

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF IPAC REPRESENTATIVES WITH HON.MINISTER E.AHMED

by [Jiby Thomas](#) on Wednesday, November 2, 2011 at 5:07am

Report of Meeting of IPAC representatives with Honorable Minister of State for External Affairs Mr. E. Ahmed, Union Government of India at Somerset, New Jersey on Friday, October 28, 2011

With prior appointment the representatives of the Indian Pravasi Action Council [IPAC], U.S.A., met the Honorable Minister of State for External Affairs, Union Government of India, Mr. E. Ahmed, at Somerset, New Jersey on Friday the October 28, 2011. The Deputy Consul General of New York, Mr. Parmod K. Bajaj and Secretary to minister Mr. Suhail Khan IFS, were also present.

The IPAC representatives submitted before the honorable minister, a memorandum of issues, (copy of Memorandum attached) which seriously affect the life of the Pravasi Indians around the world. Minister graciously listened to the representatives and went through all the 14 issues in detail with them. The discussions lasted for about 90 minutes. Minister, Mr. E. Ahmed is also the minister in charge of all the Embassies and Consulates, especially the systems, services and facilities.

The Minister took the following very crucial decisions and instructed the Deputy Consul General of New York to pass the directives to all the concerned with immediate effect.

a) Passport Renunciation Fees: The minister realized that the renunciation fee charged [\$190] since 2010 is very high. He observed that the Service charges including any penalty should not be more than \$25. Minister is of the opinion that the Penalty should not be charged for renunciation. The Minister advised the Deputy Consul General of New York to initiate action to resolve these issues immediately.

b) OCI Card & Integration with PAN Card: The Minister understood our request about OCI card and its integration with PAN card as an Identity Card. The Minister has agreed to take up this matter with the other concerned ministries of the Government of India such as, Home Ministry and Finance Ministry. The Minister directed his Personal Secretary Mr. Ismail to remind him about this matter immediately on his return to India.

c) Re-Entry Ban for Indian Pravasis to India: Regarding the 60 day re-entry restriction of Pravasi Indians to India on tourist Visa, the minister needed to get to more details of the issue from the Deputy Consul General Mr. Parmod K. Bajaj. Mr. Bajaj pointed out that there is a different provision of issuing “Five year multiple entry permit” for people of Indian origin, holding foreign citizenship. The 60 day re-entry ban applicable to tourist/business Visa is not applicable to the persons having the permit called: “Five Year Multiple Entry Permit”. The Consul Mr. Bajaj agreed to make full details of this permit available to IPAC representatives and through the media and web-site of the Consulate for information.

d) Response to telephone calls and emails: The Minister advised the Deputy Consul to make arrangement and introduce a system of prompt, courteous and immediate response from consulate as early as possible.

e) Interaction with Community Leaders: The Minister insisted that the Consulates / Embassy start frequent meetings with the representatives of leading community organizations who will dissipate the latest rules or changes of rules to community members as well as the media. IPAC representatives offered their services and cooperation to develop effective communications with Consulates.

f) Dissatisfaction and difficulties encountered by the public with Tra-Visa: Attention has been brought to the Minister about dissatisfaction and difficulties encountered by the public with the out-sourcing agency, Tra-Visa. They also brought to the Minister’s notice the huge backlog of applications with Tra-Visa without response. The Minister asked the Dy. Consul General to review the activities of the outsourcing agency. He also directed to avoid long waiting line and non admittance of applicants even after being in the waiting for long hours. Agreed to have “pick-up number system” with a cut off time. The Minister asked the Consulate representative to implement that immediately. All the applicants who have taken their number within the time limit must be attended on the same day or on priority basis depending on the service required. In response to the huge back log of pending applicants, Minister has agreed to open more out-sourcing facilities at different locations to cope up with the demand.

g) Protection of Pravasi Property and H1B Visa: The Minister opined that the Protection of Pravasi Property involves the State Governments. H1B issues are a matter involving the other ministries in India and Foreign Governments. Minister Mr. E. Ahmed could agree only to make these concerns available to MPs, State Revenue Ministers and Ambassadors.

IPAC representatives explained to the Minister about the activities of the Council. IPAC main aim is to make aware of the Indian Pravasi their rights and responsibilities, the rules and regulations on matters concerning them, to get a feed back of their experiences -good or bad -with positive mind to improve the public relations and services of Indian Missions abroad. The IPAC website will not only help the Pravasi Indians but also the India Missions abroad, Government of India, Ministers, Members of Parliament and bureaucrats. IPAC representatives can offer their services and man power support to set up facilities/centers in Cities and Suburbs. The ultimate aim is effective consulate services without increasing the cost while mitigating the hardships now encountered by the Pravasi Indians and Foreign Tourists.

The Minister appreciated the positive approach and initiative of the IPAC movement in bringing together the entire community and different organizations under one banner. The IPAC representatives thanked the Honorable Minister for his time and for his kind attention and consideration of matters concerning the Pravasi Indians.

We request all the Pravasi Indians to join this movement to make a change in our Pravasi Community. Please visit www.pravasiaction.com for more details.

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OUR CURRENT ISSUES

- 1. Abolish Passport Surrender/Renunciation Fees and Penalty**
- 2. Reform OCI Cards -Integrate OCI Card, PIO and PAN Cards into one Unit as ID Card**
- 3. Withdraw Re-entry Prohibition for Pravasi Indians.**
- 4. Protection of Pravasi Properties in India.**
- 5. Improve Services & Facilities of Consulates.**
- 6. Withdraw Proposed Double Taxation Bill.**
- 7. Address Issues of H1B visa Holders.**
- 8. Cap the Air-fare to India.**

- 9. Consulate Facilities and hardship to visitors**
- 10. Conduct Regular meetings with Pravasi Organization**
- 11. Proper Utilization of Resources and Emergency Management.**
- 12. Utilize skills and Expertise of Pravasi Professionals.**
- 13. Extradite Indian citizens in foreign jails.**
- 14. Promote art and culture of all Indian States.**

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