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## India ready for voting right to NRIs, but PM mum on Black List

**T**rying to remove a massive anomaly that prevents non-resident citizens from voting in choosing the law makers of the country, India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has finally announced that plans are afoot to enable Indians living abroad to vote in the next general elections.

Responding to a long pending demand of the non-residents, that was also reflected by members of his Global Advisory Council of Overseas Indians, the PM termed the desire legitimate and said, "We are working on this issue and I sincerely hope that they will get a chance to vote by the time of the next regular general elections."

The Prime Minister, who has so far done little about banishing and trashing to the dustbin the so-called Black List of Sikhs, went further and said, "In fact, I would go a step further and ask why more overseas

WSN Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Indians should not return home to join politics and public life as they are increasingly doing in business and academia."

Ironically, while the PM was speaking at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas conference here, the conclave witnessed no mention of the Black List despite the fact that the Union Home Ministry has often expressed the view that it was time to prune and clear the Black List of Sikhs who the government perceived were somehow had some links with the aspirational movement of the 1980s and 90s.

In any case, as New Delhi is trying to court People of Indian Origin from various parts of the world, it is anomalous that some of its citizens are not allowed to come home and no one is permitted to cast his or her vote. This clear disenfranchising of NRIs was being seen by many human

rights activists in the Diaspora as "a serious infirmity in the electoral process".

Under Article 19 of the Representation of the People Act 1950, only those "ordinarily resident" in a constituency are eligible to be registered in the electoral rolls. Since most NRIs either study or work abroad, often for extended periods, they lose their status as ordinary residents under Section 20 of the Act and are liable to be struck off the electoral rolls. As for those who remain on the electoral rolls, by virtue of not being struck off before the next revision, the only way is to cast a ballot in person, which means returning home (which may not quite be home).

Dr. Singh took on board several familiar grievances expressed by NRIs, including the slow pace of decision-making.

The PM lamented that the "foreign direct investment by overseas Indians is low and far short of potential" but did not touch the subject of how

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## Nanakshahi Changes Come Under Fire from US Sikhs

Resolution rejects SGPC, sadhs' doings, calls it saffronization agenda

WSN Bureau  
FREMONT

**I**f there was a recipe to enrage the Diaspora Sikhs, ignore their reasoned debate and pleas, and isolate itself completely from the wider Sikh sentiment prevailing all through the world, the incumbent clergy and the forces running the SGPC seem to have cooked their own goose well.

The move to order changes in the unanimously adopted Nanakshahi Calendar came under not just sharp criticism but a summary rejection from the United States sangat at a conclave organized by Gurdwara Sahib, Fremont where many Sikh organizations and gurdwara committees' representatives went so far as to call for a boycott of the visiting self-styled Sant Samajis and jathedars.

Khalistan Affairs Center, Sikh Youth of America, Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar), American Sikh Organization, martyrs' families, Gurmat Chetna Lehar, Sikh Missionary forum, Gurdwara Sahib Fremont, Dasmesh Darbar Gurdwara Sahib Lodi, Gurdwara Sahibs of Stockton, Seattle,

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California Sikhs reject changes in Nanakshahi  
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