



Press Release

High Commissioner's message to Indian students and the larger Indian community on Radio : 10 June 2009 : 12 noon

Friends,

I want to tell you that the well-being and safety of Indian students in Australia is of the utmost priority for Government of India, especially since the tragic events of 23rd May.

As you will be aware, the matter has been taken up at the highest level. Our Prime Minister has spoken to Prime Minister Kevin Rudd; our External Affairs Minister S.M.Krishna has spoken to FM Stephen Smith. They have stressed on the need to provide adequate security to our students. The Australian Government has assured us of its commitment to ensuring the safety and security of Indian students studying in Australia.

I and the Consuls General in Sydney and Melbourne have also been in constant touch with Australian authorities – Ministers, both at the Federal and State level, the police authorities and the Australian Foreign Office and impressed upon them that the safety and security of our students needs to be assured.

For the past several days, we have been in touch with the authorities on a daily basis on this issue. They are as concerned about the situation as we are and are doing what they can and what needs to be done to reassure our students.

I know that you are concerned that the attacks seem to be still continuing. We share your concern and are all working to ensure that these attacks stop.

A clear message has been conveyed that urgent action is needed to ensure that attacks against our students studying in Australia stop and that strong measures are put into place to prevent these attacks from taking place.

I have visited Melbourne from 28-30 May and accompanied by CG Melbourne, I talked to the authorities, including Premier Brumby and Police Commissioner Simon Overland and also met our students in Footscray. More recently I visited Sydney on 8 June, where I went to Harris Park and met members of the Indian community, accompanied by the Consul General, Sydney. We are following events very closely.

I have received reports of the incident which took place at Harris Park on 8th June, 2009 evening and the demonstrations by members of the Indian community since then.

I would urge all the members of the Indian community to remain calm and refrain from taking the law in their hands.

It is important to work closely with the Australian authorities and especially the police, to ensure that the attacks are stopped.

Please do not do anything that makes the situation worse.

Do not take matters into your own hands.

Work within the framework of the law.

Any incident of attack/harassment should be promptly brought to the notice of police for taking appropriate action in the matter.

You should also bring any incident of attack or harrassment to the attention of the High Commission of India or the Consulates. Our contact details are on the web.

Our EAM has given some very useful advice to our students here – ***“I would like to urge the Indian students to be patient and show restraint. They have gone there (Australia) for higher studies. They should concentrate on that rather than retaliate.”***

Please rest assured that the High Commission and the Consulates in Sydney and Melbourne remain in close and constant touch with all the concerned Australian authorities on these incidents and that we are all doing our best to do whatever we can to ensure the safety and security of our students in Australia.