

# Newspaper Clips

## January 23, 2013

Hindu Kochi 22-01-2013 P-3

# Centre defers plan to upgrade Cusat as IEST

## Ministry move part of budgetary allocation cuts

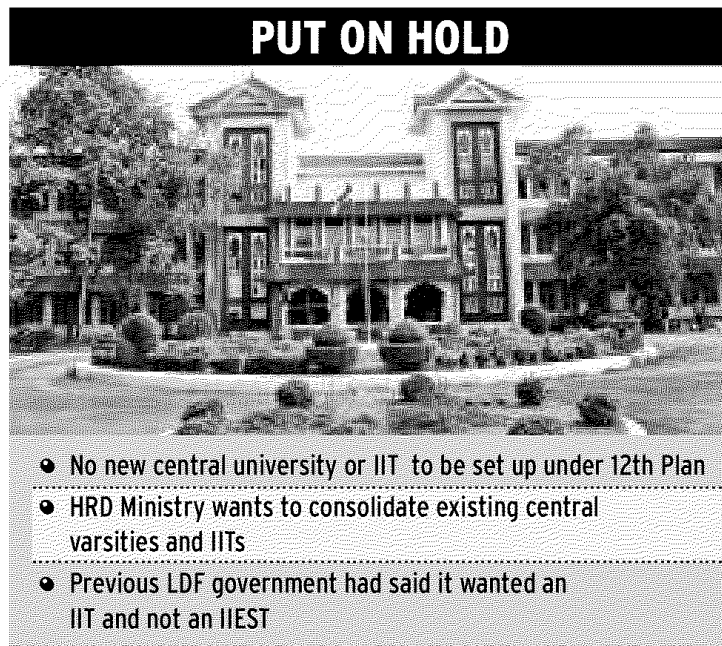
G. Krishnakumar

**KOCHI:** The Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has deferred the proposal to convert Cochin University of Science and Technology (Cusat) into an Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology (IEST).

The move comes close on the heels of a recent MHRD decision not to set up new central universities and IITs under the 12<sup>th</sup> Plan Period.

Reliable sources tracking the development told *The Hindu* on Monday that the UPA government's plan to introduce budgetary cuts in schemes proposed by various ministries especially aimed at rolling out its ambitious programmes like the food security law was also a major reason for putting on hold Cusat's upgradation proposal.

The Finance Ministry had asked various Ministries to prioritise its proposals considering the tough fiscal situation. The initial budgetary



estimate for the IEST plan was about Rs. 500 crore and the HRD ministry seems to be in no mood in implementing such schemes in the near future, sources said.

The HRD Minister M. M. Pallam Raju had earlier given a hint that the State will have to wait for realising its demand for an IIT under the 12<sup>th</sup>

Plan. The Minister had also pointed out that his Ministry's effort would be on consolidating the existing central universities and IITs.

A senior official in the Higher Education Department told *The Hindu* that the government would not push for the IEST plan immediately, as the priority was to

get an IIT. "Even though the HRD Minister's announcement had cast shadows on the IIT project for the State, we are hopeful that things might take a positive turn," he said.

The Ministry had delayed the approval of the Cusat upgradation proposal after the previous LDF government conveyed its desire that the university should be converted into an IIT and not an IEST. A section of the teachers and employees had also opposed the Ministry's move to provide the framework of a National Institute of Technology for the proposed IEST.

Cusat Vice-Chancellor Ramachandran Thekkedath said that he had not received any official information from the HRD ministry on whether the upgradation plan has been put on hold. The Vice-Chancellor had earlier pointed out that the Syndicate had passed a resolution stating that the Union government should convert the university into a Central institute.

HT Delhi

# Israel gives grants to Indians

**Vandana Ramnani**

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As many as 66 Indian postdoctoral scholars will travel to Israel in the coming months on three-year scholarships granted by Israeli government to pursue research at top universities.

Fellows from IIT Delhi, Osmania University, universities in Delhi, Lucknow, Kolkata, Mumbai and other leading academic institutions in India will conduct research in a variety of fields, including immunology, genetics, neurobiology, bio-informatics, law and economics. The research will be undertaken at leading universities in Israel, namely, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Technion - Israel Institute of Technology, Tel Aviv University, Haifa University, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, the Weizmann Institute of Science and the Open University of Israel.

“The annual amount per

scholar is 100,000 shekel (NIS) that is equivalent to about ₹14.7 lakh a year, for three years. Of this sum, two thirds are given directly by the government and one third by the university (which is also government supported). The criteria for selection are academic excellence of the candidate, academic value of the research proposal and interest of the concerned university department in the subject matter,” officials from the Israeli Embassy said.

A call for research proposals for yet another round of this postdoctoral scholarship programme has already been announced. Applications can be submitted through Israeli universities.

“The second round means that in addition to those who have already received the scholarships, Indian researchers can apply for another round of scholarships (potentially up to 100 in number),” the officials said.

# UGC relents: Teachers in colleges won't be judged on performance

**Charu Sudan Kasturi**

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**NEW DELHI:** The University Grants Commission (UGC) has dumped a mandatory requirement for varsities to only select and promote faculty members based on a performance index score, bringing relief to the more than 10-lakh college and university teachers across the nation.

The decision, taken on Monday, is the direct outcome of fears that the strict, but inflexible, parameters of the UGC's Academic Performance Index (API) were holding up appointments and exacerbating the

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**PROF. VED PRAKASH**

UGC Chairman

widespread teacher vacancies that already plague India's higher education system.

Instead of the UGC's API, universities will now have the flexibility to evolve their own mechanisms to screen teacher per-

formance, under a decision that tries to bridge the gap between ensuring the autonomy of varsities and improving faculty accountability.

"We want teachers to meet certain standards in order to be eligible for selection or promotion, but what we've seen with the API is that it's best to let universities decide those standards for themselves," UGC chairman Professor Ved Prakash told *HT*.

The API is India's first attempt at ensuring that teacher selections and promotions are directly linked to their academic performances.

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# UGC relents: Teachers in colleges won't be judged on performance

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Started along with the unprecedented salary hike teachers benefited from under the Sixth Pay Commission in 2010, the performance-linked promotions system is aimed at increasing the accountability of the country's teachers to improve the standard of India's universities. Repeated global rankings place no Indian university among the top 200 in the world — in stark contrast not only to the West, but also to China.

But teachers unions have strongly protested against the API from the very beginning, pointing out what they argued were flaws with the index that allowed favouritism and benefited a select few.

In several universities, confusion over the parameters of the index has also placed several appointments in limbo, at a time when the country's central varsities face teacher shortages of up to 30% and many state varsities have more than 50% teacher vacancies.

Under the UGC's fresh decision, varsities will need to rate teachers, but can set the parameters themselves. To encourage transparency, the UGC will insist that teachers are given a point-based score.

The university-developed index will only be used to screen applicants and not to make final selections, which will be made on the basis of recommendations of an expert panel. *For details of the report, log on to: [www.hindustantimes.com/teacherpromotion](http://www.hindustantimes.com/teacherpromotion)*

# Ranks of Indian students in Germany grow by 70%

One of the factors is the EU Blue Card, which gives foreign graduates unrestricted access to the job market

## HT Education Correspondent

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An increase of 70% has been witnessed in enrolment of Indian students at German education institutions since the academic year 2008, according to the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). There were a total of 5998 Indians studying in the country last year, up from 5038 in 2010-11. The number of total international students as whole went up from 244,776 in 2009-2010 to 252,032 in 2010-2011.

Christiane Schlottmann, director, DAAD, regional office in New Delhi, confirms that there has been a change in student mobility worldwide in recent years. Besides the conventional destinations of higher education, students are seeking newer ones in Europe as well as in Asia.

According to Schlottmann, "Stringent visa regulations, limited or non-existent employment opportunities in the host country after graduation and social threats in the traditionally popular destinations are some of the factors behind the changing trend."

The implementation of the EU Blue Card is believed to be a key determinant. Besides opening up unlimited job opportunities, the EU Blue Card provides residence permit to grant foreign graduates of German universities unrestricted



access to the job market. Other reasons that make Germany the most popular destination for international students in Europe include, over 1000 international degree programmes (IDP) taught in English, highly subsidised tuition fees, quality of education, scholarships and above all, social security.

Germany bags the first position beating Australia, the United Kingdom and China, as reported by a recent British Council survey. "Even during the recent world economic recession, Germany has sustained as the economic superpower, thereby providing easy access to international job market. The adoption of the EU Blue Card as a new work and residence permit has already started showing positive results and I believe it will further bolster this trend," said Schlottmann.

# Technology transforming education

**T**HE late 1970s marked the beginning of the educational technology revolution. Apple Computer released the highly successful Apple II computer, MIT's Seymour Paper introduced the programming language LOGO for young children, and educators talked about the power of technology to expand and enhance teaching and learning. Yet, over the past four decades, though technology has gotten more powerful and sophisticated, very little has changed, particularly in the field of higher education. In fact, the structure and methodology of today's universities still follow a model established nearly a thousand years ago in Bologna, Italy, with the founding of University of Bologna, the world's oldest university.

According to many education experts, however, this historic model of education is finally about to change. "Never before has there been such an eruption of education innovation from institutions and companies of all sizes," says Stephen Gilfus, president and CEO of a research and advisory group focused on global education innovation. "I sincerely believe that we have now entered the 'dot edu' era, which will stimulate and transform students, instructors, institutions and the global economy to reach new horizons." It is interesting to observe that two independent information sources almost talk on the same lines when it comes to the impact of technology on education.

The Pew Research Centre, which is a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping the US and the world, found in their study, that 60 per cent of the large number of respondents

Arun Nigavekar



**NEW APPROACH:** In this 2004 file photo, a student faces the rest of his computer science class at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay. Proliferation of emerging communication technologies has led to new education paradigms

— experts and stakeholders in higher education, including research scientists, higher education leaders, technology developers, futurists and consultants — felt that by 2020, higher education will witness substantial change, including mass adoption of teleconferencing and distance learning, more individualised, just-in-time learning approaches, and a transition to blended learning environments that combine online learning with less-frequent in-class meetings. In a 2012 US senate briefing on education and technology, a group of education experts concurred, noting that, "...we are finally at a time where many factors are converging to overcome historic barriers: increasingly ubiquitous broadband, cheaper devices, digital content, cloud computing, big data, and generally higher levels of comfort with technology among the general population." Even several academic

experts in European universities and industries also express that online education is making a big change particularly because of increasing cost of education. In fact, it is seen that both in the US and Europe, more than 30 per cent of higher education students now take at least one online course during their college career. As a result, many colleges and universities are experimenting with hybrid learning environments that include both online and offline instruction, realising that the transmission of knowledge need no longer be tethered to a college or university campus.

The proliferation of emerging communication technologies has led to new education paradigms, including blended learning, flipped classrooms, distance learning and the growing use of technology to deliver supplemental material. The idea of blended learning is not new. Also called 'hy-

brid' or 'mixed-mode' learning, blended learning is a pedagogical approach that combines face-to-face (F2F) teaching and learning with technology-based activities. In 2000, Wesley Baker, professor of communication arts at Cedarville University, Cedarville, Ohio, introduced the concept of the flipped classroom and in the past decade, it has gained enormous popularity among both students and teachers across Canada, the US and Europe. In its essence, the flipped classroom is a pedagogical model that switches class work with homework and vice versa. In a flipped classroom, teachers record their lecture material for students to view or listen outside of class, as homework. Class time is then used for discussion, working through problems, developing team projects or other collaborative activities. Another technology for the delivery of supplemental material is podcasting — the creation

of digital media files for use on iPods and other mp3 players. Podcasting allows students to listen to teacher-created instructional files wherever and whenever desired. Similarly, vodcasting allows students to view teacher-created videos outside of class time on a computer, tablet or other handheld device. There are many benefits in the use of digital media files for the delivery of supplemental instruction. First, and the most obvious, students are already accustomed to using the technology. Second, people learn better when they experience information with multiple senses. Each of these new instructional scenarios is having a direct impact on institutions of higher learning around the world. They are enhancing student engagement and retention, allowing more direct interaction between student and teacher.

For us in India, technology is still an entity to be respected, but never to be brought in operation. Our colleges and universities should blaze new trails in education by implementing technologies that support new and traditional pedagogical approaches and organisational models. We are certainly doing some efforts but making use of technology in education has to become a non-arguable option and this can happen if we focus our efforts in to a mission mode. The 12th plan proposes more than one lakh crore on higher education and a major part of it should be put in 'technology driven education' mission.

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# Business students from states to learn from foreign faculty

Manash Pratim Gohain | TNN

**New Delhi:** In a first-of-its-kind opportunity, management students from 11 state government universities and National Institutes of Technology from remote corners of India will learn from international faculty alongside their counterparts from Erasmus University Rotterdam, McGill University and Richard Ivey School of Business of Canada or Grenoble Ecole de Management.

Management Development Institute Gurgaon will host International Summer University 2013 in April in which students from University of Kashmir, NIT Hamirpur and Kottayam will do 8 management elective courses and get the credits transferred to their MBA.

The concept of 'summer university' is common in the West but it's the first such initiative in India. Restricting the initiative only to government institutions from remote places, MDI director Mukul P Gupta said: "An urban student gets opportunities to integrate and exchange. A student from a remote location is deprived of that despite having higher calibre. Not only will these students learn with their international peers but we are also pooling teachers from overseas B-schools which are part of our 47 international collaborations. There will be no MDI faculty during course interactions," Gupta said.

University of Kashmir was the first to sign an MoU with MDI to become part of the programme on Tuesday. Praising the initiative, Prof Talat Ahmad, VC of University of Kashmir said: "Though our students are of comparable qualities with those from top management institutions, they lack exposure to international practices."

## GLOBAL LINK

### WHO WILL TAKE PART IN INTERNATIONAL SUMMER UNIVERSITY

► Students from **11 state universities and NITs** from remote areas of India who have completed first year of MBA course

**9** faculty members from management institutes of **US, UK, Denmark, France and Mexico** to conduct courses

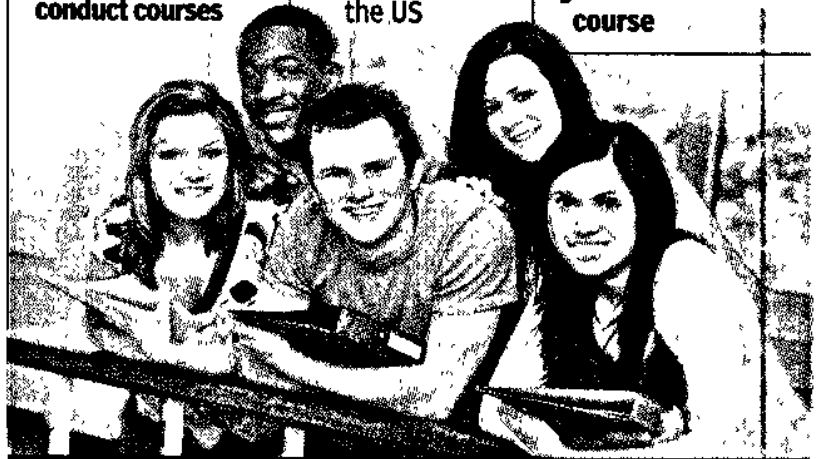
**50** overseas students from top management institutes of Europe and the US

### WHAT WILL HAPPEN

**8** courses on offer

► Students will pursue courses like **international accounting, CSR, ethics, corporate governance, cross-cultural management**

► Students will get credit for each course



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