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'Focus on 10 institutions will be a game changer'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Claiming there has been a substantial hike in budget allocation for higher and school education, HRD ministry on Friday said proposals to establish Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) and turning 10 public and private institutions into world class educational institutions could be a game changer.

Education secretary Vinay Sheel Oberoi said the broad framework of how 10 institutions each from public and private would be selected will be worked out in the next few months. "The idea is to create enabling environment for these institutions. These institutions should be multi-disciplinary. Also it should not only have foreign qualified faculty but even foreign fa-

Ten institutions each from both public and private sectors would be selected in the next few months

culty," he said, giving instance of how under Global Initiative of Academic Network (GIAN) more and more institutions are availing foreign teachers. HRD minister Smriti Irani said, "Framework for each institution will vary. We are not in favour of one-size-fits all policy." Identification of these institutions will take some time, Oberoi said.

As for Uchchatar Avishkar Abhiyan, additional secretary R Subramanyam said, "It has been very successful as 160 proposals have come. They are worth Rs 623 crore of which industry

will contribute Rs 156 crore. In the first year only IITs were involved. This will give a big push to government's Make in India programme."

In school education, Irani said opening of 62 new Navodaya Vidyalayas — 11 in Chhattisgarh — will give a big push to taking quality education to rural India. Asked about the discontinuation of highly successful Mahila Samakhya programme, school education secretary Subhash Khuntia said, "Mahila Samakhya will be taken over by the National Rural Livelihood Mission of Rural Development ministry." However, when told that rural development ministry has refused to make it a part, a senior official later said, "We will bring it back in HRD then."

Another IIT aspirant 'kills himself' in Kota

Jaipur: In yet another case of suspected suicide due to academic pressure, a 19-year-old student of one of Kota's IIT coaching institutes was found hanging in his rented room, on Thursday night. Seventeen coaching students had committed suicide in Kota last year.

Arvind Kushwah, a resident of Bhind in Madhya Pradesh, stayed as a paying guest in Indra Colony, part of Kota's Vigyan Nagar area. Although police did not recover a suicide note, they have not ruled out the possibility of him taking the extreme step under academic pressure.

Arvind's landlord Karan Kumar Prajapati said the boy was last seen outside his room on Thursday morning. Nobody noticed his absence in the mess at lunch time. The landlord presumed he had eaten outside and was studying, as the room was bolted from inside, said a police officer.

But when Arvind skipped dinner also, the landlord and the other tenants came to check on him. They called police on not getting a response from inside. A police team from Vigyan Nagar police station broke open the door and took the boy's body down. He was declared dead on arrival at a hospital.

"We didn't recover a suicide note. We are recording statements of other hostellers and his teachers at the coaching institute. The boy was an introvert. He was good at studies, but was keeping to himself for the past few days," said the officer.

Arvind's body was handed over to his family after a post-mortem on Friday. TNN

AICTE Says 17 Tamilnadu Technical Colleges Applied for Closure

http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil_nadu/AICTE-Says-17-Tamilnadu-Technical-Colleges-Applied-for-Closure/2016/03/05/article3310930.ece

COIMBATORE: As many as 227 technical education institutions across the country have applied for closure, as against 415 applications for starting new institutions, according to Anil D Sahasrabudhe, Chairman, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). In both cases, there are 17 applications from Tamil Nadu.

The applications for closing down completely cite the poor demand from students for their courses. Also, a number of institutions have applied to stop offering courses that are not attracting students.

Of the 227 applications the AICTE received for closure, 41 are from Telangana. This is the highest from any state.

There are 1,289 applications for ending specific undergraduate and postgraduate courses. While 107 of them are from Tamil Nadu, 302 are from Telangana, he added.

There are 60 per division in an undergraduate course and 18 in a postgraduate course.

In the 2015-16 academic year, the AICTE allowed the closure of 121 technical institutions, including 12 from Tamil Nadu. It also allowed other institutions to stop offering 1,093 programmes, of which 130 were from Tamil Nadu.

AICTE, the apex regulatory body for technical education in the country, had started accepting online applications to establish new institutions and for renewal of approvals on January 21.

The last date to apply for new institutions ended on February 29. Existing institutions have time till Saturday to apply for renewal of approval, with a penalty. Meanwhile, academics said there could be applications to open institutions in major cities.

Report ranks AMU above Delhi University and BHU in India

<http://www.ibnlive.com/news/india/report-ranks-amu-above-delhi-university-and-bhu-in-india-1211487.html>

Aligarh: US News Education World Report has placed Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) above Delhi University and second to Punjab University on their list of overall Best Global Universities rankings.

Banaras Hindu University also follows AMU in the list.

The rankings take into account the research performance of the universities as well as their ratings by members of the academic community around the world.

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With these rankings, displayed on the US News Education's website, www.usnews.com, the US News Education highly recommends international students to explore AMU and other top Indian universities for attending their higher education.

The list also has Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore; Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay; Indian Institute of Technology, Madras; Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur and Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur in the top 10 institutes of India.

The Aligarh Muslim University has also been awarded grade 'A' by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), which conducted an assessment exercise at the campus.

PhD research period is also teaching experience: UGC

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/532766/phd-research-period-teaching-experience.html>

Period spent on acquiring a PhD degree without any leave will now be counted as teaching experience of candidates applying for direct recruitment to vacant positions of faculties or promotion in the higher educational institutions.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) recently approved a proposal in this regard at a meeting here.

“The period of active service spent on pursuing research degree, ie, for acquiring PhD degree simultaneously without taking any kind of leave may be counted as teaching experience for the purpose of direct recruitment/promotion to the post of associate professor and above.” the commission decided .

The commission’s decision was seen in the academic circles as an effort to primarily facilitate filling up of posts lying vacant in large numbers across the country’s universities and other higher educational institutions.

Many of the universities and other higher educational institutions demand at least two to three years teaching experience for recruitment to vacant posts of faculties.

“We have large number of unemployed meritorious PhD holders. The decision to treat the period spent by them in acquiring a PhD degree as teaching experience will not only open doors of employment to many of such degree holders, but also facilitate institutions fill up their teaching positions lying vacant for years,” official sources said.

Taxpayers won't fund private educational institutions: Smriti Irani

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/JUgSXKfldv8bJLob1QJJ8N/Taxpayers-wont-fund-private-educational-institutions-Smrit.html>

Under the proposed Higher Education Finance Agency, institutions will leverage funds from market, donations and CSR funds

New Delhi: The government will not fund private educational institutions, human resource development minister Smriti Irani said on Friday, clarifying a budget proposal that gave the impression that it will.

“Taxpayers will not fund private educational institutions,” Irani told reporters in New Delhi during a press conference on the budget proposals for education.

On 29 February, finance minister Arun Jaitley in his budget speech said that the government will empower higher educational institutions to “help them become world-class teaching and research institutions”.

“An enabling regulatory architecture will be provided to 10 public and 10 private institutions to emerge as world-class teaching and research institutions. This will enhance affordable access to high quality education for ordinary Indians,” Jaitley said.

This was construed as a departure from the current practice wherein private institutions, howsoever credible they may be, do not get government funding.

The minister clarified that under the proposed Higher Education Finance Agency (HEFA), institutions will “leverage funds” from the market, donations and CSR funds.

HEFA, a not-for-profit organisation, will have initial capital of Rs.1,000 crore. According to the minister, this will also be used to help “public institutions” become world class. Irani, however, did not clarify how the government proposes to make 10 private institutions world class as envisaged in the budget.

She said the indigenous national rankings, to be published in April, will be one of the many parameters to identify institutes that are doing well.

Minister of state for finance Jayant Sinha had said on 1 March that India needs to have its “own Stanford and Harvard” universities, and hence there is a new focus in the budget.

Irani also reiterated her ministry’s decision to have a digital academic repository as announced in the budget. She said her ministry has been well covered in the budget and key schemes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan have got their due.

Narayanan Ramaswamy, partner and head-education practice at consulting firm KPMG India said that HEFA is good initiative but overall the education allocations (by both centre and states) have remained at less than 4% of the country’s gross domestic product as against a long pending demand of 6%.

The Union budget on Monday allocated Rs.72,394 crore to education in 2016-17, an increase of around 5% over the 2015-16 estimate.

“All private sector education players are not bad. HRD ministry now has the option (after the budget) to start funding quality private institutions so that they can become truly international. We thought there is a change of mindset but it seems not yet,” said a director of a private business school, who declined to be named.

India has been faring poorly in various global rankings of educational institutions. Just two of its higher educational institutions figured in the top 200 QS World University Rankings in 2015-16 as against 48 in the US and 30 in the UK.

Smriti Irani picks for AMU exec council shot down

Hindustan Times (Indore)

NEW DELHI: President Pranab Mukherjee’s office has returned an HRD ministry file recommending candidates to fill a vacant seat on Aligarh Muslim University’s executive council and asked it to send more names, it is learnt.

The ministry recommended the names of India TV editor-in-chief Rajat Sharma and Vijay P Bhatkar, architect of India’s first supercomputer and president of Vijnana Bharati, an RSS-affiliated organisation involved with the Swadeshi Science movement, sources said.

The President’s office returned the file, asking the ministry to send more names to fill the vacant slot on the university’s highest decision-making body. Of the 28 members on the council, three are recommended by the ministry but the President’s approval is mandatory as he is the visitor of the university. The HRD ministry refused to comment on the issue.

“Names will be discussed and finalised soon. The process will take some time,” a senior ministry official said. However, it seems unlikely that Sharma and Bhatkar will be considered any more, a source said.

This is not the first time that the President has questioned the ministry’s choice. Recently, HRD minister Smriti Irani and the President differed over the Visva Bharati V-C’s sacking. The President’s office had returned a ministry file recommending the sacking and asked it to examine the issue.

IIT-KGP alumni fume at student who ‘sold’ his CV on Flipkart

Hindustan Times (Kolkata)

AAKASH NEERAJ MITTAL, A FIFTH-YEAR OCEAN ENGINEERING STUDENT, MADE HIS CV BY COPYING THE PRODUCT DISPLAY PAGE OF FLIPKART. MITTAL PUT IN INFORMATION ABOUT HIMSELF AND HIS QUALIFICATIONS

KOLKATA: An IIT-Kharagpur student who ‘sold’ his CV by displaying it as a product on Flipkart has drawn the rage and disapproval of the institute’s alumni for downgrading the prestigious institution.

Aakash Neeraj Mittal, a fifth-year ocean engineering student, made his CV by copying the product display page of Flipkart. Instead of the product details, Mittal put in information about himself and his qualifications. In place of seller information, he put ‘sold by IIT-KGP’ and the button where one gets the provision of opening Flipkart as a mobile application Mittal had put ‘call me for an interview to know me in person’.

While his creativity did not fetch him a job with Flipkart, he attracted the wrath of his seniors.

“One newspaper came up with the news that I had uploaded my CV on Flipkart and offered myself to get hired. From then on, I am being accused of giving IIT-KGP a bad name. But all I did was to create my CV in photoshop and offer it to Flipkart. There was no question of being live on the website. It was just my CV in image format,” said Mittal.

This was a desperate measure by the final year student to find a job as his grades were low and he was not hopeful of finding employment that would be suitable for an IIT grad.

“My cumulative grade point average is 6. As a result, I was finding it tough to compete for a job. So, I decided to be creative,” Mittal said.

Mittal has landed a job as a business analyst for Voylla Fashion. He told HT that he wanted to study at FTII-Pune but could not as he was from a poor family and the course fees were hefty.

“The day I landed here I understood that engineering was not my cup of tea. I want to be a scriptwriter and head for Bollywood. Until that happens, I will have to survive and do some job as I have to support my family. My dream is to study in FTII-Pune. But that too is not happening because of dearth of money,” he said.

Mittal has published a book, ‘It wasn’t her fault’.

“It (the book) is a real-life story of a 13-year-old rape victim and how society treated her. Through this book, I tried to highlight her perspective and attempted to change the way society treats such victims. My book has got a five star rating on Amazon,” he signed off.