

# Newspaper Clips

## February 24, 2011

Hindustan Times ND 24/02/2011 p-10

# India upset over UK visa rules

**TOUGHER** Govt warns UK that the 3 new norms it is proposing could harm flow of Indian students

ht **EXCLUSIVE**

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**NEW DELHI:** India has protested against a proposed new UK student visa regime that could crush the dreams of tens of thousands of Indian students who gain admission to British universities each year. The UK is today the top destination for Indian students seeking higher education abroad.

The human resource development (HRD) ministry and the ministry of external affairs have warned British authorities that the proposed new rules could severely reduce the number of Indian students going to the UK. The UK issued student visas to about 57,500 Indians last year, as opposed to about 32,000 by the US.



■ The UK is the top destination for Indian students seeking higher education abroad, but new visa norms may change it all. FILE PHOTO

Concerns over three controversial rules in the proposed UK regime were communicated to the UK Border Agency (UKBA) — the British authority in charge of visa and immigration — recently, top government officials have told HT.

Higher education secretary Vibha Puri Das also met British High Commissioner Richard Stagg last week to register India's concerns, the sources said.

China is also understood to have objected to the proposed new rules. The UK also recently independently unveiled a work-visa rule barring non-European Union students from working there for two years after graduating from a British university.

According to the new visa regime students can only apply for degrees higher than those

they already hold. This move would prevent an M.Tech, M.A. or M.Sc. from studying an MBA or any other master's programme in the UK, killing lateral movement of students across streams, the HRD ministry has told the UK.

The new rules also make it mandatory for foreign students to leave the UK after obtaining one degree before they can apply for another — a move that will prove expensive for students, officials argued.

Students keen on pursuing another course in the UK apply for the second programme while they are completing the programme for which they originally came to the UK.

A third rule will put student visa applicants through a tougher English language test than at present — a move that officials are describing as unjustified and discriminatory against students weak in English.

### IMMIGRATION ISSUES

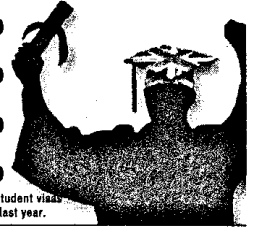
New UK student visa rules that India has objected to:

- Students can apply only to academic programmes offering degrees higher than those already held by the students. A master's degree holder in one subject, for instance, cannot apply for a second master's degree in either the same subject or in any other subject
- Students must leave the UK after obtaining their degree before they are eligible to apply for another programme there
- Students must clear a tougher English test.

### Top destinations for Indian students in 2010

UK	57,500
US	32,000
Australia	20,000
Canada	8,000

\*These are based on the number of student visas issued by these countries to Indians last year.



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# 'Minority status will not change Jamia's secular character'

SANA SHAKIL ■ NEW DELHI

Dispelling all apprehensions relating to the new minority status conferred upon Jamia Millia Islamia, teachers of Jamia on Wednesday said that there would not be any radical effect on the 'secular' character of the institution as a result of the new status and welcomed the approval of what they called a long-pending demand of minority status for Jamia.

The first Central University to be accorded minority status, Jamia would now be able to reserve 50 per cent of its seats for Muslim candidates, in line with the ruling of the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI).

Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia, Najeeb Jung has called an emergency meeting of the

Academic Council and the Executive Council on Thursday to discuss the issue in detail and decide the future plans. The two bodies of Jamia are likely to adopt the NCMEI ruling in Thursday's meeting and discuss the procedures to be followed by the institution to implement it. President of Jamia Teachers Association (JTA) Professor M Rais Khan said, "A legal process would to be followed now. The Academic and Executive Councils will support the ruling and forward it to the Ministry of Human Resource Development to be included in an ordinance."

The Institution currently has 25 per cent seats reserved for internal students in all courses, and the other 25 per cent for Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe and physically disabled students. The status of minority institution will give Jamia the liberty to do away with the SC/ST quota. Khan said, "The change will not result in any extraordinary situation or any radical

change as a particular type of quota will replace another. Fifty per cent of the seats will still be open for the general category as earlier."

Jamia teachers also assured that the quality of education would not suffer and neither will the secular character of the Institution change. Teachers however said that the internal quota of Jamia will have to be maintained. "We had taken the matter to the NCMEI when the case of 27 per cent OBC quota came up because that would have taken away the rationale of Jamia's establishment, which was for the benefit of Muslims. Modalities

have to be worked out as in how to include the Muslim quota and the internal quota in the new set up," said secretary of JTA Professor Rizwan Quaiser.

Former secretary of JTA Professor Tabrez Alam Khan who was the petitioner in the case to the NCMEI said, "We were optimistic in this case and Aziz Basha judgement in the Supreme Court further strengthened our stand."

Students of Jamia also expressed happiness over the ruling of NCMEI. Mohammad Rashid, a first year student of Political Science at Jamia said, "I am happy with NCMEI's decision. It will widen the opportunities for Muslim students. Till now there was only 25 per cent reservation for the community, that too only for those who had done their qualifying education from Jamia. Now it will be 50 per cent reservation for Muslims."

Arshia Ahmad, another first year student said, "We support this decision completely. Delhi University Colleges like St Stephen's and Khalsa College give ample reservation to the Christians and the Sikhs, respectively. So, there is nothing wrong if Jamia gives 50 per cent reservation to Muslim students."



Indian Express, ND 24/02/2011

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# IT/MA IIMs, foreign varsities line up to educate SHOs

MANEESH CHHIBBER

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

IF everything goes according to plan, over 6,000 station house officers (SHOs) posted in police stations across the country will soon receive training from top management experts from India and abroad to help them hone their man management and people-to-people skills.

In response to a tender floated by the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) in this regard, top B-schools, including at least two IIMs and two foreign universities, and some MNCs are among the 60 organisations that have made a pitch for the unique scheme.

Sources told *The Indian Express* that of the 60 that applied, 27 organisations have been short-listed. A final decision on who will finally get to train the police officers is expected by mid-March.

The scheme is part of the Rs 25-crore plan of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to facilitate training interventions for the police forces "for bridging the gaps so that the police personnel are able to discharge their duties more effectively".

Among other things, the experts are expected to train the cops in "analysing and identifying the desirable benchmark of performance and actual performance at each rank, in consultation

with various stakeholders".

"One of the jobs of the police is to maintain public order. But the field level officers are not aware as to what should be the quality of this maintenance as there is no benchmark... And the public remains largely dissatisfied. We want the experts to bridge such gaps so that police personnel are able to discharge their duties more effectively," said a senior MHA functionary.

According to the terms of the tender, there are 10 parameters on which the companies have been asked to come up with a training plan. One of them is "assessing the quality of investigation in states and developing a suitable training curriculum to ensure quality investigation". "The idea is to ascertain the degree of knowledge exhibited by the investigating officers to collect the evidence in order to secure successful prosecution and conviction," says the concept note prepared by BPR&D.

The note also says that an analysis by the agency has "revealed" that while SHOs are "reasonably" conversant with basic police skills regarding law, forensic science, etc, they lack "listening skills, counseling skills, communication skills, inter-personal conflict resolution skills, stress management skills, motivating skills, writing skills, etc".

"In the absence of such skills, complaints of police insensitivity are often received," it adds.

Statesman ND 24/02/2011 P-8

## HISTORICAL HYPHEN

### Nalanda University to bridge the gulf

IT will indubitably be a more worthwhile venture than the foreign campuses on the anvil, quite a few with dubious credentials at home. Monday's first meeting of the Nalanda Mentor Group, chaired by Amartya Sen, suggests that Nalanda University will be more than a mere revival of an ancient seat of learning. It is a testament of East Asian cooperation, pre-eminently between India, China and Singapore, one that is more profound in its objectives than the university set up by Saarc, itself an ineffectual entity. The university is no less a measure of the Bihar government's cooperation, and Nitish Kumar's constituency of Nalanda is only incidental. Chiefly, it involved the allotment of a 446-acre tract to the East Asia Summit and the smooth settlement of land acquisition problems. A refreshing contrast to West Bengal where even a road project, let alone a car factory, has to be abandoned in the face of land disputes, the Barasat-Raichak highway being but one example. Even in terms of infrastructure, Bihar has made a promising start. Unlike once again in Bengal where a new university in Barasat was opened without a building in place. If the contours as spelt out are any indication, Nalanda will showcase a unique experiment in learning as it seeks to bridge the gap between ancient and contemporary academia, with "intellectually challenging and practically useful" disciplines, to summon Sen's words. Buddhist studies, philosophy and comparative religion are intended to preserve the tradition of the ancient scholars like Hiuen Tsang. And also to protect the invaluable literary sources of information pertaining to ancient Indian history and culture. At another remove, the teaching of history, international relations, peace studies, development studies, public policy and information technology will focus on disciplines with tremendous contemporary relevance. The achievement of Nalanda University, scheduled to start its first session on a new campus in 2013, will hinge profoundly on blending tradition with the contemporary. It will take a while for the objectives to fructify. And Sen has been remarkably realistic while expressing the hope that "the university would be recognised for its achievements 20 years down the line."

Times of India ND 24/02/2011

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# Law upturned: A plastic that can conduct electricity

**Washington:** Plastics usually conduct electricity so poorly that they are used to insulate electric cables. But, now scientists claim to have created a new array of plastics that can conduct electricity just like metal does. By placing a thin film of metal onto a plastic sheet and mixing it into the polymer surface with an ion beam, an international team has shown that the method can be used to make cheap, strong, flexible and conductive plastic films.

"What the team has been able to do here is use an ion beam to tune the properties of a plastic film so that it conducts electricity like the metals used in the electrical wires themselves, and even to act as a superconductor and pass electric current without resistance if cooled to low enough temperature," Prof Paul Meredith of University of Queensland, who led the team, said.

To demonstrate a potential application of this new material, the team produced electrical resistance thermometers that meet industrial standards. Tested against an industry standard platinum resistance thermometer, it had comparable or even superior accuracy. "This material is so interesting because we can take all the de-

By placing a thin film of metal onto a plastic sheet and mixing it into the polymer surface with an ion beam, it's been shown that it is possible to make conductive plastic films

sirable aspects of polymers — such as mechanical flexibility, robustness and low cost — and into the mix add good electrical conductivity, something not associated with plastics.

It opens new avenues to making plastic electronics," Prof Adam Micolich of University of New South Wales, a team member, said. Team member Andrew Stephenson said the most exciting part about the discovery is how precisely the film's ability to conduct or resist the flow of electrical current can be tuned. It opens up a broad potential for useful applications. "In fact, we can vary the electrical resistivity over 10 orders of magnitude. In theory, we can make plastics that conduct no electricity or as well as metals do — and everything in between," he said. ■

Times of India ND 24/02/2011 P21

# Simple test to spit out if you are on the verge of a burnout

**Washington:** A new research suggests that simple spit and blood tests can detect burnout before it happens. Researchers Sonia Lupien and Robert-Paul Juster of the University of Montreal also found that if burnouts are ignored they might put distressed workers at a greater risk of physical and psychological problems.

"We hypothesized that healthy workers with chronic stress and with mild burnout symptoms would have worse physiological dysregulations and lower cortisol levels — a profile consistent with burnout," said Juster.

The levels of stress hormone cortisol are often high in people suffering from depression, while it tends to be low in cases of burnout.

Chronic stress and mis-balanced cortisol levels can ex-



## TIMELY INTERVENTION

ert a kind of domino effect on connected biological systems. The term 'allostatic load' represents the physiological problems or 'wear and tear' that ensue in these different systems related to risks for diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and immune problems.

The researchers found that

analysing a sample of spit was an excellent way to detect abnormally low levels of cortisol - a clear warning sign of impending burnout.

For their study, the researchers tested cortisol levels in 30 middle-aged participants. In addition to undergoing routine blood measures that assessed allostatic load, participants were instructed to collect saliva at home and during a laboratory paradigm.

They also filled out questionnaires related to their current stress levels and symptoms of depression and burnout. "For conditions like burnout it is essential to use multiple methods of analysis. One potential sign of burnout appears to be fatigued production of cortisol and dysregulations of physiological systems," said a researcher. ANI

**Times of India ND**  
**24/02/2011 P21**

## **A drink a day is good for the heart: Lancet**

**London:** Here's a perfect excuse to go out for a drink tonight — a tippie a day keeps the doctor at bay, say researchers. A new study, published in 'The Lancet' journal, has found that people who down a drink or two daily are not only healthier, they also possess a lower risk of developing heart disease than those who abstain from alcohol.

In fact, for some people this risk could be reduced by as much as a quarter, the study says, boosting that far from damaging health, modest drinking will improve it. The study also revealed that low alcohol intake can actually improve blood cholesterol levels and reduce other important compounds in blood linked to inflammation; it is this process that may help protect heart and blood vessels from clogging up, the 'Daily Express' reported.

The study is actually a review of 84 researches into alcohol and deaths from heart disease. In the study, the researchers at the Calgary Institute for Population and Public Health in Canada showed that a drink a day reduced the risk of heart disease by between 14 and 25%. It also reduced the risk of dying from heart disease by a quarter and of having a stroke by 2%. PTI

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# Just 50 min on cellphone can alter brain activity

But Experts Unclear If The Changes Signal Harmful Effect On User's Health

**Chicago:** Spending 50 minutes with a cellphone plastered to your ear is enough to change brain cell activity in the part of the brain closest to the antenna. But whether that causes any harm is not clear, scientists at the National Institutes of Health said on Tuesday, adding that the study will likely not settle recurring concerns of a link between cellphones and brain cancer.

"What we showed is glucose metabolism (a sign of brain activity) increases in the brain in people who were exposed to a cellphone in the area closest to the antenna," said Dr Nora Volkow of the NIH, whose study was published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

**Glucose metabolism (a sign of brain activity) increases in the brain in people who were exposed to a cellphone in the area closest to the antenna, says a study in the US**

The study was meant to examine how the brain reacts to electromagnetic fields caused by wireless phone signals. Volkow said she was surprised that the weak electromagnetic radiation from cellphones could affect brain activity,

but she said the findings do not shed any light on whether cellphones cause cancer. "This study does not in any way indicate that. What the study does is to show the human brain is sensitive to electromagnetic radiation from cellphone exposures." Use of the devices has increased dramatically since they were introduced in the early-to-mid 1990s, with about 5 billion mobile phones now in use worldwide.

Some studies have linked cellphone exposure to an increased risk of brain cancers, but a large study by the World Health Organization was inconclusive. Volkow's team studied 47 people who had brain scans while a cellphone was turned

on for 50 minutes and another while the phone was turned off. While there was no overall change in brain metabolism, they found a 7% increase in brain metabolism in the region closest to the cellphone antenna when the phone was on.

Experts said the results were intriguing, but urged that they be interpreted with caution. "Although the biological significance, if any, of increased glucose metabolism from acute cellphone exposure is unknown, the results warrant further investigation," Henry Lai of the University of Washington, Seattle, and Dr Lennart Hardell of University Hospital in Orebro, Sweden, wrote in a commentary. REUTERS



**WHAT LIES BENEATH:** Although the study shows that weak electromagnetic radiation from cellphones affects brain activity, whether it can cause cancer is yet to be conclusively proved

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# 33% posts vacant in top institutes

4,083 Positions Of 12,114 Yet To Be Filled In Centrally-Funded Edu Centres: HRD

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** One-third of teaching posts in top technical and management educational institutions — funded by the human resource development (HRD) ministry — is lying vacant.

Giving this information in Lok Sabha on Wednesday, minister of state in the HRD D Purandeswari said that out of 12,114 sanctioned posts, 4,083 are lying vacant. These institutions include IITs/IIMs/National Institute of Technology, Indian Institutes of Science Education & Research (IIESR) and a host of engineering colleges.

## DEEP DEFICIT

Institute	Sanctioned faculty strength	Filled	Vacant
Indian Institutes of Technology	4,712	3,148	1,564
Indian Institutes of Management	555	455	100
National Institutes of Technology	4,632	2,956	1,522
Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore	518	368	150

search (IIESR) and a host of engineering colleges.

Altogether, IITs have a

sanctioned strength of 4,712 teaching posts, but only 3,148 are filled. The vacancy stands

at 1,564 posts. IIMs have a combined faculty strength of 555 teaching posts, but only 455 are filled. There is a vacancy of 100 posts. National Institutes of Technology have 4,632 posts, but there is a vacancy for 1,522 slots. Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, has 150 vacancies. Of 518 posts, only 368 are filled.

The prestigious Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad, has filled only 172 of the 275 sanctioned posts. There is a vacancy of 103 posts. Similarly, National Institute of Training & Industrial Engineering, Mumbai, has 34 va-

cancies out of the total strength of 84. Central Institute of Technology, Kokrajhar, has almost 50% vacancy — 18 out of sanctioned 37 posts have not been filled. National Institute of Foundry & Forge Technology Ranchi, has 13 vacancies out of the total sanctioned strength of 42. Purandeswari said, "The pay revision of teachers of centrally-funded technical institutions subsequent to the recommendations of the Sixth Pay Commission should go a long way in attracting and retaining teachers in these institutions."



# More general seats in Jamia

## After New Status, Varsity Not Bound To Implement OBC Quota

Manash Pratim Gohain | TNN

New Delhi: Tuesday's decision by the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI) to grant 'minority institution' status to Jamia Millia Islamia is believed to be beneficial for general category students. The university can enforce 50% reservation for Muslims, but it's not bound to implement OBC reservation. This means there will be more seats for the general category students.

So far, the university had 51.5% seats reserved for SC, ST, PH and internal candidates. Another 27% for OBCs would have meant 78.5% seats being reserved. But now, 50% seats will be open for the general category.

The university has welcomed the decision, which has come after almost 15 years since the demand was first made in 1997. The demand for minority status became more intensive when the government of India made it mandatory to reserve 27% seats for OBC category in central universities.

Professor Rizwan Qaiser said: "Had there been no pressure of OBC reservation, the status would not have been that essential as it wouldn't have had any bearing on the secular character of the campus, the quality of teaching and other developments. But now, we feel that quality wise

### MINORITY ROUTE



► Its original name was **Jamia Millia Islamia National Muslim University**

► Became a Central university by virtue of an Act in 1988

► **Reservation structure till 1997:** 10% for Urdu category, 5% for employees' wards, 25% for internal students, 16% for SCs, 7.5% for STs, and 3% for PH category. Total 66.5% seats reserved

► In 1997, the reservation policy was challenged in the Delhi high court and the court **quashed the Urdu and employees' wards criteria.** This resulted in an agitation by students

► In 1998, the university filed an SLP before a double bench in Delhi high court, stating that being a minority institution it can **follow its own reservation policy**

► In 2005, the **SLP was dismissed**

► In 2006, **OBC reservation was introduced** and teachers and students moved the **NCMEI**

► On Feb 22, 2011, the NCMEI **granted 'minority institution' status** to Jamia Millia Islamia, which enables the university to reserve 50% seats for Muslims. **It is no longer bound to implement 27% OBC reservation criterion**

the campus will be better as 50% of the general seats will be based on competitive entrance exams."

There were some appre-

hensions about a decline in the number of non-Muslim students due to the minority status, but the teachers and students think otherwise. "Ja-

mia has never been exclusively for Muslims and it will never be. In fact, we see more non-Muslims joining us as 50% seats will be open for general category; and underprivileged Muslims, our catchment areas, cannot compete under the present circumstances," said M Rais Khan, president of Jamia Teachers' Association.

Meanwhile, the Jamia administration has convened emergency meetings of the academic and executive councils on Thursday where the two statutory bodies of the university will be officially informed about the decision of the NCMEI. But according to university officials, there will be, in all probability, no new admission policy for the 2011-12 academic session because of shortage of time. The admission process at Jamia starts in March and the entrance exams are conducted in the month of May.

"Only after examining all legal options and studying the order will we know how to go about framing new admission policies. After framing the policy, we will have to send it to the HRD ministry and then to the law ministry for their approval and finally to the Visitor of Jamia, who is the President of India. So, this may take three to four months," said vice chancellor of Jamia, Najeeb Jung.

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Tribune, ND 24-Feb-11 p-5

# IIT scientist designs software on adolescent health problems

**ANSHU SETH**  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

LUDHIANA, FEBRUARY 23

Noted scientist Dr Sujok K Guha from the field of biomedical engineering has designed software "Adolescent Health Education".

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, will soon introduce the software designed by Guha in the schools across the country.

Dr Sujok K Guha, the emeritus scientist working at the Centre for Biomedical Engineering at IIT, Kharagpur, was here to attend the 16th National Congress of Andrology and Reproductive Medicine at Dayanand Medical College

and Hospital (DMCH).

Dr Guha said the software is designed to address the multifaceted problems faced by the students between 10 to 16 years of age. The software will be attached to the computers in schools across the country to provide answers on the spot to queries of the students about health and nutrition, social interaction, sex, abuse, stress, lifestyle and career. The above subjects have been split into different categories thereby taking care of multiple aspects of the problems, he said.

The software is based upon the outcome of a nationwide studies sponsored by the government on the above subjects wherein issues,

including child abuse, prostitution and malnutrition were analysed in details.

He said the software is quilted with speech in English and Hindi languages. The software will also be elemental in curtailing drug abuse among students, which has become a major concern for the nation.

A student compelled by his friends to experiment with drugs/intoxicants, would get a reply in concurrence to his psychological and physical state, after making a query on the school computer.

To ensure privacy, a must for every "adolescent", the schools will also be asked to provide cubicles with computers, said Dr Guha.

The answer to the aggression felt by adolescents when they are denied the liberty to take decisions, depression caused due to broken relationships, loneliness felt by introverts, nervousness following examinations and the right means for entertainment will be just a click away, he said.

"Gradually we will incorporate the helpline numbers in the software so as to facilitate the students to directly talk to the experts concerned. Following the success of the software in schools, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, will broadcast the adolescent health education programme on television," Dr Guha said.