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| http://www.indianconsulate-sf.org/images/ashokachkra.gif | EMBASSY OF INDIAKUWAIT |

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Subject : Celebration of Pravasi Bhartiya Divas 2016**

 The 14th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD) was celebrated in Kuwait on 9 January 2016 in Embassy Auditorium from 1600 hrs – 1900 hrs. The event was well attended with the presence of over 300 Indian nationals. Ambassador provided basic data regarding Embassy’s consular, passport, visa, community welfare services rendered to the Indian community during 2015. Several speakers spoke on issues concerning Indian Diaspora in Kuwait.

2. Major achievements in bilateral ties during 2015 have been the following:

* **Illegal flow of Indian female domestic workers stopped;**
* **Recruitment of Indian nurses streamlined through 3 State Manpower Recruitment Agencies; viz. NORKA, ODEPC & OMCL;**
* **Trade & Investment**: During last 2 years, Indian EPC companies viz L&T, Shapoorji Pallonji, ESSAR, DODSAL and Simplex and Kalpataru Transmission got major contracts worth $ 6 billion. In December 2015, an announcement with regard to Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA)’s investment of US$300 million in GMR Infrastructure Limited was made;
* **Air Connectivity**: Kuwait Airways now operating daily flights to New Delhi as well as started flights to Ahmadabad and Bengaluru;
* **FE remittances** to India: US$4.8 billion sent to India from Kuwait; and
* **Indian community in Kuwait grew by 5-6% during 2015.**

3. The comparative chart of services rendered by Embassy during the calendar year 2015, vis-à-vis 2014, is given below:

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| **Particulars** | **Calendar Year 2015** | **Calendar Year 2014**  | **Comments/Remarks** |
| Passports | 87,083 | 75,031 |  Increase of 16% |
| Visas  | 13,259 | 12,719 | Increase of 4.2% |
| Attestations | 94,363 | 96,145 | Decrease 1.8% |
| Emergency Certificates | 3,923 | 2,815 | Increase of 40%  |
| Marriage Registrations | 45 | 35 | Increase of 28% |
| Birth Registrations | 4,568 | 4,691 | Decrease by 2 % |
| Deaths of Indian nationals  | 611 | 559 | Increase by 9% - Rise in suicide, traffic accidents death cases.504 mortal remains sent to India and 107 local burials.  |
| Death compensation remitted to next of kin in India | Rs. 6.33 Crore | Rs. 6.19 Crore | - |
| Labour Contracts Visas (18) |  62,587 | 38,088 | Increase of 64% |
| Labour ContractsVisas (20)  | 27,911 | 54,126 | Decline by 50%- as female domestic work contracts have been stopped since December 2014. |
| Shelter provided | 726  | 714 | - |
| Repatriation by Embassy | 446 | 539 | Decline by 20% |
| Deportation by Kuwaiti authorities | 824  | 818 | - |
| Air tickets provided under ICWF | 250  | 278 | Decrease by 11% |
| Indians in local Jails  |  376 | 281 | Increase of 33% in drug and alcohol-related cases |

4. In 2015, Embassy Auditorium was used for 48 socio-cultural events by various Indian Associations in Kuwait. There are 204 Indian associations now registered with the Embassy.

5. Various suggestions to improve services (for example, voting rights for NRIs, Aadhar Card, greater assistance to 3 lakh Indian nationals in domestic sector, cheaper air-tickets) have been noted for consideration/implementation.

**11 January 2016**