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Title: Need to encourage the spirit of free thought and expression in all educational institutions in the country.

DR.. SHASHI THAROOR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM): Independent thought, uninhibited deliberation, right to dissent, and free speech in institutions of higher education, is indispensable to the democratic character of India. However, the recent incident in two prominent Central universities of our country are evidence that we have failed to protect our students and scholars from political interference by individuals and organizations that used arbitrary processes to uproot academic freedom.

Academicians from hundreds of universities in India abroad have joined in solidarity to uphold tolerance, freedom of expression and autonomy in education. It is imperative for India, as a youthful democracy, to encourage this spirit of free thought and expression in all educational institutions and uphold the fundamental rights guaranteed under Article 19 of the Constitution.

I, therefore, urge the Government to ensure that there is no interference in the function of educational institutions and uphold academic and intellectual freedom to promote an open and democratic society.