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Indian Diaspora in the United Kingdom

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Why in News

Recently, British Foreign Secretary has stated that “**India’s politics**” is, in some sense, “**Britain’s politics**” because of the **Indian diaspora in the United Kingdom (UK)**.

- The statement came as he discussed the situation arising out of the **farmers’ protests** with the External Affairs Minister of India.
- British Prime Minister would be the **chief guest at Republic Day celebrations in January 2021**.
- Indian Prime Minister has been invited for **G7** summit in 2021.

Key Points

- **Indian Diaspora:**
 - Indian Diaspora is a generic term used for addressing **people who have migrated from the territories that are currently within the borders of India**.
 - The term “**diaspora**” is derived from the **Greek word diaspeirein**, which means “**dispersion**”. Over time, the term evolved, and now loosely refers to **any person/s belonging to a particular country with a common origin or culture, but residing outside their homeland for various reasons**.

- **Indian Diaspora in the UK:**
 - **Historical Background:**
 - The **incorporation of the British Empire in India** can be linked to the existence of modern Indian Diaspora all over the world.
 - Dating back to the nineteenth century, **Indian indentured labor was taken over to the British colonies** in different parts of the world.
 - **Population:**

The Indian Diaspora in the UK is **one of the largest ethnic minority communities in the country**, with the 2011 census recording approximately **1.5 million people of Indian origin in the UK** equating to almost **1.8%** of Britain's population.
 - **Economy:** Indians contribute **6% of the UK's GDP**. **Indian diaspora-owned companies** with a combined revenue of 36.84 billion pounds **employ over 1,74,000 people** and pay over 1 billion pounds in Corporation Tax.
 - **Culture:**
 - There has been a gradual mainstreaming of Indian culture and absorption of Indian cuisine, cinema, languages, religion, philosophy, performing arts, etc.
 - **The Nehru Centre** is the cultural wing of the High Commission of India in the UK which was **established in 1992**.
 - 2017 was celebrated as the **India-UK year of Culture** to mark the 70th anniversary of Indian independence.
 - **Politics:**

In 2019, the British House of Commons had **15 members of parliament of Indian origin**.

Significance of Indian Diaspora

- **Huge Number:**
 - According to Global Migration Report 2020, India continues to be the **largest country of origin of international migrants** with a **17.5 million-strong diaspora** across the world, and it received the **highest remittance of USD 78.6 billion** (this amounts to a whopping **3.4% of India's GDP**) from Indians living abroad.
 - It contributes by way of **remittances, investment, lobbying for India, promoting Indian culture abroad and for building a good image of India** by their intelligence and industry.

- **Economic Front:**

- Indian diaspora is **one of the richest minorities in many developed countries**, this helps them to lobby for favourable terms regarding India's interests.
- The migration of less-skilled labour (especially to West Asia) has also helped in **bringing down disguised unemployment in India**.
- In general, migrants' **remittances have positive systemic effects on the balance of payments**.

Remittances of USD 70-80 billion help to bridge a wider trade deficit.

- By weaving a web of cross-national networks, the migrant workers facilitated the **flow of tacit information, commercial and business ideas, and technologies into India**.

- **Political Front:**

- Many people of Indian origin hold **top political positions in many countries**, in the USA itself, they are now a significant part of Republicans and Democrats, as well as the government.

India's diaspora played an important role in the **India-U.S. nuclear deal**.

- Indian diaspora is not just a part of **India's soft power**, but a fully transferable **political vote bank** as well.

Related Government Initiatives

- **Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD):**

It is celebrated once in every two years to strengthen the engagement of the overseas Indian community with the Government of India and reconnect them with their roots.

- **UMANG International App:**

- It would help all Indian international students, NRIs, and Indian tourists abroad to avail themselves of the services of the government of India anytime they want.
- The app would be helpful in creating awareness about India in the world through 'Indian Culture' services available on it.

- **VAJRA Faculty Scheme:**

The Scheme enables NRIs and the overseas scientific community to participate and contribute to research and development in India.

- **Know India Programme:**

It is a three-week orientation programme for diaspora youth conducted with a view to promote awareness on different facets of life in India and the progress made by the country in various fields.

Source:IE