

Newspaper Clips
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Hindustan Times ND 15/01/2015 P-14

Govt cuts funds for higher education, IITs worst hit

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NEW DELHI: The government has reduced funds for higher education to the tune of ₹3,900 crore in its revised budget estimates for the financial year 2014-15. The government has revised the figure to ₹13,000 crore, as against ₹16,900 crore for the plan allocation.

The revision, say officials, will hit the eight new IITs that were scheduled to move to their permanent campuses this academic year. The government has reduced the ₹2,500 crore originally allocated to the 16 IITs for the year 2014-15, to ₹2,337 crore, initiating a cut of ₹163 crore.

"The reduction of 163 crore will affect the new IITs as the HRD ministry will not be able to disburse the funds for the final phase of construction of their new campuses," an official said.



■ **IITs face a cut of ₹163 crore from their original allocation**

The eight IITs announced by the UPA government during 2008-12 were operating out of temporary campuses and six of these (except IIT Ropar and Jodhpur) were to move to their permanent campuses by July this year.

Additionally, the IITs will have to bear the burden of ₹150 crore due to the recent hike in junior and senior research fellowships which have been increased from ₹16,000 to ₹25,000 (JRF) and

₹18,000 to ₹28,000 respectively.

The government has also initiated budget cuts for the five IITs and five IIMs announced in last budget session of the Parliament. Out of ₹500 crore allocated for these, the government will now disburse only ₹65 crore.

Funds for new initiative including have also been cut. While the government has revised the allocation for Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) from ₹100 crore to ₹5 crore, the allocation for the Madan Mohan Malviya National Mission on Teachers Training has been revised to ₹15 crore as against the original ₹100 crore.

The government has also revised allocation for Rashtriya Uchcha Siksha Abhiyan — which seeks to improve overall quality of higher education in the country — to ₹397 crore as against ₹2,200 crore in the original budget.

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आईआईटी छात्र दो महीने आईआईएम में पढ़ सकेंगे

नई दिल्ली | रोहित पवार

आईआईटी के सभी छात्र आईआईएम से प्रबंधन पढ़ सकेंगे। दो माह की प्रबंधन की पढ़ाई में छह विषय पढ़ाए जाएंगे। इसमें 120 अंक दिए जाएंगे जो कि मुख्य परीक्षा का हिस्सा होंगे। खास बात यह है कि उन्हें आईआईएम में पढ़ने के लिए कोई टेस्ट नहीं देना होगा। इसके अलावा आईआईटी के प्रबंधन कोर्स के छात्र भी आईआईएम में पढ़ाई कर सकेंगे।

आईआईटी दिल्ली के प्रबंधन विभाग में बुधवार को हुई अहम बैठक में इस बाबत फैसला लिया गया। सूत्रों ने बताया कि सभी आईआईटी संस्थानों में सबसे पहले आईआईटी दिल्ली इस योजना की शुरुआत करेगी। फिलहाल आईआईएम

नई पहल

- आईआईएम में पढ़ने के लिए छात्रों को नहीं देनी होगी कोई परीक्षा
- आईआईटी दिल्ली आगामी सत्र से शुरू करने जा रही है योजना

अहमदाबाद से करार की सहमति बनी है।

छात्रों को आईआईएम से मिलेगा सर्टिफिकेट: आईआईएम इन छात्रों को सर्टिफिकेट भी जारी करेगा। इससे आईआईटी के छात्रों का दर्जा पहले से और बढ़ जाएगा। फिलहाल आईआईएम में पढ़ने के लिए कैट की कड़ी परीक्षा से गुजरना होता है। मगर नई पहल से आईआईटी के छात्रों को बिना कैट के पढ़ाई करने का मौका मिलेगा।

Nai Duniya ND 15.01.15 P-1

नया आइडिया

आईआईटी दिल्ली के तीन छात्रों ने शुरू किया गैटमाई लुक्स डॉट कॉम

हजामत बनवानी है? क्लिक करें, घर आएगा नाई

शलेन्द्र सिंह >> नई दिल्ली

तेजी से पापुलर हो रही ऑनलाइन सेवाओं को देखते हुए अब आईआईटी, दिल्ली के तीन छात्रों ने ऑनलाइन हजामत व ब्यूटी पॉर्लर में मिलने वाली अन्य सेवाओं का विकल्प लोगों को उपलब्ध करवाया है। ब्यूटी पॉर्लर से जुड़ी सेवाओं के लिए आपको घर से निकलने की जरूरत नहीं है। बस एक क्लिक भर से आपको ये सुविधा उपलब्ध हो जाएगी। इसके जरिए लोगों को न सिर्फ घर बैठे ब्यूटी सर्विसेज उपलब्ध हो रही हैं, बल्कि ऐसे लोग जो अपना ब्यूटी पॉर्लर शुरू करने के लिए जरूरी खर्च नहीं कर सकते हैं, उन्हें घर बैठ ही रोजगार भी मिल रहा है। इस आइडिया की सफलता का अंदाजा इसी बात से लगाया जा सकता है कि दिल्ली से शुरू ये ऑनलाइन सुविधा अब दिल्ली-एनसीआर तक जा पहुंची है और अब इसके



देश के अन्य शहरों में ले जाने की तैयारी भी शुरू हो गई है।

आईआईटी, दिल्ली से एमबीए अंतिम वर्ष की पढ़ाई कर रहे तीन छात्रों ने गैट माई लुक्स डॉट कॉम नामक वेबसाइट शुरू की है। वेबसाइट की विशेषता है कि इसके जरिये सजने-संवरने के लिए पॉर्लर जाने की जरूरत नहीं है। ये सुविधाएं घर पर ही उपलब्ध होगी। वेबसाइट को तैयार करने वाले तीन छात्रों में से एक नितिन बजाज ने बताया कि उन्होंने व उनकी साथी श्रेया रातरा ने फरीदाबाद की

वाईएमसीए से बीटेक की पढ़ाई की है। उन्होंने मैकेनिकल में बीटेक किया है जबकि श्रेया ने इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स में डिग्री पाई है। बीटेक की पढ़ाई के बाद उन्होंने वर्ष 2013 में आईआईटी, दिल्ली में एमबीए फुलटाइम कोर्स में दाखिला लिया। इन दोनों के साथ इस प्रयास से एक अन्य बीटेक इन कम्प्यूटर साइंस के छात्र सौरभ गोयल भी जुड़े हैं।

आमदनी के साथ सुरक्षा भी

नितिन के मुताबिक, ग्राहकों की सुरक्षा के मद्देनजर हमारे साथ जुड़े सभी 35 से 40 ब्यूटीशियन का पुलिस से सत्यापन कराया गया है और कोई भी आपराधिक छवि वाला व्यक्ति हमारे साथ नहीं जुड़ा है। आमदनी के विषय में नितिन ने बताया कि हम रोज इस सुविधा के जरिए चार से छह ऑर्डर पाते हैं और इससे 10 से 20 हजार रुपए तक की कमाई हो रही है।

आइडिया कुछ यूं हुआ विकसित

नितिन ने बताया कि ऑनलाइन पार्लर सर्विस की शुरुआत का विचार हमें कुछ अलग करने की सोच के चलते आया। पहले हमने ऑनलाइन ग्रांसरी सेवाएं देने के विषय में सोचा, लेकिन उसमें आने वाली लागत को देखते हुए ऑनलाइन ब्यूटी सर्विसेज की ओर ध्यान गया। महिला हो या पुरुष आज के दौर में हर कोई सजने-संवारने पर अच्छी-खासी रकम खर्च करता है और ऐसे में यदि आप उन्हें घर बैठे ये सुविधा उपलब्ध कराते हैं तो ये बिजनेस के लिहाज से बेहद फायदेमंद है।

Nai Duniya ND 15.01.15 P-14

केरल के छात्रों ने बनाया एक लीटर में 200 किमी चलने वाला वाहन

तिरुवनंतपुरम। केरल के तिरुवनंतपुरम के एक इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेज में पढ़ने वाले तीन छात्रों ने ऐसा वाहन विकसित किया है, जो एक लीटर पेट्रोल में 200 किमी से ज्यादा की दूरी तय करेगा। गवर्नमेंट इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेज के प्रिंसिपल बी. अनिल ने बताया कि बढ़ती तेल की कीमतों और ऊर्जा संकट के इस दौर में यह बहुत ही अद्भुत प्रयोग है। इस प्रोटोटाइप वाहन को फिलीपींस में 26 फरवरी से 1 मार्च तक होने वाले इंटरनेशनल फ्यूल इफीसियेंसी कांटेस्ट 'शोल इको मैराथन' में भेजा जा रहा है। प्रोजेक्ट के नेतृत्वकर्ता बिबिन सगराम ने कहा कि प्रतियोगिता में 16 देशों की 120 टीमें हिस्सा ले रही हैं। केरल की तरफ से केवल हमारी टीम होगी।

Plea for a common IIT-NIT exam

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/hteducation/chunk-ht-ui-hteducationsectionpage-otherstories/plea-for-a-common-iit-nit-exam/article1-1306580.aspx>

Rajeev Kumar, professor at IIT Kharagpur, had taken up the issue of a common examination with the human resource development minister in January 2010 along with several other JEE reform proposals. “Due to objections in holding a common examination by a small set of people having vested interests, the then minister of HRD along with the Councils of IITs and NITs resolved in June/July 2012 in favour of two separate streams of examinations, namely, JEE (Mains) and JEE (Advanced), for admissions to IITs and NITs. The main objections against a common examination were that the IITs were against factoring of Class 12 examination marks in merit ranking for admissions to the IITs. The IITs favoured a descriptive format for JEE (Advanced) for admissions to IITs. The IIT Council imposed a cap of a total of 1,50,000 candidates in IITs’ JEE (Advanced). This was felt necessary to avoid evaluation of a large number of descriptive answer scripts manually within the available short span of time,” says Kumar in a recent letter to the HRD minister.

Some of the reasons that enabled Kumar to write to the minister are his observations that ‘non-standard’ Class 12 marks are ‘one of the criteria for admission to IITs’ in 2015. For example, the eligibility criterion for 2015 admissions includes a requirement of 75% marks or above (for general category candidates), or top 20 percentile ranking in Class 12. “Also, the JEE (Advanced) is in multiple choice question (MCQ) format. A cap of 1,50,000 candidates is also unnecessary for an MCQ format examination, which does not need manual evaluation. While the ministry is carrying out an exercise of common counselling for admissions to IITs and NITs, it would be in larger public interest to consider the pending proposal for a common examination for admissions to IITs and NITs,” says Kumar in the letter. He has requested the HRD ministry and the Councils of IITs and NITs to consider this proposal which could be extended to include other Centrally Funded Technical Institutions as well.

PM Angry With Smriti For Delay In GIAN Plan

— By FPJ Bureau | Jan 14, 2015 12:56 am

<http://freepressjournal.in/pm-angry-with-smriti-for-delay-in-gian-plan/>

New Delhi : Prime Minister Narendra Modi is upset with Human Resources Development Minister Smriti Irani for not putting on fast track the Global Initiative for Academic Network (GIAN) programme he agreed with US President Barrack Obama last October for launch in India.

As part of preparations for Obama’s visit to India as the chief guest at the Republic Day parade, Modi went through various projects agreed by the two leaders for implementation and felt shocked that no progress has been made at all on the Indo-US joint initiative of GIAN for launching an academic excellence programme in the central universities.

Modi had agreed that India will host about 1000 science and innovation academicians from the United States every year to teach here to enable Indian students to get the best teachers without going to the US. He fumed at Irani for the delay by her HRD Ministry to work out the modalities to invite the U.S. academicians on short-term basis at various institutions.

Following his snub, Irani cancelled all her meetings on Monday, including one scheduled at FICCI on Swami Vivekananda, and convened an urgent meeting of the select IIT and IIM directors, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and representatives of a few central universities to sit with the University Grants Commission (UGC) chairman to prepare the GIAN plan.

Sources said IIT Kharagpur director PP Chakraborty has been tasked to draft a note on the financial aspects including honorarium for the visiting faculty under GIAN.

GIAN is a brainchild of Modi who personally discussed the idea with Obama during his Washington trip in October for creation of a talent pool of eminent scholars from India and abroad to teach at the centrally-funded institutions of excellence in India.

Lack of money, men led to DRDO delays

Hindustan Times (Delhi)

NEW DELHI: While the government claims its decision to sack Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) chief Avinash Chander does not merit controversy, the Centre had, last August, slammed the organisation over delays and cost overruns in key military programs.

The DRDO has come under repeated criticism from the government regarding delays. A Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence report had flayed DRDO for chronic inefficiency.

HT took a look at the report and found ten projects with a combined sanctioned cost of ` 16,860 crore, were delayed by at least 5 years. Prominent reasons for delays include lack of infrastructure and technology, non-availability of indigenous raw material etc.

In 2009-10, the DRDO received 6.98% of the total defence budget, but it was reduced to 5.37% in 201314. As per government orders in 2001, the DRDO was sanctioned a strength of 7,932. The committee observed that as DRDO's projects grew, there was no increase in sanctioned manpower — around 7,809 scientists currently work in the organization.

Despite these setbacks, the organisation has achieved a lot, it was observed. With approximately \$14 billion spent in a decade (200212) DRDO developed various missiles, drones, radar systems and carried out research. In contrast, USA's unmanned aerial vehicle projects, cost \$14.18.

The committee suggested remedial steps including raising the budgetary provision, outsourcing development activities, close monitoring by stakeholders and changing the phased development approach to concurrent approach

DRDO chief removed to bring in younger generation: Parrikar

Hindustan Times (Jaipur)

OUSTED Minister claims there is no controversy in removal of Chander, man behind the Agni series of ballistic missiles

NEW DELHI: Defence minister Manohar Parrikar said on Wednesday DRDO chief Avinash Chander was sacked under his recommendation because he felt someone from a "slightly younger generation" should hold the position and not by one on contract.

CONTROVERSIAL MOVE

■ On Tuesday night, the appointments committee of cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi “approved termination” of the contract of Chander with effect from Jan 31

■ The move comes in the backdrop of Modi’s comment last year that “laidback” attitude in the DRDO would

not be tolerated.

- Chander joined the DRDO in 1972 after graduating in engineering from IIT, Delhi.
- The removal of Chander raised questions over the government’s action because, according to DRDO officials, development of the Agni range of missiles under a highly-restrictive international control regime was possible only because of his perspective planning and relentless efforts



Chander, widely known as the man behind the Agni series of ballistic missiles, retired on November 30 last year and thereafter continued on contract. The contractual term was to end May 31, 2016.

Parrikar said there was no controversy in the decision to relieve the Defence Research Development Organisation chief, who doubled up as scientific adviser to the defence minister, of his duties 16 months before his extended stint was to end.

“I recommended that a person on contract should not be occupying such a senior position. This senior position should be filled by other eligible senior persons. We should introduce in the scientific world, a slightly younger generation,” he said.

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The move comes in the backdrop of Modi’s comment last year that the “laidback” attitude in the DRDO would not be tolerated.

Chander joined the DRDO in 1972 after graduating in electrical engineering from IIT, Delhi.

The removal of Chander raised questions over the government’s action because, according to DRDO officials, development of the Agni range of missiles under a highlyrestrictive international control regime was possible only because of his perspective planning and relentless efforts.

“It is the government’s decision to end my contract but I had no indication this was coming. No idea why it has happened,” the 64-year-old scientist said.

Parrikar said even he was not aware of the sudden termination of Chander without informing him, though he recommended his early exit after the previous government extended his contract.

The sacking was first reported by HT on its website [www. hindustantimes.com](http://www.hindustantimes.com).

A search panel headed by the cabinet secretary will pick Chander's replacement from among top DRDO scientists.

Kiran Kumar Takes Charge as ISRO Chairman

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/karnataka/Kiran-Kumar-Takes-Charge-as-ISRO-Chairman/2015/01/15/article2620647.ece>

BENGALURU: A S Kiran Kumar (in picture) on Wednesday took charge as the Department of Space secretary as well as the chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).



Kumar assumes office with the hope to keep up ISRO's good work following the space agency's highly successful 2014, which saw its Mars Orbiter Mission capture the attention of the whole world. A statement from ISRO said, "Mr Kiran Kumar is a highly accomplished space scientist and engineer with a distinguished career spanning over four decades in ISRO in the satellite payload and applications domains."

Kumar's immediate challenges will include the upcoming Chandrayaan II and the completion of the GSLV MK III project, which will give ISRO the capacity to put heavy satellites (over 3 tonnes) into space.

HT.COM ND 15.01.15 P-6

TICKET TO THE IITs AND NITs

NEW PROCESS

Common counselling for IITs and NITs can and offer 'best choice seats' to candidates

Gauri Kohli

While the confusion over common counselling for IITs and NITs is clear, it is important to know how the process will work. Education experts have been calling for a common counselling process to address the issue of vacant seats during admission to the IITs and NITs. The Delhi High Court passed an order in August last year which directed the human resource development ministry and the IITs to initiate a common counselling process from the new academic year.

The HC order was passed after a petition was filed by IIT Kharagpur professor Rajeev Kumar who had put forth suggestions before the court on implementation of counselling plans. For facilitating common counselling, Kumar has recommended setting up a single empowered authority, a common board for admissions to IIT and NITs, for admissions. "The IIT and NIT Councils should resolve for creation of the common board. The board must be composed of representatives of the HRD ministry, IITs, NITs, CBSE, and the implementing agency like the Centre for Advanced Computing (C-DAC) or the National Informatics Centre (NIC). Candidates who qualify in JEE (Advanced), are given ranks and are eligible for admission in IITs must be automatically registered by the common board for participation in the admission process. Similarly, candidates who qualify in JEE (Main) and are given ranks must be automatically registered by the common board," says Kumar in the petition, a copy of which is with HT Education.

As per Kumar's suggestions, candidates



■ Seat allocation will be done as per the admission norms

FILE PHOTO

AS PER THE NORMS PUT FORWARD BY IIT PROF WAS TO SET UP OF A SINGLE EMPOWERED AUTHORITY AND A COMMON BOARD FOR ADMISSION

should submit a common preference list of their choices through the web-portal maintained by the common board. Candidates eligible for admissions to both (IITs and NITs) will be able to enter their choices across these institutes. Those who are eligible for admission only to IITs and only for NITs will submit a list of preferred courses only to those institutions.

The choices will be entered by the candidates in the order of their preferences. The common board will ensure that the candidate gets the best choice in the order of the candidate's preference. The common board will allocate the seats following admission norms of the IITs and NITs. However, a candidate who can get two seats – one each from the

courses offered by IITs and NITs based on the ranks in the two examinations – will be allotted a single seat based on his preferences as given in the entered list of choices, says Kumar in his list of suggestions.

Seat-allocation will be done strictly in accordance with the admission norms, as decided by IITs and Central Seat Allocation Board (CSAB)/NITs independently. The common Board will issue a single admission offer to each eligible candidate for admissions to IITs or NITs, instead of issuing separate letters for admissions to IITs by an IIT, and admission to NITs by the CSAB.

The candidates have to accept the admission offer, or withdraw. In case of NITs, candidates have the option of locking the institute or locking the course, allowing no sliding of the allocated seat. The common board will carry out seat re-allocation, sliding-up of the allocated seats for seats remaining vacant because of candidates not accepting these seats. However, instead of independent multiple counselling rounds for IITs and NITs, allocation can be done online.

THE PROCESS AS OF NOW

■ Currently, the IITs are using the seat allocation software developed by IIT Delhi; this software was updated in 2012 with the help of **Centre for Advanced Computing**

■ For NITs, Central Seat Allocation Board (CSAB) is using seat allocation software initially developed by **C-DAC, and then subsequently maintained by NITs**. In addition, C-DAC developed the complete software for the proposed Joint-Seat Acceptance Committee (JSAC), in 2013, in consultation with IITs/NITs. The software module, as developed by C-DAC, has most of the functions except online counselling

■ Candidates have to **register online** after the declaration of the JEE (Advanced) results

■ After registration, aspirants are allowed to **fill the choice-filling form** in order of preference from the list of available seats

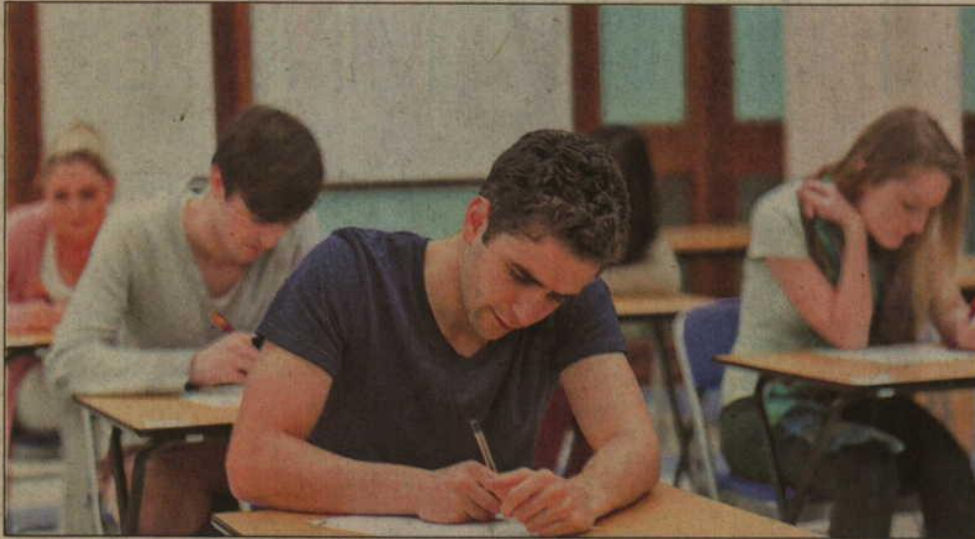
■ The course allocation is done on the basis of the **candidate's all-India rank** he/she gets based on the performance in JEE (Advanced) and the courses he/she selects in the choice-filling form

■ There were **three rounds of online counselling in JEE (Advanced) 2014**. Candidates can get provisional admission

■ There is **separate counselling** for the NITs

THINKSTOCK





■ Rajeev kumar of IIT Kharagpur had taken the issue of common exam FILE PHOTO EW

Supplication for a common IIT-NIT exam

Gauri Kohli

Rajeev Kumar, professor at IIT Kharagpur, had taken up the issue of a common examination with the human resource development minister in January 2010 along with several other JEE reform proposals. "Due to objections in holding a common examination by a small set of people having vested interests, the then minister of HRD along with the Councils of IITs and NITs resolved in June/July 2012 in favour of two separate streams of examinations, namely, JEE (Mains) and JEE (Advanced), for admissions to IITs and NITs. The main objections against a common examination were that the IITs were against factoring of Class 12 examination marks in merit ranking for admissions to the IITs. The IITs favoured a descriptive format for JEE (Advanced) for admissions to IITs. The IIT Council imposed a cap of a total of 1,50,000 candidates in IITs' JEE (Advanced). This was felt necessary to avoid evaluation of a large number of descriptive answer scripts manually within the available

short span of time," says Kumar in a recent letter to the HRD minister.

Some of the reasons that enabled Kumar to write to the minister are his observations that 'non-standard' Class 12 marks are 'one of the criteria for admission to IITs' in 2015. For example, the eligibility criterion for 2015 admissions includes a requirement of 75% marks or above (for general category candidates), or top 20 percentile ranking in Class 12.

"Also, the JEE (Advanced) is in multiple choice question (MCQ) format. A cap of 1,50,000 candidates is also unnecessary for an MCQ format examination, which does not need manual evaluation. While the ministry is carrying out an exercise of common counselling for admissions to IITs and NITs, it would be in larger public interest to consider the pending proposal for a common examination for admissions to IITs and NITs," says Kumar in the letter.

He has requested the HRD ministry and the Councils of IITs and NITs to consider this proposal which could be extended to include other Centrally Funded Technical Institutions as well.

Failing to pass the quality test

Primary school education should be reviewed and improved so that learning outcomes go up

All is not well on the education front, especially in the quality of State-run schools. This is clear from the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), which is facilitated by Pratham, a non-governmental innovative learning organisation. **ourtake**

The key findings of its 10th year report, which was released in New Delhi on Tuesday, was not different from the earlier ones. The enrolment levels are 96% or higher for the 6-14 age group for the sixth year in a row, the proportion of children enrolled in private schools has increased slightly from last year. Interestingly, a higher proportion of boys go to private schools, which are perceived to be better than State-funded ones by many parents, as compared to girls.

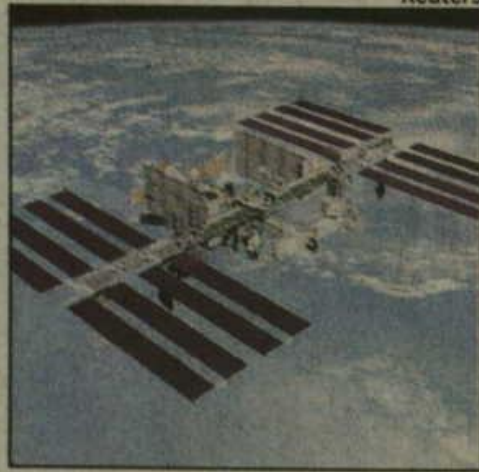
The reason for such a slow but steady shift towards private schools is easy to decipher: The quality of State-run schools is poor and this, as the report shows, reflects on the performance of the students. In the last 10 years, the report says, the overall situation with basic reading continues to be extremely "disheartening" in the country. For example, in the latest report, only a fourth of children in Class 3 can read a Class 2 text fluently. The ability to read English is unchanged for lower primary grades. In 2014, about 25% of children enrolled in Class 5 could read simple English sentences. This number is virtually unchanged since 2009. However, the decline is visible in upper primary grades. Math also continues to be a serious and a major concern. One of the main reasons why this dismal trend continues is that while the state governments have invested hugely in infrastructure and teaching personnel, the emphasis has always been on enrolment and not on learning-related activities. The thrust is always on finishing the syllabus and not on improving the learning abilities of students. However, the Right to Education (RTE) Act says it's the duty of the teachers to assess each child's learning ability and provide additional instructions if required.

After years of dilly-dallying, the erstwhile Planning Commission had emphasised on learning outcomes in 2012. The NDA's Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat, a sub-scheme of the RTE, has now set an outcome goal of 85% children in Class 1 and 2 reaching specified learning levels. This is a good move but what about older children who have huge deficits in basic skills? One way out of this mess could be to group students according to the level of learning capabilities. On the input side, teachers need better training and motivation. Like the UPA, the NDA too is focused on excellence rather than good quality learning at the basic level. This is the reason why we hear governments talking so much about building more IITs and IIMs but not enough quality primary schools. This thrust on excellence at the cost of every child is not what governments should aspire to.

Gas leak scare sparks partial evacuation at Space Station

Cape Canaveral (Florida): Astronauts evacuated the US section of the International Space Station on Wednesday and moved into the Russian side after a signal raised concerns of an ammonia leak, though early analysis suggested it was a false alarm, Nasa said.

Nasa's Butch Wilmore, the station commander, together with Terry Virts, a flight engineer with Nasa, and Samantha Cristoforetti, a flight engineer with the European Space Agency, abandoned the US side of the orbital outpost after an alarm sounded around 4am (0900 GMT). The trio joined three Russian crewmates on the Russian side of the station,



Reuters

FALSE ALARM?

which is a partnership of 15 nations, overseen by the United States and Russia.

The precautionary move came as ground control teams detected increased pressure in a water line in one of the station's two cooling loops, a possible indica-

tion that ammonia may have leaked into the line.

The crew of the \$100 billion research laboratory, which is in orbit about 260 miles (418 km) above Earth, was never in any danger, Nasa said. Later, Nasa mission commentator Rob Navias said there was no hard data to indicate a leak.

"It's becoming a stronger case that this is a false indication, which is great news," Jim Kelly, an astronaut at Mission Control in Houston, radioed to the crew shortly before 8.30 am (1330 GMT).

"Outstanding news," replied Wilmore. "We'll be ready to do whatever you need us to do when the time comes," Nasa said. REUTERS