

- (b) its implications on current US-India relations; and
- (c) the implications of this on India's global standing?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): (a) to (c) Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Congressman Brad Sherman, introduced an amendment pertaining to India in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020. This amendment proposes the sense of the Congress that the U.S. should strengthen and enhance its major defence partnership with India, *inter alia*, to promote shared values and common interests, enhance civilian and military exchanges, facilitate information sharing and technology transfer. This amendment also mandates the submission of a report by the U.S. Secretary of Defense to the U.S. Congress regarding defence cooperation between India and the U.S. in the Western Indian Ocean.

The amendment was passed by the House of Representatives, and included in its version of the NDAA for FY 2020. The U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate versions of the text of the NDAA for FY 2020 are currently being reconciled in a joint committee.

India and the U.S. have established a strategic partnership based on our shared values and common interests. As sovereign democracies and strategic partners, both countries are closely involved in global efforts to promote peace, prosperity and security, and have committed to work together on regional and global issues.

Information of fake foreign universities

1964. DR. PRABHAKAR KORE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the instances of Indian students enrolling in fake foreign universities are on the rise;
- (b) whether Government has identified the issues faced by several Indian students abroad after foreign institutes they enrolled in, turns out to be fake;
- (c) whether Government proposes to set up a portal to help students seeking admission in foreign universities to identify the genuineness of such universities; and
- (d) if so, the details of the proposed portal and other steps taken by Government to help Indian students enrolling in foreign universities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): (a) There is no evidence to suggest that instances of students enrolling in fake foreign universities are on the rise.

However, some instances where Indian students have unwittingly enrolled in fake foreign universities have come to Ministry's notice during the period 2016-2018 from USA, UAE, Switzerland, Suriname and Czech Republic. In most of the cases the Universities were operating without the requisite permission and approval from the host Government.

(b) Indian Missions/Posts closely coordinate with local authorities and provide all possible assistance to the affected students, including facilitation of their voluntary departure to India. The Education officer in the Mission regularly meets the students. The Missions/Posts also issue advisories to warn students about fake universities. Some Missions/Posts share the link of the list of genuine universities on their website so that students may apply to these universities only. Social media platforms to sensitize the Indian students about the fake universities are also utilized.

(c) and (d) Yes. The Ministry, in consultation with various stakeholders including MHRD, MoH&FW, Medical Council of India, Association of Indian Universities, University Grants Commission etc. is in the process of developing a Global Indian Students Portal. In addition, following steps have been taken by the Ministry and our Missions/Posts abroad to help Indian students:—

(i) To safeguard the interest of Indian students going abroad, Ministry has developed a “Students Registration Module” within the MADAD portal to create a database of Indian students going abroad. It enables Indian students abroad to register voluntarily and provide data about their courses, location, institution, duration of the course, etc. Also, a separate category of grievances (*e.g.* related to fake universities; fraudulent educational consultants/agents; safety and security of students etc.) for the Indian students abroad has been created on the portal.

(ii) Officials of the Missions/Posts regularly visit local universities and colleges to meet Indian students to address their issues. Student Welfare officers of Indian Missions are constantly in contact with Indian students association and University administrations. There are informal group of students on social media to disseminate information about students related issues in many countries. Such groups are in touch with student welfare officers. Advisory on “do's and don'ts” in foreign countries, including issues related to

fraudulent agents are issued by Indian Missions, which are placed on the website of the Mission.

Role of BRICS in international context

1965. SHRI MANAS RANJAN BHUNIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India is not in active role for the acceleration of the role of Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS) in international prospective;
- (b) if so, the reasons for not taking an active role in BRICS at present; and
- (c) the present outlook and international context of BRICS?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): (a) to (c) India along with Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa actively engages on issues of global importance through BRICS. BRICS is an important Grouping bringing together the major emerging economies from the world, comprising 42% of the world population, having 23% of the world GDP and over 16% share in the world trade. BRICS countries have been the main engines of global economic growth over the years. At the same time, BRICS has emerged as a major factor in a peaceful, prosperous and multi-polar world.

During Summit, BRICS Leaders discuss various issues of global importance including global financial and security situation, countering terrorism, climate change, sustainable development, reform of the multilateral system, reform of WTO and institutions of international governance, ways to promote Intra-BRICS cooperation including in science & technology, trade, health, information and communication technology, people-to-people exchanges. In all BRICS Leaders Summits, Indian delegations have been led by Prime Minister.

BRICS cooperation is broadly covered under Economic, political & security, and people-to-people exchanges. From inception, finance and trade is a major area of Intra-BRICS Cooperation. The New Development Bank (NDB) and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) are the major outcomes in this area. NDB has funded/decided to fund 44 projects worth more than USD 12 billion, within BRICS countries including 8 projects worth USD 3246 million in India. Further, Contingent Reserve Arrangement to provide protection against global liquidity pressures has been set up in BRICS.