The Indian Council of World Affairs Act, 2001 lays down the objectives of the ICWA. Section 13 of the Act lists the objectives as:

- To promote the study of Indian and international affairs so as to develop a body of informed opinion on international matters.
- To promote India's relations with other countries through study, research, discussions, lectures, exchange of ideas and information with other organizations within and outside India engaged in similar activities.
- To serve as a clearing house of information and knowledge regarding world affairs.
- To publish books, periodicals, journals, reviews, papers, pamphlets and other literature on subjects covered under Indian foreign policy.
- To establish contacts with organizations promoting objects facilitating India's relations with other countries.
- To arrange conferences and seminars to discuss and study the Indian policy towards international affairs.
- To undertake such other activities for the promotion of ideas and attainment of the above mentioned objects.

**6.17** Furnishing details about the conferences organized by ICWA and the tangible policy outcomes emerging out of them that were beneficial in framing foreign policy agenda, the Ministry stated that during the period April 2020- Feb 2021, the Council has organized a total of 100 Seminars/ Conferences/ Panel discussions and Book discussions, out of which 51 events were held online since April 2020, due to the COVID 19 situation. These included Webinars/Web conferences/Online lectures & Panel discussions out of which 8 specifically dealt with COVID 19 themes. Digital format has enabled easier participation of scholars/experts based abroad and this has had a positive impact on the content of ICWA's conversations.

**6.18** The Council has organized 22 international interactions in the form of Seminars and Bilateral Dialogues including online interactions. Some important bilateral dialogues held were with our MoU partners in China, Russia, Iran, Poland, Germany, Hungary, Vietnam and Uzbekistan. ICWA also had interactive sessions with visiting delegation from Vietnam and Syria. ICWA organized the Fourth India- China Think Tank Forum in Beijing; partnered with MEA to organize the Indian Ocean Dialogue; organized a major international conference on India's engagement with Changing Arctic. There were webinars organized to commemorate Special Days/events included the Africa Day, Nelson Mandela Day, 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Korean War, 60 years of the Antarctica Treaty, 75 years of the UN which also reflected on a century of Indian multilateralism and India-China Relations @ 70.

Some major online international conferences organized were on the Geopolitics of Maritime Heritage of Western Indian Ocean, Gandhi and the World, Gender within International Relations, India and the SCO; Mekong- Ganga Cooperation and recently on the India-Africa Development Partnership. These saw wide participation by scholars and experts from various countries in the respective areas. In some of the online conferences/webinars Head of Indian Missions and Foreign Heads of Missions in Delhi participated such as the policy dialogues on India and the SCO, India and Africa and dialogues with MoU partners in Russia, Poland, Hungary and Germany.

The Council, in its conferences, seminars and bilateral dialogues gave priority to engage a more diverse set of voices in the discussion and debates. At the national level, experts and scholars were invited from various think tanks, universities and research institutes across the country, to participate as resources person in Council's conferences and seminars. In our bilateral dialogues the Council brought together a cross section of Indian analysts and experts from various universities, research institutes, to interact with the counterpart delegation on range of areas of mutual interest at the bilateral and regional level.

**6.19** Some of the major dialogues that the Council organized during the last one year and the objectives and policy outcomes emerging out of them are as follows:

#### Bilateral dialogues

With regard to Russia, ICWA organized two online dialogues with the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) on 15 July 2020 and 20 October 2020. The discussions

in the first dialogue focused on India – Russia relationship in the context of Post pandemic Global Order reflecting on the challenges and opportunities in the bilateral , regional and global arenas; In the second dialogue the focus was on assessing India- Russia relationship in the context of completing 20 years of Strategic Partnership. One of the policy recommendations put forth was India and Russia should focus on issues which offer low hanging fruits for the relationship. The dialogues also focused on the current international geopolitical flux, Far East non-traditional threats and the Indo-Pacific.

On China, a video conversation between Dr. T. C A. Raghavan, DG, ICWA, and Mr. Wang Chao, President, Chinese People’s Institute of Foreign Affairs (CPIFA, MOU Partner of ICWA, was held on August 7, 2020. ICWA and CPIFA have completed six bilateral structured dialogues in Beijing and Delhi alternatively so far. Different aspects of India China relations were discussed in the conversation. Both sides agreed that it was a useful engagement between the two institutions.

On SCO, ICWA organised a webinar on ‘*India-SCO Relations: The Next Steps*’ on 2 September 2020 and the Council participated in the *XV Forum meeting of the SCO Forum* on 29 September 2020. In the discussions the common point emphasized was that India should increase engagement with the SCO, as the region is very important from economic, security, political and cultural perspectives. India needs to take a long-term perspective of SCO. It was suggested that India should work on developing multilateral mechanism from below, based on soft issues of culture, education, commonalities, connectivity and economic development. It also emerged that there is need to increase study and research in India about Central Asia, Eurasia and the regional organisations.

The Indian Council of World Affairs, (ICWA) New Delhi hosted a dialogue with International Foreign Affairs and Trade Institute, (IFAT) Hungary on 10 September 2020. The discussions centered on perceptions on China in South-Asia and Europe amid the global pandemic; and on current dynamics of the global economy.

On Vietnam, ICWA had a dialogue with Vietnam Institute for Indian and Southwest Asia Studies (VIISAS), Hanoi, an affiliation of Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, on “New Horizons in India-Vietnam Relations” on 7 October 2020. It was stated that there is a need to ensure that multipolarity of Asia is maintained and both sides emphasized that they are in favour of a multipolar world order a. It was also highlighted that aggressive territorial

assertions need to be contested; both countries can work out a coastal defence mechanism which would integrate coordination between marine or sea police, coastguards and navy as well as coastal radar system to thwart away attacks on strategic or commercial installations along coasts of both countries; and Textile can become a key cooperation sector in India-Vietnam trade relations.

## **B. Mandate, Activities and Publications of RIS**

**6.20** The Memorandum of Association of RIS stipulates the key objectives of establishment of RIS by the government:

1. To serve as a national focal point to identify and discuss priority areas of research concerning multilateral issues, primarily on economic, social, scientific and technological matters;
2. To undertake research activities or may assign areas of research to specified national institutions;
3. To forge effective links between research institutions of other Nonaligned and developing countries; organize discussions, seminars and workshops and may involve research institutions of other countries; and
4. To advise Government of India on all matters pertaining to multilateral economic and social issues, as may be referred to from time to time.

**6.21** The thrust areas of RIS Work Programme are as follows:

### **A. Global Economic Issues and South-South Cooperation**

- Patterns and Dynamics of Global Trade
- WTO: Broader debate on multilateralism
- Agreement on Agriculture and Food Security
- TRIPS and Domestic Patent Regime
- IPRs with special focus to Indian Pharmaceutical Industries
- GATS and Trade in Services Agreement (TISA)
- Dispute Settlement Mechanism under WTO
- Post-2015 Global Development Agenda
- International Financial Institutions
- BRICS New Development Bank
- Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)

- International Aid Architecture and Development Cooperation
- Global Ethics in Science and Technology
- Human Genetics and Access
- Issues for developing countries in G-20
- Climate Change Negotiations
- Global Value Chains

## **B. Trade, Investment and Economic Cooperation**

- South Asia Development and Cooperation Report
- Regional Value Chain in South Asia
- India and Central Asia
- India-Eurasian Economic Community Engagements
- Blue Economy
- IORA in the New Millennium
- Economic Aspects of Fisheries in the IORA region
- Dimensions of IBSA and BRICS partnership
- India-China Trade Relationship
- Towards a New Strategic Economic Partnership with Africa
- India-COMESA Partnership
- Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement and other mega FTAs
- Africa Asia Growth Corridor
- Indo-Pacific Dialogue
- Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)
- Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement
- Meaning of Indian Economic Dynamism for East Asia
- India-Japan Economic Partnership
- Economic Integration between India and CLMV region
- Global and Regional Value Chains through Rules of Origin
- India's Engagement with Latin America
- India-SICA Economic Partnership
- India-Bangladesh Dialogue

## **C. Connectivity and Regional Cooperation**

- Connectivity in South Asia: Issues and Way Forward
- BBIN Growth Quadrangle
- BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement
- Development Corridors in Myanmar
- India's Border Trade with Myanmar and Connectivity
- ASEAN-India Maritime Issues

- ASEAN-India Development and Cooperation Report (AIDCR)
- Digital Connectivity with ASEAN
- Impact of Economic Corridors
- Regional Cooperation for Infrastructure Development
- Challenges in Financing Infrastructure Projects
- Maritime Connectivity and Shipping Linkages
- International North–South Transport Corridor
- Trade Facilitation at Indian Ports
- Tourism with improved Shipping linkages
- Telecommunication Connectivity in South Asia
- BCIM Economic Cooperation

#### **D. New Technologies and Development Issues**

- Biotechnology and development
- International Cooperation in traditional medicines
- Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of living modified organisms
- Impact of GM crops
- Global Responsible Research
- Technology Transfer under the Clean Development Mechanism
- Climate change and Environment-friendly technologies
- IPR regimes and their implications for Commercialization of Technologies
- National Innovation System
- Policy Responses for strengthening R&D activities
- Sector-specific technological imperatives like pharmaceuticals, electronics and auto component in context of Make in India
- Trade, Technology and Growth in Developing Countries
- New Technologies and Digital Divide
- Cyber Security, technologies and regulatory regimes
- TRIPS plus commitments in Mega-regional groupings like the TPP
- Nano-technology and development
- New materials and implications for manufacturing productivity
- Trade, FDI and Total Factor Productivity since India's Liberalisation
- India Africa Partnership in Technology in Agriculture and Health

**6.22** The Ministry further submitted that taking note of the specialized knowledge and evidence based research, the depth of its regional and global network and partner institutions, growing influence particularly in promoting the new development narrative of Global South, bringing together North and South for sustainable development, and its unique convening

power to present multi-disciplinary multi-dimensional perspectives on issues critical to developing countries, Department of Science & Technology has assigned a multi-year research programmed to RIS on Science Diplomacy and the Ministry of Ayush has entered into a Knowledge Partnership with RIS for a span of three years for deeper research on promotion of India 'Traditional Medicines'. NITI Aayog also designated RIS as its advocacy partner for SDGs.

**6.23** Furthermore, over the years, RIS has developed the expertise to promote multi-stakeholder consultations on vital issues concerning the developing countries, including South South Cooperation, under which is brings together the North and the South for maximum possible convergence on development issues and for the promotion of collaborative and cooperative endeavours between the two sides. RIS hosts annual Delhi Process dialogue with the strong support of MEA on international development cooperation with the participation of international development experts. This year Delhi VI is scheduled to take place. Similarly, MEA has instituted IBSA Fellowship Programme at RIS to reinvigorate the process. It also organizes five ITEC programmes every year with the support of MEA and ASEAN Centre at RIS also works under the overall guidance and support of MEA to promote India's cooperation with the ASEAN countries on issues of its core interest.

**6.24** The list of key activities undertaken by RIS during the last three years is at **Annexure-IV**. RIS brings out a wide variety of research studies on key areas of its specialization on contemporary issues. The list of its important publications is at **Annexure-V**.

**6.25** Elucidating on the role played by MEA in RIS and ICWA, the Ministry stated that apart from its annual financial support, MEA continues to be actively involved in the work programme of ICWA and RIS so that it is in alignment with the evolving priorities and focus areas of India's foreign policy goals. EAM is the Vice-President of the Governing Council and a member of the Governing Body of ICWA. Foreign Secretary is a member of both the Governing Body and the Governing Council of ICWA. Foreign Secretary and Secretary (Economic Relations) in the MEA attend the meetings of the Governing Council of RIS and share their vision which forms a vital part of the work programme of RIS.

**6.26** At the functional level, PP&R Division maintains regular contact with ICWA and RIS. It also coordinates with various divisions of the Ministry where inputs and programmatic & research support might be required from ICWA and RIS. Senior officials of the MEA participate in the wide range of conferences, dialogues and workshops organized by ICWA and RIS on core areas of India's interest in the geopolitics and geo-economics, trade, finance, development, neighbourhood connectivity and South-South Cooperation and share their perspectives on emerging issues of critical importance to India. MEA works with ICWA and RIS to hold track 1.5 and 2 dialogues on emerging issues so as to promote India's foreign policy objectives. RIS also organizes the meetings of BRICS and IBSA Academic and Civic forums with the support of MEA.

**6.27** Specifying the contribution of ICWA and RIS in carrying out the foreign policy goals, the Ministry stated that both ICWA and RIS play an important role towards the promotion of India's foreign policy goals in the field of regional and international trade, finance, development, science, technology and innovations. ICWA performs three principal functions –

- a) Carry out Research with a Foreign Policy focus,
- b) To act as a platform for discourse on foreign policy and international affairs and maintains a robust publication programme and
- c) Outreach with like-minded institutions nationally and internationally.

In each of these three aspects, ICWA brings to bear focus on 'Area Studies', as a distinct body of research. RIS by virtue of its convening power and regional and global network of partner institutions vigorously promotes India's narrative on issues of India's core interest in the backdrop of growing threats to multilateralism and rising protectionism. Its focused attention on issues confronting Global South enables MEA to cultivate this important constituency in Asia, Africa and Latin America, which is extremely important to pave the way for the creation of market access opportunities for India in these countries.

**6.31** The eminent band of eminent subject scholars from India and other parts of world engaged by RIS for policy relevant dialogues on issues of core interest to India and its rigorous specialized evidenced based research studies provide vital inputs to MEA in its policy formulation options on key issues to safeguard and promote India's interests. The expertise of



RIS on issues pertaining to Global South, including the evolving architecture on international trade, investment, finance, development, IPR and STI as well as on WTO issues provides vital policy relevant inputs to MEA and other departments of the Government.

**C. Budgetary Allocation to ICWA and RIS**

**6.32** An outlay of Rs. 16 crore has been provided for ICWA during BE 2021-22 which is slightly lower than the budgetary allocation during BE 2020-21. Specifying the reason for reduced allocation during BE 2021-22 and RE 2020-21, the Ministry stated that the reason for reduction in RE 2020-21 and BE 2021-22 is due to less requirement of funds to CPWD for renovation work of Library, which is in alignment with assessed pace of work. The funds for core activities of ICWA have been suitably provisioned.

**6.33** An outlay of Rs. 12.62 crore has been earmarked under this Head for BE 2021-22 while an allocation of Rs. 12.46 crore was made at RE 2020-21. Providing the rationale behind reduced allocation under this head, the Ministry submitted that the reduced sanctioned grant by the MEA was due to the anticipated underutilization of funds by RIS largely on account of the unforeseen impact of COVID 19 on its planned activities, including hosting of events coupled with national and international travel, which had to be either deferred or switched over to virtual or hybrid dialogues involving far less expenditure on its activities. However, it vigorously pursued its research programme with the help of its Faculty.

**6.34** Grant in aid and expenditure during the last three years to RIS are as follows

<b>Year</b>	<b>Sanctioned Grant in Aid from MEA</b>	<b>Actual expenditure</b>
<b>2017-18</b>	<b>8.65</b>	<b>8.65</b>
<b>2018-19</b>	<b>12.00</b>	<b>12.00</b>
<b>2019-20</b>	<b>12.00</b>	<b>12.00</b>

**6.35 ICWA performs three principal functions – carry out Research with a Foreign Policy focus; act as a platform for discourse on foreign policy and international affairs and maintains a robust publication programme. It also conducts outreach activities with like-minded institutions nationally and internationally. An outlay of Rs. 16 crore has been provided for ICWA during BE 2021-22 that is slightly lower than the budgetary allocation during BE 2020-21. The reasons attributed by the Ministry for reduction during BE 2021-22 and RE 2020-21 was fewer requirements of funds to CPWD for renovation work of Library, which is in alignment with assessed pace of work. The Committee note that during the period April 2020- Feb 2021, the Council has organized a total of 100 Seminars/ Conferences/ Panel discussions and Book discussions. The Committee desire that the Ministry should ensure that adequate funds are provisioned for ICWA to carry out the functions entrusted to it. The Committee also suggest that the extensive research carried out by ICWA need to be well publicized and more research collaboration be established with national and foreign think tanks/research organizations.**

*(Recommendation No. 37)*

**6.36 Research and Information System (RIS) is a think tank specializing in international economic relations and development cooperation, serving as a forum for fostering effective policy dialogue among think tanks of developing countries. An outlay of Rs. 12.62 crore has been earmarked for RIS for BE 2021-22 while an allocation of Rs. 12.46 crore was made at RE 2020-21. The Ministry submitted that the reduced grant by the MEA was due to the anticipated under-utilization of funds by RIS largely on account of the unforeseen impact of COVID 19 on its planned activities. The Committee note that**

**there are four thrust areas of RIS Work Programme - Global Economic Issues and South-South Cooperation; Trade, Investment and Economic Cooperation; Connectivity and Regional Cooperation; and New Technologies and Development Issues. The expertise of RIS on issues pertaining to Global South, including the evolving architecture on international trade, investment, finance, development, IPR and STI as well as on WTO issues provides vital and policy relevant inputs to MEA and other departments of the Government. In view of the far reaching implications of the RIS initiatives, the Committee would recommend that suitable enhancement of the budgetary allocations as per their requirements at the RE stage. They also recommend proper channelizing of research inputs of RIS into foreign policy.**

*(Recommendation No. 38)*

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **FOREIGN POLICY PLANNING & RESEARCH**

The Policy Planning and Research Division is the nodal division of the Ministry for policy planning and public diplomacy initiatives with the strategic and academic community. It also conducts bilateral and multilateral policy planning dialogues. The Division along with its network of autonomous bodies (Indian Council of World Affairs and Research and Information Systems), think tanks and academic collaborations provide a well-organised mechanism for the purpose of Policy Planning and Research in foreign affairs. As the nodal Division of the Ministry, the PP&R Division undertakes a continuous analysis of our principal foreign policy objectives as well as provides research-based perspectives to the Ministry on various regional and global developments.

**7.2** Policy Planning and Research Division performs the following functions:

- (1) Interface with the strategic community by organizing collaborative conferences and seminars with various think tanks, as well as supporting and facilitating India's participation in major international conferences. The Raisina Dialogue, the Global Technology Summit, the Asian Economic Dialogue and the Indian Ocean Conference are some of the flagship conferences organised by the division in partnership with prominent think-tanks. In addition to these, the Division also organizes national level seminars in collaboration with universities and academic institutions in different locations in the country to aid in the dissemination of foreign policy awareness.
- (2) Conduct of bilateral and multilateral policy planning dialogues with other Foreign Offices and organise Track 1.5 dialogues with our important diplomatic partners.
- (3) Prepare research papers, policy briefs and situation reports pertaining to global developments and international affairs in general and India's foreign policy in particular. These reports are disseminated within the Ministry and the Government.
- (4) The Division is also mandated to prepare and publish the Annual Report of the Ministry, which is tabled in Parliament. This is an intensive, three-month-long process during which this Division collates and synthesizes inputs from all our Divisions; and, presents a comprehensive overview of the Ministry's activities on an annual basis.

**7.3** The Ministry also stated that while there is no single overarching and formalized strategic document that can delineate a roadmap for India's foreign policy apparatus, the underlying principles of our diplomatic strategy are long-established and enduring. The Ministry continually assesses and refines its diplomatic stance and policies in response to evolving global challenges. India's positions on relevant issues and its interests, in the context of these principles, have been articulated through various platforms. These include safeguarding India's sovereignty and security, protecting and promoting India's national interests, enabling India's domestic economic transformation, ensuring peaceful, secure and stable regional and global environment that is conducive to India's growth and development and building influence in global forums through bilateral, multilateral and regional efforts. This pragmatic and outcome-oriented foreign policy orientation has revitalised our traditional ties, re-energised our strategic, commercial, and economic relations with new partners and re-connected us with our Diaspora abroad. It has provided us with a foundation for dealing with the new and fast-changing realities of the world.

**7.4** When asked about the mechanism for incorporating academic expertise into policy formation, the Ministry stated that it accord high priority to engaging academics based in universities and think tanks and utilizing their expertise in the preparation of research papers and policy briefs for use in the ministry. There are multiple mechanisms for engaging with academics. For example, the division funds universities for the conduct of national/international seminars and thematic conferences on a regular basis.

**7.5** The Ministry also engages with academia through its autonomous bodies – ICWA and RIS – which have a systematic programme of academic events as well as collaborations with corresponding institutions in other countries. The research output of the academic activities is compiled into reports and compendiums, which are utilised by the ministry.

**7.6** Another channel through which the ministry utilises academic expertise is by commissioning of research projects through think tanks like ICWA, RIS, IDSA etc. Apart from these formal channels, the officers of the Ministry maintain close links with academics and

researchers working on areas of interest to the ministry and frequently interact with them in order to exchange views and gain insights from them.

**7.7** The Ministry supports various Track 1.5 Dialogues, in partnership with prominent think-tanks, enabling the participation of domain expertise on key foreign policy issues. The Ministry has also intensified institutional engagement with academic experts by facilitating regular interaction of high functionaries with academics.

**7.8** On the Committee’s query about the manner in which external expertise has been inducted into the Ministry, they stated that it has been utilising external expertise in the form of subject specialist consultants for the purpose of research and policy planning. These consultants are used for producing research papers, policy briefs, coverage of strategic conferences and seminars, preparation of template speeches, think-tank compendium, as well as daily analysis of significant global events.

**7.9** Apart from PP&R Division, other divisions in the ministry are also utilising the services of consultants. Currently, these consultants are being hired at a level equivalent to the scale of an Under Secretary for duration of two years with a provision for extension. When asked about the Ministry intends to use their expertise in short term and long term basis, the Ministry replied that The practice of inducting external expertise as contractually appointed consultants has been initiated in the ministry since FY 2015-16. Based on the experience of the ministry in utilising the services of these consultants, a policy would be drawn up for using their expertise on a long term basis.

**7.10** Furnishing details of the research organizations/ think tanks which are collaborating with the Division.

<b>Name of Research Institutes</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
<b>ICWA</b>	ICWA was established in 1943 as a think tank and was registered as a non-official, non-political and non-profit organization under the Registration of Societies Act, 1860. By an Act of Parliament in 2001, the Council has been declared an institution of national importance. The Hon’ble Vice President of India is ICWA’s ex-officio President. ICWA is administered as per the provisions of the Indian Council of World Affairs Act, 2001. The budget for ICWA is provided by the PP&R

	Division, MEA.
<b>RIS</b>	The RIS was established in 1983 as a registered society. The Society was envisaged to serve as a national focal point to identify and discuss priority areas of research concerning multilateral issues, primarily on economic, social, scientific and technological matters. It was decided that the society will undertake research activities or may assign areas of research to specified national institutions. The society will also forge effective links between research institutions of other Nonaligned and developing countries. It would also organize discussions, seminars and workshops and involve research institutions of other countries in these undertakings. It would also advise the Government of India on all matters pertaining to multilateral economic and social issues as may be referred to from time to time. The Budget for RIS was also provided as a grant in aid by PP&R Division, MEA.
<b>IDSA</b>	The Institute for Defence and Strategic Analysis is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Defence. PP&R Division collaborates with IDSA for carrying out various conferences and thematic projects.
<b>Gateway House</b>	The Ministry collaborates with Gateway House for the organisation of the India Canada Track 1.5 Dialogue. In the past Gateway House has organised two editions of Geo-Economic Dialogue and one edition of T 20 Think Tank Dialogue.
<b>Delhi Policy Group</b>	The Ministry collaborates with Delhi Policy Group for the organisation of the India-Japan Track 1.5 Dialogue
<b>Hudson Institute</b>	The Ministry collaborates with the Hudson Institute for the organisation of the India-US Track 1.5 Dialogue.
<b>Asian Confluence</b>	The Ministry collaborates with Asian Confluence for organising NADI Dialogue in the North East.
<b>Institute of Chinese Studies</b>	The Division had provided grant in aid for the functioning of this institute.
<b>Observer Research Foundation</b>	The Division collaborates with ORF for the organisation of the Raisina Dialogue. So far five editions of the Raisina Dialogue have been successfully organised till 2020. Raisina Dialogue is the Ministry's flagship conference relating to international strategic affairs and geo politics. In the past, ORF has also collaborated with the Ministry for activities connected to BRICS.
<b>India Foundation</b>	The division collaborates with India Foundation for the organisation of the Indian Ocean Conference. So far five editions of the Indian Ocean Conference have been held since 2016.
<b>Ananta Aspen Centre</b>	The Division collaborates with Ananta Centre for the organising of the India US Forum and the India Korea Track 1.5 Dialogue.
<b>Carnegie India</b>	The Division collaborates with Carnegie India for organising the Global Technology Summit. The 5th edition of this summit was organised in December 2020.
<b>Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP)</b>	The Division is collaborating with CESP to organise theme-based, focused micro seminars for nodal officers in the Ministry and Missions.

<b>Pune International Centre</b>	The Ministry collaborates with PIC for various foreign policy related outreach conferences, including organisation of Asia Economic Dialogue.
<b>Chennai Centre for Chinese Studies</b>	The Ministry provides grants in aid to this institute for funding its academic activities.
<b>China Centre for Analysis and Strategy</b>	The Ministry provides grants in aid to this institute for funding its academic activities.
<b>National Institute for Advanced Studies</b>	The Ministry collaborates with this institute directly for commissioning thematic research as well as for inputs on scientific subjects.
<b>Kolkata University</b>	The division collaborates with this university for supporting the establishment of an Institute for Foreign Policy Studies.
<b>Others</b>	The division has collaborated with Symbiosis International University, Vidyaprasarak Mandal (Mumbai), Jadavpur University, Gujarat National Law University, Madurai Kamraj University and Yonsei University, Korea for numerous foreign policy outreach conferences

**7.11** The Committee wanted to know whether there exists research collaboration with other countries on issues pertaining to Foreign Policy, the Ministry replied that currently there are no established research collaborations with other countries on issues pertaining to foreign policy. However, it may be pointed out that the ICWA maintains a regular programme of interactions and academic collaborations with its partner institutions in several countries. Similarly, the RIS has a comprehensive programme of research collaboration with international organisations and academic bodies of other countries. The ASEAN-India Centre located within the RIS is specifically mandated for research collaboration on issues of mutual interest for India and ASEAN countries. The outcome of such collaboration is usually in the form of academic research, which is published, in various index academic journals.

**7.12** Annual Policy Planning Dialogues constitute one of the core mandates of the Policy Planning & Research Division. The Dialogues are held with our bilateral and multilateral diplomatic partners to develop a commonality of understanding on important regional and global issues. Kindly furnish a detailed note on the partners, themes and nature of dialogues held during the past three years.



**7.13 The Policy Planning & Research Division of the Ministry of External Affairs is entrusted with four primary functions – organization of collaborative conferences and seminars with various think tanks; conduct of bilateral and multilateral policy planning dialogues with other Foreign Offices; preparation of research papers, policy briefs and situation reports pertaining to global developments and international affairs in general and India’s foreign policy in particular; and preparation of the Annual Report of the Ministry. The Committee observe that there are multiple mechanisms for engagement with academics, which *inter alia* includes funding of national/international seminars and thematic conferences through its autonomous bodies – ICWA and RIS, commissioning of research projects through think tanks, etc. The Ministry has also submitted that the research output of the academic activities is compiled into reports and compendia. The Ministry is also utilizing external expertise in the form of subject specialist consultants for the purpose of research and policy planning. The Committee were surprised to note that there are no established research collaborations with other countries on issues pertaining to foreign policy.**

**The Committee are pleased to learn that the Policy Planning & Research Division along with its network of autonomous bodies (Indian Council of World Affairs and Research and Information Systems), think tanks and collaborations with academia undertakes a continuous analysis of our principal foreign policy objectives as well as provides research-based perspectives to the Ministry on various regional and global developments. The Committee, however, feel that the interface between policy and academia require greater synergy. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Policy Planning and Research Division should make persistent efforts to incorporate academic**

**and policy analysis into the process of foreign policy formulation. There is also a need for wider dissemination of the publications of Reports, Briefs and compendia of the Ministry and its network of think tanks and autonomous bodies. The Committee also desire that the Ministry should reach out to established think tanks in partner countries for a deeper exchange of ideas and policies.**

*(Recommendation No. 39)*

**7.14** Elucidating on the key principles shaping and guiding Indian foreign policy making in the changed international order, the Ministry stated that the world is transitioning into a more multi-polar world. There has been a change in the nature and distribution of power. The contemporary geopolitical and geo-economic realities do not reflect conventional bipolar or unipolar models. Consequently, many more countries are in a position to influence and shape outcomes. In this increasing multipolarity, India aspires to occupy one of the key poles of the emerging geopolitical landscape. This can be achieved by optimal combination of capabilities, relationships and positioning. India's ability to move forward in this loose architecture of multiple interest based alliances will determine the path towards it emerging as a leading power in coming times.

Given the rapidly changing international scenario and the evolving international order, India continues to pursue its pragmatic and outcome oriented engagements to enhance security, upholding its territorial integrity and promote economic transformation. India pursues these goals through strengthened bilateral, regional and multilateral partnerships. While India strives to build its influence in key global forums, it is also offering to the world its own unique solutions to global issues, like the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). Our neighbourhood and the Indian Ocean Region will continue to be accorded the highest priority, where the focus will be on creating mutually beneficial people oriented regional frameworks for stability and prosperity.

The pandemic has accentuated divisions at the international stage and deepened great power competition. With strategic autonomy at its core, India will continue to step up its engagement with all the major powers of the world, taking independent decisions in its national

interest. India desires to have multipolarity in international order that is stable and conducive to our national growth. Interest-based alliances and issue-based coalitions are a preferred way of our multilateral engagements. We do not seek to confine ourselves to being a balancing power but emerge as a leading power based on our own strengths and capabilities.

India continues to step up its engagement with all the major powers of the world, taking independent decisions in its national interest. India and the US continue to consolidate their comprehensive global strategic partnership. With the UK and France, we have stepped up our comprehensive cooperation. India enjoys a multifaceted relationship with the European Union. India also remains proactively engaged within the Russia-India-China framework. India and Russia define their long-standing ties as a Special and Strategic Privileged Partnership.

Working as an advocate for reformed multilateralism and globalisation is a central part of India's foreign policy agenda in the post-COVID world. The multilateral system has been under pressure, with individual countries balancing their competing interests instead of advancing our collective interests. India will lend voice and support to the creation of a new, people-centric template for multilateral cooperation.

Domestic transformation has become integral to India's foreign policy and the goal of our diplomatic engagements continues to bring visible economic benefits like foreign investments, technology and jobs to our people. Finally, a key principle guiding India's foreign policy is strengthening the bonds of Indian diaspora with their homeland and leveraging their capabilities and resources to promote India's interests abroad.

**7.15** On being asked about the Ministry consultation mechanisms between different Ministries/Departments/Institutions on issue of foreign policy, they submitted that frequent consultations are held with concerned Ministries/Departments and other organizations of the Government of India while formulating specific foreign policy goals. Consultations on foreign policy with foreign countries take place under the mechanism of Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs). The mechanisms of FOCs exist with all countries. For the preparation for FoCs, MEA obtains relevant inputs from all the concerned Ministries/Departments/Institutions on the Indian side. Ministry of External Affairs holds regular consultations with the Ministry of Home Affairs (Foreigners Division, Bureau of Immigration, Internal Security - II), investigative agencies of Government of India, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Department of Legal Affairs (Ministry of Law and Justice), State Governments concerned and other relevant

organisations. These consultations are undertaken to shape India's policies with regard to Indian Visa, extradition, OCI, Consular issues, etc.

The Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Defence have been engaging in a '2+2' format with India's partners such as the United States, Japan and Australia at senior official and/or ministerial level. On policy matters related to welfare and protection of workers going abroad, Labour and Manpower Cooperation MOUs/Agreements with Countries of Destinations (CODs) and Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement (with advanced economies), aimed at enhancing the mobility of Indian workers as well as facilitating their protection and security have been signed. These MOUs and Agreements have the provision of implementation through Joint Working Groups, comprising of representatives from both sides which meet annually, alternately in both countries and all prevailing labour and manpower related issues are discussed during these meetings. These MOUs and Agreements are finalized in consultation with concerned Ministries/Departments in the Government of India, mainly Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Skills Development and Entrepreneurship, Department of Commerce and others.

**7.16** The Committee were keen to know whether the Ministry has explored the idea of having a grand strategy that clearly spells out coherent foreign policy objectives, goals and strategy for the long run. The Ministry replied that Article 51 of the Constitution provides a statutory mandate to the Government to conduct India's foreign policy in pursuit of just and honourable relations between nations and to promote international peace and security. The primary objectives of India's foreign policy are to protect and promote India's national interests, defend territorial integrity and sovereignty and ensure peaceful, secure and stable regional and global environment that is conducive to India's growth and development.

Continuity and change have been the defining characteristics of India's foreign policy. The ends of our foreign policy are deeply intertwined with national developmental priorities. Correspondingly, the means and strategies devised to achieve those ends have been attuned such that there is maximum convergence between India's global diplomatic engagement and domestic development.

India's foreign policy adjusts to objectives, and to the evolving global environment while safeguarding core interests. In effect, India's global strategy is aimed to diversify and expand the country's political, economic and geo-strategic options to ensure that India

continues on its upward trajectory as a fast-growing inclusive economy, with a rising profile in global affairs.

The Coronavirus pandemic has delivered the greatest shock to the international system since World War II. A catastrophic health disaster triggered a series of lockdowns that have resulted in economic slowdowns and GDP contractions. The economic effects have spilled over to all sectors of life and are catalysing major socio-economic challenges. The loss of a million lives and of countless livelihoods has affected, perhaps irreversibly, an entire way of living. The geopolitical and geo-economic environments have been affected. Some trends have been accelerated and new equations have appeared.

The rise of China is the major geostrategic development of the current time. This has caused a rearrangement of the global balances of power and capacity that developed after World War II and during the Cold War. The bipolar order that prevailed during that period gave way to a unipolar system following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the USSR. A further transition is underway as this unipolar world order moves to a multipolar world order. This rearrangement, or rebalancing, is driven in part by a change in the determinants of power.

The international polity is characterized by extraordinary rates of change. The determinants of comprehensive national power are changing rapidly and include not just territory and manpower and resources but also technology, connectivity and a country's economic and business prowess. The nature of threats has changed. Conventional war has been supplemented by rising security threats from terrorism, social violence, climate change and other biological threats and other non-traditional threats. New technologies have created not just new industries but political movements.

Indian diplomatic strategy is adjusting to these changes with agility and flexibility and building capacities to maintain decisional autonomy. It is focused on a leadership role that both participates in and contributes to the emerging world order. India is deepening cooperation with old partners and allies and at the same time forging new partnerships with rising powers. It has a dynamic and proactive global strategy in a multipolar world that adjusts to alliances and convergences that are fluid and issue based. It engages simultaneously with multiple centres of gravity and capacities in an extremely complex and fast-moving global scenario.

India has rapidly grown in economic, political and military strength. It is a country with a global footprint and global footprint with transnational commerce, trade and energy linkages; increasing connectivity – physical, digital and financial; and a large diaspora. India also has well established interests and positions in global governance regimes in climate, technology, health and other global commons.

The primary spatial orientation of India's foreign policy remains its immediate neighbourhood, under the Neighbourhood First Policy. It is supported by the revitalised Act East Policy and Think West Policy that seeks to enhance our engagement in our extended neighbourhood. Prime Minister Modi's vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region – SAGAR- is directed to strengthen ties with like-minded partners to promote a rules-based order across the Indo-Pacific. India's relations with major powers have attained comprehensive strategic levels while maintaining strategic autonomy.

The pandemic has demonstrated the limitations of the existing international system. A purely economic agenda has defined globalization so far, and nations have cooperated more to balance competing individual interests, rather than advance the collective interests of all humankind. The limitations of this approach are evident. India believes that a new template of globalization, based on fairness, equality and humanity in the post-COVID world is needed. India has always been a constructive actor in shaping of such a human welfare-centric international system through initiatives such as Vaccine Maitri; by sharing developmental experience with partner countries in the Global South; undertaking humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations, particularly during the pandemic; through initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure; and by acting as a first responder and a net security provider in its diplomatic environment. India's diplomatic strategy takes into account the imperative of an Atmanirbhar Bharat that catalyzes a globalised India focussed on linking the local to the global, on becoming a nerve center of global supply chains and a manufacturing hub.

**7.17** When asked about the COVID-19 pandemic impacted our foreign policy, the Ministry submitted a detailed response. During the COVID pandemic India generated a lot of goodwill for ensuring supply of essential medicines, even while meeting its own domestic requirements. This has cemented India's reputation as the "Pharmacy of the World" and as a responsible stakeholder in global health supply chains. India has provided medical assistance in the form of

essential drugs, test kits, protection gear, etc., to over 150 countries. Medical assistance worth around 80 crore rupees was extended to over 80 countries under grants-in-aid. Our other efforts in this area have included: Grant of clearance to commercial consignments of about 56 crore hydroxychloroquine tablets and about 154.4 crore tablets of paracetamol, when these items were restricted for export; Medical and early responder missions across the world including Operation Sanjeevani to deliver 6.2 tonnes of essential medicines and hospital consumables to the Maldives; Deployment of rapid response medical teams to help Maldives, Kuwait, Mauritius and Comoros deal with the pandemic; **Mission SAGAR**, under which an Indian Naval Ship *Kesari* was deployed to Maldives, Mauritius, Madagascar, Comoros and Seychelles to deliver Corona virus related assistance – this was in consonance with the Prime Minister’s vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR). Messages of appreciation to PM from leaders around the world bear testimony to the effectiveness of our Health Diplomacy.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have organised a number of online training programmes for COVID-19 testing, clinical practices, case management, vaccine development and delivery etc. in which more than 1000 participants from Asian, South East Asian and South African countries have participated. We have also organised a training programme covering administrative and operational aspects on 19-20 January 2021 for immunization managers, cold chain officers, communication officers and data managers of the recipient countries. More than 150 experts from neighbouring countries participated in this training programme.

So far India has granted authorization for emergency use to two vaccines: ‘Covishield’ of Serum Institute of India and COVAXIN of Bharat Biotech. In addition, there are four other vaccines in different stages of clinical trial. Since the roll out of COVID-19 Vaccine in India on 16 of January 2021, we have started vaccine supplies to neighbouring and partner countries from 20 January 2021. Till 2 February, we have supplied a total of 16.1 million doses of Covishield vaccines to 17 countries in our neighbourhood and beyond. [(56 lakh doses have been supplied under grant-in aid to - Bangladesh (20 lakhs), Myanmar (15 lakhs), Nepal (10 lakhs), Bhutan (1.5 lakhs), Maldives (1lakh), Mauritius (1 lakh), Seychelles (50 thousand), Sri Lanka (5 Lakhs), Bahrain (1 lakh) and Oman (1 lakh). The rest have been supplied vaccines under contract with vaccine manufacturer Serum Institute of India (SII). Supply of vaccine is an ongoing effort.

In line with our Neighbourhood First Policy, the Prime Minister hosted a video conference of SAARC leaders. He also encouraged early convening of the G-20 Virtual Summit. He later attended the NAM Summit and the Global Vaccine Summit. The thrust of the Prime Minister's interventions in these fora has been on calling for better multilateral response to global crises, and reform of multilateral cooperation by putting people at the center of our collective efforts. We have extensively used the virtual mode to sustain communication with our friends and partners.

India also depicted its resilience as a nation when it commenced operations under Vande Bharat Mission (VBM) on May 7, 2020 to facilitate the return of stranded Indian nationals abroad in a phased manner. With the launch of the Vande Bharat Mission, the massive whole of Government of India effort to respond to the Covid-19 situation entered a new phase. The Vande Bharat Mission is the largest and most complex exercise ever undertaken by the government in close coordination involving MEA and Ministries of Civil Aviation, Home Affairs, Health & Family Welfare as well as the concerned State governments. Since then, more than 4.2 million Indians have returned so far under 9 VBM Phases with 8240 Air India flights and 9115 chartered and 'Air Bubble' flights. Of this, 4.7 lakh have entered India by land from Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. India also facilitated evacuation of 110,000 foreign national of 120 countries stranded in India during Covid. This exercise carried out in close coordination with state governments at the height of the Covid pandemic lockdown. This seamless exercise earned India enormous goodwill. Covid 19 crisis has indicated our long held belief that global cooperation is imperative for tackling crisis of this magnitude. Therefore, rebalancing multilateralism is necessary to ensure coordinated responses to crisis that impact humanity.

Ministry of External Affairs made a major effort to respond to this fast-changing and complex situation. Multiple challenges have had to be dealt with on an emergency basis. A simultaneous effort has been made, in these very difficult circumstances, to be a responsible member of the international community and take a far-sighted view that will stand us in good stead in the post-pandemic world. Our policies and our actions are guided by our civilizational ethos and our heritage that places humanity at the centre of global prosperity and cooperation and of a responsible international citizenship.



India's role as a "pharmacy of the world" has come into sharp focus during this crisis. India also acted as a responsible international actor during the crisis by providing Covid-related medical supplies to over 154 countries, more than half of which were grants to our partners in the developing world. These included medications such as Hydroxychloroquine and Paracetamol. These supplies were transported in spite of lockdowns and logistical challenges. In line with the PM's vision of SAGAR, Indian Navy conducted large-scale humanitarian operations, Mission SAGAR I, II and III to extend critical humanitarian support to our partners battling COVID in our extended neighbourhood. As a part of these missions, essential medical supplies, food items and rapid response teams have been sent to Maldives, Mauritius, Madagascar, Comoros Seychelles, Sudan, Eritrea, South Sudan, Djibouti, Vietnam and Cambodia.

Development and production of Covid vaccines in India, and their export highlighted India's position as a responsible and reliable stakeholder in global health supply chains and as a responsible global citizen. They also focused attention on the capacities of India's biopharmaceutical sector. In 2021, India has already supplied doses of Made in India vaccines to Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Maldives, Mauritius, Oman, Bahrain, Seychelles, Egypt, Morocco, Afghanistan as well as partners in the Caribbean. The supplies have been made under grant assistance as well as on a commercial basis. India's vaccine manufacturers have partnered with international organisations such as GAVI that will make available doses of vaccines for Africa and UN health workers.

The Ministry adapted with speed and scale to the challenges imposed to diplomatic communication and interaction imposed by the disruptions to travel. Corona-era diplomacy using virtual tools was rapidly activated. Multilateral, plurilateral and bilateral meetings have taken place at all levels using virtual platforms and voice communications. The Prime Minister participated in several virtual multilateral and plurilateral summit level meetings including G20, SAARC, UN General Assembly, BRICS Summit, the Vaccine Summit, SCO Summit, and the ASEAN-India Summit.

During this period, the Ministry has been cognizant of the needs of our diaspora and has stood by them throughout this difficult period, as evidenced by the success of the Vande Bharat Mission (VBM). VBM has been the largest such repatriation operation ever conducted.

This saw safe international travel of more than 3 million stranded & distressed people during global shutdowns in the wake of the pandemic.

**7.18** On being asked about the details in which the MEA is utilizing external expertise in the form of subject specialist consultants in the various divisions of the Ministry along with their area of expertise and years of service, the Ministry stated they have engaged Consultants as subject matter experts or Knowledge Partners, including experienced retired government officials as well as from the open market. At present, there are 41 such Consultants working with the Ministry. The Consultants function as subject matter experts who provide value addition to the Ministry with their technical inputs on issues of importance, for specific assignments and/or projects.

**7.20** According to the Ministry, the key principles shaping and guiding Indian foreign policy are to pursue pragmatic and outcome oriented engagements, build influence in key global forums, creation of mutually beneficial, people oriented regional frameworks for stability and prosperity, working out reformed multilateralism and globalization and strengthening bonds of Indian Diaspora with their homeland. The Ministry has also informed that there is no single overarching and formalized strategic document that can delineate a roadmap for India's foreign policy apparatus and that the underlying principles of our diplomatic strategy are long established and enduring. The Ministry continually assesses and refines its diplomatic stance and policies in response to evolving global challenges. India's positions on relevant issues and its interests, in the context of these principles, have been articulated through various platforms. The Committee observe that frequent consultations are held with concerned Ministries/Departments and other organizations of the Government while formulating specific foreign policy goals. The Committee also note that mechanism of Foreign Office consultations exists with all

**countries for consultations on foreign policy. The Committee also note that the Ministry is utilizing subject specialist consultants.**

**Over the years, the Committee have been encouraging the Ministry to articulate India's grand strategy encompassing short term, medium term and long term objectives of our foreign policy. The Committee are unimpressed by the Ministry's justification for not having a grand strategy. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation that the Ministry of External Affairs should take all necessary steps to spell out a coherent and balanced Grand Foreign Policy strategy for India on priority basis.**

*(Recommendation No. 40)*

**7.21 Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted all aspects of world politics. The Committee are pleased to note that during the COVID pandemic, India generated a lot of goodwill for ensuring supply of essential medicines, even while meeting its own domestic requirements and has thereby cemented India's reputation as the "Pharmacy of the World" and as a responsible stakeholder in global health supply chains. India has also provided medical assistance in the form of essential drugs, test kits, protection gear, etc., to over 150 countries. In wake of this pandemic, the Government of India launched the Vande Bharat Mission that brought back 4.2 million Indians under 9 VBM Phases with 8240 Air India flights and 9115 chartered and 'Air Bubble' flights. It was the largest and most complex exercise ever undertaken by the Government in close coordination with MEA and Ministries of Civil Aviation, Home Affairs, Health & Family Welfare as well as the concerned State governments. Multilateral, plurilateral and bilateral meetings have taken place at all levels using virtual platforms and voice communications.**

The Committee are extremely impressed by the resilience shown by the Ministry of External Affairs in responding to the uncertainties that accompanied the Covid 19 pandemic and related restrictions. India acted as a responsible international actor during the crisis by providing Covid-related medical supplies to more than 150 countries, standing for its Diasporic Community and increasing use of innovative tools for conducting diplomacy and interaction with foreign governments. The Committee applaud the Ministry's efforts in responding valiantly during such uncertain times and are hopeful that India would continue to advocate reformed multilateralism and globalization based on principles of fairness, equality and humanity in the post-Covid world.

*(Recommendation No. 41)*

NEW DELHI  
16 March, 2021  
25 Phalguna, 1942 (Saka)

P.P.CHAUDHARY,  
Chairperson,  
Committee on External Affairs

**MINUTES OF THE EIGHTEENTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2020-21) HELD ON 24 FEBRUARY, 2021**

The Committee sat on Friday, the 24 February, 2021 from 1100 hrs. to 1300 hrs and from 1330 hrs to 1550 hrs. in Room No. 53, Parliament House, New Delhi.

**PRESENT**

**Shri P.P. Chaudhary – Chairperson**

**MEMBERS**

**LOK SABHA**

2. Kunwar Pushpendra Singh Chandel
3. Shri Dileshwar Kamait
4. Smt Meenakshi Lekhi
5. Shri P.C.Mohan
6. Shri Ritesh Pandey
7. Smt Navneet Ravi Rana

**RAJYA SABHA**

8. Shri K.J. Alphons
9. Shri P.Chidambaram
10. Shri Swapan Dasgupta
11. Shri Brijlal

**SECRETARIAT**

- |                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Shri P.C. Koul  | Additional Secretary |
| 2. Dr. Ram Raj Rai | Director             |

**REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>
1.	Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla	Foreign Secretary
2.	Ms. Nagma M. Mallick	Additional Secretary (Africa)
3.	Shri Vinay Kumar	Additional Secretary (AD)

4.	Shri Arun K. Chatterjee	Additional Secretary (AD)
5.	Shri Naveen Srivastava	Joint Secretary (East Asia)
6.	Shri Raj Kumar Goyal	Additional Secretary &FA
7.	Shri Jayant Khobragade	Joint Secretary (PSP&CPO)
8.	Shri Sevala Naik Mude	Joint Secretary (C&WA)
9.	Shri Sanjay Rana	Joint Secretary (UNP)
10.	Shri G. Balasubramanian	Joint Secretary (AD)
11.	Shri Vipul	Joint Secretary (Gulf)
12.	Shri Anil Kumar Rai	Joint Secretary (Parl & Coord)
13.	Shri Abbagani Ramu	Joint Secretary (OIA-I)
14.	Shri Alok Ranjan Jha	Joint Secretary (Estt.&GEM)
15.	Shri Devesh Uttam	Joint Secretary (CPV)

2. Before the Sitting commenced the Chairperson apprised the Members about Parliamentary Research and Information Support to Member (PRISM) a research service initiative of Lok Sabha Secretariat and advised them to utilize it for all their research and information requirements. The Chairperson, thereafter, asked the Secretariat to share the coordinates of PRISM with the Members so as to enable them to avail its services right away. The Chairperson then directed that the witness be ushered in.

3. The witness took their seats, the Chairperson welcomed the Members of the Committee and the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs to the Sitting of the Committee convened to take evidence of the representatives of the Ministry on Demands for Grants of the Ministry for the year 2021-22. He also drew attention of the representatives of the Ministry to Direction 55 (1) of Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha. In his opening remarks, the Chairperson delved upon the overall budgetary allocations made to the Ministry of External Affairs during BE 2021-22 as well as RE 2020-21. While acknowledging the enhanced allocation made to MEA in absolute terms, the Chairperson emphasized that the budget allocated to MEA was highly incommensurate with country's expanding global engagement and footprint.

3. Thereafter, the Foreign Secretary presented a broad overview of the Ministry's budget, milestones achieved in the ongoing Fiscal and the challenges faced in project implementation

abroad. The Members raised pertinent questions on various issues related to the mandate of the Ministry which *inter-alia* included; demand-allocation differential; reduction in the MEA's budget *vis-a-vis* the Government's overall budget; impact of Covid-19 on conduct of India's foreign policy in general and implementation of projects abroad in particular; coordination with line Ministries; fluctuating nature of demands and allocations to various countries under developmental cooperation; criteria for project selection under ITEC programmes; arbitrariness in budgetary allocation for the diaspora functions of the Ministry; strategy to counter increasing Chinese connectivity projects in our neighbourhood; under-staffing in vital departments & Missions/Posts abroad; current status of the construction of Nalanda University and South Asian University Projects; and imperative of a grand strategy for India's Foreign Policy, etc.

4. Responding to the queries raised by the Members of the Committee, the Foreign Secretary gave detailed replies related to rationalization of expenditure; closer coordination with the Ministry of Finance; monitoring mechanism for implementation of international projects; restructuring of organizational structure of MEA, creation of new and relevant budgetary heads; and welfare schemes and programmes dealing with Indian Diaspora. Before the Sitting concluded the Chairperson directed that the Ministry should furnish written replies on the various points raised by the Members during discussion to the Secretariat at the earliest.

The witnesses then withdrew.

*The Committee then adjourned.*

A verbatim record of the proceedings has been kept.

**MINUTES OF THE TWENTIETH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2020-21) HELD ON 16 MARCH, 2021**

The Committee sat on Tuesday, 16 March, 2021 from 1200 hrs. to 1215 hrs. in Committee Room No. '1', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

**1. Shri P.P. Chaudhary, Chairperson**

**Lok Sabha**

2. Shri Dileshwar Kamait
3. Shri Suresh Kumar Kashyap
4. Smt. Preneet Kaur
5. Smt. Meenakashi Lekhi
6. Smt. Goddeti Madhavi
7. Smt. Poonam Mahajan
8. Dr. K. C. Patel

**Rajya Sabha**

9. Smt. Jaya Bachchan
10. Shri Brij Lal

**Secretariat**

- |    |                 |   |                      |
|----|-----------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. | Shri P.C. Koul  | - | Additional Secretary |
| 2. | Dr. Ram Raj Rai | - | Director             |

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 Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2021-22.
4. The Chairperson invited the Members to offer their suggestions, if any, for incorporation in the draft Report. The Members suggested some minor modifications. After deliberations the Committee adopted the draft Report with these minor 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.*



**Countries with no Resident Indian Missions or Posts**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Country</b>
1.	Albania
2.	Andorra
3.	Antigua and Barbuda
4.	Bahamas
5.	Barbados
6.	Belize
7.	Benin
8.	Bolivia
9.	Bosnia and Herzegovina
10.	Burundi
11.	Central African Republic
12.	Comoros
13.	Costa Rica
14.	Dominica
15.	Ecuador
16.	El Salvador
17.	Gabon
18.	Gambia
19.	Georgia
20.	Grenada
21.	Haiti
22.	Honduras
23.	Kiribati
24.	Latvia
25.	Lesotho
26.	Liechtenstein
27.	Lithuania
28.	Luxembourg
29.	Marshall Islands
30.	Micronesia
31.	Monaco
32.	Montenegro
33.	Nauru
34.	Nicaragua
35.	North Macedonia
36.	Palau
37.	Republic of Moldova
38.	Saint Kitts and Nevis
39.	Saint Lucia

40.	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
41.	Samoa
42.	San Marino
43.	Solomon Islands
44.	Timor-Leste
45.	Tonga
46.	Tuvalu
47.	Uruguay
48.	Vanuatu

**Region-wise list of Missions/Posts**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Name of Mission</b>
<b>AFRICA</b>	
1	Embassy of India, Abidjan
2	Embassy of India, Addis Ababa
3	Embassy of India, Algiers
4	Embassy of India, Antananarivo
5	Embassy of India, Asmara
6	Embassy of India, Bamako
7	Embassy of India, Lome
8	Embassy of India, Brazzaville
9	Embassy of India, Cairo
10	Embassy of India, Conakry
11	Embassy of India, Dakar
12	Embassy of India, Djibouti
13	Embassy of India, Freetown
14	Embassy of India, Juba
15	Embassy of India, Khartoum
16	Embassy of India, Kigali
17	Embassy of India, Kinshasa
18	Embassy of India, Luanda
19	Embassy of India, Malabo
20	Embassy of India, Monrovia
21	Embassy of India, Niamey
22	Embassy of India, Nouakchott
23	Embassy of India, Ouagadougou
24	Embassy of India, Rabat
25	Embassy of India, Sao Tome
26	Embassy of India, Tripoli
27	Embassy of India, Tunis
28	Embassy of India, Yaoundé
29	Embassy of India, N'djamena
30	High Commission of India, Abuja
31	High Commission of India, Accra
32	High Commission of India, Dar Es Salaam
33	High Commission of India, Gaborone
34	High Commission of India, Harare
35	High Commission of India, Kampala
36	High Commission of India, Lilongwe
37	High Commission of India, Lusaka
38	High Commission of India, Maputo
39	High Commission of India, Mbabane

40	High Commission of India, Nairobi
41	High Commission of India, Port Louis
42	High Commission of India, Pretoria
43	High Commission of India, Victoria (Mahe)
44	High Commission of India, Windhoek
45	Consulate General of India, Cape Town
46	Consulate General of India, Durban
47	Consulate General of India, Johannesburg
48	Consulate General of India, Saint Denis
49	Consulate General of India, Zanzibar
50	Assistant High Commission of India, Mombasa
51	Office of High Commission of India, Lagos
<b>ASIA</b>	
52	Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi
53	Embassy of India, Amman
54	Embassy of India, Ashgabat
55	Embassy of India, Astana (Nur-Sultan)
56	Embassy of India, Baghdad
57	Embassy of India, Manama, Bahrain
58	Embassy of India, Bangkok
59	Embassy of India, Baku
60	Embassy of India, Beijing
61	Embassy of India, Beirut
62	Embassy of India, Bishkek
63	Embassy of India, Damascus
64	Embassy of India, Doha
65	Embassy of India, Dushanbe
66	Embassy of India, Hanoi
67	Embassy of India, Jakarta
68	Embassy of India, Kabul
69	Embassy of India, Kathmandu
70	Embassy of India, Kuwait City
71	Embassy of India, Manila
72	Embassy of India, Muscat
73	Embassy of India, Phnom Penh
74	Embassy of India, Pyong Yang
75	Embassy of India, Riyadh
76	Embassy of India, Sanaá
77	Embassy of India, Seoul
78	Embassy of India, Tashkent
79	Embassy of India, Tehran
80	Embassy of India, Tel Aviv
81	Embassy of India, Thimphu
82	Embassy of India, Tokyo
83	Embassy of India, Ulaan Baataar

84	Embassy of India, Vientiane
85	Embassy of India, Yangon
86	Embassy of India, Yerevan
87	High Commission of India, Bandar Seri Begawan
88	High Commission of India, Colombo
89	High Commission of India, Dhaka
90	High Commission of India, Islamabad
91	High Commission of India, Kuala Lumpur
92	High Commission of India, Male
93	High Commission of India, Singapore
94	ASEAN Mission in Jakarta
95	Consulate General of India, Bali
96	Consulate General of India, Bandar Abbas
97	Consulate General of India, Birgunj
98	Consulate General of India, Chiangmai
99	Consulate General of India, Dubai
100	Consulate General of India, Erbil
101	Consulate General of India, Guangzhou
102	Consulate General of India, Hambantota
103	Consulate General of India, Heart
104	Consulate General of India, Ho Chi Minh City
105	Consulate General of India, Hong Kong
106	Consulate General of India, Jaffna
107	Consulate General of India, Jalalabad
108	Consulate General of India, Jeddah
109	Consulate General of India, Kandahar
110	Consulate General of India, Mandalay
111	Consulate General of India, Mazar e Sharif
112	Consulate General of India, Medan
113	Consulate General of India, Osaka Kobe
114	Consulate General of India, Phuentsholing
115	Consulate General of India, Shanghai
116	Consulate General of India, Sittwe
117	Consulate General of India, Vladivostok
118	Consulate General of India, Zahidan
119	Assistant High Commission of India, Chittagong
120	Assistant High Commission of India, Khulna
121	Assistant High Commission of India, Kandy
122	Assistant High Commission of India, Rajshahi
123	Assistant High Commission of India, Sylhet
124	Representative Office of India, Almaty
125	Representative Office of India, Ramallah
<b>EUROPE</b>	
126	Embassy of India, Ankara
127	Embassy of India, Athens

128	Embassy of India, Belgrade
129	Embassy of India, Berlin
130	Embassy of India, Berne
131	Embassy of India, Bratislava
132	Embassy of India, Brussels
133	Embassy of India, Bucharest
134	Embassy of India, Budapest
135	Embassy of India, Copenhagen
136	Embassy of India, Dublin
137	Embassy of India, The Hague
138	Embassy of India, Helsinki
139	Embassy of India, Kyiv
140	Embassy of India, Lisbon
141	Embassy of India, Ljubljana
142	Embassy of India, Madrid
143	Embassy of India, Minsk
144	Embassy of India, Moscow
145	Embassy of India, Oslo
146	Embassy of India, Paris
147	Embassy of India, Prague
148	Embassy of India, Reykjavik
149	Embassy of India, Rome
150	Embassy of India, Sofia
151	Embassy of India, Stockholm
152	Embassy of India, Vienna
153	Embassy of India, Warsaw
154	Embassy of India, Zagreb
155	High Commission of India, Nicosia
156	High Commission of India, London
157	High Commission of India, Valletta, Malta
158	Permanent Mission of India, Geneva
159	Permanent Delegation of India, Paris
160	Consulate General of India, Birmingham
161	Consulate General of India, Edinburgh
162	Consulate General of India, Frankfurt
163	Consulate General of India, Geneva
164	Consulate General of India, Hamburg
165	Consulate General of India, Istanbul
166	Consulate General of India, Milan
167	Consulate General of India, Munich
168	Consulate General of India, St Petersburg
<b>NORTH AMERICA</b>	
169	Embassy of India, Guatemala City
170	Embassy of India, Havana
171	Embassy of India, Mexico City

172	Embassy of India, Panama City
173	Embassy of India, Washington
174	High Commission of India, Kingston
175	High Commission of India, Ottawa
176	High Commission of India, Port of Spain
177	Permanent Mission of India, New York
178	Consulate General of India, Atlanta
179	Consulate General of India, Chicago
180	Consulate General of India, Houston
181	Consulate General of India, New York
182	Consulate General of India, San Francisco
183	Consulate General of India, Toronto
184	Consulate General of India, Vancouver
<b>OCEANIA</b>	
185	High Commission of India, Canberra
186	High Commission of India, Port Moresby
187	High Commission of India, Suva
188	High Commission of India, Wellington
189	Consulate General of India, Melbourne
190	Consulate General of India, Perth
191	Consulate General of India, Sydney
<b>SOUTH AMERICA</b>	
192	Embassy of India, Bogota
193	Embassy of India, Brasilia
194	Embassy of India, Buenos Aires
195	Embassy of India, Caracas
196	Embassy of India, Lima
197	Embassy of India, Paramaribo
198	Embassy of India, Santiago
199	High Commission of India, George Town
200	Consulate General of India, Sao Paulo

<b>List of Indian Mission/Post Integrated with Passport Seva System</b>	
<b>S No.</b>	<b>Mission Name</b>
1	United Kingdom - London
2	United Kingdom - Birmingham
3	United Kingdom - Edinburgh
4	USA - New York
5	USA - Washington DC
6	USA - Atlanta
7	USA - San Francisco
8	USA - Houston
9	USA - Chicago
10	Saudi Arabia - Riyadh
11	Saudi Arabia - Jeddah
12	Oman - Muscat
13	Kuwait - Kuwait City
14	Bahrain - Manama
15	UAE - Dubai
16	UAE - Abu Dhabi
17	Qatar - Doha
18	Singapore - Singapore
19	Thailand - Bangkok
20	Malaysia - Kuala Lumpur
21	Canada - Toronto
22	Canada - Vancouver
23	Canada - Ottawa
24	Sri Lanka-Colombo
25	Australia - Sydney
26	Australia - Melbourne
27	Australia - Perth
28	Australia - Canberra
29	China - Beijing
30	Spain - Madrid
31	France - Paris
32	New Zealand-Wellington
33	Rwanda-Kigali
34	Sri Lanka-Kandy
35	Russian Federation-Moscow
36	China-Hong Kong



37	Mexico-Mexico city
38	Italy-Milan
39	Russian Federation-Vladivostok
40	Uganda-Kampala
41	Russian Federation-St. Petersburg
42	Myanmar-Yangon
43	Switzerland-Geneva
44	Sri Lanka-Hambantota
45	Nigeria-Lagos
46	Vietnam-Ho Chin Minh City
47	China-Shanghai
48	Brunei Darussalam - Bandar Seri Begawan
49	Indonesia-Jakarta
50	Indonesia-Bali
51	Japan-Tokyo
52	Botswana-Gaborone
53	Italy-Rome
54	Greece-Athens
55	Switzerland-Berne
56	South Africa-Cape Town
57	Philippines -Manila
58	South Africa- Pretoria
59	Lebanon-Beirut
60	Bomako-Mali
61	Eritrea-Asmara
62	Germany-Berlin
63	Austria-Vienna
64	Turkey-Istanbul
65	Bulgaria-Sofia
66	Republic of Congo-Brazzaville
67	Poland-Warsaw
68	Finland-Helsinki
69	Denmark-Copenhagen
70	Portugal-Lisbon
71	Democratic Republic of Congo - Kinshasa
72	Sri lanka-Jaffna
73	Cameroon-Yaounde
74	Cyprus-Nicosia
75	China-Guangzhou

76	Ireland-Dublin
77	Morocco-Rabat
78	Turkey-Ankara
79	Germany-Munich
80	Malta-Valletta
81	Tanzania-Dar es-Salaam
82	Argentina-Buenos Aires
83	Brazil-Brasilia
84	Armenia-Yerevan
85	Nigeria-Abuja
86	Tanzania-Zanzibar
87	South Korea - Seoul
88	Colombia - Bogota
89	Kenya-Nairobi
90	Vietnam - Hanoi
91	Germany-Frankfurt
92	Slovakia-Bratislava
93	Cote Divoire - Abidjan
94	Jordan - Amman
95	Netherlands - The Hague
96	Malawi - Lilongwe
97	Jamaica - Kingston
98	Slovenia-Ljubljana
99	Indonesia - Medan
100	Israel- Tel Aviv
101	Azerbaijan - Baku
102	Angola-Luanda
103	Ghana-Accra
104	Germany - Hamburg
105	Belgium - Brussels
106	Mongolia - Ulaanbaatar
107	Mozambique - Maputo
108	Senegal - Dakar
109	Romania - Bucharest
110	Hungary - Budapest
111	Iceland - Reykjavik
112	Sweden - Stockholm
113	Cambodia - Phnom Penh
114	Fiji - Suva

115	Japan - Osaka Koebe
116	Panama - Panama
117	Ethiopia - Addis Ababa
118	Trinidad And Tobago - Port of Spain
119	France- Saint Denis
120	Chile - Santiago
121	Madagascar - Antananarivo
122	Equatorial Guinea-Malabo
123	Kyrgyzstan - Bishkek
124	Myanmar - Mandalay
125	Kenya - Mombasa
126	Czech Republic - Prague
127	Burkina Faso - Ouagadougou
128	Laos - Vientiane
129	South Africa-Durban
130	Guyana - Georgetown
131	South Sudan - Juba
132	Suriname - Paramaribo
133	South Africa - Johannesburg
134	Maldives-Male
135	Bangladesh - Dhaka
136	Guatemala - Guatemala City
137	Zambia - Lusaka
138	Seychelles - Victoria-Mahe
139	Kazakhstan - Astana
140	Belarus - Minsk
141	Sudan - Khartoum
142	Peru - Lima
143	Brazil - Sao Paulo
144	Iraq - Baghdad
145	Egypt-Cairo
146	Djibouti -Djibouti
147	Turkmenistan - Ashgabat
148	Serbia – Belgrade
149	Iraq - Erbil
150	Algeria-Algiers
151	Namibia - Windhoek
152	Papua New Guinea - Port Moresby
153	Niger - Niamey

**Major programmes organized by RIS from 2018 to 2021**

**2021**

- Launch of Special Issue of Development Cooperation Review on ‘Disaster Risk Management’
- Virtual Panel Discussion on "Joe Biden Administration"
- Global Trends in Triangular Co-operation with India – Emerging Policy Choices for Enhanced Collaboration with Civil Society Organisations
- STIP Forum Lecture Digital Payments and QR Code: What Way Forward
- Round Table on Pharmaceutical Project “Public Policy and Economic Development: Case Study of Indian Pharmaceutical Industry

**2020**

- India and Argentina in the New World Order
- Post-Pandemic Indian Ocean Regional Economic Cooperation
- ‘Future Roadmap for Global Economic Recovery: Reflections on G20 Riyadh Summit and Beyond
- Global Trade Governance and Multilateral Framework
- COVID-19-Wakeup Call for Better Cooperation between Science and Policy-Making
- ASEAN-India Partnership in the Post-Covid-19
- Deepening Cooperation in IBSA: Perspectives from Key Sectors
- ‘COVID-19 and Mental Health Response in South Asia: Opportunities for Learning and Cooperation’
- B-20 Global Dialogue in India
- WTO @25 Series
- Nobel Prize for CRISPR
- The Multilateral Response to Covid-19 – Perspectives from South Asia
- India-Sri Lanka Relations
- Signing Ceremony of the MoU on Bilateral Dialogue Between ICWA, RIS, KNDA, and KIEP
- Partnerships to Foster Decent Work for Sustainable Development
- Fifth BNPTT Meeting
- 31st STIP Forum Lecture

- Webinar on Priorities for India's G20 Presidency in 2022: Role of Engagement Groups
- Localising Sustainable Development Goals – Perspectives from North East India
- SDG Conclave 2020 – Partnerships, Cooperation and Development of North Eastern States
- Development Banks and Policy Choices for India
- Panel Discussion on 'Capturing Economic Value in India'
- Panel Discussion on 'Capturing Economic Value in India'
- Webinar on Digital Currencies and Crypto-Currencies, 7 May 2020
- RIS-PRIA-NIUA and European Union National Conference on 'Future of Urban Sanitation in India' 27-28 February 2020
- Webinar on the theme, "India-Vietnam S&T Cooperation: Prospects and Perspectives"
- Expanding South-South Cooperation in an Interdependent World
- Webinar on the theme, "India-Vietnam S&T Cooperation: Prospects and Perspectives"
- Expanding South-South Cooperation in an Interdependent World
- Strengthening Cooperation Initiatives between India and Côte d'Ivoire
- Roundtable discussion on Uzbekistan-India: New horizons of strategic partnership
- Webinar on 'Revisiting Economic Cooperation in BIMSTEC in Post-COVID-19
- Webinar on 'Indonesia's Exit Plan and Potential for Bilateral and Regional Cooperation'
- Seminar on Traditional Medicine in India and China
- Special Talk on 'Role of Energy Efficiency in Effective Energy Transition'
- Roundtable on 'Social Enterprises and Social Stock Exchange - the Indian Scenario'
- Breakfast Seminar on 'Medical Devices Sector in India: Regulations, Local Manufacturing and Trade'
- Making of India's STIP Policy 2020
- Book Release Webinar on 'Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of Genetically Modified Crops: Global Implications'
- Consultation on Access, Equity and Inclusion (AEI) and Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI)
- Webinar on STI for SDGs
- South Asian Cooperation for Accelerating Recovery from COVID-19 and Building Back Better
- India's Strategic Identity
- Meeting of the Network of Southern Think-Tanks (NeST)
- ASEAN-India: Strengthening Partnership in the Post COVID Era
- ITEC Capacity Building Programme on Science Diplomacy
- ITEC Capacity Building Programme on "International Economic Issues and Development Policy"
- RIS-GDC-SEWA Fellowship Programme on Women's Economic Empowerment being conducted at Ahmedabad and Delhi
- RIS Online Internship and presentations by Interns

## Webinar on 'Indonesia's Exit Plan and Potential for Bilateral and Regional Cooperation'

### **2019**

- 11<sup>th</sup> Delhi Dialogue: Advancing Partnership in Indo-Pacific
- Third Annual Developing Country Forum 'South-South Cooperation in International Tax Matters'
- Regional Policy Dialogue on "Harnessing the Potential of Regional Cooperation for Sustainable Development in South Asia"
- Advances in Coastal Research with special reference to Indo-Pacific
- Plenary Session on "ASEAN in the Indo-Pacific, Opportunities and Challenges for Future Economic Development"
- ITEC Programme on Learning South-South Cooperation
- New Opportunities & New Partnerships Post-BAPA+40: Delhi Process Fifth Conference on South-South and Triangular Cooperation
- High-Level Political Forum 2019
- Third ASEAN-India Workshop on Blue Economy
- Sustainable Development Goals
- RIS Co-hosts Sixth IBSA Academic Forum in Kochi
- Seminar on Digital Economy, e-Commerce and the WTO
- India-Africa Partnership in Agriculture
- Special Session on Artificial Intelligence
- Trilateral Highway and Its Implication on India's Northeast Region: Interaction with Tamu Border Authority
- RIS Seminar on Act East: India's Trade at Northeastern Border
- India-Central Asia: Traditional Ties and Development Partnership
- Strengthening India-Africa Economic Relations
- RIS Breakfast Seminar Series
- ASEAN Indo-Pacific Outlook and India
- RIS at BAPA+40 : Special focus on RIS Volume on Raul Prebisch and Development Strategy
- An Interactive Session with H.E Ms. ReginahMakgaboMahaule, Deputy Minister of International Relations, South Africa
- Reform Multilateral Bodies to Reflect Present Global Reality: Ambassador Anil Sooklal
- Interactive Session with Ms. Armida SalsiahAlisjahbana, Executive Secretary, UN-ESCAP

### **2018**

- South Asia Comes Together for Implementing SDGs
- SACEPS hosts Policy Dialogue on Unlocking the Potential of Regional Cooperation in South Asia
- NeST Invited at Paris Peace Forum

- Policy Dialogue on Act East and North East
- India, Afghanistan and Iran Partnership: Understanding the Emerging Contours
- Protecting the Global Trading System and the Role for Multilateralism
- De-briefing Session on G-20
- South-South Civil Society Conclave
- Learning South-South Cooperation
- Delhi Dialogue X: Strengthening India-ASEAN Maritime Cooperation
- The Road to BAPA+40 through Delhi Process IV
- Interactive Session with H.E. Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President-elect of the United Nations General Assembly
- Second ASEAN-India Workshop on Blue Economy
- Role of India in Global Order
- Pre-BIMSTEC Summit High Level Consultative Meeting
- RIS Participation at HLPF, 2018
- New Course on Trade and Sustainability
- New Course on Sustainable Development Goals
- AIIB Lead-up Events and Host Country Seminars
- RIS Engagement with 3rd AIIB Annual Meeting
- Third EAS Conference on Maritime Security and Cooperation
- Seminar on ASEAN-India Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs)
- Consultation Meeting on Delhi Dialogue X with ASEAN HoMs
- Launching Science Diplomacy Programme
- Panel Discussion on South African Presidency of IORA and BRICS: Issues Before Summits
- Infrastructure at the Centrestage of India's Priorities
- Launching of 'Development Cooperation Review'
- SDGs targets at End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Panel Discussion on 'South African Presidency of IORA'
- 5<sup>th</sup> Roundtable of the ASEAN-India Network of Think-Tanks (AINTT)
- International Conference on "ASEAN-India @ 25: Retrospection and the Way Ahead"
- Discussion Meeting on 'Research Priorities for the IOR Region'
- International Economic Issues and Development Policy (IEIDP)
- ITEC Capacity Building Programme on Science Diplomacy

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**Key publications brought out by RIS from 2018 to 2020**

**2021**

**RIS DISCUSSION PAPER**

**#260 Inflation Targeting: Monetary Policy, Growth and Inflation** by Manmohan Agarwal and Ammu Lavanya Discussion

**2020**

**REPORTS**

**Deepening Cooperation In IBSA: Perspectives From Key Sectors, RIS, New Delhi, 2020**  
**China's Policy Initiatives For National And Global Promotion of TCM, RIS, New Delhi, 2020**

**RIS DISCUSSION PAPERS**

**#259 Bulk Drug Industry in India: Challenges and Prospects** by T. C. James

**#258 Strategising India's Exports** by Dammu Ravi

**RIS POLICY BRIEFS**

**#101 Price Discovery becomes Robust in Gas, Electricity and Coal Markets in India in Post-Covid 19 Reforms** by Subhomoy Bhattacharjee

**#100 G20 Sherpa and Finance Tracks: Commonalities and Opportunities** by Priyadarshi Dash, Sonal Garg & Sabhya Rai

**#99 STI for SDGs: G20 Partnership and National Imperatives** by Sachin Chaturvedi Sabyasachi Saha

**DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION REVIEW**

Volume: 3 No: 2: October, 2020

**G20 DIGEST**

Volume: 2 No: 2, January, 2021

Volume 2, Special Issue, PP 1-21, October, 2020

**FIDC DISCUSSION PAPER**

**#3: India-Africa Development Partnership Dynamics**

**IORA PUBLICATION**

Blue Economy Insight, November, 2020

**AIC PUBLICATION**

Asean-India Development and Cooperation Report 2021

**REPORT**



**Medical Devices Industry in India Local Manufacturing and Trade**, RIS, New Delhi, 2020  
**Global Governance and Economic Cooperation: Opportunities and Challenges for Developing Countries**, RIS, New Delhi, 2020  
**E-Commerce Issues at the WTO Discussions and in India**, RIS, New Delhi, 2020  
**Southern Perspectives on Science Diplomacy**, RIS, New Delhi, 2020

#### **RIS DISCUSSION PAPERS**

- #257: Development of ‘TrueNat’ Innovation System in India for Detection of Tuberculosis and COVID-19: A System Based Perspective** by Nidhi Singh and Kirti Tyagi
- #256: Negotiating Bretton Woods in Hindsight** by Manmohan Agarwal
- #255: What Ails Global Multilateralism: Prognosis and Way Forward** by Augustine Peter
- #254: Need for Setting Up of a New Development Bank** by G. A. Tadas
- #253: The Indian Manufacturing Sector, Finances and Growth** by Manmohan Agarwal, Rumi Azim & Neha Betai
- #252: The Case for a Global Healthcare Partnership** by Rajeev Kher and Arun S. Nair
- #251: The IMF and Its Operation till the Breakdown in the 1970s: Implications for International Liquidity and Adjustment** by Manmohan Agarwal
- #250: India-EU Connectivity Partnership: Potential & Challenges** by Arun S. Nair
- #249: Water and Sanitation: Achievement of Large Indians States** by Manmohan Agarwal & Rimon Saha
- #248: Exchange Rate Crises: Experience of India, East Asia and Latin America** by Manmohan Agarwal & T. R. Vandana
- #247: Regime Switching, Exchange Rate Volatility and Intervention in BRICS Currency Markets** by Suman Das & Saikat Sinha Roy
- #246: The 2008 Financial Crisis and Shifts in Economic Power** by Manmohan Agarwal & Amrita Brahma
- #245: Economic Multilateralism in Peril** by Manmohan Agarwal
- #244: Surmount Challenges, Cash in New Trade Opportunities** by Dammu Ravi

#### **RIS POLICY BRIEF**

- #98 COVID-19: Economic Collapse and Recovery** by Manmohan Agarwal
- #97 Global Goals (SDGs) for post-COVID: Dealing with Reversal of Gains and Spectre of Global Poverty** by Sabyasachi Saha & Prativa Shaw
- #96 Public Goods and STI Policy** by Ravi K Srinivas
- #95 An Integrated Approach to TRIPS Flexibilities in the Post-pandemic Era** by Atul Kaushik
- #94 Access, Equity and Inclusion and Science, Technology and Innovation Policy** by Ravi K Srinivas
- #93 Global Governance of Technology and Institutional Architecture** by Sachin Chaturvedi
- #92 COVID-19 Lesson - A Time for Disruptive GPDPs** by Dr P K Anand & Mr Krishana Kumar
- #91 Crypto Currencies: Three Questions** by Prof. Manmohan Agarwal

**#90 COVID-19 Pandemic and Health System Preparedness: Pathways to Reform** *by Jaideep C Menon & Denny John*

**#89 Intellectual Property Rights and Innovation in the Times of Corona Epidemic** *by Dr Krishna Ravi Srinivas*

**#88 Robotisation of Textile Sector in China: Impact and Imperatives** *by Amit Kumar*

## **OTHER JOURNALS**

### **G20 DIGEST**

Volume: 2 Special Issue, October 2020

Volume: 2 Special Issue, October 2020

Volume: 2 No: 1; August, 2020

Volume: 1 No: 5: March-May 2020

### **SCIENCE DIPLOMACY REVIEW**

Volume: 2 No: 1: May 2020

### **ASIAN BIOTECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT REVIEW (ABDR)**

Volume: 21, 22 No: 3, 1: May 2020

### **OCCASIONAL PAPER**

South-South Cooperation: Latin American Theoretical Approaches by Gladys Lechini and María Noel Dussort, August 2020.

### **G20 LECTURE SERIES**

India's Priorities in G20 Key Points from G20 Osaka Summit, September, 2020

### **FITM POLICY BRIEF**

**#7** SDG-3 and COVID-19 Mainstreaming Traditional Medicine

**#6** AYUSH Systems and Corona Virus: Assessing R&D in Viral Diseases

## **RIS Publication (2018-19)**

### **Books and Reports**

#### **The Power of International Value Chains in the Global South**

*ITC and RIS, Geneva, 2019*

#### **Raul Prebisch and Development Strategy**

*RIS, New Delhi, 2019*

#### **Together Towards a Healthy Future: India's Partnerships in Healthcare**

*RIS, New Delhi, 2019*

#### **Act East: ASEAN-India Shared Cultural Heritage,**

*RIS, AIC, New Delhi, 2019*

#### **Southern Perspectives on Science and Technology Cooperation,**

*RIS, New Delhi, 2019*

#### **Trade and Finance for Development: Southern Perspective**

*RIS, New Delhi, 2019*

#### **South-South Cooperation: Experiences and Challenges**

*RIS, New Delhi, 2018*

#### **Recommendations for Fourth BIMSTEC Summit**

*RIS, New Delhi, 2018*

#### **Sustainable Development Goals: Perspectives from Developing Countries**

*RIS, New Delhi, 2018*

#### **South-South Cooperation: Role of Science Diplomacy**

*RIS, New Delhi, 2018*

#### **Global Perspectives on Trade and Sustainability**

*RIS, New Delhi, 2018*

#### **Ten Delhi Dialogues, ASEAN-India Centre (AIC),**

*RIS, 2018*

#### **New Quest for Mobilising Financing for Infrastructure**

*RIS, New Delhi, 2018*

#### **AIIB Annual Meeting 2018 Host Country Seminars Background Papers**

*RIS, New Delhi, 2018*

**Assessing Economic Impacts of Connectivity Corridors: An Empirical Investigation**  
*by Prabir De, Sunetra Ghatak and Durairaj Kumarasamy, 2018, RIS and AIC at RIS*

**India-Russia Relations in Global Context**  
*RIS, New Delhi, 2018*

**RIS DISCUSSION PAPERS**

- #238 Pathways for Country's Official Statistical System to Surmount Over Policy Midget *by Krishna Kumar and P. K. Anand*
- #237 Trade in Local Currency: Illustration of India's Rupee Trade with Nepal, Iran and Russia *by Priyadarshi Dash, Monica Sharma & Gulfishan Nizami*
- #236 Government's Policies and Growth of Pharmaceutical Industry in India 1947-2018: A Review *by Prasanta Kumar Ghosh*
- # 235 Is India Digitally Prepared for International Trade? *By Rashmi Banga*
- # 234 Evolving Conceptual Framework and Monitoring Mechanism for SDGs in India *by Krishna Kumar and P.K. Anand*
- # 233 A Review of R&D and Sectoral Incentives in Manufacturing in Industrialised and Emerging Economies: Lessons for 'Make in India' *by Sabyasachi Saha and Prativa Shaw*
- # 232 Achieving SDG 4 in India: Moving from Quantity to Quality Education for All *by Beena Pandey*
- # 231 The Manufacturing Sector in India *by Manmohan Agarwal*
- # 230 Forging Collaborations and Evolving Strategies for Infrastructure Development *by Garima Dhir*
- # 229 Innovation Regimes and Multilateralism: A Reflection on the Scope of New MDBs *by Sabyasachi Saha*
- # 228 Financing Infrastructure: Mobilizing Resources and Exploring New Instruments *by Priyadarshi Dash*
- # 227 Technology Development Policies in Brazil, China, India, Russia and South Africa *by Manmohan Agarwal, Amrita Brahmo and John Whalley*
- # 226 Financing Solar Energy: Lessons from Indian experience *by Amitendu Palit*
- # 225 Commonwealth and Sustainable Development Goals *by Balakrishna Pisupati*
- # 224 Commonwealth Women and Development Partnerships *by Anuradha M. Chenoy*
- # 223 A True People's Commonwealth: Towards A Common Future *by Rajesh Tandon and Kaustuv Kanti Bandyopadhyay*

**RIS POLICY BRIEFS**

- # 87 Energy Sector and Financial Markets: Opportunities for India *by Subhomoy Bhattacharjee*
- # 86 Health City Planning and Traditional Medicines: Learning from International Experiences *by Prof. T.C. James*
- # 85 Emerging Dynamics on RCEP *by V.S. Seshadri*
- # 84 The Why and How of the RCEP *by Rajeev Kher*
- # 83 RRI: An Indian Perspective (English)
- # 82 RRI: An Indian Perspective (Hindi)
- #81 Chabahar: A port too far *by Subhomoy Bhattacharjee*

#80 Chabahar Port and India by *SubhomoyBhattacharjee*

**RIS DIARY**

Volume 15 No. 1, January 2019  
Vol. 14 No. 4, October 2018  
Vol. 14 No. 3, July 2018  
Vol. 14 No. 2, April 2018

**DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION REVIEW**

Volume 1, No. 10-12, January-March 2019  
Vol. 1, No. 4, No. 9, July 2018-December 2018  
Vol. 1, No. 1, April 2018  
Vol. 1, No. 2, May 2018  
Vol. 1, No. 3, June 2018

**SOUTH ASIA ECONOMIC JOURNAL**

Vol. 19, No. 2 (July – December 2018)  
Vol. 19, No. 2 (July – December 2018)  
Vol. 19, No. 1 (January – June 2018)

**FITM POLICY BRIEF**

Access and Expansion of Traditional Knowledge Digital Library and Incentivization of Innovations, 'RIS, No. 1, New Delhi, 2017'

**FITM SCOOPING PAPERS**

#2 Protection of Traditional Knowledge in India, October 2018  
#1 China's Policy Initiatives for National and Global Promotion of TCM by *T.C. James and Namrata Pathak*

**SCIENCE DIPLOMACY REVIEW**

Volume 1 No.2, January 2019

**SCIENCE DIPLOMACY NEW ALERT**

Issue 8 : 16-28 February 2019; Issue 7 : 01-15 February 2019; Issue 6 : 16-31 January 2019;  
Issue 5 : 01-15 January 2019

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