

# Newspaper Clips

February 1, 2014

## **AICTE to open doors for foreign students**

M.P. Praveen

*Council to utilise surplus seats in institutions*



S.S. Mantha, chairman of AICTE, at the national conference on e-governance in Kochi on Friday.—Photo: K.K. Mustafah

The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is in the process of internationalising its institutions, whereby 15 per cent of surplus seats in these institutions will be open to foreign students from this year.

Talking to *The Hindu* on the sidelines of the 17th national conference on e-governance that concluded here on Friday, S.S. Mantha, chairman, AICTE, said the project was aimed at effectively utilising the excess capacity its institutions had created over the years.

“We have created a large capacity with almost two million seats across the country in the area of technical education. Like any other system, we have an excess capacity of about 15-20 per cent,” Mr. Mantha said.

While flow of students from the Europe or the U.S. was not expected, students from many Asian countries were likely to take advantage of the opening up of institutions.

On the Supreme Court verdict of April 2013 that decreed that the role of AICTE was not regulatory but advisory, he said the AICTE had been playing a regulatory role for almost 30 years.

The council was set up through an Act of Parliament passed in 1987. “There are specific objectives in the Act, and I believe that technical education in this country needs its own space. We earnestly seek and hope that the government restores the objectives of AICTE through an amendment of the Act,” Mr. Mantha said.

He said restricting the number of technical institutions just because seats were lying vacant would be short-sighted for a country like India. Half of the country’s population is expected to be below 30 years of age in the next six to seven years.

In India, about 50 million students appear for board exams, of which about 25 million clear it and enter colleges. If the education quality matrix was improved, leading to even a 10 per cent increase in the number of prospective college entrants, it would touch about 40 million to accommodate which there would not be enough colleges. “So what we are seeing is a transition where things are getting consolidated. What we have to do is improve the supply side and quality matrix, create alternate modes of education, thereby create more opportunities,” Mr. Mantha said.

Asked about the perennial issue of employability of technical graduates, he said denying students access was not a solution. The quality needed to be improved. A benchmark of minimum 70 per cent marks could be set for admission to engineering colleges. “But, that is not fair. For, the need is to create an enabling environment to get access to the system. Besides, denying access has social and political consequences. In education, you have to first give access and then ensure quality, which requires money,” Mr. Mantha said.

Printable version | Feb 1, 2014 12:07:15 PM | <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-kerala/aicte-to-open-doors-for-foreign-students/article5641690.ece>

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# IIT-B TO HOST PANEL DISCUSSION AS PART OF GAY RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

## Soon, audio emails and tweets that only you can hear

HT Correspondent

htmetro@hindustantimes.com

**MUMBAI:** Taking forward its support for the rights of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) community, the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay will hold a panel discussion on the controversial Section 377 on Sunday, as part of its two-day Entrepreneurship Summit.

In a first, the college will host a United Nations representative for the discussion.

The panel event is a part of the college's month-long, nationwide campaign, IOTA 377, which was launched close on the heels of the Supreme Court verdict criminalising homosexuality by upholding the Constitutional validity of Section 377. The institute is collaborating with the NGO Humsafar Trust for the campaign.

In 2011, IIT-B had set up an on-campus support group for the LGBTQ community, called Saathi.

During the past month, students from the institute and members of the Humsafar trust visited colleges across the country to advocate the rights of the LGBTQ community.

"We were given a slot of 20 minutes after the workshops of the entrepreneurship cell at each college. Prominent LGBTQ activists spoke about the community's rights during the sessions because we are not accorded a minority status in the country and are scarcely visible as a community," said a third-year student of IIT-B, who is part of Saathi.

The panel discussion on Sunday will also host eminent LGBTQ activists such as Parmesh Shahani, the head of the Godrej India Culture Lab. "Nearly 4,000 students are expected to attend the e-summit. The entrepreneurship cell decided to use the platform to send a strong message," said Pratik Agarwal, a student organiser.

**BERLIN:** Enter this room to hear out emails, listen to your latest tweet or have a 'floating' chat with your friend on facebook - all by placing sound in the room exactly where you want it to be! Sounds unreal!

Well, researchers at Technical University of Berlin in Germany don't think so. Once in their 'BoomRoom', you don't need to wade through clogged emails or endless Twitter timelines. Jorg Muller, a professor, has invented a more fun way of sifting through messages - sound.

In his audio-enabled space, 56 loud speakers direct sound to stationary and mobile positions in a space around you. An array of 16 gesture-recognising cameras allow you to steer and control this audio - essentially creating an isolated cocoon of sound that only you can hear. .

More urgent messages might buzz your scalp, said a report in NewScientist magazine. Gesture recognition would allow users to 'touch' an email to open it and have a computer read it out loud. While it comes to music, gestures such as moving your hands apart or bringing them together can alter qualities like volume, treble and bass. **IAN S**

# Infosys co-founder gives IISc Rs 225 crore

TNN | Jan 31, 2014, 12:24 AM IST



*Kris, a co-founder of the Bangalore-based IT giant, will give the money under the banner of the Pratiksha Trust, a charitable organization he has set up with his wife Sudha.*

BANGALORE: In one of the biggest philanthropic contributions to the Pure Sciences, Infosys executive vice-chairman Kris Gopalakrishnan has set aside Rs 225 crore to develop a Centre for Brain Research at the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore. It's also one of the single-largest donations the 105-year-old institute has received from an individual.

Kris, a co-founder of the Bangalore-based IT giant, will give the money under the banner of the Pratiksha Trust, a charitable organization he has set up with his wife Sudha. The trust funds education, research, innovation and entrepreneurship.

As part of the collaboration between IISc and the Pratiksha Trust, the latter will give the money over 10 years for the establishment and functioning of the research centre. It'll also be supported by the Centre for Neuroscience and other facilities at IISc and collaborate with hospitals across the city.

An international scientific advisory board chaired by Nobel laureate Prof Torsten Wiesel will guide the centre. Stanley Fahn (Columbia University), Sangram Sisodia ( University of Chicago), John Morris (Washington University, St. Louis) and Giovanni Frisoni (University of Geneva) are among

the members who will help start operations at the centre, set research goals, and guide it.

Kris will also fund the setting up of three chairs each in the departments of computer science, IISc and at the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras.

"The broad goal of the centre is to understand the functioning of the brain," said Vijayalakshmi Ravindranath, chairperson, Centre for Neuroscience, IISc. "We'll study how a normal brain ages and what factors lead to neurodegenerative conditions and diseases like dementia which are accelerated by old age. We'll work on whether it's possible to have an early diagnosis, better quality of life for those diagnosed with the problem and ensure treatment. The centre will also look at links between brains and computers and leverage existing understanding of brain functioning to create better models of computing," she said.

With its focus on clinical research, the centre is expected to have 50-75 faculty as well as visiting faculty and post-doctoral students. The centre will be an autonomous body in the institute.

"There are around 10 institutes in India which do work in these areas. But never has there been an institute which focused on one aspect. Therefore, this is an important initiative because the number of ageing people. In India is rapidly increasing," she said.

## 'INITIATIVE WILL BE A TRENDSETTER'

“ The human brain is one of the world's biggest mysteries yet to be fully understood. By funding and creating this centre with IISc, we're working towards creating a globally recognized, world-class facility that'll be at the cutting edge of research. We're hopeful that this centre will provide an impetus to future alliances between medical research and computing. We also hope the centre will attract funds from other sources and inspire similar partnerships

— K GOPALAKRISHNAN | INFOSYS EXECUTIVE VC



“ It's one of the best things that has happened to pure science research in recent times. I've always believed that private funding for research... is crucial for a country like ours. It's not possible for us to depend only on government support. Look at the US or S Korea — it is private funding which is supporting research... I'm thankful to Kris Gopalakrishnan for this gesture

— CNR RAO | SCIENTIST

“ The creation of this centre provides a wonderful opportunity to bridge the gap between science and engineering on the one hand and biomedical research on the other. The... initiative will be a trendsetter in private participation in research which is of direct relevance to human health

— P BALARAM | DIRECTOR, IISc

# Promoter can't be chancellor: UGC

Vishwas Kothari, TNN | Feb 1, 2014, 03:45 AM IST

PUNE: In a move that is unlikely to go down well with the heads of deemed universities, the [University Grants Commission \(UGC\)](#) has decided to stick to its earlier stated position that promoters or owners of the societies that promote deemed universities, cannot be chancellors of such institutions.

The commission passed a decision to this effect at its meeting held on January 10 after the HRD ministry had forwarded a bunch of proposed amendments to the UGC (Institutes Deemed to be Universities) Regulations of 2010, following a feedback exercise it undertook with the stakeholders. Chairman of UGC Ved Prakash presided over the meeting, which was attended by vice-chairman H Devraj, secretary U Basu, director Vikram Sahay and 10 members.

Apart from setting norms for the chancellor's appointment, the UGC also decided against other three proposed amendments regarding approval procedure for setting up offshore centres by deemed universities; allowing group of institutions to coalesce in order to be eligible for deemed university status; and providing for relaxation in the regulations.

The commission approved the remaining proposed amendments with a modification related to the publicly funded deemed universities. As per the modification, the governance system and management of such deemed universities will be in accordance with the decision of the central or the concerned state government, as the case may be, instead of the application of Clauses 5.1 to 5.9 mentioned in the original regulations. The clauses explain various aspects of governance including not-for-profit society under Public Trust Act, an independent board of management (BoM), composition of BoM, appointment of vice-chancellor etc.

"The regulations approved by the UGC executive body will now go for formal notification, which is expected to be released on the commission's website soon," a senior UGC official told TOI on Friday.

The commission's decision assumes significance for the city, which is home to six deemed universities. Four of these institutions — [Symbiosis International University \(SIU\)](#), [Bharati Vidyapeeth University](#), [D Y Patil University](#) and [Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth \(TMV\)](#) — are established by privately funded societies.

Of the remaining two, the [Defence Institute of Advanced Technology](#) is a deemed university set up under the [Defence Research and Development Organization](#) while the [Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics](#) is run by the Servants of India Society founded in 1905 by social and political leader Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

Vidya Yeravdekar, SIU's principal director and one of the three representatives of deemed universities on the UGC panel that had drafted the 2010 regulations, said, "The draft regulation, which was forwarded to the HRD ministry, provided for no such restriction on the promoters or owners of societies from being chancellors. It was the ministry's task force under Prof Tandon which changed the draft and introduced such a restriction. We wonder how such a change can be effected when the UGC is an autonomous body that had cleared the draft after due consideration."

"A society under the [Public Trust Act](#) is the main requirement to set up a deemed university. When a trustee or president of such society is an eminent academician then what is the harm in his/her being the chancellor," Yeravdekar said. "It is difficult to understand why there is so much discussion in the UGC or the HRD ministry on regulation of deemed universities when the government is promoting private universities in a big way. Also, what proposed amendments the UGC is pushing for when the 2010 regulations have been challenged in various high courts including Chennai and Karnataka, where the courts have directed status quo," she added.

According to Yeravdekar, "There were 130 deemed universities in the country as against around 62 private universities in 2009. While the number of deemed universities has remained constant, private universities have gone up to around 200. This gives a feeling of discriminatory approach on the part of the HRD ministry."

Vice-chancellor of TMV Deepak Tilak said, "The entire issue boils down to the control of deemed universities, which come up by way of societies under the Public Trust Act and the societies making a significant investment in infrastructure, work force and allied matters. Many times, the sponsoring society has a bigger canvas of activity to look after. No sponsoring society will be willing to let the control go to any outside person or body."

Tilak said, "The amended regulations would only result in the tendency to secure indirect control of deemed universities. After all, the financial budget and other key requirement of such institution has to be cleared by the society that promotes the deemed university."

**UGC Regulation on appointment of Chancellor:** Among the authorities of the deemed to be universities, there shall be a Chancellor who shall be appointed by the sponsoring society or the sponsoring trust. He/she shall be an eminent educationist or a distinguished public figure other than the president of the sponsoring society or his/her close relatives.