

SATURDAY, JULY 4, 2009

Hindustan Times

NEW DELHI • LATE CITY • Rs 3.00

Australian MPs want to visit Tibet

To see for themselves under what conditions Tibetan people are living

HT Correspondent
Dharamsala, July 3

NOTWITHSTANDING CHINA'S sharp criticism over their meeting with the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, the visiting Australian all-party delegation on Friday expressed disappointment over the Chinese government rejecting the 'Memorandum for Genuine Autonomy' submitted by the Tibetan delegation to the Chinese counterparts last year.

The delegation, headed by Michael Danby, member of Australia's Labour Party and convener, proposed to visit China to ascertain the situation in Chinese-controlled Tibet.

"We want to visit Lhasa to see for ourselves under what conditions the Tibetan people are living," said Michael Danby, addressing mediapersons here.

Australian parliamentarians expressed serious concern over the transmigration of the Chinese into the Tibetan areas.

"The day is not far when Tibetans will become a minority in their own land," said senator Nick Xenophon.



HT PHOTO
The visiting Australian MPs addressing mediapersons in Dharamsala on Friday.

The visiting Australian parliamentarians supported the Dalai Lama's quest for more rights for Tibetan people within the provisions of the Chinese constitution.

"We support the Dalai Lama's Middle Way proposal for peacefully-negotiated settlement of the Tibetan issue," stated the members of the delegation.

The Australia all-party group for Tibet emphasised that the Chinese should enter into 'sincere' negotiations with Tibet.

"We support the memorandum as a basis of constructive negotiation on Tibet's future and will continue to encourage the Chinese government to enter into sincere negotiations. The Australian parliamentar-

SOON, HARMONY MARCH IN MELBOURNE

IN RESPONSE to a question, delegation leader Michael Danby regretted the racial attacks on Indian students in Australia. He said the strength of Indians had grown dramatically from the past few years. Policing was being improved in areas dominated by the Indian community, so that racial attacks could be checked. Danby said Australian citizens would organise a Harmony March in Melbourne to instill a sense of security among the Indians living in Australia.

ians exhorted China to permit mediapersons to visit the areas of China-administered Tibet. "Many journalists of Australia are keen to visit Tibet," said 27-year-old Senator Sarah Hanson Young, who happens to be the youngest person ever elected to the Australian Parliament.

Young observed that there was a need for more people to people link between the Chinese and Tibetan people.

The parliamentarians said they would run a sustained campaign to muster support for the Tibetan cause on their return to Australia.

Supporting the Tibetan

cause, the delegation members expressed concern over the "deterioration in conditions inside Tibet since the last year. In the 50th year since the Tibetan uprising of 1959 and the Dalai Lama's exile, we express our deepest concern and sympathy over the enduring situation in Tibet," the parliamentarians stated jointly.

Earlier, the Australian delegation called on the Dalai Lama to discuss the Tibetan issue. They also held different rounds of meetings with Tibetan Prime Minister Samdhong Rinpoche and members of the Tibetan Parliament.