

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:7
ANSWERED ON:22.11.2006
SAFEGUARDING INDIANS FROM RACIAL DISCRIMINATION
Barman Shri Ranen;Reddy Shri Mekapati Rajamohan

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Indian students studying in the Medical College at St. Petersburg have been allegedly subjected to racial discrimination;
- (b) if so, whether similar cases have been reported from England and Netherlands from Indian IT entrepreneurs working in those countries;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the number of such cases including loss of life so far brought to the notice of the Government during the last two years, country-wise;
- (e) whether there is insurance coverage to those who succumb to the injuries including credit guarantee for their educational loan obtained in India;
- (f) if so, the details thereof;
- (g) if not, the suitable schemes likely to be formulated in the future; and
- (h) the remedial measures taken/proposed to be taken to safeguard Indian studying/ working abroad?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE)

(a) to (h) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (H) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 7 REGARDING "SAFEGUARDING INDIANS FROM RACIAL DISCRIMINATION" TO BE ANSWERED ON 22.11.06.

According to the enquiries made by the Government from the concerned Ministries/ Departments and the Indian Missions abroad, there have been no cases of racial discrimination against the Indian students in St. Petersburg or in any other country during the last two years. Similarly, no case of racial discrimination against any Indian IT entrepreneur working in the United Kingdom or the Netherlands or any other country has come to the attention of the Government so far.

There were, however, two unfortunate incidents of attack against Indian students at St. Petersburg in Russia a few months earlier. Shri Nitesh Kumar Singh, a 6th year student of I.I. Mechnikov St. Petersburg State Medical Academy was attacked on a road by some masked persons on September 24, 2006 in the evening hours when he was returning from a nearby grocery store. Despite the seven stab wounds on his spine, Shri Singh could walk to the hostel. An ambulance was called by other students and he was taken to the hospital where, unfortunately, he died.

The officials of our Consulate in St. Petersburg immediately contacted the police and hospital authorities and asked them to take urgent action to probe this incident. The second incident relates to Shri Kishore Kumar Anjangi, a 5th year student of the same Academy who was stabbed in the throat on April 19, 2006 in front of his hostel. Fortunately, he survived the attack.

Our Embassy in Moscow and the Consulate in St. Petersburg have taken up the matter with the Russian authorities. They have initiated a criminal case in connection with the above murder of Shri Singh and arrested one suspect who is being investigated. As a result of the intervention of our Mission, the Russian authorities have taken several measures – posting round the clock guards, police patrol cars, mounting surveillance cameras and emergency alarm systems - to enhance security in and around the university and hostels where Indian students study and live.

In addition, our Mission in Moscow has posted an advisory on their website highlighting security risk for Indian students in Russia and advising them to be vigilant and exercise due caution and prudence in their movements. Ministry of External Affairs has requested our Ministries of Health and Human Resource Development and the Russian Embassy in New Delhi to ensure that Indian students planning to study in Russia are adequately briefed on the security risks they are likely to encounter in Russia to enable them to make an informed choice.

It should be added that the above attacks are not directed against Indian students only; such attacks have also occurred against

foreign students from other Asian, African and Latin American countries in St. Petersburg. Though some media reports describe these attacks as racially motivated, the local authorities refuse to call them as racist and consider these as acts of hooliganism. As per Russian law, it is mandatory for all foreign students to have medical insurance. The insurance cover depends on the kind of policy obtained by each student. However, enquiries made by our Mission in Moscow indicate that most students have medical insurance coverage that includes transportation of the body to India in the event of death. The body of late Shri Nitesh Kumar Singh was sent to India. The insurance company bore the expenses. Indian commercial banks are extending education loans to students for studies in India and abroad. Some of these banks have offered different insurance coverage along with the education loans in association with insurance companies.