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## 36% of scientists at NASA are Indians: Govt survey

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NEW DELHI: If you thought that Global Indian Takeover was just a hollow cliché leaning on a few iconic successes like Pepsi's Indra Nooyi, Citibank's Vikram Pandit and steel world's Lakshmi Mittal, there is a slew of statistics now to give it solid ballast.

The extent to which desis have made an impact in the US was reeled off in the Rajya Sabha — as many as 12% scientists and 38% doctors in the US are Indians, and in NASA, 36% or almost 4 out of 10 scientists are Indians.

If that's not proof enough of Indian scientific and corporate prowess, digest this: 34% employees at Microsoft, 28% at IBM, 17% at Intel and 13% at Xerox are Indians.

And the House of Elders also heard some startling facts about a country that's still stuck with a Third World tag — 20% of gold in the world is used by Indians and nine out of 10 diamonds used in the world are made in India.

The figures of Indian successes were given to the Rajya Sabha on Monday by D Purandeshwari, minister of state for HRD, in defence of the country's higher education system and the state of research.

Purandeshwari said that although a lot needed to be done to encourage research, it was wrong to run down the country's higher education system since most Indians who excelled abroad were products of Indian institutions.

He said there was no slackness in research and the number of PhD holders had gone up from 17,898 two years back to 18,730 last year.

The minister also listed initiatives taken to encourage research, especially in science. Apart from creating 1,000 positions of research scientists at various levels, she said draft norms to create 10 networking centres in basic sciences in leading departments of universities were being prepared. It would help in promoting collaborative research and give access to advanced facilities.

Also, all postgraduate programmes pertaining to science and technology would have an in-built component of research. The University Grants Commission is also identifying performing universities so that they can be given 50 fellowships to carry out research in basic sciences.

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