

Newspaper Clips

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'IIM council will not affect autonomy'

NEW DELHI: With the IIM-Ahmedabad opposing the government's move to set up a council of the premier B-schools and allow them issue degree instead of diploma, the Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry has clarified that it will not affect their autonomy anyway.

The ministry is formulating a bill to give statutory status to IIMs to enable them issue degree to their students. Setting up of a council of the premier B-schools is one of the components of the proposed legislation, which is yet to take a final shape.

"IIM council will just be a coordinating body and a forum to meet, unlike IIT council (which is highest decision making body of the premier technical institutes). The IIM councils will not have powers to review or issue any directive to B-schools. IIMs will remain autonomous and free to decide on their administrative issues like salaries, appointment and all," HRD Minister MM Pallam Raju said on Wednesday when his reaction was sought on the issue.

Union Higher Education secretary Ashok Thakur said the move to formulate a bill to give statutory status to IIMs and also set up a council of the B-Schools was not initiated by the Ministry on its own.



"It is other way round. Several IIM directors came and asked for it. We are not thrusting anything on them," he added.

A senior ministry official said that except IIM-Ahmedabad, other IIMs were keen on getting statutory status to their respective institutions in view of the fact that sooner or later foreign universities will come to the country and set up their campus as a bill seeking to allow their entry was pending with Parliament.

These B-school directors were of view that once foreign universities come and start operating in the country, it will create a problem for students of IIMs as it issues diploma while foreign institutions issue degrees.

The IIMs cannot award degrees since they have not been set up by Parliament and do not enjoy deemed-to-be-university status. The IIMs have been set up as societies under the Societies Registration Act.

The move has strongly been

objected by the IIM-Ahmedabad director and a section of faculty in the institute. They have questioned the necessity of enabling IIMs with powers to issue degrees in place of diplomas, saying the pass outs of the institute get good jobs world over and none of them ever complained that their diploma was not considered on a par with management degrees issued by other institutions.

"Only some faculty along with director of IIM-Ahmedabad has expressed some reservations on the issue. But, many other faculties of the institute have supported the move. Rest of IIMs including the new ones are also in favour of the bill," a senior ministry official said.

Higher Education Secretary said that a "consensus draft" has been arrived at after several rounds of discussion with IIM directors.

A meeting, to be presided by the HRD Minister, is scheduled to be held at Kozhikode during the recess of budget session of Parliament. "Minister will meet directors and discuss the issues before any decision is taken," he said.

The meeting of IIM directors with the HRD Minister is tentatively scheduled to be held on March 23 at IIM Kozhi.

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SOFTENING STAND

Council will not endanger autonomy of IIMs: Govt

Education secretary says the proposed IIM council will be a coordinating body and a forum to discuss issues

BY PRASHANT K. NANDA
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NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday said it will ensure that the proposed pan-IIM Council, a body that will coordinate the operations of the 13 Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), will not impinge on their autonomy even as some of the elite business schools resisted the move.

"We are not thrusting anything on anybody. It (the proposed council) does not have the power to direct. IIMs will continue to be fully autonomous," higher education secretary Ashok Thakur told reporters in New Delhi.

Contrary to popular perception that it's the ministry that is devising the plan, it's the IIM directors who had met the former human resource development minister Kapil Sibal for setting up such a body, Thakur said.

The IIMs provide postgraduate diplomas in management (PGDM) to their students and many IIMs say this is not well-accepted internationally. Other than the council, the draft



Differing views: A file photo of IIM-Ahmedabad. IIM-A's governing council chairman says that IIMs should be given an option on whether they want to join the council.

IIM Bill also aims to allow these business schools to award postgraduate degrees to the students.

"It's the directors of the IIMs who had come to the earlier minister and they had said that PGDM is internationally, strictly speaking, a non-degree," Thakur said. While the foreign university Bill will allow overseas institutes to award degrees to Indian students, institutes such as the IIMs will be handicapped as they only provide diplomas, Thakur said. Now that they have achieved a consensus on the draft IIM Bill, any remaining issues will be ironed out in a March meeting.

Still, some IIMs, including

IIM Ahmedabad, have been opposing the council, arguing that they excel in the quality parameters and don't need to be part of a council that will hamper their autonomy. IIM-A director S.K. Barua said that he has not seen the consensus draft.

"The existing arrangement has delivered results as regards IIM-A. The IIM-A Society that governs the Institute has 100 members; these members are actively involved in ensuring that the Institute performs and continues to move on the path of achieving greater academic excellence. IIM-B (IIM Bangalore) and IIM-C (IIM Calcutta), too, have performed very well. I do not think that

IIMs need an IIM Council. As demonstrated by the older IIMs, the Society-Board structure is capable of delivering excellent results," Barua said in an e-mailed response.

The proposed IIM Council will be a coordinating body and "a forum to discuss", Thakur said. "The council will not be like the IIT Council. IIT Council has real power. They can fix their salary. They can give directions but this is (just) a coordinating body. I don't know what kind of harm it will (cause)," Thakur said.

Barua said he understands that the "younger IIMs are pushing for a Bill so that they can award a degree instead of a diploma in management. They may like to keep in mind that how the qualification is named is of little consequence. What is more important is how the qualification is perceived. Would the perception change just by renaming the qualification? Unlikely".

"PGDM awarded by IIM-A (and by IIM-B, IIM-C and perhaps IIM-L) is recognized as a master's degree in management for admission to doctoral programmes in the best schools in the world by global rating and ranking agencies, and by recruiters. Similar recognition would be achieved by the new institutions over time once they deliver performance. And I am sure, they would," Barua said.

IIM-A governing council chairman A.M. Naik had said on 7 February that IIMs should be given an option on whether they want to come join the council. Naik is also the managing director of **Larsen and Toubro Ltd.** Meanwhile, the human resource development ministry said that they are in favour of a consensus and will move ahead by taking everybody on board.

आईआईटी की तर्ज पर नहीं होगी आईआईएम काउंसिल

पंकज कुमार पांडेय | नई दिल्ली

इंडियन इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ मैनेजमेंट (आईआईएम) के लिए प्रस्तावित काउंसिल, आईआईटी काउंसिल की तर्ज पर नहीं बनेगी। असहमति के सुर को देखते हुए केंद्र सरकार ने काउंसिल को केवल आईआईएम की कोऑर्डिनेटिंग बॉडी की तरह गठित करने का प्रस्ताव तैयार किया है। यानी आईआईएम की काउंसिल को आईआईटी काउंसिल जैसे फीस बढ़ोतरी, वेतन, परीक्षा या अन्य नीतिगत मामलों से जुड़े फैसले लेने का अधिकार नहीं होगा। काउंसिल भारतीय प्रबंधन संस्थानों के बीच समन्वय बनाने का काम ही करेगी। मानव संसाधन मंत्री-पल्लम राजू ने कहा कि संसद के बजट सत्र के पहले चरण के समाप्त होने के बाद सभी आईआईएम के बीच सहमति बनाने का प्रयास आईआईएम, कोझीकोड की बैठक में किया जाएगा। मंत्रालय का कहना है कि आईआईएम के बीच आम सहमति के बाद ही काउंसिल के संबंध में अन्य मंत्रालयों से रायशुमारी करके इस बाबत विधेयक संसद के समक्ष लाया जाएगा।

उच्च शिक्षा सचिव अशोक ठाकुर ने कहा कि आईआईएम काउंसिल बनाने का प्रस्ताव सरकार ने आईआईएम की तरफ से अनुरोध के बाद ही तैयार किया था। उन्होंने इस बात से इनकार किया कि काउंसिल के गठन को लेकर प्रबंधन संस्थानों में जबरदस्त विरोध है। उन्होंने कहा कि आईआईएम अहमदाबाद और कुछ अन्य संस्थानों की फैकल्टी की ओर से कुछ आशंकाएं जताई गई हैं। अंतिम फैसला करते वक्त हम इन सभी की राय को ध्यान में रखेंगे। कोझीकोड की बैठक में सभी मसलों पर विस्तार से चर्चा होगी।

उच्च शिक्षा सचिव ने कहा, आईआईएम काउंसिल कोऑर्डिनेशन बॉडी होगी। यह एक तरह से मीटिंग फोरम होगा। जहां सभी आईआईएम अपनी समस्याओं पर बात करें और आगे का रास्ता तय करें। सचिव ने कहा कि आईआईएम के निदेशकों ने मंत्रालय के सामने अपनी चिंता जाहिर करते हुए कहा था कि उनकी पीजीडीएम डिग्री को अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर मान्यता नहीं दी

कम्युनिटी कॉलेज के लिए बाहरी संस्थानों की ली जाएगी मदद

नेशनल ब्यूरो | नई दिल्ली. केंद्र सरकार पॉलिटेक्निक, आईटीआई और अन्य मौजूदा कॉलेजों के आधारभूत ढांचे का इस्तेमाल कम्युनिटी कॉलेज शुरू करने के लिए करेगी। इन संस्थानों की फैकल्टी का भी उपयोग किया जाएगा। साथ ही देश में इस नए कॉन्सेप्ट को सफल बनाने के लिए अमेरिका, ब्रिटेन जैसे देशों के कम्युनिटी कॉलेजों का सहयोग लिया जाएगा। मानव संसाधन मंत्री पल्लम राजू ने कहा कि हमारी प्राथमिकता रोजगारपरक शिक्षा की है। कम्युनिटी कॉलेज स्थानीय युवाओं के लिए मददगार साबित होगा। सरकार तीन सौ से ज्यादा कम्युनिटी कॉलेज जल्द शुरू करना चाहती है। राजू ने कहा कि कम्युनिटी कॉलेज का कॉन्सेप्ट हमारे यहां नया है। हम दुनिया के श्रेष्ठ उदाहरणों का उपयोग करेंगे। इसके लिए संस्थानों में आपसी समन्वय का प्रयास होगा और ट्रेनिंग दी जाएगी।

जाती है। विदेशी शिक्षण संस्थानों के साथ सहभागिता के लिहाज से भी आईआईएम की साझा दिक्कतों का उल्लेख किया गया था। मंत्रालय ने इन्हीं समस्याओं का समाधान करने के लिए काउंसिल के गठन का प्रस्ताव चर्चा के बाद तैयार किया। उच्च शिक्षा सचिव ने कहा कि आईआईएम की स्वायत्तता से छेड़छाड़ नहीं होगी। मंत्रालय का कहना है कि आईआईएम को वित्तीय रूप से भी आत्मनिर्भर बनाने की छूट है।

मोटी तनख्वाह पर बनेंगे निदेशक! : उच्च शिक्षा सचिव ने कहा कि कोई फैकल्टी सदस्य जल्दी निदेशक नहीं बनना चाहता। दरअसल उसे कंसल्टेंसी से ही काफी आय होती है और वह इसे नहीं छोड़ना चाहते हैं। मंत्रालय का तर्क है कि आईआईएम चाहें तो वे दुनिया के श्रेष्ठ लीडर्स को निदेशक के रूप में 40-50 लाख रुपए की तनख्वाह पर नियुक्त कर सकते हैं। इसके लिए आईआईएम को वित्तीय रूप से आत्मनिर्भर होना होगा।

Pioneer , ND 14/02/2013

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Raju to persuade IIM-A into backing 'degree' legislation

Once all IIMs agree, new law would enable them to award degrees

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad's (IIM-A) unwillingness to join a proposed Council of IIMs continues to put a spanner in the Union HRD Ministry's plans to bring the prestigious management schools at par with international degree colleges.

The IIM-A's reluctance has held up a draft legislation that would enable these B-schools to award degrees, instead of the current diplomas, apart from also bringing them together under a joint council. Union HRD Minister MM Pallam Raju is now set to intervene to ensure the IIM-A falls in line.

"All the IIMs have a view that though the schools are internationally recognised, they still award diplomas, contrary to the global practice. The directors have conveyed that awarding degrees would lift the IIMs to a more formidable position in the international arena," Raju said. The proposed legislation is likely to be given a final shape when Raju meets IIM

directors and chairpersons in Kozhikode next month.

HRD Secretary Ashok Thakur maintained that the proposed IIM Council will be only a "coordinating" unit which will not have powers to take any decision. "We are not forcing anyone. The Council will help them come on a single platform to deliberate and ponder over issues on how to become more global. This will be a forum just like IITs have now," Thakur said. He claimed several IIM-A faculties have already consented.

The IIM draft bill, modeled on the lines of IIT Act 1961, has been prepared by a five-member committee set up by the Union HRD Ministry and headed by a former SEBI chairman. The proposed legislation seeks to confer the IIMs the status of institutes of national importance, empowering them to award degrees instead of diplomas. It will also establish the IIM Council, similar to the Council of IITs, and pave way for appointment of more Government directors on IIM boards.

However, IIM-A Governing Council chairman AM Naik has expressed fears that the move would slow down the institute's effort to take it to the next level of globalisation. The IIM directors have had five rounds of meetings in recent times with the HRD Ministry over the issue with the latest being held in January end.

Govt ready with draft Bill to empower IIMs

Will allow premier institutes to grant degrees to students

ADITI TANDON/TNS

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 13 Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), India's premier management institutes, will soon be able to award degrees independently and claim their rightful place on the global stage.

The government has finalised a draft Bill to grant statutory powers to the IIMs so they can award degrees instead of the two-year postgraduate management diplomas they have been awarding thus far.

Being autonomous societies functioning on the basis of memoranda of understanding signed with the Ministry of HRD, the IIMs don't have powers to grant degrees unlike Central universities, IITs and deemed universities, which are all set up by an Act of Parliament or State Legislatures.

THE IIM BILL

- First proposed in 2007 to rein in IIMs that were not implementing OBC reservation
- Important if IIMs are to award degrees; currently they can only award diplomas; their PGDMs not globally recognised as degrees

Bringing the 13 IIMs under the purview of Parliament has now become urgent considering growing global competition in the field of management and the impending entry of foreign education providers into India. These are expected to offer tough competition to local B-schools, whose diplomas are not recognised abroad.

"Internationally, the PGDMs being offered by the IIMs are non degrees. That's a huge handicap. That's why IIM directors approached the ministry earlier asking to come

under a legislative umbrella to be able to grant degrees. We have evolved a draft which IIM directors have consented to. We will take it forward," said Ashok Thakur, Secretary, Higher Education, today.

IIM Ahmedabad Director Sameer Barua said he had not seen the consensus draft yet. Barua has been raising concerns around institutional autonomy to the IIMs in respect of their administrative and financial powers.

HRD Minister MM Pallam Raju today clarified: "The IIM Council being proposed under the IIM Bill will only be a coordinating body and a forum for discussions. It will not have the kind of powers the IIT Council has under its Act."

Concerns raised by the IIMs are also valid. Picture this - IIMs of Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Kolkata have become

independent of government funding and raise their own money. Once the Bill is finalised and passed as it is, all IIMs will have to subject their accounts to the CAG audit and maintain a separate account to keep the money received from the Centre and other sources, including endowments.

The IIM Bill, as proposed, doesn't address the role of states in the IIMs even when in many states these institutes have come up with the active support of the state government.

The Ahmedabad IIM came up on contributions by an industrialist, free land donated by the state and some operational cost from the Centre.

Raju said he would meet all IIM directors at Kozhikode after the first leg of the budget session of Parliament to evolve a consensus around the Bill.

Hindustan Times , ND 14/02/2013

p-10

Most IIMs open up, ready to offer degrees

Charu Sudan Kasturi

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NEW DELHI: Most Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) want to offer degrees and no longer fear that the move may clip their autonomy, the ministry of human resource development asserted on Wednesday, insisting that internal divisions — and not the government — were holding the plan back.

Only IIM Ahmedabad Director Samir Barua and a few faculty members are opposed to the proposed IIM Act that will enable the country's premier B-schools to offer degrees instead of the diplomas graduates currently get, education secretary Ashok Thakur said.

"All the other IIMs are on board," Thakur said, with HRD minister MM Pallam Raju seated next to him. "In fact, the plan

itself is driven by the IIMs. We do not want to thrust anything down their throats."

The IIMs currently offer post graduate diplomas in management, widely recognised as equivalent to the MBA. But several top universities require that applicants to their coveted PhD programmes hold postgraduate degrees - and not just diplomas

But the IIMs in the past have expressed fear that an umbrella

IIM Council that the Act would create could erode their autonomy in key areas, especially the power of each IIM to set its fees and admission criteria.

Now, the IIMs and government have decided that the Council will only have a recommendatory role.

Merits of a one-year full-time MBA at IIMs

The seventh of an eight-part series on the one-year full-time MBA at IIMs looks at the advantages and drawbacks of the course over a two-year programme



SHIKHAR MOHAN

The key benefit offered by the one-year full-time MBA at IIM, I believe, is that it gives you time to discover yourself before you manage others. In Indian society, the pressure to rise above the neighbour's kid is a constant one. The one-year full-time MBA at an IIM, by adhering to the original mission statement of an MBA as defined by the Association of MBAs – to “enhance and develop previous relevant experience” – gives you five years to pursue what your heart desires and will accept you with open arms, whether you chose to spend those years becoming a Ranji cricket player or a DJ at a club. Diversity and experience is respected and encouraged at the one-year full-time MBA at an IIM.

Second, as discussed earlier in the series, the learning environment offered by the course is incredible. The class is full of people who have seen corporate life inside out, and with almost 600 years of collective corporate wisdom available in a typical class of 60 candidates at an IIM, the peer learning that the course offers is amazing.

Third, from a pure economics view, the opportunity cost of a one-year MBA is half that of a two-year PGP. You save one year's post-qualification salary and join work faster.

Fourth, the one-year full-time MBA's placement process is better equipped to place experienced professionals, as opposed to the placement process of the two-year PGP. Since the bulk of the two-year PGP students at IIMs, on an average, have less than one year of work experience and almost 40 per cent of the students have zero work experience, most companies that come to recruit

two-year PGP students offer management trainee profiles, an entry-level position. Many two-year PGP candidates with 4-5 years experience struggle to find suitable profiles. Such candidates with greater than three years' experience may be better off pursuing the one-year course after gaining some more work experience.

Fifth, candidates pursuing a one-year MBA at IIMs receive a qualification recognised globally as an MBA, as opposed to the qualification earned through the two-year PGP course, which is recognised as a masters in management internationally – a course for candidates without work experience.

The one-year course offers global exposure for the entire batch through an international immersion, a higher salary and senior roles after graduation, as opposed to those gained from a two-year PGP course, and the academic rigour of a global two-year MBA in a year's time.

However, in case you are interested in pursuing management education right after college, without gathering any work experience, the two-year course will probably serve you better, as the extra year will give you more time to absorb concepts.

Also, since the one-year course crunches a significant portion of the two-year syllabus into a year, it becomes a bit heavy. Extracurricular activities take a hit and students find it difficult to participate in festivals on campus or indulge in sports. I hope that going ahead the contact hours for the one-year course are reduced in line with those of its counterparts in Europe so as to give students more time to appreciate the nuances of their subjects.

A clear advantage the two-year course enjoys over the one-year course in India is that it has been in existence far longer. The industry in India has well-established frame-

works such as the management trainee programme to induct graduates of the two-year course into the workplace; this makes the placement process smoother.

As opposed to this, many companies here are still figuring out how to best utilise the experienced talent coming out of the one-year full-time MBA and are establishing new frameworks for absorbing MBAs at senior positions. The frameworks have existed in companies abroad from the day the MBA degree was created. A student at a global B-school is simply not awarded an MBA degree

unless he has substantial work experience – HR processes at companies abroad, therefore, have well-developed processes to induct these senior hires.

The cost of the course is also a factor to consider when deciding which MBA to go for. The fees for the one-year course at the IIMs ranges between ₹14 lakh and ₹21.5 lakh. The two-year course is subsidised by the government and

the average fee across the IIMs ranges between ₹10 lakh and ₹14.5 lakh.

Lastly, there is no reservation in the one-year full-time MBA at the IIMs, as the course is wholly financed by the candidates. The two-year course, on the other hand, reserves approximately 50 per cent of the seats for OBCs, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. In case a candidate is applying under a reserved category, he should keep this in mind when planning his applications.

The writer is a globally awarded brand management & advertising professional and vice-president, marketing at CommonFloor.com, a leading real estate portal funded by US-based venture capital funds Tiger Global and Accel Partners. He can be reached at e09shikharm@alumni.iimdr.ac.in

The last part will appear next Thursday



ONE YEAR
MBA AT IIMs
DECODED
PART-VII

DNA Indore13-02-2013 P-2

IIT-I to launch dual degree course

Now students can pursue Ph D, PG together

Shruti Marwaha

Students can now pursue Ph D with post-graduate course in the Indian Institute of Technology-Indore (IIT-I) with plans afoot to launch a 'dual-degree programme' that will save their at least 18 months in getting the doctorate.

With this launch in coming academic session, IIT-I will become the first among the new IITs to start the course similar to that offered by its older counterparts in Mumbai and Kanpur.

IIT-I academic affairs dean Neelesh Jain told DNA that the PG degree courses of MSc and MTech will have two semesters of course work and one semester of thesis work that

EXPANSION

The PG degree courses of MSc and MTech will have two semesters of course work and one semester of thesis work that will overlap with the Ph D programme

IIT-I is probably the first IIT in the country to be starting the dual degree course with MTech in Communication & Signal Processing and Production & Industrial Engineering

After being selected for M Tech or M Sc through GATE, student will be given option of taking the dual-degree programme

will overlap with the Ph D programme. Thus students opting for the dual course, will not have to repeat it.

"IIT-I is probably the first IIT in the country to be starting the dual degree course with MTech in Communication & Signal Processing and Production & Industrial Engineering," he said adding it will also offer MSc in physics and chemistry in the upcoming session.

The institute plans to start with 12 seats in each of the four courses in MSc and MTech, which means that only 48 students will initially get the opportunity to pursue dual degree in the four specialised subjects.

After being selected for M Tech or M Sc through GATE score, the student will be given the option of taking the dual-degree programme.

Bengal Post Kolkata 13-02-2013 P-3

IIT-Kgp to fulfil dreams

■ OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA

Tippa Muniraja, a National Cadet Corps (NCC) air wing cadet from Bengal, is living his dreams by designing aircraft models. He is trying his level best to achieve his goal of seeing his aerofoil designs finding new wings to fly at international air shows in the near future.

At an interval of two years, aviation merchandise and military hardware from world over get showcased at Aero India, held in February in Bangalore, considered the aviation hub of India. Aero India's ninth edition saw its conclusion on Sunday. "Tippa is the brain behind resurgence in aero-modelling and IIT Kharagpur is fully supporting the endeavour with adequate funds," said Muniraja's commanding officer Wing Commander Trilok Bandhu Gupta, an IAF aeronautical engineer.

The B Tech, Aerospace Engineering second-year student from IIT Kharagpur, flight cadet Muniraja was among one of the recipients of the medals of honour from Governor M K Narayanan for individual excellence and achievement last week in Kolkata.

Apart from this, he is one of the only two aerospace engineering students in his batch who opted to join the air wing of the NCC. Although IAF authorities do not come to the IIT for campus selection, Muniraja is motivated enough to join the air force. In case Muniraja does not make it to the IAF, he says he will be pleased to work in any Indian aviation industry or the Defence Research and Development Organisation. Clearly, the NCC has instilled values of "nation comes first" in the mind of this young aerospace engineering student who hopes to see IAF pilots flying indigenously built aircraft in future.

Hindu ND 14/02/2013 p-15

HAL, IIT Madras Sign Technology Cooperation Initiative

HAL signed a Technology Co-operation Initiative with Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras), for establishing a Centre for Aerospace Transmission Systems (CATS) at HAL Stall on February 06, 2013. The initiative was signed between Dr Vijay Kumara, General Manager (RWRDC) and Dr M S Shanmugam of IIT Madras. The initia-



ive aims to undertake joint research in the field of transmission system for the helicopter and engine programs of HAL and to evolve required software and design solutions for different types of gears, bearings, lubrication system, vibration monitoring system and production technologies. Speaking on the occasion, Shri P Soundara Rajan, Managing Director (Helicopter Complex) said that designing Helicopters is a critical technology and it was high time for us to possess the knowledge on gearboxes and transmission systems. 'This is our first step towards defense preparedness to have our own knowledge base', he said. Prof Shanmugam of IIT Madras marked the signing of initiative as important milestone for HAL and IIT Madras. Dr R K Tyagi, Chairman, HAL, lauded the efforts of HAL, Helicopter Complex and IIT Madras for the initiative.

Hindustan Times , ND 14/02/2013 p-15

Education diplomacy faces test as Hollande lands today

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NEW DELHI : India's strategy of using education as a diplomatic tool faces a key test during French President Francois Hollande's visit this week, amid differences threatening an ambitious collaborative project both governments have cited to demonstrate close ties.

India is hoping France finally inks a formal MoU to jointly handhold the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Jodhpur, five years after the two governments first announced the project. Though a consortium of French universities has started research work with the IIT, the two countries are yet to sign a broader pact covering promised assistance from France, because of differences in perceptions over how the project could help India and France.

Failure to reach an agreement on the MoU during Hollande's

visit, starting Thursday, could force India to rethink its use of collaborative education projects as a tool of diplomacy, government sources have told HT.

"We need to re-evaluate whether this strategy is working," a senior official closely involved in the discussions with France said. "It's not just about France, our strategy as a whole is facing problems."

In 2007, India and Japan had announced plans to jointly sire IIT Hyderabad. But the collaboration with Japan over IIT Hyderabad has had a rocky journey too. The two countries are yet to sign an agreement for a ₹1,509 crore loan Japan promised the IIT. India has also asked Japan for an additional ₹100 crore grant for IIT Hyderabad, officials said.

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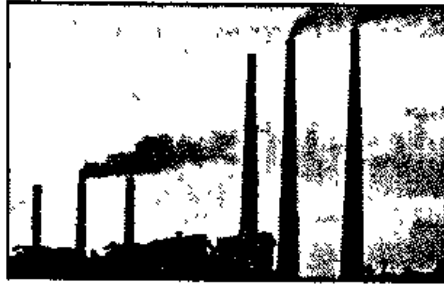
Study: Air pollution 5th biggest killer in India

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Air pollution is the fifth leading cause of death in India after high blood pressure, indoor air pollution, tobacco smoking and poor nutrition, with about 620,000 premature deaths occurring from air pollution-related diseases. Like China, India faces an unprecedented public health crisis due to air pollution, the Centre for Science and Environment's (CSE) analysis of government data and the Global Burden of Disease report's data on India has shown.

The green think tank released its own assessment and the global study's India specific data on Wednesday warning that the number of premature deaths due to air pollution had increased six fold over the last 10 years.

Air pollution is now the seventh leading cause behind the loss of about 18 million healthy years of life in India due to illness. It comes after indoor air pollution, tobacco smoking, high blood pressure, childhood underweight, low



WARNING SIGNS

nutritional status, and alcohol use. CSE's own assessment of the air pollution data generated by the government painted the grim facts that are leading to the public health crisis.

"Close to half of cities are reeling under severe particulate pollution while newer pollutants like nitrogen oxides, ozone and air toxics are worsening the public health challenge," CSE estimates say. Half of the urban population breathes air laced with particulate pollution that has exceeded the safety standards. As much as one third of urban population is exposed to critical level of particulate pollution. Smaller cities are among the most polluted in the country.

The data is a damning in-

dictment of India's supposed growing urban regions. Out of the 180 cities that are monitored for only two towns—Malapuram and Pathanamthitta—in Kerala meet the low pollution norms (pollution levels remaining at 50% below the standard) for all pollutants.

About 78% cities (141 cities) exceed the standard set for particulate matter of size below 10 microns (PM10). As many as 90 cities have critical levels of PM10 and of this, 26 cities have most critical levels of PM10, exceed the standard by more than 3 times. Gwalior, West Singbhum, Ghaziabad, Raipur, and Delhi are top five critically polluted cities.

The data analysis shows the situation is only getting worse with time.

"The PM10 monitoring network has doubled between 2005 and 2010—it has increased from 96 to 180 cities. During this period the cities with low level of pollution has fallen from 10 to 2 and the number of critically polluted cities have increased from 49 to 89 cities," CSE said.