

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:361

ANSWERED ON:24.02.2010

BAN ON ISSUE OF VISA TO INDIAN STUDENTS BY UK

Bhagat Shri Sudarshan;Jindal Shri Naveen;Reddy Shri Mekapati Rajamohan

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Britain has put a ban on issue of visa to North Indian students as reported in the media;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has raised the matter with the British Government authorities; and
- (d) if so, the outcome thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA)

(a) & (b) Britain has announced that with effect from 1 February 2010 it would temporarily stop accepting student visa applications at 3 Visa Application Centres in North India (New Delhi, Jalandhar and Chandigarh).

Other details of the announcement are as follows :

Applicants for other visa categories could continue to apply even at the 3 centres in North India (New Delhi, Jalandhar and Chandigarh).

Application centres in West and South India would remain open for all visa categories including student visas.

Applicants for student visas from North India could apply to visa centres in West and South India. Prior appointment by email would be mandatory.

The suspension was a temporary act and the UK Border Agency would review this at the end of February 2010.

(c) & (d) Yes. Government has raised the matter with the British authorities. In our interactions with them we have emphasized the need to safeguard the interests of bonafide Indian students. Augmentation of staff strength at the visa section of the British High Commission to cope with the large increase in the number of visa applications has been suggested. In an announcement on 13 February 2010, the British authorities have said that from 1 March 2010, 3 three visa centres in North India (New Delhi, Jalandhar and Chandigarh) will start accepting visa applications from those students who want to study higher education courses, whether foundation degrees, undergraduate or postgraduate. The temporary suspension, however, remains in place for those wanting to study at lower levels.