

Foundation stone laid

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NEW DELHI, JULY 11. The Delhi Chief Minister, Sheila Dikshit, laid the foundation stone of the Action For Autism (AFA) National Centre here on Saturday. Noted danseuse Shovana Narayan was present at the function.

Speaking on the occasion, Ms. Dikshit pledged the support of the Government. The support assumes importance in the light of the Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram's announcement in his Budget speech that the UPA government would extend the benefit of Section 80DD and Section 80U to persons with autism, cerebral palsy and multiple disabilities.

Shovana Narayan recited shlokas on the occasion. This was followed by a song "Mindblind" by students from the Open Door School for children with autism. The song highlighted the puzzling world of autism.

The national centre will try to address the needs of the growing number of children diagnosed with autism. The building under construction will house the National Autism Organisation with function-specific units focusing on education, training, advocacy, research and rehabilitation.