

to prevent the fragmentation of higher education and enhance the autonomy of higher educational institutions as recommended by the National Knowledge Commission and the Committee to advise on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education under Prof Yash Pal, has been accepted by the Government as one of its priorities.

(b) A Task Force has been constituted by the Government to aid and advise it in the establishment of overarching authority. A draft legislation has been prepared by the Task Force which was placed in the public domain for wider consultations. Based on the comments and suggestions received, the Task Force is revisiting the provisions of the draft legislation. After the Task Force submits its report a view would be taken by the Government on the suggested provisions before introduction of a legislative proposal in Parliament. Therefore, it is not possible at this point in time to mention by when the NCHER would be constituted.

Indian students in Australia

3160. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that Indian students in Australia are continuously facing racial assaults causing deaths and fatal injuries;

(b) if so, the steps being taken in all seriousness to stop this menace;

(c) whether Government is thinking to snap the diplomatic ties with Australia; and

(d) if not, the other means which are visualized to solve this problem with honour?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) Yes, Sir. There have been few cases of attacks on Indian students in Australia in the recent past. While some of the incidents are alleged to have a racial element, there is no concrete evidence to that extent.

(b) and (d) The matter regarding attacks on members of Indian community including Indian students in Australia has been taken up with the Australian authorities, both at the level of federal Government and at States Government level as well as during various Ministerial visits and the visit of Prime Minister of Australia to India in November, 2009. The High Commission of India in Canberra and the Consulates General in Sydney and Melbourne are in close and constant touch with the Australian authorities including the Ministers, the Australian Foreign Office, senior officers and police authorities and have impressed upon them that such attacks cannot be allowed to happen and that stringent measures should be taken to stop these attacks as well as to apprehend the culprits.

Hon'ble Minister of Human Resource Development, visited Australia from 6th to 10th April, 2010 and discussed the matter regarding attacks on Indian students, their safety and the steps taken by the Australian Government with Hon'ble Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of

Education, Employment and Workplace Relations of Australia; Foreign Minister of Australia; Premier of Victoria; Premier of New South Wales; Deputy Premiers of Western Australia and New South Wales and Ministers of Education of Victoria and New South Wales. In these meetings, Hon'ble Minister of Human Resource Development expressed his deep concern on the continued incidents of assaults on Indian students. He also requested Premier of Victoria for credible data on the incidents that have taken place over the past one year as also information relating to the status of the trials, the charges framed and convictions. He stressed the importance of setting up an institutional mechanism for sharing such information. He also requested the Premier of Victoria and New South Wales about extending transport concession to international students and increase in accommodation facilities for international students.

Immediately after the above visit, the Premier of Victoria has sent an update to the Hon'ble Minister of Human Resource Development on the measures taken by the Victorian Government to improve the experience of international students in Victoria and to help safeguard the well-being of Indian students and the Indian community in Victoria, as well as to provide further information on cases involving Indian victims.

(c) No, Sir.

All India Children's Educational Audio-Video Festival

3161. SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has recently organised the 15th edition of All India Children's Educational Audio-Video Festival (AICEAVF) 2010;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the response received from each State especially from Andhra Pradesh; and

(d) the funds allocated and spent for such festivals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) The 15th All India Children's Educational Audio-Video Festival was organized by Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET) of National Council of Educational Research Training (NCERT) during 18-20 March, 2010.

(b) There were 116 participants from CIET, State Institutes of Educational Technology (SIETs), producers of educational audio and video programmes and persons working in the field of education. 114 programmes (31 audio and 83 video) were screened and 27 awards were presented in various categories.

(c) SIET, Andhra Pradesh had submitted 13 entries (7 audio and 6 video), out of which 3 in audio category received awards. In addition, SIETs from Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Orissa and Kerala participated in the festival.

(d) An amount of Rs. 9,73,204/- was spent on this festival.