



## PRESS RELEASE

### High Commissioner's remarks to Press about student attacks, 29 May 2009

The well-being and safety of our people here, and especially of our students, is a top priority for Government of India. Towards this end, I am in constant touch with Australian authorities – Ministers, both at the Federal and State level, the police authorities, the Australian Foreign Office.

We have impressed upon them that such attacks cannot be allowed to happen.

Accompanied by Anita Nayar, our Consul General in Melbourne, I visited Indian student Sravan Kumar Theerthala in the ICU of Royal Melbourne Hospital and also met his friends and some other students, who had been injured in the incident which occurred on the night of 23/24 May.

I talked to Doctors in the ICU. Sravan is being given the best medical treatment possible.

I will also be meeting the two other students who have been injured in Sydney and Melbourne respectively.

In the course of my visit to Melbourne I have met the Premier of Victoria, John Brumby; the Deputy Premier Rob Hulls; the Minister for Skills and Workforce Participation Jacinta Allan; the Police Commissioner of Melbourne Simon Overland and the Assistant Commissioner of Police responsible for the districts where the incidents have taken place, Sandra Nicholson.

I conveyed what our External Affairs Minister has clearly said: ***“Such attacks should not be allowed to happen. It is the responsibility of the Australian authorities to ensure the well-being and security of our students studying in Australia”.***

I have conveyed the perceptions of our students that vicious attacks against them have been increasing and the urgent need to reassure them.

The Australian authorities have been responsive and are cooperating with us.

The Premier, and all the other authorities I met, have conveyed their clear commitment to addressing our concerns. They have informed me of the steps that they have taken and of further steps that they will be taking to ensure the safety and security of our students and to reassure them that Australia is a safe country to study in.

The Premier has indicated that several steps are being taken to address safety issues:

- Police patrolling will be increased around train stations, especially late at night.
- The number of transit police, including in plain clothes on late night trains that are taken by our students, will be increased.
- Recommendations of the Victoria Government Overseas Students Experience Taskforce are being studied; many of them will be implemented in the next months.
- The State Government's Robbery Taskforce has been doubled; several offenders have been charged.
- The Brimbank Police Service area has launched a reference group involving the police and members of the Indian community to see how to decrease incidents of any victimisation of Indian students.

The Premier conveyed his clear commitment to ensuring that the experience of more than 47,000 Indian students in Victoria is positive, productive, and safe.

We would request all students to share information about any development on this issue with the Consulate/the High Commission on [cgo@cgimelb.org](mailto:cgo@cgimelb.org) or [hco@hcindia-au.org](mailto:hco@hcindia-au.org). We can make our representations to the Australian authorities more effective if we have detailed information on what the specific problems are. Please also ensure that you report all incidents to the police, however minor, and let the Consulate know, so that we can take it up with the authorities, not just in general terms, but on a specific, case-by-case basis also.

The High Commission will soon be unveiling a section on its website dedicated to students, with advice, dos and don'ts and useful information; we are trying to make it as comprehensive as we can and will appreciate any inputs/suggestions.

The High Commission and the Consulate are in close and constant touch with our Indian students in Australia and will continue to extend all possible assistance.

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