

Newspaper Clips
May 2, 2015

Times Of India ND 02/05/2015 P-13

Higher edu: Soon, India to have own ranking system

Akshaya.Mukul
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: India is set to evolve its own system of ranking higher educational institutions. Designed with the Indian situation in mind, the new system will stress on outcomes and that ranking of institutions should not be confused with accreditation that is done by National Assessment and Accreditation Council.

Last month, senior HRD officials, directors of IITs, IIMs, NITs and representatives of CII and FICCI met to work out the system. "We

The institutions will be ranked on academic performance, teaching-learning, learning resources, graduation outcome, global MoUs and impact/innovation done by institutions

have got 'six groupings of outcomes on which institutions will be ranked," a senior HRD official said.

These will be academic performance, teaching-learning, learning resources, graduation outcome, global MoUs and impact/innovation done by institutions. Ranking for science, engineering, liberal arts, social sciences, medicine, law and business admin-

istration will be done differently. The weightage for each of the six outcomes will be finalized in the last meeting. Frequency of the rankings also need to be sorted out. "Most likely it will be once in two years. We will also finalize if a new body is needed to carry out the ranking," he said. CII has offered to do the ranking."

For the full report, log on to www.timesofindia.com

More IIT seats on offer as new branches join admission rounds

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/higherstudies/more-iit-seats-on-offer-as-new-branches-join-admission-rounds/article1-1343063.aspx>

Students clamouring for admission to the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) this year have a reason to celebrate as the number of seats in the institutes is set to increase, with four out of five new IITs announced in the union budget also participating in the centralised admission rounds at IIT Bombay for the academic year 2015-16.

The new IITs- proposed in Goa, Tirupati, Palakkad and Chhattisgarh will open its doors for students this year, albeit with fewer seats.

Last year, more than 9,800 seats across 16 IITs were available for admission. This year, with the new IITs and the conversion of Indian Institute of Mines (ISM) Dhanbad into an IIT, the number of seats will be close to 11,000, officials at IIT Bombay said.

As the cut-off marks for eligibility to appear for the JEE Advanced has also come down to 105 from 115 last year, coupled with the new rule that students scoring 75% or more in board exams will also be eligible for admissions, students have a much better chance of securing an IIT seat.

Registrations for JEE Advanced will begin from May 2 and close on May 7.

"We have issued the notification that four new IITs along with the converted ISM will be a part of the centralised admission process. I cannot comment on the number of seats that will increase."

A joint meeting to finalise details of common counselling for National Institutes of Technology (NITS) and IITs will be held at IIT Bombay on Saturday.

While common counselling is more or less confirmed, problems such as dates of board exam results across the country have to be taken into consideration. IIT officials had shown displeasure over the software that was to be used for the common counselling due to which the process could not take place last year.

After several seats in IITs and NITS remained vacant last year, consensus on holding a joint counselling has been reached.

IIT Bombay is convening the JEE Advanced and the centralised admissions this year. While a common counselling round for National Institutes of Technology (NIT) and IITs almost finalised, students can choose from more IITs this year as students will be able to choose courses offered by both IITs and NITS on the same online platform.

कई शिक्षण संस्थानों में प्रमुखों के पद खाली

विनोद के शुक्ल/एसएनबी

नई दिल्ली। डिजिटल इंडिया का सपना दिखाने वाली मोदी सरकार का लगभग एक साल पूरा होने को है लेकिन मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय की लेट लतीपी के कारण इससे जुड़े बहुत से शिक्षण संस्थान आज भी बिना पूर्णकालिक प्रमुखों के काम कर रहे हैं। हालांकि नेशनल इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ ओपन लर्निंग के अध्यक्ष पद की नियुक्ति हो गयी है, लेकिन बहुत से संस्थान अब तक बिना प्रमुख के पड़े हुए हैं। साल बीत गया मगर मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय शिक्षा खासकर उच्च शिक्षा के प्रति कितना संवेदनशील है कि इसका अंदाजा इसी से लगाया जा सकता है कि आज भी कई संस्थान अपने मुखिया की बाट जोह रहे हैं।

मंत्रालय अब तक सिर्फ आईसीएचआर, एनआईओएस, नेशनल बुक ट्रस्ट और मात्र पांच केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालयों के कुलपतियों की ही नियुक्त कर पाया है। यदि इस तरह कि कुछ नियुक्तियों को छोड़ दिया जाए तो मंत्रालय अब तक महत्वपूर्ण जगहों पर लोगों की नियुक्ति करने में असफल रहा है, फिर भी अपनी

■ सरकार साल भर की उपलब्धियां गिनाने की तैयारी में

उपलब्धियां गिना कर पीठ धपथपाने की तैयारी में लगा है। केंद्रीय माध्यमिक शिक्षा परिषद (सीबीएसई) के अध्यक्ष पद पर दो अस्थाई नियुक्तियां अब तक हो चुकी हैं। पहले विनीत जोशी जिनका कार्यकाल पिछले नवम्बर 2014

तक था। जोशी के बाद इस पद पर सतबीर बेदी को अतिरिक्त प्रभार दिया गया है। इस पद पर नियुक्ति की सभी औपचारिकतां हो गईं हैं और एक नाम भी क 'बिनेट कमेटी फार एप्वाइंटमेंट के पास भेजी जा चुका है।

राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद के निदेशक पद पर प्रो बीके त्रिपाठी अस्थाई तौर पर लम्बे समय से कार्यरत हैं। संस्कृत की वकालत करने वाली सरकार ने अब तक राष्ट्रीय संस्कृत संस्थान के लिए उपकुलपति नहीं नियुक्त किया है और प्रो राधावल्लभ त्रिपाठी के पद से हटने के बाद प्रो. आर कन्नन और एपी सच्चिदानंद को अस्थाई तौर पर जिम्मेदारी दी गई और वर्तमान में मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय में संयुक्त सचिव डा. सुखबीर सिंह संघू इसकी कार्यवाहक जिम्मेदारी का निर्वहन कर रहे हैं। एआईसीटीई के एक्टिंग अध्यक्ष के पद पर अविनाश पंत भी लंबे समय से कार्यरत हैं। मंत्रालय अभी तक आईसीएसएसआर के अध्यक्ष पद पर भी किसी को नियुक्त नहीं कर पाया है।

देश भर के 10 आईआईआईटी में से सिर्फ जबलपुर में कार्यवाहक निदेशक है। जबकि आईआईएम लखनऊ में प्रो. राजीव के श्रीवास्तव अंतरिम निदेशक के रूप में कार्यभार सितम्बर 2014 से संभाले हुए हैं और आईआईएम कोजीकोड में कुलभूषण बलूनी निदेशक की जिम्मेदारी निभा रहे हैं। जिन 16 केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय में से मात्र केरल, पंजाब, गुजरात और हेमवती नंदन बहुगुणा विश्वविद्यालय के लिए नियुक्तियां हो गईं हैं जबकि कर्नाटक, हिमाचल प्रदेश, हरिसिंह गौर विश्वविद्यालय, हरियाणा और बिहार विश्वविद्यालय अभी भी मुखिया के बिना हैं। ओडिशा, राजस्थान, तमिलनाडु, नार्थ-ईस्ट हिल और मेघालय विश्वविद्यालय को लेकर कोई सुगबुगाहट नहीं है। इनके आलावा बहुत से अन्य संगठन भी बिना पूर्णकालिक प्रमुखों के लंबे समय से कार्यरत हैं।

Pioneer ND 02/05/2015 P-8

Govt rejects plea to give State universities Central status

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has turned down the request of the State Governments to convert their selected universities into Central Universities.

Citing legacy and existing staff problems, the HRD Ministry has conveyed to the States that they should rather take help through the Centrally sponsored scheme of Rashtriya Uchchttar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) to upgrade their universities.

In a meeting on Thursday on the conversion of the State Universities into Central Universities, the Ministry decided not to convert them due to legacy issues, adjustment of existing staff and disaffiliation of

The HRD Ministry, however, promised to help the States through schemes like Rashtriya Uchchttar Shiksha Abhiyan

affiliated colleges, sources said.

The HRD Ministry, however, maintained that RUSA would incentivise the State Governments to improve higher education by creating additional capacity in the existing institution and set up new ones in un-served and underserved areas. "Under this scheme, the State Government would have the flexibility to set up new universities and colleges keeping in mind the local requirements," said a HRD official.

The Ministry in a commu-

nication to the State Governments cited the 12th Five Year Plan approved by the National Development Council where the focus is on scaling up of capacity in existing institutions rather than increasing the number of institutions, with exception of new institutions needed to address critical regional and social gaps.

And with a view to increasing access and improving the quality of higher education in the country, the 11th Five Year Plan envisaged setting up of one Central University each in States which did not have any Central University till then. Accordingly, 16 Central Universities were established by the Central Universities Act, 2009 in different un-served States.

IIM-Indore's dubious integrated course

SHATTERED Distraught father speaks out against a controversial five-year management programme

Jeevan Prakash Sharma

When his daughter secured admission in a five-year management course—integrated programme from IIM Indore, TD Raghav's joy knew no bounds.

A 65-year-old retired scientist from the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Raghav was so convinced that management training would be ideal for his daughter and open up a lucrative career path for her that he persuaded her to drop her BSc life science course in Miranda House, Delhi University, and join IIM-I.

Little did he realise then how much his decision would affect the young woman's career. She had to drop out after a year as, according to allegations by Raghav, the "institute not only concealed crucial facts of the course from its students, but it also had irrelevant course content and illegal passing criteria."

During the orientation session, some parents asked then director N Ravichandran if the institute had the mandatory approvals to start the course. "The director then did not disclose anything and just said that the IIMs are autonomous bodies which do not require any approval from any regulatory body," Raghav adds.

Raghav suspected something was amiss when his daughter was asked to choose a course for doing her graduation from the Indira Gandhi National Open University (Ignou) with her IIM-I programme. "When I made enquiries I was told by an official of the institute that

WHEN I MADE ENQUIRIES, I WAS TOLD BY AN IIM-I OFFICIAL THAT THIS FIVE-YEAR COURSE WAS NOT EQUIVALENT TO A DEGREE PROGRAMME AND THAT IIMS AS A RULE DON'T HAVE A DEGREE GRANTING STATUS

TD RAGHAV, retired scientist, CSIR

this five-year IPM course was not equivalent to a degree programme and that as IIMs don't have degree granting status the IPM would not give any student any degree and it would remain a diploma course," says Raghav.

Then came the shocker. Raghav was told that IIM-I had signed an MoU with Ignou to enable IPM students to simultaneously do an undergraduate course and get a degree from Ignou. The fee for the whole IPM programme came to ₹23 lakh.

A year into the course Raghav received a communication from IIM-I asking for ₹1.39 lakh as fee for the fourth semester, which he paid. Assuming that his daughter had been promoted to second year, he was shocked to receive a letter from the institute informing him that his daughter had failed the first year and would have to repeat all the three semesters for the first year.

"When I confronted the officials of the institute and asked them how my daughter had 'failed' after clearing three

HOW THE INTEGRATED PROGRAMME STARTED

Academic Year	Term	Course Title	Credit
2012-13	I	Language Skills in French - I	6
2012-13	I	Introductory Microeconomics	3
2012-13	I	Statistics - I	3
2012-13	I	Language Skills in English - I	3
2012-13	I	Physical Training	2
2012-13	I	Personality Development	3
2012-13	II	Language Skills in English - II	6
2012-13	II	Personality Development	2
2012-13	II	Language Skills in French - II	3
2012-13	II	Bhagwad Geeta	6
2012-13	II	Calculus - I	6
2012-13	II	Introduction to Microeconomics	6
2012-13	II	Physical Training	4
2012-13	III	Management	3
2012-13	III	Introduction to Biology	3
2012-13	III	Calculus - II	3
2012-13	III	Introduction to Sociology	3
2012-13	III	Introduction to Economics	3
2012-13	III	Language Skills in French - III	3
2012-13	III	Language Skills in English - III	3
2012-13	III	Introduction to Psychology	3
2012-13	III	Linear Algebra	3
2012-13	III	Swimming	3

The mark sheet of a student shows that IPM has compulsory courses, such as Bhagwad Gita, swimming, physical training, etc IMAGESBAZAAR



- In 2011, IIM-Indore launched a five-year integrated programme in management (IPM) without having the authority to grant a degree
- Students qualifying for the course were asked to do an undergraduate course from Ignou simultaneously with IPM to 'make up' for the diplomas they would get
- The compulsory subjects of IPM included swimming, physical training, Bhagwad Geeta etc and marks of these subject counted in promotional criteria
- The student of IPM was asked to 'drop out' after 'failing' to clear swimming and physical fitness evaluations in her first year
- Even top management experts are of the view that IIM-I did not make the 'right decision' in starting the IPM course

PICTURE FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSE ONLY

semesters and paying the fee for the second year, the authorities asked my daughter to drop the course and go home. When I asked for her mark sheet, officials told me it was uploaded on the internet. When I couldn't find it online I asked for a hard copy 'They refused' says Raghav. When he got the mark sheet, Raghav was surprised to see the course content. In the first year of IPM, compulsory subjects included swimming, physical

training, Bhagwad Geeta, biology, and foreign languages such as French and German. "My daughter had failed in some courses such as swimming and physical training, but she had cleared the other management-related courses. The institute, however, refused to listen to my grievances," alleges Raghav. Later, he got another email from the institute informing him that the board had considered his plea for leniency and had

wanted his daughter to repeat semester two and three of the first year. She would be allowed into the second year only after she cleared both. "What kind of leniency is this? Repeating two semesters means repeating the first year. It shows that this programme, is running on the whims of the head of the institute. I suggested that they only make my daughter repeat the courses she failed but the authorities refused," says Raghav.

'Proper planning' not done to launch the programme

Jeevan Prakash Sharma

When IIM Indore had launched its management course called Integrated Programme in Management (IPM) in 2011, industry experts had questioned the rationale behind starting this course as they said it did not follow the mandate for which IIMs were created in India.

"The IIM mandate is not to start undergraduate programmes and admit students for that. That's the reason why, thus far, the institutes have not been granted degree-conferring status. IIMs were set up as institutes of excellence for postgraduate management programmes. So directors and senior faculty of other IIMs were amazed when IIM-I launched an undergraduate programme without having the power to grant degrees," says a former IIM director.

JB Singh, principal, Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, says, "It amounts to fraud if an institute that's so well reputed asks the students to do a degree from an open university just because it doesn't have the mandate to run an undergraduate programme."

When contacted, N Ravichandran, who started the course in IIM-I as director, refused to talk about it. "It was my past. I don't want to talk about it or give any clarifications now. You should talk to the present director Rishikesh T Krishnan," he adds.

Warp drive space travel closer to reality?

Andrew Griffin

Nasa may have successfully tested a form of space flight that could carry people to the moon in a few short hours — and eventually let us fly at speeds approaching that of light. The agency has built an electromagnetic (EM) drive, using technology that shouldn't be possible in current understanding of physics, according to users on forum NasaSpaceFlight.com. Some of those



© SPEED OF LIGHT

discussing the plan claim to be Nasa engineers that are currently working on the plan — and have been verified as such, according to Cnet. While the technology behind EM drives has been demonstrated before, the results have been disputed by some. But a controlled demonstration in conditions like those in space could be enough to begin the work to prove that the project could be used in practice.

Though the technology has been discussed in detail on the fo-

rum and elsewhere, it is yet to undergo any peer review and the results of recent Nasa experiments have not been released publicly.

The device works by propelling objects through space by using magnets to create microwaves, which are then sent through a device to create thrust. If it works, it could overcome the need to carry fuel for propulsion — a huge problem that limits the speed and distance that those journeying in space can travel. THE INDEPENDENT

Hindustan ND 02/05/2015 P-5

जेईई-एडवांस्ड का ऑनलाइन आवेदन आज से शुरू होकर सात मई तक चलेगा

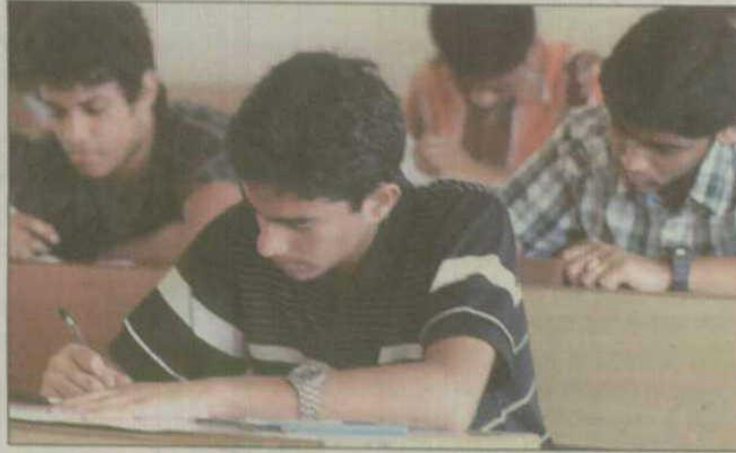
मेन की कटऑफ से होगा पंजीकरण

नई दिल्ली | कार्यालय संवाददाता

जेईई-मेन की परीक्षा का परिणाम आ चुका है। आईआईटी संस्थानों में दाखिले के लिए अब जेईई-एडवांस्ड परीक्षा होगी। जेईई-एडवांस्ड के लिए पंजीकरण दो से सात मई तक होगा। आवेदन सिर्फ ऑनलाइन माध्यम से होगा। इसके लिए छात्रों को www.jeeadv.iitb.ac.in पर पंजीकरण करना होगा। परीक्षा 24 मई को आयोजित होगी और परिणाम 18 जून को आएगा।

जेईई-मेन की परीक्षा में शीर्ष डेढ़ लाख छात्र ही एडवांस्ड में बैठ सकते हैं। जो छात्र इनमें शामिल नहीं, वे राज्य स्तर के विभिन्न इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेजों में सीटें हासिल कर सकेंगे। इनकी रैंकिंग 12वीं के अंकों और जेईई मेन के स्कोर के आधार पर तय होगी।

बता दें कि सीबीएसई बोर्ड 12वीं के परिणाम के बाद अंकों के आधार पर मेन की परीक्षा की अंतिम रैंकिंग जारी करेगा। उसके आधार पर राज्य स्तर पर



इंजीनियरिंग की सीटें आवंटित होंगी।

हाल में सीबीएसई बोर्ड ने जेईई-मेन का स्कोर जारी किया था। इस बार सामान्य वर्ग के छात्रों के लिए 105 कटऑफ तय हुई है। बीते साल यह आंकड़ा 115 था। ओबीसी के लिए 70, एससी के लिए 50 और एसटी के लिए कटऑफ 44 तय हुई है।

आईआईटी में दाखिले के लिए दो

परीक्षा होती है। पहली जेईई मेन की परीक्षा और दूसरी जेईई एडवांस की परीक्षा। मेन की परीक्षा सीबीएसई बोर्ड और एडवांस्ड परीक्षा का आयोजन आईआईटी करता है। मेन की परीक्षा एडवांस्ड की क्वालिफाइंग है। एडवांस्ड में बैठने के लिए सिर्फ दो मौके मिलते हैं। वहीं जेईई मेन की परीक्षा तीन बार दी जा सकती है।

नियमों में हुआ बदलाव

इस बार जेईई-एडवांस्ड की परीक्षा के नियमों में बदलाव हुआ है। यदि छात्र ने 2014 में 12वीं की परीक्षा दी है और वह किसी विषय में आप अंकों से संतुष्ट नहीं है और उसने 2015 में इंफुवमेंट की परीक्षा दी है तो ही वह परीक्षा में बैठ सकेगा। साथ ही छात्र द्वारा 12वीं के सभी विषय की परीक्षा दोबारा दी गई हो। किसी एक या दो विषय में या फिर कंपार्टमेंट वाले विषयों की ही परीक्षा न दी हो। यदि छात्र ने ऐसा किया है तो ही पंजीकरण करा जाएगा। जेईई एडवांस्ड आयोजन कमेटी के एक वरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने बताया कि ये नियम इंफुवमेंट और कंपार्टमेंट वाले छात्रों के लिए तय किए गए थे। किसी एक विषय में भी कंपार्टमेंट आती है तो उसे सारे विषयों की परीक्षा दोबारा देनी होगी। इसमें प्राप्त होने वाले अंकों के आधार पर ही परीक्षा में बैठने के लिए योग्य माना जाएगा।

शीर्ष 20 पर्सेंटाइल छात्रों में जगह बनाना जरूरी

एडवांस्ड के बाद आईआईटी में दाखिले के लिए दो में से एक शर्त पूरी करनी होगी। पहली शर्त छात्र अपने राज्य के बोर्ड के शीर्ष 20 पर्सेंटाइल वाले छात्रों में जगह बनाने में कामयाब होना चाहिए। यदि छात्र ऐसा नहीं कर पाता है तो उसके 12वीं कक्षा में न्यूनतम 75 फीसदी अंक होने चाहिए।

Deccan Herald ND 02/05/2015 P-9

Nasa spacecraft crashes on Mercury after 11-year mission

MIAMI, AFP: An unmanned Nasa spacecraft has crashed on the surface of the planet Mercury, after it ran out of fuel following a successful 11-year mission, the US space agency said on Thursday.

The MESSENGER probe – short for MErcury Surface, Space ENvironment, GEochemistry, and Ranging – was the first spacecraft to orbit Mercury, and issued a final farewell on Twitter shortly before its demise at 3:26 pm (1926 GMT).

"Well, I guess it's time to say goodbye to all my friends, family, support team. I will be making my final impact very soon."

Shortly after, the official @MESSENGER2011 Twitter account posted another image of Mercury's surface, with the caption: "MESSENGER'S LAST ACT? THAT'S SMASHING!"

The image was not of Mercury's fall. Nasa has said previously that there could be no

real-time pictures of the impact, which would take place on the side of the planet facing away from the earth.

But the US space agency confirmed that the probe had indeed crash-landed.

"A Nasa planetary exploration mission came to a planned, but nonetheless dramatic, end Thursday when it slammed into Mercury's surface at about 8,750 miles per hour (3.91 kilometers per second) and created a new crater on the planet's surface," the agency said in a statement.

The spacecraft itself was just about three meters long. The crater it would cause was expected to be 52 feet in diameter, Nasa said.

The mission, which launched in 2004, had achieved "unprecedented success," with its top discovery being that Mercury had lots of frozen water and other volatile materials in its permanently shadowed polar craters.

Times Of India ND 02/05/2015 P-21

Tesla unveils battery to store solar energy

It Can Power Homes, Business During Blackouts

Diane Cardwell

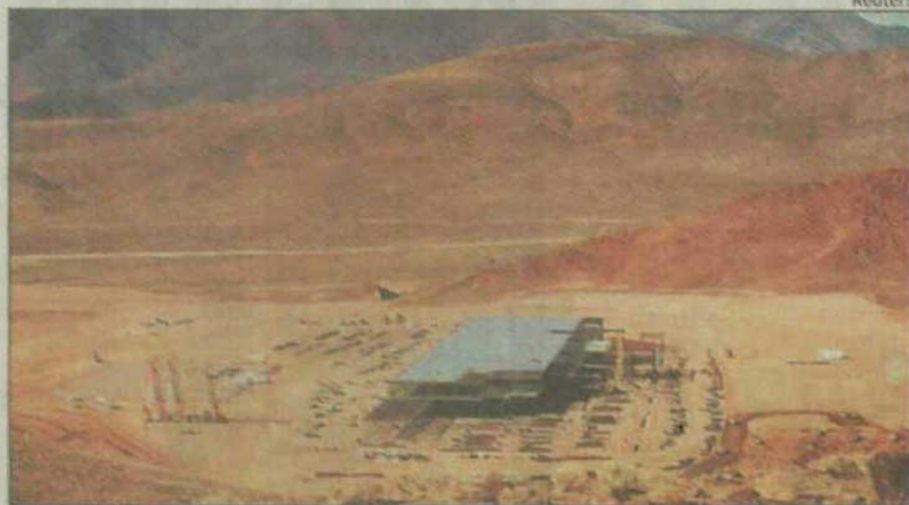
Reuters

In recent years, the fast-growing popularity of solar panels has intensified a central challenge: how to use the sun's energy when it isn't shining. Now, Tesla Motors, the maker of luxury electric sedans, says it is taking a big step toward meeting that challenge with a fleet of battery systems aimed at homeowners, businesses and utilities.

To herald its ambitions in the field, the company scheduled an event on Thursday night at its design studio in Hawthorne, California, with chief executive Elon Musk presiding. He announced the firm would build batteries that store solar energy and serve as a back-up system for consumers during blackouts. The device would allow consumers to get off a power grid or bring energy to remote areas that are not on a grid. Tesla plans to start shipping the units to installers in the US by this summer.

The company's foray into the solar storage market will include rechargeable lithium-ion battery packs that can mount to a home garage wall as well as battery blocks large enough to smooth out fluctuations in the grid. "We've obviously been working on building a world-class battery, a superefficient and affordable way to store energy," said Khobi Brooklyn, a Tesla spokeswoman. "It's just that we've been putting that battery in cars most of the time."

In a news conference before the event, Musk said the consumer battery, called the Powerwall,



The Gigafactory, a \$5-billion plant is being built by Tesla in Reno, Nevada, to produce the lithium-ion battery systems. The batteries will be connected to the internet and can be managed by Tesla from afar. Customers can connect up to nine battery packs to store larger amounts of power

would sell for \$3,500, and was derived from the batteries that Tesla uses in its Model S vehicles. The device, which Tesla will start producing later this year, will be installed by licenced technicians.

In Hawaii, where 12% of the homes have solar panels, handling the surplus power is putting pressure on the state's biggest utility, which is fighting to reduce what it pays for the energy. The batteries will be connected to the internet and can be managed by Tesla from afar. Customers can connect up to nine battery packs to store larger amounts of power.

"If you have the Tesla Powerwall, if the utility goes down, you still have power," Musk said. He added: "The whole thing is an integrated system that just works."

Energy and auto analysts have generally responded positively to Tesla's move. "Elon thinks that there's a long-term gain to be made not only in electric cars but also in electric energy storage — and he's probably right," said Karl Brauer, an analyst at Kelley Blue Book. "There's a universal application for portable energy and storable energy that goes to everybody. It's really just a matter of getting the business model together."

Tesla's announcement comes as energy companies are moving in the same direction. Sungevity, a leading solar installer, announced a partnership this week with Sonnenbatterie, a smart energy storage provider in Europe, to begin offering their systems to its customers. NYT NEWS SERVICE

Goa government identifies land to set up new IIT

http://zeenews.india.com/news/goa/goa-government-identifies-land-to-set-up-new-iit_1588595.html

Panaji: Goa Chief Minister [Laxmikant Parsekar](#) said the government has identified three separate plots to set up the proposed Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in the state.

Parsekar, who was under criticism for failing to come up with land, told IANS on Friday that a team of union ministry of human resource development would arrive in Goa later in May to finalise the location of the premier institution.

"We want the IIT to be set up formally as soon as possible. We have identified three areas spread over 14 lakh square metre for the purpose," Parsekar said.

Parsekar said that the HRD ministry could now choose between the three potential locations chosen at Dhargal, Khandola and Betul for setting up of the IIT.

"We have been told that an HRD team is expected to visit Goa this month to finalise the area," Parsekar said.

The new IIT in Goa is a part of the bouquet of IITs announced by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government, with Jammu and Kashmir, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala being the other places where the new premier institutes had been allotted.

In Goa, however the process of formally setting up the IIT got delayed due to the state government's inability to come up with adequate land for Institute over the last year, during which a temporary IIT campus was established in the Goa Engineering College in Farmagudi, 30 kms from Panaji.

How Modi Government Is Undermining Indian Education

<http://www.ndtv.com/opinion/how-modi-government-is-undermining-indian-education-759854>

One issue that has not received the attention it deserves from observers of the Modi sarkar has been its treatment of education. We have all heard for some time about the demographic dividend that awaits our nation from its youthful population, but we can only reap that dividend if we train and educate our young people to be able to take advantage of what the world has to offer them in the 21st century. Otherwise, the Naxalite menace shows us how easily the demographic dividend can become a disaster: there is nothing more dangerous to the nation than legions of under-educated, unemployed and unemployable young men with no stake in our society. This is why I have often argued that education in India is not just a socio-economic issue, but a national security issue as well.

But the Modi Sarkar's performance in education so far does not inspire confidence. Its budgetary allocations tell the tale. The overall education budget is down from Rs. 82,771 cr to Rs. 69,074 cr. Whereas under the UPA, the Plan allocation went up by 18 per cent in 2012-13 and by 8.03 per cent in 2013-14, the BJP Govt has reduced the Plan allocation for 2015-16 by 24.68 per cent. The savage cuts go across the board: the flagship Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has been reduced by 22.14 per cent, funding for the Mid-Day Meal Scheme by 16.41 per cent, the Rashtriya Madhyama Shiksha Abhiyan for secondary education by 28.7 per cent and the Rashtriya Uchhatar Shiksha Abhiyan, to support state colleges, by 48 per cent. To take just one example, the SSA, which funds schools across the country: MHRD had asked for Rs. 50,000 cr in 2015-16; it received Rs. 22,000 cr from the Modi sarkar's current Budget.

How can the government's grandiose targets - and more important, the nation's indispensable objectives - be achieved? The onus will be on the States, but they are the ones clamouring for more Central assistance. Formerly, the Central government had shared its RTE budget with states on a 65:35 proportion (90:10 in the NorthEast) but most states had been unable to provide their share. (When I was Minister, I recall that Rajasthan, for instance, didn't pay teachers' salaries till Central funds were received). Now, presumably, the share expected from our cash-strapped and governance-challenged states will be higher - and their failure bigger.

What monitoring mechanisms is the cash-strapped MHRD devising? Now that the Planning Commission has been abolished, who is going to perform its oversight role?

In higher education, we have long lamented that not a single Indian university is in the top 200 of any of the global rankings. But look at the non-seriousness of the BJP's approach to our flagship IIT system. They have announced the creation of five new IITs with a grand total investment of Rs. 1000 crore - but the Government's own Detailed Project Report specifies that the cost of establishing an IIT is Rs. 2200 cr over a period of 7 years: in other words, each new IIT needs an annual expenditure of around Rs. 310 crore a year. Mr Jaitley's allocations fall dramatically short of that - and this excludes any amount which may be needed for completing the construction of previously announced IITs. Inadequate funding has compromised the quality of education in all newly established IITs and IIMs, with the government rolling out more such institutions without strengthening the existing infrastructure.

This is just one example. The reduced allocations across the board do not match the 12th Plan objectives regarding expansion, growth, access, or quality of Higher Education. The 12th Plan approach paper had proposed that 18 per cent of all Government education spending or 1.12 per cent of GDP should be on Higher Education, and Parliament's Standing Committee on HRD recommended raising it to 25 per cent and 1.5 per cent respectively. Instead, this government is going in the opposite direction.

The picture of enrolment is more encouraging, but offset by an alarming level of dropouts. Our Gross Enrolment Ratio at primary level is high (over 101 per cent) but so is the dropout rate - about 30 per cent drop out by Class 8. You can't educate them if they're not in school. MHCR has also released figures of 60 lakh out-of-school children; according to the Ministry's 'Education for All' report to UNESCO in 2012, this had declined to 30 lakhs just 2 years ago, which suggests that the trend is reversing. When I pointed this out in the Lok Sabha, Education Minister Smriti Irani declared that my math was wrong. It isn't, but perhaps one of MHRD's figures is.

My concern about this situation is that SC/ST children and those from disadvantaged communities are disproportionately missing out. It is clear that they are not taking advantage of schemes like the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (residential schools in which 75 per cent seats are reserved for SC/ST/OBC/minorities). The Centre also says it will no longer support states in building 6000 model schools in educationally backward districts. Announcing Central objectives and expecting the States to fund them is a peculiar hallmark of this government. But it is not going to transform this country in any domain, least of all education.

Take Kendriya Vidyalayas. Demand for KVs has been going up: most Indians want quality education that's also affordable. But again, more Central investment is required in the scheme. For the six KV seats I'm entitled to allot under the MP's quota, I had 459 requests from constituents. The increase from six seats to ten proposed by the Standing Committee and recommended by the Minister won't come close to overcoming the demand/supply mismatch. The only answer lies in creating 500 more KVs across the country, as UPA wanted to do. The BJP has given no resources for this. Nor does it plan to enhance the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas, highly sought-after residential schools for the mainly

rural poor. It should ideally create JNVs for specially disadvantaged groups, like the fishing community in the coastal areas.

An educated country needs good teachers, and enough of them. But only 63 per cent of government schools have a Pupil-Teacher ratio as per RTE norms (30:1 primary, 35:1 upper primary). According to the RTE Act, the prescribed norm had to be reached by March 2015: what is government doing about it?

We have a shortage of trained teachers as well as training institutes. There are 6 lakh posts of teachers vacant under the SSA. Even in the KVs, 7698 out of 44,529 sanctioned teaching posts are vacant; so are 50 per cent of positions in teacher-training institutions. Most teacher training colleges, as the Verma Committee observed, are so bad they should be closed down. If we train teachers badly, they will teach children badly. A serious initiative by MHRD is needed: urgent recruitment, more Teacher Eligibility Tests, remedial training. Instead we have a level of governmental inattention to the crisis that matches our notorious culture of teacher absenteeism. The picture is even worse in higher education: Central Universities, IITs, NITs, IIMs, are all suffering crippling shortages of teachers.

As a result, the quality of education continues to suffer. Learning outcomes in our school system remain weak. The National Achievement Survey, PISA and other measurements show that not even half the children in Class V can read a Class II text. The government seems bereft of ideas to remedy this.

One of the areas the government should be able to have a direct impact upon is infrastructure. But construction delays are affecting 177 KVs (including Pangode in my own constituency). Only 52 per cent of schools have a playground; only 83 per cent have a girls' toilet. (MHRD's own figures show 2 lakh schools without toilets and 5.2 lakh without playgrounds.)

Performance indicators make dismal reading. Take the scheme to set up girls' hostels in all Educationally Backward Blocks: 3453 were approved, only 536 are functional. Only 69 per cent of the kitchens-cum-stores sanctioned for the mid-day meal programme have been constructed; the quality of food served remains a widespread concern, and not only because of the Bihar tragedy in which dozens of children died; teachers remain reluctant to supervise the cooking or taste the food. These are all issues the government could fix, but it will take resources, including more honoraria to the cooks/helpers. Instead, the mid-day meal budget has been cut by the government.

With this record of under-performance, it's troubling that the government is busy undermining the autonomy of institutions of higher education. There is widespread concern about the announced resignations of key academic leaders, from the Chairman of the Board of Governors of IIT-Bombay, to the IIT-Delhi Director, the NCERT Director, and even the Chairman of the National Book Trust, the eminent Malayalam writer Sethumadhavan, seven months before the expiry of his term. Sethu had published 17 novels and 20 collections of short stories, so at least the Book Trust was headed by someone who had written books - but the new regime has predictably replaced him with the former editor of the RSS mouthpiece, Panchajanya. A similar attempt to remove Delhi University VC Dinesh Singh has been held up by President Mukherjee seeking further clarifications.

Saffronisation seems to be the name of the game. Can the Minister say that the new VC of Benares Hindu University, a prant-level official of the RSS with very slender academic credentials and no books on his CV, is worthy of a position formerly held by the likes of Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Acharya Narendra Dev? What are the qualifications of Mr Y Sudershan Rao to Chair the Indian Council of Historical Research - other than his Hindutva views?

It's not just appointments. MHRD's directive to educational institutions to observe 25 December as Good Governance

Day, requiring the physical presence of students on the Christmas holiday, was an anti-national step. So was the instruction to set up separate vegetarian canteens at the IITs (I am vegetarian myself, but my intellectual contact with my fellow students was never, and should not be, limited by what they eat.) We need an assurance from the government that it will uphold the integrity of educational attainment in India beyond religious considerations.

The supposedly autonomous University Grants Commission has become a poodle, being instructed to issue a directive to Delhi University to withdraw its four-year Undergraduate Programme abruptly, and to disqualify all other universities from offering such courses. (The UGC's craven political expediency in reversing its own previous decisions on laughable grounds is another embarrassment.)

Equally dismaying is the new MHRD instruction that it must be informed before any MoUs with foreign universities are signed. This is contrary to the Acts governing institutions like IITS, NITs, and Central Universities, which give them the power to enter into academic collaborations with other educational institutions, including foreign ones. The previous NDA government had done the same thing; in August 2004, UPA withdrew that requirement, saying it was "unnecessary interference in the autonomy of institutions". With the BJP back in power, autonomy is again history.

Our educational system is over-regulated and under-governed. I hope this government will rethink the disastrous course upon which it has embarked, and revive the UPA proposal to abolish UGC and AICTE and create an overarching Council of Higher Education to facilitate, rather than restrict, educational autonomy. Excellence can only thrive amid freedom. Sadly, the BJP Government does not appear to believe either in promoting freedom or financing excellence.

(Dr Shashi Tharoor is a two-time MP from Thiruvananthapuram, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, the former Union Minister of State for External Affairs and Human Resource Development and the former UN Under-Secretary-General. He has written 15 books, including, most recently, India Shastra: Reflections On the Nation in Our Time.)