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Title: Stress suffered by the Indian students due to closure of Trivalley University in U.S.

SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL (VIJAYAWADA): Mr. Chairman, Sir, we are all aware that in January this year, the Tri Valley University in US has been shut down by the US authorities and more than 1500 students were on the road. Virtually, they have been haunted by the US authorities. We have seen the instances where they have been radio-tagged; they have been detained for 23 days.

They have been put in prison with hardened criminals. All of us in this House expressed our concern and anguish in February. I personally went to the US in March. We also met all the students there. We also went to the Embassy there and we had a meeting with the Ambassador. But in spite of that, a lot of NTAs have been issued there, and none of them have been cancelled.

Now, four days back, on the 28th July, we came to know that there is one more University in the U.S., University of Northern Virginia, near Washington has been shut down. More than 2,500 students are studying there. Out of them, 90 per cent are Indians and a majority of them are from Andhra Pradesh. They come from very backward regions like Srikakulam, Mahabubnagar, Anantapuram and Prakasam District.

Sir, all of us know as to what happened to Tri-Valley students, where more than 1,500 students have been haunted, and they have been living like in exile. When I went there, I met a couple of students. There is one girl called Anusha. In fact, she lost her pregnancy because of the pressure of the US authorities and the stress that she has witnessed. There is one more girl from Delhi called Rachna. She was eight months pregnant and she was living in a small village in Illinois State. She was shivering and she was very well worried and frightened as to what was going to happen to her. Fortunately, Indian community people had helped her. NATS, ATA, TANA, NATA and all of them came to their rescue and they engaged lawyers. Now, nobody knows what is going to happen to these 2,500 students who are studying in the Northern Virginia University.

The irony is when I went in March, the US authorities themselves, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement, in the presence of the Ambassador, asked the students to transfer to Northern Virginia University. At their request, most of the Tri-Valley University students shifted their status to the Northern Virginia University. At that time also, the students told me: "This University also looks like a fraud but the authorities are asking us to go and join this University. We are joining there. We do not know what is going to happen to us." Really that is what happened.

After four months, on the 28th July, the FBI, the ICE and the Student and Exchange Visiting Programme have raided that University and declared all the 2,500 students out of status. We do not know what is going to happen to these students.

Last time also, we requested the hon. External Affairs Minister, Shri S.M. Krishna ji that he or the Prime Minister should directly talk to the President of America. When one American student is arrested here, the President of America will directly talk to the MEA authority. But here, 1,500 students of Tri-Valley were virtually on the roads and they were living like in exile. Now, 2,500 students are again out of status.

So, what we request the Government is that the Government should talk to the authorities there and ask them to give six months' time for them to change their status. In the middle of the academic year, they will not get any admission in any other University. Either they should be allowed to transfer to F1 Visa or they should be allowed to go to Dependent Visa or H1 Visa. At least six months' time should be given to them before they are declared as out of status. Otherwise, all these 2,500 students also will face the same fate of the Tri-Valley students, where they have been detained, radio-collared, and they are living in shame there. Unfortunately, it is an alien land, it is a foreign land. All of them are youngsters and they are like our children.

When they spoke to the Indian Ambassador to the US virtually they were all in tears. I would like to convey this to the Government, through you, Sir. We want the Prime Minister himself to speak to the President of America to ensure that our children are safe there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shrimati Botcha Jhansi Lakshmi is also associating with the issue raised by Shri L. Rajagopal.

Now, the House stands adjourned to meet again tomorrow at 11 a.m.

20.14 hrs

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock

on Thursday, August 4, 2011/Sravana 13, 1933 (Saka).

* Not recorded.

* Not recorded.

* Not recorded.

* Not recorded as ordered by the Chair

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* Speech was laid on the Table.

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