

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) The main objective of this science exhibition mounted in rail coaches is to generate awareness about science and popularize it amongst the masses, in general and students, in particular. The exhibition also aims at attracting students to opt for careers in science research and teaching by informing them about career prospects and challenges in various areas of science and technology. The mobile exhibition has travelled to over 100 towns and cities across the country in about 400 days since its launch on 30 October 2007. It has been visited by over 35 lakh people, mostly high school students and science teachers.

(b) This mobile exhibition helps to project the excitement of research for improving our knowledge in frontier areas. The visitors are encouraged to do hands-on activities and experiments. Outstanding achievements by Indian researchers are projected, opportunities for research in national laboratories are explained and counseling sessions for career guidance arranged. Factors that influence career choices of good students are numerous. This exhibition encourages decision making based on better information.

Attacks on Indians in foreign countries

*15. SHRI SUBHASH PRASAD YADAV:
SHRI D. RAJA:

Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the constant attacks on the Indian diaspora in foreign countries, particularly in Australia and Canada;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the measures initiated as well as proposed to be initiated in this regard by the Indian Government?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) to (c) There have been instances of attacks on Indians in foreign countries. The details of cases reported recently from Australia and Canada are given in Annexure [See Appendix 217 Annexure No. 1]. Whenever instances of attacks on Indian nationals come to notice, the matter is taken up with the concerned Governmental authorities abroad. The Indian Mission also provides necessary support and assistance to the victim. In respect of Australia, a series of measures have been undertaken, as detailed in the Statement.

Statement-I

Details of measures initiated by Indian Government in respect of Australia

The issue of attack on Indian students in Australia and other countries have been taken up with the concerned authorities, including at the highest level in the case of Australia. In a telephonic conversation, when the Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd called our Prime Minister immediately after his assumption of office, our concerns at the attacks on Indian students were conveyed to him suitably. The Prime Minister made a reference to this in the

course of his reply to the debate in the Parliament on the motion of thanks for the President's address to the joint sitting of both houses. The Minister of External Affairs has also conveyed our deep concerns to his counterpart in the Government of Australia.

2. It has been conveyed to the Australian Government that such attacks should not be allowed to happen and that it is the responsibility of the Australian authorities to ensure the well-being and security of our students in Australia. Our High Commissioner and Consuls General in Australia are in constant touch with the Australian authorities both at the federal as well as State level, including the Ministers, senior officers and the police authorities, besides the Australian Foreign Office, the Universities and the students.

3. The Government of Australia has in response to these demarches, strongly condemned these attacks. The Australian authorities have conveyed their firm commitment to ensuring the safety and security of Indian students in Australia. When the matter came up in the Australian Parliament, the Australian Prime Minister as well as the Leader of the opposition and several Members of Parliament denounced the attacks and called for immediate steps to ensure the safety and security of Indian students studying in Australia. Premier of the Victoria state has further promised that the state would do everything in its power to track down the perpetrators of these cowardly acts and bring them to justice.

4. On 23 June, 2009, a delegation led by Ms. Lisa Paul, Secretary, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Government of Australia, called on the Hon'ble Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs. Government of India's deep concerns over the matter were conveyed to the Australian delegation. In response to some suggestions made by the Indian delegation, the Australian side undertook to consider the following:—

- (i) Registration of Education Agents;
- (ii) Ensuring quality of education provided at private educational institutions;
- (iii) Steps to ensure that Education Agents brief deporting Indian students properly, on the basis of the latest advisory booklet published by the Australian Education Department for international students;
- (iv) Steps to prevent exploitation of Indian students by unscrupulous employers who underpay them and employ them beyond the maximum prescribed 20 hours a week;

5. The High Commission of India in Canberra and Consulates General in Sydney and Melbourne will continue to extend all possible assistance. An advisory for students going for studies to Australia has been put on the website of this Ministry.

6. Our Missions/Posts in other countries/promptly take up such incidents of attacks with the concerned authorities in the host Government for redressal and with a view to prevent their recurrence