

# Some Aussie institutes ruining lives of Punjabi, other students

WSN Network  
MELBOURNE

After a large number of students of Punjabi and other ethnicities came under racist attacks in Australia, India's External Affairs Minister S M Krishna has said some "dubious" educational institutions in Australia were ruining the lives of young Indians and asked Canberra to come out with new regulations to cover private colleges to undo the damage. He also said "physical attacks" on Indian students in Australia and the poor quality of courses and services offered in many vocational colleges were of concern to India.

"I think they (vocational colleges) are not only bringing a bad name to Australia but they are destroying the future of the younger generation of Indian students," Krishna, who is here on a visit, told 'The Australian' newspaper.

He also called for new regulations to cover private colleges and continued reform by the federal and state governments. However, Krishna also praised Canberra and state governments for responding to India's concerns. He said the damage to Australia's reputation in India need not be long term.

"The Australian and (state) governments have quickly moved in and started undoing the damage by a series of measures taken to dispel any notions of insecurity felt by the Indian student community," he said.

"I would want the tempo to be maintained so that signals are constantly flowing to India, so that governments are constantly responding to meet our concerns," Krishna, who met Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and his counterpart Stephen Smith during his visit, said.

"Some dubious educational institutions have lured gullible Indian students into joining some of these institutions. There is a big gap between the quality of what has been promised and what has been delivered," Krishna said. "Some colleges have closed down but full-time fees have been collected from these students and they are left high and dry. So they are wandering around the streets of Sydney and Melbourne and they are a

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cause of consternation for India," he said. "Perhaps there is case for a new regulatory regime to be put in place as far as these private education providers are concerned," the Minister said.

Meanwhile, Canberra's envoy designate to New Delhi, Indo-Australian Peter Varghese has described the racist attacks on Indian students here as "a hot issue" and said it is more complicated than just being a racial problem. "Sure student issue is a hot issue. We won't be able to ignore it and I don't want to ignore it. Something that needs to be resolved and explained. I will be doing what I can," he was quoted as saying during

Krishna's 5-day visit to Australia.

Varghese, who replaces Australian High Commissioner John McCarthy in New Delhi later this month, also strongly refuted that Australia was racist. "No I don't (think Australia is racist). I think if you look at the way Australia has changed in the last 20-30 years you will get a sense of the country which is when tested is open to accepting people from a wide range of backgrounds and from cultures and races. I consider it to be the most multi-cultural society," he said.

Australian society was free to accept people on their face value and deal with them as an individual rather than based their race, he said.



## Two more Indian students attacked

MELBOURNE: Two students from Punjab and Madhya Pradesh have become the latest victims of attacks on Indians in Australia. They were assaulted by groups of men separately, even as Canberra assured New Delhi of the safety and security of Indians here. Gaurav Kakkar, a student of a hairdressing course, was attacked by a group of men when he was talking to his family in Punjab's Ferozepur from a telephone booth. Kakkar was taken to hospital and discharged two days later. Mohit, a student from Indore, was attacked from behind with a beer bottle on his head and beaten up with a baseball bat on his waist and leg by four youths on Friday.

Varghese, who also served as Australia's spy chief, said the student issue is a more complicated set of issue rather than just being racist attacks, some of which were linked with each other. Varghese described the recent attacks on Indian students as initially a law and order issue. "In many of the cases, the Indian students were victims of crime rather than being particularly targeted."

"There could have been specific cases where motivation could have been racist and I don't think we exclude that and it is also the case that in some of these cases you were dealing with the groups who were living in part of country where crime was higher or (victims) were commuting at odd hours," he said.

The impression that the Indian students "as a group are being systematically targeted is very wrong and misleading," Varghese said, adding he will try his best to resolve the student issue. Calling the Victorian police's advice to Indian students that they should not talk in Hindi in public as "not practical and desirable,"

Varghese, nevertheless, said the students should be equally aware that they are not putting themselves into a risky situation. He also suggested that Indian students take necessary precautions while travelling during wee hours or going to areas with high crime rate. It will be sensible thing to do for anyone, he added.

On the educational institutions of the country that have come under scrutiny for their performances, Varghese said for "most part I think Indian students have a productive and positive time spent from what we have found from our surveys." However, he said there was a feeling of disappointment over the recent educational scams revealing that the Australian education institutions were not up to the mark.

"There is a small slice of educational institutes which we are talking about. Vast majority of Indian students who are doing courses are happy," he said, adding that performances of a handful of institutions should not overshadow the entire education industry of Australia.

## Conclave demands special law to deal with honor killings

ROHTAK: Following many incidents of honor killings of boys and girls in Haryana and elsewhere in recent weeks, a 'Citizens Rights Convention' organised here on Sunday by various social organisations to build an alternative platform "which could provide space and discourse for a healthy culture and deal with social issues like marriage, dowry, etc, in a progressive and democratic manner" demanded a special law to deal with such cases in a time-bound manner.

The convention also aimed to build pressure on the government, police and administration to take swift action against the perpetrators of crimes like honour killings.

More than 500 men and women from all over Haryana, including leading intellectuals, educationists, lawyers and members of All India women's organisations, took part in the convention.

Jagmati Sangwan, president of the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA), Haryana, stressed the need for alternative and more democratic modes of

## Meanwhile, killings continue

JHAJJAR: A young couple was found hanging by a single rope from a tree at Siwana in Jhajjar district on Sunday, hours before a sarv khap mahapanchayat met to decide the quantum of punishment to another family for refusing to annul same-gotra (clan) marriage.

The couple — Sandeep Kadian, 22, and Monika, 16, — had eloped from the village on July 31.

The incident comes days after a young couple was killed after they were beaten to death by the girl's family in a village in Rohtak district on August 6. Last month, a 21-year-old man was lynched for marrying against the wishes of his community in Haryana's Jind district.

relationships and the need for a healthy dialogue in favour of young couples in the family, panchayats and educational institutions.

Jyotsana Chatterji, president of the joint women's programme, and Premila Loomba of National Federation of Indian Women highlighted the need for a change in the traditions of khap panchayats and warned them not to take law into their own hands.

D.R. Chaudhary, a leading educationist, and Raghubir Singh Hooda, convener, All India Lawyers'

Association, Haryana, said khap panchayats in the name of brotherhood were in fact caught up in stagnant and retrogressive social and cultural values and people at large should raise protest against "fatwas" of such outfits. Sudha Sunderraman, general secretary, AIDWA, condemned the "silence" of most political parties and leaders on such a significant issue affecting the very secular fabric of democratic society. She called upon all citizens to raise their voice and stand unitedly in defence of constitutional rights of all citizens.

## Indian-American doctor, wife face new charges

WASHINGTON: An Indian American doctor, who is accused of illegally possessing high-explosive grenades, and his wife face new charges of interfering with the probe into their extensive weapons cache.

The new seven-count indictment accuses 51-year-old Dr Randeep Mann and his wife Sangeeta of seeking to obstruct the probe by hiding from federal agents signed, blank cheques.

It also alleged that 48-year-old Sangeeta concealed evidence and made a false declaration to a federal grand jury about removing the cheques from her husband's office on his orders, the Arkansas News said on Saturday.

According to a statement released by the U.S. attorney's office in Little Rock, agents on Friday arrested Sangeeta, who pleaded not guilty to the charges later in the day at a hearing before U.S. Magistrate J. Thomas Ray.

Sangeeta, who was arrested from her home near London in Pope County on Friday, remains in custody until a detention hearing on Monday in federal court, the report

said. In the indictment unsealed on Friday, federal prosecutors accused Dr Mann with illegally possessing an automatic machine gun without official paperwork on the weapon. Mann also faces two new charges accusing him of owning an unregistered 12-gauge shotgun and the unregistered 7.62-mm machine gun.

According to prosecutors, Sangeeta told the grand jury probing her husband that she removed the cheques from his Russellville office because she "thought it would be safer".

"The checks had not been removed from the clinic because she thought it would be safer but because she had been instructed by Randeep Mann to remove the items," according to the indictment.

Dr Mann, who had a medical practice in Russellville, has also pleaded not guilty to earlier charges and remains in custody pending trial.

The Arkansas doctor has been in custody since his March 4 arrest on a single charge of possessing unregistered machine guns and explosives only permitted for the military. He is scheduled to be arraigned on the new charges on August 18.