

**PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

INDIA AUSTRALIA EDUCATION COUNCIL TO BE CONSTITUTED

New Delhi: April 09, 2010

A landmark initiative to constitute the India-Australia Education Council has been agreed on by India and Australia. A first of its kind, this Council will bring together government, academia, business and industry of both the countries to further bilateral collaboration in the education sector. Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister of Human Resource Development, and Ms. Julia Gillard, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australia decided upon this in a meeting held yesterday in Melbourne, Australia, in recognition of the fact that education is central to sustained, inclusive and equitable growth.

Two other landmark initiatives agreed by the Ministers include setting up a Joint Faculty Development Programme as also the organisation of a bilateral Inter University Convention of Vice Chancellors. These initiatives, together with the expansion of the existing Education Exchange Programme to include all levels of education, are aimed at greater cooperation in the education sector between the two countries.

Three MoUs in the field of education were also signed in the presence of the two Ministers :

- MoU between Association of Indian Universities and Universities Australia.
- MoU between Central Board of Secondary Education and Australian Council of Education Research and
- MoU between The Energy Research Institute (TERI) and Deakin University.

The discussion between the two ministers also explored various ways to further the strategic partnership between India and Australia. Issues relating to the safety and well being of Indian students in Australia and other related matters were also discussed. The two Ministers emphasised that people-to-people contacts, including student interactions, are at the heart of the bilateral relationship, in building bridges of friendship and understanding and acting as a significant resource for future development of the relationship.

Later in the day, Shri Sibal discussed with Premier Brumby, the steps taken so far by the Victorian government to address the concerns of international students. In this meeting, Shri Sibal expressed his deep concern on the continued incidents of assaults on Indian students and requested Premier Brumby for credible data on the incidents that have taken place over the past one year as also information relating to the status of the trials, the charges framed and convictions. He stressed the importance of setting up an institutional mechanism for sharing such information. He also requested the Premier of Victoria about extending transport concession to international students and increase in accommodation facilities for international students.

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