

## Newspaper Clips

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# IIT, UGC Standoff Reaches Council

Meeting tentatively scheduled on Oct 1

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**New Delhi:** The standoff between IITs and the University Grants Commission (UGC) is now set to reach the IIT Council, the highest decision-making body of the 16 elite engineering schools headed by the Union HRD minister.

Miffed with the higher education regulator for its attempt to regulate their course structures, IITs had proposed that the matter should be taken up by the Council of which the UGC Chairman is also a member. It is learnt that HRD minister has agreed to the idea and the meeting of the council is tentatively scheduled for October 1.

Confirming this development, IIT Kharagpur Director Partha Chakrabarti, who first wrote to the ministry against the UGC circular asking IITs to offer courses as per established nomenclature, told ET in an SMS, "I am given to understand the minister has decided that the issue will be discussed in the IIT Council where all IITs participate and also UGC. I think this is the right decision and I would like to thank the HRM (Smriti Irani) for **deciding on a proper approach**. I have not received a formal notification yet, but it should be clear soon, when we get the agenda."

The matter will be first taken up by the standing committee (read sub-group) of the IIT Council in the next two weeks. Renowned nuclear scientist Anil Kakodkar, who is the head of the standing committee, has already expressed his displeasure over the UGC's move.

The controversy is rooted in an UGC circular which was sent to all institutions of higher education, including

## Higher Tiff

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**NUCLEAR SCIENTIST** Anil Kakodkar, head of standing committee, has already expressed his displeasure over UGC move

**IF IITS WERE TO** implement UGC direction, then IIT Kanpur and IIT Kharagpur would have to tweak their four-year Bachelors of Science degrees



IITs, in the aftermath of the Delhi University's Four-Year Undergraduate Programme row, asking them to ensure that their degrees conform to UGC specifications. The circular raised a storm with the IISc Bangalore locking horns with the UGC over this, and now IITs. If IITs were to implement UGC direction, then IIT Kanpur and IIT Kharagpur would have to tweak their four-year Bachelors of Science degrees.

# 5 new IITs to start functioning from next session: HRD Ministry

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 28

THE five new IITs announced by the BJP-led government in the Union Budget are likely to start functioning from the next academic session, the HRD Ministry has said.

“We have already written to the states to identify two sites before the site selection committee of the Ministry visits the states and submits the reports. However, we plan to start the new IITs from tem-

porary campuses from the next academic session as has been the case with the earlier IITs,” a ministry official said Thursday.

The five new IITs would be set up in J&K, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala.

Currently, there are 16 IITs across the country.

As per estimates, each of the new IITs would entail an investment of roughly Rs 1,800 crore.

Officials said as per the plan, the older IITs would initially mentor the new ones.

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**COURSE CORRECTION:** The institutes look to increase job readiness; focus on spoken and written communication skills and Android app development, among other things

## IITs Get Help to Spruce up Students' Soft Skills

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New Delhi: They can crack the toughest math, but some need help to improve their communication skills, developing a positive body language, even a crash course in developing Android apps. The establishment of new Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), a faculty base and curriculum unable to keep pace with changing times, rising competition and the changing rural-urban student mix has led to employability issues at the premier engineering schools. They're trying to fix this by bringing in some outside help.

IIT Hyderabad is in the middle of a pilot to assess speaking, reading and writing skills of its 1,500 students. The institute—rated as one of the best among the newer IITs in research—tied up with IT skilling firm Talent Sprint to conduct computer-aided tests for BTech, MTech and PhD students. Those found wanting will have to undergo a 36-hour remedial coaching programme on body language, effective professional communication, listening and paraphrasing and articulating thoughts. The tests are mandatory for all first-year students from next year.

“Our students are good in technology and engineering but communication is vital in the real world. Whether they be-

come CEOs, CTOs, or entrepreneurs, they need these skills,” said Uday B Desai, director, IIT Hyderabad.

The need for such tests has assumed importance in the face of changing rural-urban demographics at IITs, and the sheer absence of soft skills training at schools in big cities. “We'll also learn as we go along,” Desai said. “The problem is much deeper and complex, unlike running a course in mathematics.”

To enhance job readiness, other IITs are seeking external help as well. Plans include assessments such as those conducted by Talent Sprint, getting trainers from the corporate world, business schools and the British Council for English lessons, effective professional communication, body language, resume writing and crash courses on Android app development.

Mohandas Pai, chairman of Manipal Global Education and a member of the Anil Kakodkar committee on autonomy for IITs, sees these as much-needed changes. “The IITs are a dream destination for thousands of students who come from a different socio-economic strata. Bringing them up to the mark is important. The IIT curriculum is very theoretical and such hands-on programmes will boost employability.”

IIT Kanpur tied up with the British Council this year to conduct English tests focused on conversation skills and written and spoken fluency. It will get other organi-

### Upskilling: What the IITs are Doing

**IIT HYDERABAD**  
In the throes of a pilot test to assess speaking, listening, reading, writing abilities of its BTech, MTech, PhD students through Talent Sprint

**IIT KANPUR**  
Tied up with British Council this year to conduct English tests focused on conversation skills and written fluency. Will get other organisations to help students with aptitude and technical tests

**IIT KHARAGPUR**  
Will conduct year-long learning workshops and on-campus courses on Python (a coding language), analytics with R programming, and Android app development through Venturesity

**IIT MADRAS**  
Will focus on more hands-on soft skills training for interviews and body language

**IIT GUWAHATI**  
Is in talks with business schools and coding platform providers for mock tests. Is putting in place a series of structured classes that will cover the basics of software

sations to help students with aptitude and technical tests. The institute will also set up a Career Development Center (CDC) this year for helping students make informed decisions on job opportunities. “CDC will provide exposure to opportunities outside of traditional careers. Knowledge of MBA programmes, IAS training, inter-disciplinary programmes shall be provided to students, and CDC will aid them in preparation and application,” said

an IIT Kanpur spokesperson. “Since industry skills are changing, and placements are getting more competitive, the new IITs want to put their best foot forward from day one,” said Santanu Paul, managing director of Talent Sprint and an IIT Madras alumnus. Well-established colleges are setting up skill programmes to maintain their stature, he added. “If an employer hires lesser students this year, the college is not going to wait till

next year for course correction. It will start implementing skill programmes now.”

IIT Guwahati is in talks with business schools and coding platform providers for mock tests. “The plan is to conduct soft-skills workshops to infuse confidence in our students,” said a spokesperson.

Venturesity, set up by IIT Kharagpur alumnus Subhendu Panigrahi, will conduct a year-long workshop at IIT Kharagpur for online and on-campus courses on Python (a coding language), analytics with R programming, and Android app development. “We have finalised these courses because of industry demand,” said Panigrahi, who helps seek out talent for angel and venture capital-backed companies.

“The number of IITs has gone up, but getting quality faculty is a challenge,” said Srikanth Sundarajan, IIT alumnus, and a venture capitalist at Helion. Sundarajan feels there's a significant difference in quality between the IITs in the 90s and now. “These skills should be a part of the curriculum. Institutions which were very good are receding towards mediocrity fairly quickly,” said Sundarajan, also a visiting faculty member at IIT Bhubaneswar.

“It's a good step, and would help polish students who are mainly focused on technical courses,” said P Thiruvengadam, human capital leader, Deloitte. IIT Delhi dropout Azhar Iqbal concurred. Iqbal, a Kishanganj resident, dropped out of IIT

Delhi last year to pursue his startup that's developing the News in Shorts app. “Coming from a small town, I found it challenging to read lengthy stories in newspapers. Students from small towns lack exposure, and this will help at the time of recruitments,” he said.

New in Shorts delivers top news stories in 60-word, bite-sized portions, something that emerged from his difficulty with long news stories. It raised seed investment from Times Internet and entrepreneurs including Flipkart co-founders Sachin and Binny Bansal in July.

“Skilling programmes need to be specific in terms of needs and delivered with focus. They assume greater importance as hiring by companies during the last few years was limited,” said VS Raju, former director of IIT Delhi.

IIT Madras will also lay strong emphasis on soft skills training. “We will be more hands on with training students on sitting through interviews and body language. Students are bright, but some of them could do with support,” said Babu Viswanathan, placement advisor, IIT Madras.

## **5 NEW IITs MAY START FROM NEXT SESSION**

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 28

The five new IITs, proposed in Narendra Modi government's first budget, are likely to start functioning from the next academic session.

Sources stated that the Union human resource development ministry has written to each of the five states to identify two sites for setting up these prestigious institutes. The institutions are likely to begin operations from temporary campuses by 2015, sources stated.

"We have written to state governments to identify two sites before the site selection committee of the ministry visits respective states," officials said.

## Stifled by UGC, colleges seek a bigger voice

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/management/stifled-by-ugc-colleges-seek-a-bigger-voice-114082801173\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/management/stifled-by-ugc-colleges-seek-a-bigger-voice-114082801173_1.html)

**As UGC seeks to align undergraduate courses in IITs and private and autonomous institutes, the clamour for its reform rises**

The University Grants Commission, or UGC, which funds half of - and regulates most of - college education in India, has had a busy summer. With [Smriti Irani](#) at the helm of the ministry of human resource development, which oversees education, UGC has taken on the venerable Indian Institutes of Technology, Bangalore's Indian Institute of Science and Delhi University in what seems to be an attempt to align all [undergraduate courses](#) in the country to a three-year duration.

The [IITs](#) are fighting back, even as UGC is facing flak for a somnolent period when it allowed Delhi University to run a four-year undergraduate programme, or FYUP, for a year before scrapping it in June. Those who were closely involved with the scrapping of FYUP, such as Nandita Narain, professor at St Stephen's College and president of Delhi University Teachers' Association, says all UGC wants is to discuss the undergraduate programmes with the colleges and universities. "One of the criticisms that UGC faced when it rolled back Delhi University's [FYUP](#) was that it was being inconsistent," says Narain. "UGC does not want to curtail the four-year programme everywhere, it only wants universities to justify their position."



However, those on the other side of the fence feel the regulatory body is not in the habit of holding dialogues. "Though UGC's notification on the undergraduate programme is not wrong, it should have consulted the IITs on this matter," says Gautam Barua, former director of [IIT Guwahati](#) who headed the institute for a decade. "Academically, UGC and IITs can sit across the table and discuss this issue."

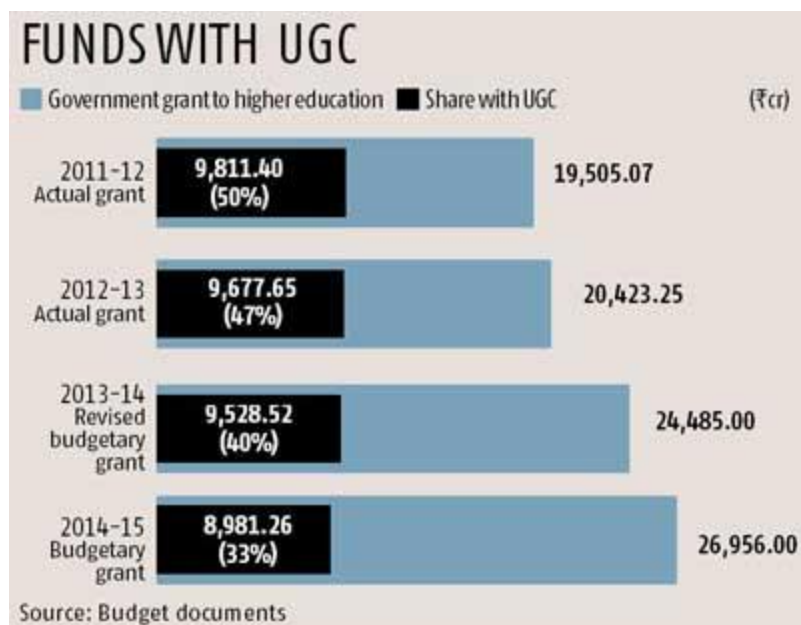
India's 10+2+3 policy mandates an undergraduate course of three years, but many science programmes have run four-year courses for a long time. The IITs, for instance, offer four-year programmes in engineering as well as five-year dual degree programmes. The four-year science undergraduate programme at the century-old Indian Institute of Science, or IISc, in Bangalore had 15,000 aspirants fighting for 114 seats this year.

UGC's reversal to a three-year regime has evinced mixed reactions. The new, privately-funded Ashoka University in Sonapat, perhaps lacking the experience to deal with regulators, complied. It has reduced its FYUP to three years, making the last year optional, and terming it a year of research. Similarly, IISc had decided to add a bracketed addition to the name of its undergraduate course after the face-off. Instead of it being called a BSc, or Bachelor of Science, programme, it will be referred to as BSc (Research).

"The matter is settled now," Anurag Kumar, who took over as director of the institute the day the UGC order challenging

the four-year course landed on his desk, told Business Standard from Bangalore.

Kumar refused to comment on UGC's way of functioning, saying, "It is a government organisation. It has a job to do." But others are not so reticent. The regulator's missives have resulted in a sharp clamour for a re-examination of its role, especially since it combines regulation, approval and funding of higher education in India. "As it stands, UGC plays the roles of advising, regulating and funding agency of nearly all universities, and the government in power has huge control over it. This must change," wrote Vishwesh Guttal, professor at IISc, in independent website, The Conversation.



Much of UGC's clout comes from its financial powers. It controls and disburses grants given by the ministry of human resource development to institutes such as IISc and Delhi University. In 2011-12, UGC was the disbursing agency for half of funds marked for higher education. In 2014-15, the sum it has for disbursals is around Rs 9,000 crore, or 33 per cent of the total.

Given its financial power, state-run universities are often beholden to UGC. It also awards private universities the sought-after "UGC-recognised" label. The sort of influence the body can exert in higher education can be gauged from the fact that India has 178 private universities, 165 deemed-to-be universities, 45 central and 317 state universities, besides numerous private colleges.

And UGC is not averse to using its power. The experience of Meera Ramachandran, who was principal of Delhi University's Gargi College from 2005 to 2013, shows UGC's money-disbursing power hung like a Damocles' sword over the heads of colleges. "For anything you wanted to put across, they tended to be a bit threatening," says Ramachandran, and it was only once in a while the head of UGC "saw your point of view".

Currently, UGC is headed by Ved Prakash who has served the government in various capacities, including as director of the Staff Selection Commission, the panel that recruits people for government posts. He offered no replies to the questions sent by Business Standard on e-mail. His office repeatedly said he was out of station and would respond to the numerous phone calls made to him, but he did not.

However, in an interview to The Indian Express on August 25, he said, "Where is the question of encroaching on the authority of IITs? It is a question of ensuring uniformity in nomenclature of degrees."

### Branding powers

Giving institutions its stamp of approval also gives UGC undue power. C Raj Kumar, vice-chancellor of O P Jindal University, set up with a corpus of Rs 400 crore by industrialist Naveen Jindal, says even though UGC recognition is not mandatory and his university had not sought funds from the regulator, it helps to have UGC's approval. As things stand, he says, "people in India are generally comfortable when something is approved or recognised by somebody."

UGC regulates colleges through a system of inspections, in which teams of assorted experts go and tick off boxes on infrastructure, faculty and student numbers. It then apprises the university or the college of compliance or non-compliance with the norms set by UGC. This recognition process can take up to two years.

"I think that while UGC has, in general, the statutory power to do the job of regulating education, the problem has been implementation and vision," says Philip G Altbach, director of the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College, US, who has worked in India and researched regulation in higher education in other countries as well. "I think that in large part, UGC has failed to effectively regulate Indian higher education."

In the United States, Altbach points out, universities are accredited by regional accreditors that function somewhat like NGOs. They demand a careful self-study from every university in a decade and then visit the institution to evaluate the data. Each institute makes the cut based on its own goals and performance - there is no standard metric. The colleges are not ranked, one either passes muster or doesn't. A university can also be put on probation for a short time to fix its shortcomings.

All of this does not have legal standing, but if an institution is not accredited, it is not eligible for any funding from the government for student loan programme, research and so on. In other words, without accreditation, no institution can work. A small number of institutions do fail to get accreditation and often go out of business.

In India, accreditation, self-regulation and raised entry barriers to higher education can provide a solution. A 2008 committee to review the working of UGC, headed by scientist Yash Pal, expressed concern at the mushrooming of engineering and management colleges of low quality. While stressing the need for private investment, it raised doubts about the funding for such institutions. It felt the money was mostly "unaccounted wealth from business and political enterprises or from capitation fees."

The landscape has changed since then, with a number of high-investment universities being established through the backing of industrial houses and bodies like the Azim Premji Foundation and Shiv Nadar Foundation. The number of students enrolling in low-quality institutes has fallen, indicating that market forces are indeed creating a churn. However, this does not obviate the need for a good regulator. As Kumar of O P Jindal University says, a regulator can "create checks and balances to see that those with a strong philanthropic commitment" get into higher education. Far too many institutes are allowed entry, he says.

Irani's ministry, it seems, is trying to solve the demand for regulatory reform through yet another committee. It will be headed by Hari Gautam, former UGC chairman and advisor to the chairman of a private medical university in Rajasthan. He declined to comment on how he hopes to restructure UGC. The committee has two other members. The lack of equitable representation - it has no members from the southern states - is not the only reason why it is being criticised. "Every time they carry out the same exercise (of forming a committee)," says H Chaturvedi, director of Birla Institute of Management Technology. "A regulator should be like a gardener, it should be supportive. It should promote higher education and focus on how to raise standards."

Instead, many point to how UGC has wasted time locking horns with another educational regulator, the All India Council for Technical Education, or AICTE, over who should oversee business-education courses. While the regulators fight it out, it is perhaps not a coincidence that few Indian universities find themselves making it to global listings of excellence in education.

## **IIT-Indore to host industry academia conclave in Sept**

Hindustan Times (Indore)

INDORE: In a bid to ensure better placements and internships, the Indore branch of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) will organise an Industry Academia Conclave-2014 on September 12 and 13.

This is the third time that an interactive session will be held at the institute for which companies from all over the country have been invited.

“We usually invite companies to come over and meet the students so that new horizons can open up to them,” said Nirmala Menon, the PRO of IIT-Indore.

The conclave will be helpful for students who wish to undergo internships at these premium institutions. Varad Vyapari, the student in-charge of the education cell of IIT-Indore, said, “This year that we are coming up with something, which has companies coming for all the fields and branches of the institute.”

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# Deferred Placements Buoy Student-Bizmen

Clutch of IITs working on allowing Plan-B for graduating students who choose entrepreneurship over a career

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**Mumbai:** Giving in to popular demand from graduating students smitten with entrepreneurship, a clutch of IITs across the country has decided to offer 'deferred placements' to students who would rather float a new business than sit for a job interview now.

As many as 13 students from the Class of 2015 at IIT-Bombay have applied for deferred placements this year to pursue entrepreneurial ventures. Of these, eight are planning for-profit ventures and five are going for social ventures. The institute is likely to choose 10 from among the 13. It had toyed with deferred placements last year when only one student applied, but the idea has found takers only this year.

IIT-Madras, also encouraged by student demand, is rolling out deferred placements for the first

time this year. IIT-Kanpur has also been considering the same. IIT-Guwahati General Secretary (placement cell) Manish Arora expects at least 7-8 students to opt for deferred placements this year compared with 2-4 last year.

**IIT officials say the number of students interested in pursuing entrepreneurial activities post graduation has gone up tremendously in recent times**

popular at top IITs, but are gaining traction in IITs only this year.

Such initiatives help spur the appetite for entrepreneurship and risk-taking among young graduates at the country's premier engi-

neering institutes.

Students are excited about entrepreneurship even though the job market is picking up once again. This year, companies such as Goldman Sachs, Amazon and eBay are offering salaries that are 20% to 40% higher than last year.

"The number of students interested in pursuing entrepreneurial activities post graduation has gone up tremendously," says Mohak Mehta, placement manager at IIT-Bombay. "By opting for deferred placement, a student is assured of a Plan B which acts as a safety net in case he fails to succeed in his venture."

Malegaon boy Abhijit Patil needed the deferred placement option to convince his parents to let him give entrepreneurship a shot. IIT-Bombay's Patil and his two friends run a 3D printing and scanning business.

'Fall-back Option gave Courage' >> 19

## The Techpreneurs

Students Opting For Deferred Placement

• Student/institute  
• Startup (area)

• ABHIJIT PATIL  
(IIT-Bombay)

• 3D PRINTING,  
SCANNING

• VAIBHAV ANTIL  
(IIT-Bombay)

• MUSIC TECHNOLOGY

• MAHESH RATHORE & GREESHMA UNNIKRISHNAN  
(IIT-Bombay)

• BIOMEDICAL DEVICES

• RANGANATHAN K  
(IIT-Guwahati)

• CONSULTANCY VENTURE



## 'Fall-back Option Gave Courage'

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Patil and his partners have been conducting workshops and providing 3D printing services to IIT-B professors and students for the past few months, and have already broken even on their initial investment of about ₹4 lakh.

"I come from a small town and both my parents are teachers, so entrepreneurship after engineering college isn't the most common route," he says. "Knowing that I had the option to come back for placements gave me—and my parents—the courage." At least 15-20 students at IIT-Madras are interested in startups, says Vishranth Suresh, academic affairs secretary. "We have had 7-8 students whose ventures didn't take off as expected. They had approached us to sit for placements later. We didn't have a policy in place then, which is why we want one now," he says.

At IIT-Bombay, Mahesh Rathore and Greeshma Unnikrishnan, both second-year M.Tech students, plan to produce novel biomedical devices. Dual-degree student Vaibhav Antil and six friends are working on a modern approach to the traditional Jukebox.

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# IIT के 'आंत्रप्रेन्योर्स' को डेफर्ड प्लेसमेंट का गिफ्ट

IIT बॉम्बे के 13 स्टूडेंट्स ने इस साल डेफर्ड प्लेसमेंट के लिए एप्लिकेशन दिया

[ श्रीराधा डी बसु | मुंबई ]

आंत्रप्रेन्योर बनने की हसरत पालने वाले आईआईटी स्टूडेंट्स के लिए अच्छी खबर है। आईआईटी ने वैसे स्टूडेंट्स के लिए बाद में प्लेसमेंट ऑफर करने का फैसला किया है, जो कैम्पस प्लेसमेंट में जॉब के लिए इंटरव्यू देने के बजाय अपना बिजनेस खड़ा करना चाहते हैं।

आईआईटी बॉम्बे के 2015 क्लास के 13 स्टूडेंट्स ने इस साल आंत्रप्रेन्योरशिप की खातिर डेफर्ड (बाद में प्लेसमेंट के लिए इंटरव्यू देने) प्लेसमेंट के लिए एप्लिकेशन दिया है। इनमें से 8 स्टूडेंट्स प्रॉफिट वेंचर्स यानी मुनाफा कमाने वाला बिजनेस करेंगे, जबकि पांच ने सोशल वेंचर यानी सामाजिक क्षेत्र में काम करने का इरादा जताया है। संस्थान डेफर्ड प्लेसमेंट के लिए 14 में 10 स्टूडेंट्स का चुनाव करेगा। इस तरह के प्लेसमेंट का आईडिया सबसे पहले पिछले साल आया, जब एक स्टूडेंट ने इसके लिए अप्लाई

किया। हालांकि, इस आइडिया का ट्रेंड इसी साल बढ़ा।

आईआईटी मद्रास में भी स्टूडेंट्स की मांग पर इस साल पहली बार डेफर्ड प्लेसमेंट सिस्टम लाया जा रहा है। आईआईटी कानपुर में भी इस पर विचार चल रहा है। आईआईटी गुवाहाटी के जनरल सेक्रेटरी (प्लेसमेंट सेल) मनीष अरोड़ा को इस साल 7-8 स्टूडेंट्स के यह विकल्प चुनने की उम्मीद है, जबकि पिछले साल ऐसे स्टूडेंट्स की संख्या 2-4 थी।

डेफर्ड प्लेसमेंट के तहत स्टूडेंट्स अपना वेंचर शुरू करने के लिए प्लेसमेंट को एक या दो साल के लिए टाल सकते हैं। अगर उनका बिजनेस सफल नहीं होता है, तो वे फिर से कैम्पस में आकर नौकरी के लिए इंटरव्यू दे सकते हैं। आईआईएम में यह सिस्टम काफी

पॉपुलर है, लेकिन आईआईटी में यह ट्रेंड इसी साल नजर आ रहा है।

इस तरह की पहल से देश के प्रीमियर इंजीनियर संस्थानों के ग्रेजुएट्स को आंत्रप्रेन्योरशिप के लिए जोखिम लेने को प्रोत्साहन मिलेगा। जॉब मार्केट के रफ्तार पकड़ने के बावजूद स्टूडेंट्स आंत्रप्रेन्योरशिप को लेकर काफी उत्साह में हैं। इस साल गोल्डमैन सैक्स, एमेजॉन और ईबे जैसी कंपनियां पिछले साल के मुकाबले 20-40 फीसदी ज्यादा सैलरी ऑफर कर रही हैं।

आईआईटी बॉम्बे के प्लेसमेंट मैनेजर मोहक मेहता ने बताया, 'ग्रेजुएशन के बाद आंत्रप्रेन्योरशिप में दिलचस्पी दिखाने वाले स्टूडेंट्स की संख्या में जबरदस्त बढ़ोतरी हुई है।'

**डेफर्ड प्लेसमेंट चुनने वाले IIT बॉम्बे के पांच स्टूडेंट्स सोशल वेंचर खड़ा करना चाहते हैं**





# Beyond Nehru-Gandhis: UGC to Name Chairs after 'Unsung' Heroes

Varsity watchdog on mission to draw up list of 50 names that could include Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, Madan Mohan Malviya and Zakir Hussain

Ritika Chopra  
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**New Delhi:** For decades, the Nehru-Gandhis have 'made' their names in centres of excellence, but it's now the turn of a whole new lot to lend their glory to India's best research chairs and institutions.

In what would mark a fresh change in the education iconography of the country, the University Grants Commission is embarking on a mission to identify a host of unsung social figures/thinkers and recognise their contribution by dedicating research centres in their name. ET learns that Jan Sangh stalwart Deen Dayal Upadhyaya,

spiritual leader Swami Vivekananda, educationist and founder of Banaras Hindu University Madan Mohan Malviya, former presidents S Radhakrishnan and Zakir Hussain, religious and social reformer Raja Ram Mohan Roy, and philosopher-queen of Malwa Ahilya Bai could figure on this list, which could have as many as 50 names. The government, however, has no plans to rename centres and institutes that currently carry the name of members of the Nehru-Gandhi family.

UGC Chairman Ved Prakash told ET that the regulatory body would soon set up a committee to propose the names of social reformers and thinkers. "The committee will draw up a list based

on the contribution made by them in different fields. Once the personalities are finalised we will either name chairs or centres of excellence after them, which will propagate their work and conduct further research in their area of expertise."

UGC will start each centre of excellence with an initial grant of ₹7.5 lakh. The move, according to government sources, is aimed at correcting the previous regime's "bias" in naming educational centres after the

Nehru-Gandhi family and honouring those ignored under Congress regimes. According to an RTI reply of 2012, there are 99 educational institutions named after Nehru-Gandhis.

Ved Prakash refused comment on whether the decision had anything to do with the predominance of the Nehru-Gandhi name in the education sector.

Modi regime's first budget featured a host of schemes named after Upadhyaya, Shyama Prasad Mookerji and Malviya.



# New model to keep women from fleeing IT profession

**WASHINGTON:** An Indian-origin researcher's 12-year-old model may help reverse the exodus of women from information technology (IT) profession by creating a more diversified work environment, scientists say.

Studies show women are significantly underrepresented in the IT field, and the number of women who have graduated with degrees in computer and information science have plummeted from 37 per cent in 1985 to 18 per cent in 2011.

The failure to "stop the bleeding" stems, in part, from the industry's reliance on an oft-cited, outdated and understudied research model, said Cindy Riemenschneider, from Baylor University's Hankamer School of Business.

"We have to look deeper



into the areas that really need to be addressed," Riemenschneider said, explaining that employers and experts have been focusing on the wrong challenges facing women in the IT profession.

For example, there have been numerous studies and efforts focused on work-family conflict and organisational structures.

But a new study shows that those areas are less significant

than challenges found in occupational culture and informal inter-office social networks.

These areas emerged as more integral in a recent study by Riemenschneider and colleague Deborah Armstrong, associate professor in Florida State University's entrepreneurship, strategy and information systems department.

They started with a 12-year-old model developed by researcher Manju Ahuja, which, they contend, included popular assumptions that had not been thoroughly tested.

Riemenschneider and Armstrong tested those findings by surveying IT professionals from a Fortune 500 company over a period of three years.

Using the results of their research, they were able to build upon Ahuja's model and pro-

pose a new model they hope will "re-energise the dialogue regarding creating a more diversified IT work environment," according to the study.

Riemenschneider said women who advance within a company often find few female mentors. She suggested allowing women to utilise peer networking and mentoring via professional organisations.

"The further women move up, the fewer female mentors they have. Women might be mentored by a male, and the lens he looks through might not be the same one she looks through," Riemenschneider said.

"Employers need to be proactive to help employees at whatever stage, to keep them within the company, so they can move up the corporate ladder," she said.

PTI

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## SPACE

# NASA deep-space rocket, SLS, set for blast off in 2018

Once finished, it will propel spacecraft beyond Earth's orbit

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Washington, August 28

The US space agency's powerful deep-space rocket, known as the Space Launch System (SLS), aims to blast off for the first time in 2018, NASA said Wednesday.

The SLS has been in development for three years already, and when finished it should propel spacecraft beyond Earth's orbit and eventually launch crew vehicles to Mars by the 2030s.

NASA has now completed a thorough review of the project, signifying formal space agency

commitment to the 70 tonne version of the SLS at a cost of \$7 billion from 2014 to 2018. "The programme is making real, significant progress," said William Gerstenmaier, associate administrator for the Human Explorations and Operations Mission Directorate at NASA.

"We will keep the teams working toward a more ambitious readiness date, but will be ready no later than November 2018."

The Government Accountability Office (GAO), however issued a report last month that called into question the space's agency's current funding plan for SLS, saying it "may be \$400 million short of what the program needs."

The GAO also raised concerns about the development sched-

ule and how engineers will integrate hardware that was designed to fly on a cancelled NASA programme known as Constellation that would have returned humans to the Moon.

Gerstenmaier said NASA was taking those concerns into account and is seeking to address the GAO's recommendations.

The SLS is NASA's first heavy-lift launch vehicle in over 40 years, and the space agency has estimated total costs in developing the first of three SLS variants at \$12 billion.

The SLS will "provide an unprecedented lift capability of 130 tonnes, which will enable missions even farther into our solar system, including such destinations as an asteroid and Mars," NASA said.