

Newspaper Clips

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Where do the new IITs stand?

As IIT aspirants consider their options, we kick off an eight-part series profiling the new institutions

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In 2008, the union human resources development ministry announced eight new IITs in a bid to set up institutes of excellence throughout the country, taking the number of all IITs to 15. Recently, the government said it would set up four more of these as laid out in the 12th five-year plan.

However, even as the new ones are announced, the second generation of IITs - in Hyderabad, Ropar, Patna, Gandhinagar, Indore, Bhubaneswar, Mandi and Jodhpur - seems to be struggling to live up to the IIT brand, with classes operating out of makeshift campuses, faculty shortages and unfilled seats.

All they need is time, say former and present IIT directors. IIT-Guwahati, set up in 1995, and is among the newer of the old IITs, had its share of similar problems and scepticism. "There are issues when any new IIT starts," said Gautam Barua, director of IIT-Guwahati. "We started out 15 years ago, but when we moved to the campus in 2000, within time, everything had become smooth."

"It all depends on my son's score. Our first preference is, of course, the old IITs, but we will definitely consider the new ones as well, if he can't make it to the established institutes. The quality can't be that different."

-Vilas Gatlwar, parent of IIT aspirant

"The rationale was that some parts of the country don't have an IIT," said Bhaskar Ramamurthi, director of IIT-Madras. "There are so many good candidates who don't get through the JEE (Joint Entrance Examination)."

Adding seats hasn't blunted the competition, which means the demand for an IIT education is as high as ever, despite an array of other options now available. This year, 4.85 lakh students competed for 7563 seats. Therefore, only one exam taker out of every 64 got in.

"Students are considering the new IITs as options," says Vinay Kumar, CEO, Rao Academy, which coaches students for the IIT-JEE. "However, in my experience, these institutes are preferred only after BITS Pilani, which is more established."

"I have received good feedback about the new IITs from former students," says Pravin Tyagi, director, IITianSpace, a coaching institute. "What they say is that the syllabus remains the same, and only the infrastructure is not at par with the other IITs. That will take time."

Full profile of IIT-Patna, page 5

"I've heard that the quality of education is not at par with the older IITs, so frankly, I'm not considering the new IITs. I would rather go to BITS Pilani or the Vellore Institute of Technology, if I don't get into any of the established IITs."

- Mihir Kulkarni, IIT aspirant

DU, IIT, Jamia, JNU take first step to plan first meta university

Students can mix and match study modules of institutes, create flexible curriculum for courses of their choice

NAVEED IQBAL

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 20

FOUR of India's leading educational institutions have begun consultations on a new collaborative programme that will allow students to mix and match study modules these institutes offer, and create a flexible curriculum.

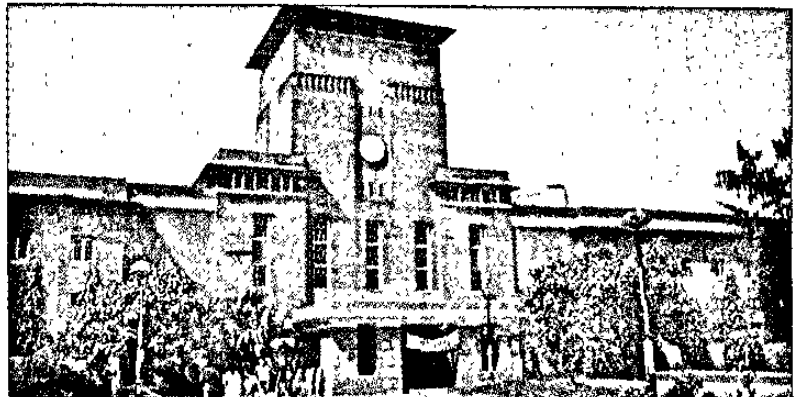
Representatives from Delhi University, Indian Institute of Technology, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and Jamia Millia Islamia held their first meeting this month to give shape to the country's first 'meta university'.

JNU Vice-Chancellor S K Sopory, who represented the university in the coordination meeting, said the four universities are trying to provide students the best of choices and more courses.

"It is still at the preliminary stages. The courses, credit systems and other minor details are yet to be worked out," Sopory told *Newsline*.

Existing rules prohibit students registered at one university from attending classes or courses offered at another, unless there are exchange arrangements.

Delhi University Vice-Chan-



cellor Dinesh Singh said work on the collaboration began after Prime Minister Manmohan Singh announced at a meeting of the National Innovation Council that the government was contemplating a meta university.

"The vice-chancellors of the participating universities met after the announcement and it was decided that as a pilot project, these four universities in Delhi will take it up," DU V-C said.

Under the system, the collaborating universities will provide, and recognise, credits to the students for different courses and facilitate student mobility across disciplines.

Each of the four institutions participating in the pilot project has constituted a team of two professors, who met about a

week ago to look into the intricacies of starting such a university.

Jamia Vice-Chancellor Najeeb Jung said, "No new campus would be required for this concept. The current campuses of these varsities will suffice for the needs of the meta university."

Jung said the university is likely to start in July next year. A member of the meta university deliberations panel from Jamia, S M Sajid, said the idea is to pool in resources and expertise from all these universities and provide the best to the students.

The institutions will take up research projects together in the future, after consulting experts from different fields. Sajid said climate change, education and public health are the areas that will be worked upon.

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Less policing for higher education centres from 2012

APPROVAL PROCESS Regulators UGC, AICTE to trust institutes, but will impose heavy penalty for misinformation

Chetan Chauhan

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NEW DELHI: Higher education is set to see a measure of liberalisation as two regulators will no more send their teams to inspect the functioning of universities and other institutes but rely on self-disclosure by the bodies they control.

However, the two higher education regulators — the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and University Grants Commission (UGC) — will impose a heavy penalty for giving incorrect information.

The exercise is in connection with granting approval for new courses or the upgrade of facilities.

“We have provided the self-disclosure statements of more than 10,000 institutions on our portal from next year,” said AICTE chairman SS Mantha.

The information relates to infrastructural facilities such as land and laboratories, teaching staff, etc.

It will be the council's first

Inspection and approval regimes promote corruption, sloth. We need to move away from this paradigm to authentication and automatic approvals

Working group report prepared by HRD ministry

major step towards the new approval process. Mantha said the council would trust the institutions for what they say. “Inspection will be done only if there is a complaint,” he said.

The UGC is also moving towards a more transparent approval process and fund-disbursal mechanism based on accreditation by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, an autonomous institution under it.

Both regulators in the past have received flak for imposing inspector raj on the approval process, resulting in allegations of corruption.

“Inspection and approval

regimes promote corruption and sloth. We need to move away from this paradigm to authentication and automatic approvals,” said a working group report prepared by the HRD ministry for the 12th five-year plan (2012-17).

Reforms in the approval process have been pending for long but now the government has decided to act. The relevant data on most of the institutions are available online with the regulatory bodies.

The ministry also wants to move from demand-based grants to entitlement-based ones with a measurable outcome. “Central funds cannot be the right of an institution,” a senior official said. “The institutions should compete for central government funds”.

The UGC administers more than 75 schemes of funding to central and state universities. “The process of approval and sanction is not only time-consuming, it also suffers from opaqueness and prolixity,” the ministry document had said.

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Super education regulator gets cabinet approval

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NEW DELHI: A single over-arching independent body in place of multiple higher education regulators to promote academic excellence and research was approved by union cabinet on Tuesday, almost three years after the idea was generated.

The National Council for Higher Education and Research (NCHER), which will subsume existing regulators such as the University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), will cover all streams of higher education except the medical and agricultural areas.

The NCHER will, however, not get constitutional status as recommended by academician Professor Yash Pal in his report in 2009 but would be an independent statutory body outside the purview of the HRD ministry. "It will be a body of academics for academics," a government official said.

The council will be a 70-member body with representation from the states and professional bodies to decide on policy issues. The NCHER Bill proposes to have an 11-member executive committee to execute the council's decisions.

COURSE CORRECTION

- National Council for Higher Education and Research will develop national curriculum for higher education. This will bring uniformity in courses and raise quality of institutions
- To enforce credit system for institutions. This will help students migrate from one institution to another and carry credits
- The new body will also streamline fund flows
- It will make appointment of V-Cs transparent through a national registry of academicians

The draft bill mandates the council to bring reforms in higher education for setting up quality institutions across India with an aim to increase the gross enrolment ratio to 30% by 2020 from 20% in 2010.

There are over 11 million students pursuing higher education in more than 600 universities and 24,000 colleges in the country today. In the next five years, the government expects new 700 universities and 10,000 colleges mostly in the private sector. To achieve this, the council is expected to shift from the multiple-approval-based approach to self-regulation based on accreditation.

Education reforms on backburner

IT IS never easy to gauge the acceptance of the change process and the mood of a nation in a country like India, which is almost a sub-continent with several intricacies at the social and political level. The year that is coming to an end, in particular, has been a difficult year for the country. Issues like corruption are at centre stage and next-generation reforms, on matters that are vital for social, educational, industrial and economic transformation, have completely lost the momentum. This certainly is not a good sign for an economy that is under pressure. The State needs cogent action to ensure accountability and transparency for fighting the evils that spread through corruption and corrosion of value systems. Both these aspects are linked with social and political reforms but they are more linked with change in the education system — right from primary to higher education level.

It is in this domain that governments at the centre and in the states have failed to keep up the tempo of reforms. The minister for HRD claims that they have taken several decisions in the education sector, the kinds of which have not been taken in the past sixty years. They, for the past two and half years, are making the claim that revamping of the entire education system is on the anvil. The ministry claims that as many as 13 bills are pending in Parliament. The minister almost shows helplessness in accelerating the process of getting bills through the Parliament.

However, this does not reflect the complete picture. Recently the four reports of HRD standing committee on the bills related to the national accreditation regulatory authority for higher educational institutions, the entry of foreign ed-

Arun Nigavekar



URGE FOR GROWTH: Educational institutions in small towns are more eager for enabling policies and clear operating strategies that would bring them into the mainframe of economic change

ucational institutions, the educational tribunal and the prohibition of unfair practices in technical educational institutions, medical educational institutions and universities have been submitted to the HRD ministry. These recommendations reflect the broad cross-party consensus and even though it is the prerogative of the ministry either to accept them or to modify or reject them, it is yet not clear what is the stand of the ministry on these reports.

It is now quite evident that these bills may not come to discussion in the present session of Parliament. There are many other important bills on reforms in education that are

still at a preliminary level. The concept of creation of an umbrella structure for all the important legal entities that deal with higher and technical education, namely bodies like UGC, AICTE and 11 other such bodies connected with medical, legal, and other professional disciplines, is not getting past the ministerial level itself and hence this important bill that would bring a broader uniformity in professional and educational system is put on the back burner.

These delays create completely non-functioning agencies; this is what is happening at both UGC and AICTE. They have gone so much into their shell that no new initia-

tives are taken and funds are not being used. Internal information indicates that UGC has just used 30 per cent of plan allocations. The entire system has lost its focus. Bodies like UGC and AICTE should have members that truly reflect the best in the domain, they should come from different parts of the country and should reflect every layer of the educational system — state universities, central universities, national institutions and so on.

If one looks at the membership of the Commission today one can see that state universities, that carry the maximum burden of educating the youths — they constitute 80 per cent

of the total number of professional and higher educational institutes — are not on the radar of the HRD ministry. They prefer persons from cities like Delhi, Mumbai and other metros than many other places where meaningful changes are happening at the delivery and quality level. Indeed, the larger part of India is outside the metros. Educational institutions in rural areas and small towns are facing the challenges and aspirations of the youth and are more eager for enabling policies and clear operating strategies that would bring them into the mainframe of economic change. They want technology, they want connectivity and they desire to be a part of the skill development revolution.

Kapil Sibal, in a recent debate held at Mumbai, gave an impressive speech, but said that the opposition, even though they agree with reforms and also the bills when discussed on phone, change the approach when the matter comes before the business committee. The common man does not know what is truly happening, but one thing is certain that in the past 12 months things have gone from bad to worse, at a grass root level. Children from 220 million families in this country are suffering and are slowly losing faith in the system. This is a bad sign. The true power of democracy comes alive when state, business, academicians and society engage in challenging each other, not to create chaos but to create harmony. Education is too precious a commodity to become a political battleground. We hope 2012 brings greater sense in the minds of those who make the policies and those who implement them.

(The writer is former chairman of UGC and former VC of University of Pune)

Paucity of space in Patna

PROFILE: IIT-PATNA The institute still operates from a temporary campus and doesn't have sports facilities or a girls' hostel

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The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Patna is housed in a 10-acre transit accommodation on the New Government Polytechnic campus in Patliputra Colony. The institute does not have the feel of a college campus, rather the buildings resemble army barracks. It has been given 500 acres at Bihta, 25 km from the state capital, by the Bihar government, but is waiting for the ministry of human resource development to release the funds it needs to start construction work there.

Currently, the main campus is split into four clusters — the three-storied institute building (housing a computer centre, electrical lab, electronics lab, large-scale integration lab, communication lab, physics and chemistry lab, faculty office, library and most of the classrooms); an extended mechanical engineering workshop, which resembles a locomotive shed; advance electrical lab next to the canteen; and the science building, which was rid of police encroachment only two years ago, and now houses the optics lab and material science lab besides the departments of physics, chemistry and mathematics.

The hardware lab, a classroom, conference hall and a section of the faculty sitting room and the scholars sitting place is outside the main campus, adjacent to what was



IIT-Patna is housed in a ten-acre transit complex in the New Government Polytechnic

conceived as the Software Technology Park of India. The temporary campus has four boys' hostels across the road, but the girls' hostel is located 2 km away, and it has virtually no sports facilities.

Infrastructure

■ **Campus:** In a temporary 10-acre complex on the New Government Polytechnic campus in Patliputra Colony, Patna

■ **Hostels:** Four for men; female students stay in a building about two km from

the institute.

■ **Messes:** Two for men and one for women

■ **Laboratories:** 36 labs—nine for mechanical engineering, eight for electrical engineering, four for computer science, eight for physics, six for chemistry and one for humanities

■ **Classrooms:** 11 classrooms spread across three clusters of buildings

■ **Sports facilities:** The institute does not have tennis courts or a swimming pool. Students began to play

BASIC FACTS

- **Opened on:** August 6, 2008
- **Highest rank to gain entry this year in the general category:** 3324
- **Lowest rank to gain entry this year in the general category:** 4586
- **Seats:** 120 seats, 115 took admission this year; five are vacant
- **Previous years' vacancies:** Three in 2010, 29 in 2009 and 28 in 2008
- **Faculty:** The institute has 55 members in the academic staff and no vacancies; the goal is to increase this to 70 to 75 by March next year
- **Students:** 495; 456 men and 39 women
- **Teacher-student ratio:** 1:9

cricket and soccer almost two years after the institute was established, after it rented a building belonging to the Software Technology Park of India behind a boy's hostel. Female students do not have an area for sports

■ **Placements:** The placements cell has contacted around 25 companies this year, of which Microsoft, Hero MotoCop and Tata Motors have already extended offers to six students, three each from mechanical engineering and computer science. Recruitment of electrical engineering students began on December 2

Student life

■ **Annual festival:** Anwasha attracted participants even from outside India. Students do have a problem raising sponsorship money from public and private companies for the annual event.

■ **Clubs:** There are six major clubs: cultural, literary, sports, technical, environment and photography. Of these, the cultural and literary clubs are the most popular



"The best part is the good faculty and the high teacher-student ratio. But we do not have proper areas for games"

Kumar Shiladitya, VP, Students' Gymkhana



"My priority is to get the campus at Bihta ready soon. We've got 500 acres of land. We are waiting for funds to start construction"

Anil K Bhowmick, director

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Sibal moves Copyright Bill

Amendment Seeks To Bring Law In Tune With Intl Treaties

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: After being disallowed by the opposition last week, Union HRD minister Kapil Sibal on Tuesday moved a bill in the Rajya Sabha to amend the Copyright Act.

The Copyright (Amendment) Bill, 2010, seeks to amend the Copyright Act, 1957, to fine-tune it with relevant international treaties and to introduce a system of statutory licensing to protect the owners of literary or musical works.

Sibal moved the bill for "consideration and passing" amid uproar by the opposition in the Upper House over a different issue. The opposition members were de-



The Copyright (Amendment) Bill, 2010, seeks to amend the Copyright Act, 1957, to fine-tune it with relevant international treaties and to introduce a system of statutory licensing to protect the owners of literary or musical works

manding home minister P Chidambaram's resignation alleging that he had helped a Delhi-based hotelier, who was his former client. But, Sibal could still manage to move the bill.

The opposition parties, including BJP, AIADMK and TDP, had prevented him from moving the bill last week, al-

leging that there was a "conflict of interest". The members had said that the minister cannot move the bill since his lawyer son represented a music company.

"According to Rule 294 of Parliament's Ethics Committee, a member having direct or indirect interest in a matter cannot move a bill... He

has conflict of interest," JD (U) member Shivanand Tiwari had said while preventing Sibal from moving it.

After question hour, Sibal could be seen talking to Tiwari. Sibal also spoke to BJD's Pyari Mohan Mohapatra, seeking his support. Later, nominated member Javed Akhtar could be seen interacting with Tiwari and commerce minister Anand Sharma went over to S S Ahluwalia (BJP) to build consensus over the bill. As the deputy chairperson announced tabling of the bill, BJP members could be heard demanding action against Chidambaram and CPM members trooped into the well of the House on the Mullaperiyar dam issue. The House was then adjourned.

HindustanTimes

Title : Nehru Place finds a notorious place on world map

Author :

Location : WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI:

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Nehru Place finds a notorious place on world map

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WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI An official US report has identified Nehru Place in New Delhi among the 30 most notorious IT markets of the world dealing in goods and services that infringe intellectual property rights.

"Nehru Place is reportedly one of the many markets in major cities throughout India that are known for dealing in large volumes of pirated software, pirated optical media containing movies and music, and counterfeit goods," said the report released by the US trade representative (USTR) on Wednesday.

This is the second time that Nehru Place, Asia's biggest computer and accessories market, has featured in the USTR list. The first was in March.

Housing around 3,000 shops, most of which deal in computers, software and accessories, Nehru Place is estimated to generate an annual revenue of more than ₹5,000 crore.

"There have been anti-piracy drives at Nehru Place that have largely targeted the retailers, but the need is to generate awareness among people so that the demand for pirated products goes down," said Sumanta Mukherjee, lead analyst at Cybermedia Research.

SEEDY HUB

- Nehru Place is one of the 30 most notorious markets in the world selling pirated or fake computers, software, accessories and music and movie CDs
- It features in the Out-of-Cycle Review of Notorious Markets report of the US trade representative
- With 3,000 shops, the market in south Delhi generates revenue of about ₹5,000 cr annually

Mukherjee felt that if prices of original products, especially software, are brought on par with international prices, the demand for pirated products will come down considerably.

"A case in point is the price of mobile handsets. As handset prices in India are comparable with those in other global locales, piracy of mobile handsets has seen a sharp dip," he pointed out.

"The encroachment in the market by vendors encourages selling of pirated software and other accessories. The authorities have failed to act against these vendors, who are scattered all around," said V Krishnan of the Progressive Channels Association of Information Technology, which has a major stake in Nehru Place.

HindustanTimes

Title : Indians invited for new Oxford scholarships

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Indians invited for new Oxford scholarships

LONDON: To attract the best students in the world, Oxford University's Blavatnik School of Government has announced 10 new scholarships that will be open to candidates from India. The ten scholarships will cover all tuition fees and living costs for students taking the School's innovative one-year Master of Public Policy degree.