

Newspaper Clips

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Times of India ND 30/05/2014 P-15

₹450cr education channel project under Irani's lens

Akshaya Mukul | TNN

New Delhi: The HRD ministry's ambitious plan to start 50 education channels met with some serious questioning from the new minister Smriti Irani on Thursday. Aware of allegations of a scam in the Rs 450 crore project under the National Mission for Education through ICT, Irani raised questions about the proposed cost of each studio.

When told that each studio would cost Rs 50 lakh, Irani said she has been a producer and the cost of a Bollywood film set with far superior facilities does not cross more than Rs 70 lakh. Already there are allegations of collusion between consultants for the project and ministry officials. There are allegations that the tender was awarded in a hurry despite the fact that there were only two bidders and one company had raised queries. Also, people involved with the project are asking the need to have 230 studios throughout the country despite the fact that many institutions already have studios. The minister also asked questions about the implications of a CAG audit on various projects and programmes of the ministry. In fact, one of the 60 points flagged by her includes seeking a note on CAG's audit of various school programmes.

Irani is also expected to take a decision on the location of a second central university in Bihar. At the insistence of former chief minister Nitish Kumar, UPA II had agreed to give two central universities to the state at Patna and Motihari. However, inclusion of Motihari in the list of central universities was to be carried out through amendment in the Central Universities Act. In the changed political context of Bihar and



HRD minister Smriti Irani arrives at PMO to attend Thursday's Cabinet meeting. **For steps to download & use Alive app, see P 2**

Report indicting UGC for irregularities among first tasks

One of the first things to land on HRD minister Smriti Irani's table will be the audit report on the UGC that severely indicts the regulator for widespread financial mismanagement and ad-hocism. Highlight of the audit by the director general of audit, central expenditure, is the manner in which UGC has created its own fee structure of payment to advocates resulting in excess payment of Rs 84.88 lakh. The report says UGC hired senior advocates arbitrarily. **Akshaya Mukul**

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

Delhi, it remains to be seen what decision the new minister takes. She has been briefed in detail by ministry officials.

The HRD minister also received representation from her colleague Manoj Sinha, minister of state for railways, on the functioning of Banaras Hindu University vice-chancellor Lalji Singh.

Hindu ND 30/05/2014 P-10

Judge me by my work: Smriti

Anita Joshua

NEW DELHI: Union Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Smriti Irani on Thursday broke her silence on the controversy over her misrepresenting her educational qualification in an affidavit when she urged the media to judge her by her work.

Thereafter, she is said to have ticked off senior officials in the Ministry for setting up committees to take decisions. Among the decisions awaiting the new Minister was appointment of directors to several Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) including in Bhubaneswar, Patna, Indore and Mandi.

Another issue on which the Minister and officials differ is the setting up of IITs in every State.

According to officials, many of the new IITs set up during the previous regime continue to face problems of infrastructure and faculty shortage. Even older IITs, including the one in Delhi, face a faculty crunch and have to rely a lot on visiting faculty.

In fact, former Union Minister of State for HRD Shashi Tharoor had tried hard to get an IIT for his home State Kerala, but could not manage to do so; primarily because the Planning Commission had

taken the view in 2012 that no more such institutes should be set up during the 12th Plan Period except under "exceptional circumstances."

With 16 IITs in the country, the Commission was of the view that the focus should be more on consolidation of what already exists. Flagging the resource crunch, the Commission had told the Ministry that after the kind of expansion which was undertaken in higher education in the 11th Plan Period, the next five years ought to be used to consolidate this growth.

SASTRA varsity VC backs Minister

J. Venkatesan reports:

Coming out in support of Smriti Irani, the vice-chancellor of SASTRA University Prof. R. Sethuraman said on Thursday that a person's qualification is not the only criteria to hold the post of HRD Minister.

In a statement, Prof. Sethuraman said, "The ability to understand, comprehend and appreciate a fair knowledge of ground reality and a good sense of respect for the law and fair play are the most essential factors to be considered for appointing a person in any post including HRD Minister."

Smriti learns the IIT ropes

BASANT KUMAR MOHANTY

New Delhi, May 29: Human resource development minister Smriti Irani today picked her way through the procedural labyrinth of governance, wondering whether IIT directors can be appointed without formal search panels and how to open fast such an institute in every state.

Ministry officials who met Smriti to make a presentation about new IITs and the pending appointments of directors to five IITs were asked by Smriti if there was any need for search committees, sources said.

An official later said the minister was trying to familiarise herself with the nitty-gritty and not prescribing solutions.

The minister said that bureaucratic delay should be avoided. At present, the appointments are made after a search committee headed by an eminent academic recommends three to five candidates.

Smriti asked whether a way could be explored to avoid the formation of search panels. The ministry officials said this might not be possible since the norms governing the IITs stipulate the formation of such search panels.

The new minister told the officials that her party was committed to setting up IITs in states that do not have such institutions. At present, 15 states have these premier tech schools. Certain states like Kerala and Karnataka have been demanding an IIT each.

Smriti, sources said, insisted that all bottlenecks should be addressed to ensure that the uncovered states get IITs.

Ministry officials said such an idea might be difficult under the 12th Plan (2012-17) since this plan period, as mandated by the National Development Council, was focused on consolidating the existing institutions.

The officials also cited the severe faculty crunch faced by the eight new IITs that have been opened in the past six years. Their academic output remains poor since about half their teacher posts are vacant.

All these eight IITs are functioning from temporary campuses. Although they have got land, construction of the permanent campus is yet to start in many IITs.

Expansion of the IITs may, therefore, be a tough call at this moment, the ministry officials said. No decision has been taken on this.

Opinion also exists that opening an IIT in every state might also bring down the celebrated quality associated with the institutes.

‘Work’ plea

Smriti today said she should be judged by her “work” as minister, in her first comments on the controversy about a non-graduate being appointed minister in charge of education.

She, however, declined comment when asked about the discrepancy between her 2004 nomination papers, which showed her as a graduate, and her 2014 election affidavit that did not.

“I will humbly request all of you to judge me by my work,” Smriti, 38, said. The youngest minister in the Narendra Modi government added that she had been given the job on the basis of her ability.

Yesterday, the Congress had highlighted how her 2004 affidavit mentioned “B.A. 1996 Delhi University (School of Correspondence)” while her 2014 papers cited “Bachelor of Commerce Part-1, School of Open Learning (Correspondence), University of Delhi-1994”.

Asked about this variance, Smriti said: “I will not add anything to the statement that I have made.”

She said the controversy was aimed at distracting her from her work. “Extraneous circumstances have been created to ensure my attention is deviated from the work I have been entrusted with.”

The Rajya Sabha member insisted she had always delivered on assignments given by her party. “I have been judged by my organisation on the capacity to deliver on assignments,” she added.

The controversy had erupted after Madhu Kishwar, an academic and a backer of Modi before the general election, took a dig at Smriti’s educational qualifications in a tweet a day after the minister was sworn in.

But several academics suggested the row was pointless and argued that politicians should not be judged by their degrees but their work.

N.R. Madhava Menon, a legal educator, said academic degrees were not needed under the Constitution to contest an election or become a minister.

Smriti Irani as HRD minister: Why not?



From the track record of recent HRD ministers, it is clear that academic qualifications have nothing to do with performance

a college dropout, is India's new human resource development minister. The appointment has got a sneering tweet from former United Progressive Alliance (UPA) minister [Ajay Maken](#). Joining him in this scorn attack is activist-journalist [Madhu Kishwar](#), a publicly fervent admirer of Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#), who has tweeted many times on this issue. Some samples, in chronological order: "Smriti Irani merely class 12 pass. Went to bcm fashion model on to tv serial bahu. Is this qualification enf 4 India's education minister?" "Smriti Irani's appointment not the only one disappointing or controversial but its like an avoidable grahna (eclipse) on a bright and shining rising sun!" "HRD needs a head who can steer dextrously between Left and Right extremists in academia to define sensible course unfettered by partisan agendas."

The first allegation is that having been a fashion model and acted in an [Ekta Kapoor](#) serial, Irani is a bimbo. This is a very strange judgemental statement coming from a feminist like Kishwar. Besides, as Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) spokesperson for several years, Irani has given ample evidence that she is intelligent, quick-witted and always comes well-prepared to a debate, whatever the topic. And by the way, [Anand Gandhi](#), the director of *Ship of Theseus*, which won the National Award for Best Film this year, wrote the dialogues for the first 82 episodes of *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi*, the serial in which Irani starred.

The second tweet requires no comment; it is merely rhetoric. The third statement implies that Kishwar would like the new government to define university syllabi and vet teachers' ideologies. This, of course, goes against the concept of any democracy where institutes should be allowed to set their own paths.

US universities are packed with left-leaning professors. A 2005 national survey directed by Smith College professor [Stanley Rothman](#) found they outnumbered conservatives by a ratio of 5-to-1 on American campuses. Whatever the causes of this skew, the effects, as we all know, on US public opinion or policy, have been negligible. It's only an instance of the way a democracy should allow—and has allowed—education to function.

However, the more immediate issue that Maken is sniggering at and Kishwar ranting about may be that as HRD minister, Irani would be presiding over the future of elite and world-class higher-learning institutions like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT), the Indian Institutes of Management (IIM), the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc). A Class 12 pass would obviously not have the intelligence or ability to do that.

As an alumnus of both IIT and IIM, I beg to differ.

I will not cite laughably irrelevant examples like [Rabindranath Tagore](#), who never finished school, or [Bill Gates](#) or [Steve Jobs](#), both of whom dropped out of college. I will just stick to the business of the HRD ministry, and here too, to the elite institutions.

The last four HRD ministers we have had were all well-educated men. Irani's immediate predecessor, [Pallam Raju](#), is an engineer with an MBA from the US. He succeeded [Kapil Sibal](#), who is one of the top lawyers of the country. Before Sibal, we had [Arjun Singh](#), who was a BA, LLB. The Vajpayee government had [Murli Manohar Joshi](#), who has a PhD in physics. Let's see what they did for these institutions that all Indians are supposed to be proud of.

Raju was a low-profile minister, and by all accounts, a good one. But as we go back in time, the story gets murkier.

Sibal, for no discernible reason other than a perverse desire to fiddle with something that was working perfectly well, changed the IIT entrance examination system. He clubbed the JEE (the venerable IIT entrance test, regarded as the toughest and fairest of its type in the whole world) with all other engineering entrance tests run by the government. The top 1,50,000 students to qualify would then sit for JEE-Advanced, and the top 9,000 who passed this test would be offered an IIT seat. This of course means that if a student falls sick on the day of the first test, he or she has to just hang

around for a year. In the earlier system, with multiple states and colleges having their own tests, you had a choice: a day wouldn't set you back by a year.

That's not all. Under Sibal's scheme, the student's performance in JEE-Advanced counts for only 60%. The rest 40% weightage is of the student's Class XII board results. Now, given that different state higher secondary boards give different levels of marks (just compare marks in the West Bengal board and the Andhra Pradesh board, or CBSE and ISC), this has brought in a wholly new factor of uncertainty into the process. Also, quite simply, someone who has a brilliant engineering mind may not get a very high percentage in the Class XII boards, because he may not be good in languages. In short, Sibal messed up the IIT entrance system, diminishing its stature, rigour and fairness. This was our learned lawyer's signal contribution India's higher education.

And would anyone who has read Sibal's poetry (two proudly published volumes till date) want him as the man in charge of our children's education? Here's an extract from a poem on his Twitter experience: "All the fans, every troll/ Make this for me, anything but droll./ Thanks tweeples for the journey so far/ It's been a month, above par."

Singh spent his days as HRD minister sulking that he was not Prime Minister, plotting his petty political schemes, supposedly making money by granting deemed university status to private educational institutions, and then sprang a surprise on the nation (including, reportedly, even the Gandhis) by announcing 27% reservation for Other Backward Class students in all institutes of higher learning. Singh typified the corrupt Indian politician, embroiled in scam after scam through his career, but managing to survive them all.

Of course, the most educationally qualified HRD minister of the past two decades was the NDA's Joshi, who wrote his PhD thesis (on spectroscopy) in Hindi, a completely unnecessary exhibitionist exercise that proved or established nothing (What's the Hindi for spectroscopy? And why do we need a Hindi word for it?). As minister, he spent taxpayers' money funding insane projects like trying to build an aircraft modelled on the Pushpak Rath as described in the Ramayana, politicised all top academic appointments, and attempted to force universities to introduce courses like Vedic astrology and yogic consciousness. But his coup de grace was trying to seriously undermine the autonomy of the IITs and IIMs.

First, he announced that IIT alumni who donated money to their alma maters could not do so directly. They could only send the money to the HRD Ministry and the bureaucrats there would decide where the money should go. This was so utterly ridiculous. If you are donating your money, don't you have the right to decide who are giving it to and for what? There was such an uproar from influential and wealthy IITians that he had to beat a hasty retreat.

Next, he issued a diktat that the HRD ministry would from now on decide admission procedures, hiring norms and syllabi for IITs and IIMs. Though the Union government had always theoretically had the power to do so, no one had ever exercised these powers and left these excellent institutes alone to run themselves. This in fact was a key reason for their success and reputation. There was a national outrage, and some of the IIMs, led by IIM Ahmedabad director [Bakul Dholakia](#), openly protested. Joshi threatened that if the IIMs did not fall in line, he would cut off central government financial assistance to them. Keep your money, replied the rebellious IIMs, we can manage on our own. Again, Joshi had to withdraw. In other words, Joshi was a general embarrassment as minister, as far as most educated progressive Indians were concerned, regardless of political ideology.

On Wednesday, Congress spokesperson [Abhishek Singhvi](#) and general secretary [Digvijaya Singh](#) have both expressed regret that Modi chose Irani over Joshi for the HRD ministry. That's opportunistic politics.

The point I am trying to make is that of the last four HRD ministers, three have done—or tried to do—serious damage to our higher education system, and all three were well- to highly educated. Thus, academic credentials seem to have no correlation with an HRD minister's competence or performance. Therefore, the fact that Irani is a college dropout is

irrelevant. Educated does not necessarily mean literate, literate does not necessarily mean intelligent, and intelligent does not necessarily mean competent.

Even more important, it is the HRD ministry that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has always had its eye on. Education is one area it wishes to influence. Joshi was a direct RSS appointee. Irani is one of the few BJP politicians in the new cabinet who has no connections with the RSS at all. Through her appointment, Modi has sent a strong message to the mother organisation that it should desist from interfering in his government.

There is no reason why Irani will not make a reasonably good HRD minister. She is definitely sincere and hard working, and she should spend her energies on primary education. As for higher education, and especially the elite institutes, all she has to do to let them be. She needs to do nothing. It does not matter at all whether she is a college dropout or a double PhD.

After all, [Rahul Gandhi](#) is an MPhil in development studies from Trinity College, Cambridge. But in the Lok Sabha election nomination papers he filed in 2004 at Amethi, he got the name of his course wrong. Development economics, he wrote, instead of development studies. I rest my case.

IIT-Delhi student seeks Aamir's help to highlight road safety issue

Faheem Ruhani May 29, 2014 | UPDATED 19:36 IST

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/iit-delhi-student-seeks-aamir-khan-help-to-highlight-road-safety-issue/1/364311.html>

One person dies every five minutes on Indian roads. Not something that is going to shock many of us.

The good thing is that there is someone who has decided to do something about it. Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Delhi student Dikshant Sharm has written to [Aamir Khan](#) to highlight the issue of road safety through his hugely popular reality TV show Satyamev Jayate in the coming season.

IITian Dikshant lost four of his friends in a road accident when they undertook a trip to Rajasthan to celebrate their placements. Two of them lost their lives and two others were injured badly when the Innova they were travelling in overturned near Jaisalmer in March this year.

Dikshant has been seeking signatures (via www.change.org) from people to petition Aamir Khan and Satyamev Jayate to do a show on fatal road accidents. He has so far got over 32,000 people to sign the petition.

In his petition, Dikshant states, "Someone told me that the lives of my friends could have been saved if they were taken care of immediately. But no help arrived for about 30 minutes and they succumbed to their injuries.

"I have realised that the impact of road accidents are huge. Not only do they claim lives, but they also have a devastating impact on the lives of those who are involved. If a loved one of yours has been involved in the accident it haunts you for the rest of your life."

Ever since Aamir Khan's reality show Satyamev Jayate went on air two years ago, it has created awareness about burning issues that afflict Indian society. Aamir and his reality show have been successful in starting a debate on many topics the show took up,

Satyamev Jayate's director, Satyajit Bhatkal confirmed having received Dikshant's petition. "The team of Satyamev Jayate met this group of students. We were very moved by their story and what they intend to do."

Bhatkal added, "Taking a leaf out of their life, these students have turned a personal tragedy into a larger issue that affects society at large. We are very positive that we should do something on this issue."

Read more at: <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/iit-delhi-student-seeks-aamir-khan-help-to-highlight-road-safety-issue/1/364311.html>

Smriti Irani to grapple with audit report indicting UGC for financial mismanagement

[Akshaya Mukul](#), TNN | May 30, 2014, 03.49 AM IST

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Smriti-Irani-to-grapple-with-audit-report-indicting-UGC-for-financial-mismanagement/articleshow/35747084.cms>

NEW DELHI: One of the first things to land on HRD minister Smriti Irani's table will be the audit report on the University Grants Commission that severely indicts the regulator for widespread financial mismanagement and ad-hocism.

Highlight of the audit by the director general of audit, central expenditure, is the manner in which UGC has created its own fee structure of payment to advocates resulting in excess payment of Rs 84.88 lakh. The report says UGC hired senior advocates without following proper procedure in arbitrary manner. "The UGC hiring other senior advocates only on the recommendation of its legal consultant Amitesh Kumar without consulting other panel advocates," it said. From 2011-12 to 2013-14, it said, UGC spent Rs 5.51 crore on legal fees. It was also revealed that UGC paid Rs 50000 per conference charge to senior advocates, incurring an expenditure of Rs 12.50 lakh for 25 conferences.

The audit report also says UGC hired contractual staff for various posts - clerks, assistants, skilled/semi-skilled, consultants, driver, cook - that was in excess of their sanctioned strength for which it had to bear an extra burden of expenditure of Rs 2.07 crore per year. "As per rule, the man-in-position cannot be higher than the sanctioned strength," report said, adding that UGC should immediately curtail this expenditure.

What has particularly caught the attention of auditors is the way consultants were hired by UGC. The report lists consultants by name - SK Ray who retired as joint secretary from HRD ministry and AK Sharma who was earlier in NCERT - and says their appointment is irregular. Report specifically mentions that honorarium of chief consultants was increased from Rs 35,000 to Rs 70,000 without their request. Every year, UGC has incurred excess expenditure of Rs 70 lakh.

The report says UGC failed in its primary task of giving grants to colleges/universities. It found that UGC extended the 11th Plan period beyond March 31, 2012 and first installment of grant was released after lapse of three years of the Plan. In 64 Delhi colleges that got general development grant and merged scheme grant, only 29 colleges furnished the

utilization certificates. Audit report said, "Due to the lack of monitoring by UGC, the very purpose of scheme for which it was framed and launched in 11th Plan was defeated as a total amount of Rs 46.65 crore remained unutilized. Similarly, Rs 9.72 crore meant for establishment of computer centre in universities remained unutilized.

Widespread mismanagement of funds in payment of phone bills and transport allowance has been pointed out. Also, physical verification of library books of UGC has not been conducted since 1987

Centre Planning to Set Up IIM-Visakhapatnam?

By Express News Service

http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/andhra_pradesh/Centre-Planning-to-Set-Up-IIM-Visakhapatnam/2014/05/29/article2251756.ece Published: 29th May 2014 09:07 AM

Last Updated: 29th May 2014 09:07 AM

VISAKHAPATNAM: Even as Vizagites are planning to bring pressure on the government to accord Central University status to Andhra University, the thinking at the Centre seems to be in favour of setting up an Indian Institute of Management (IIM) in Visakhapatnam. Though no concrete decision has been taken in this regard, sources said that feelers to this effect were sent by the Union government to the authorities concerned in the state.

But academicians fear that any such decision would only make matters worse for the 88-year-old university which has been facing a deficit of over `40 crore per year for the last two financial years. As against the budget estimated budget of `367 crore this year, the university is estimated to face a deficit of 1`118 crore during 2014-15.

Ever since the limits of Andhra University have been reduced by setting up two new universities at Srikakulam and Kakinada, the number of its affiliate colleges has come down, causing a severe revenue loss. Besides, funds from neither the Union government nor the state government were released promptly. "If this was the situation in the united Andhra Pradesh, we fear that it could only get worse considering that the government would be busy creating the new capital and other infrastructural facilities rather than funding Andhra University," said a senior faculty member at the university.

Though the demand for upgrading Andhra University as central university has been pending for long, the state bifurcation has flamed the long-cherished demand and the university authorities have sent a report to the Union Ministry of Human Resources Development seeking the same, a couple of weeks before the election code came into force.

A delegation of Andhra University authorities including faculty plan to meet the Union Ministry of HRD officials and also N Chandrababu Naidu soon after his swearing-in as the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh. If the Centre refuses to upgrade Andhra University, the officials want to push a proposal for upgrading the Andhra University Engineering College into an Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) or at least a National Institute of Technology (NIT).

When approached by TNIE, Andhra University vice-chancellor GSN Raju denied any knowledge of the Union government's plans to set up an IIM instead of upgrading Andhra University into a central university. "It is too early to take any step over upgrading Andhra University. We have submitted our report but the government is yet to respond. We will press for upgrading the university once everyone settles in their offices. We want all

educational institutions promised to Andhra Pradesh as per the Reorganisation Act, to be established in Vizag,” he said.

Sagar central university recruitment scam: CBI raids 7 premises in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bhopal/Sagar-central-university-recruitment-scam-CBI-raids-7-premises-in-Madhya-Pradesh-Uttar-Pradesh/articleshow/35769363.cms>

BHOPAL: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Friday raided seven premises in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh (UP) in connection with the alleged multi-crore recruitment scam at Hari Singh Gour Central University in state's Sagar district.

Raids are being carried out at the residential premises of former university vice chancellor (VC) - N S Gajbiye in Kanpur, office of VC, office of registrar and residential premises of four assistant professors at Sagar, said sources.

Taking into account the enormity of scam in recruitments in Hari Singh Gour Central University in Sagar district in 2010, CBI had on Thursday registered three FIRs. The investigating agency will look into alleged illegal appointment of 153 professors and assistant professors in the prestigious and only central varsity in the state.

Even Prime Minister Narendra Modi had expressed concern on alleged recruitment scam during his campaign for assembly polls in the state last November.

The agency has also registered a preliminary enquiry (PE) against then vice-chancellor N S Gajbiye to investigate his alleged role in appointment in commerce, mass communication, English and law departments of the varsity, sources said. Initial investigations revealed some of candidates were appointed overlooking their ineligibility for the post. Role of screening committee members is also under scanner.

TOI was first to report the alleged scam its October 29, 2013 edition after a series of complaints were lodged against Gajbiye by professors, who were terminated from the college. On November 18, Narendra Modi took a dig at Congress over corruption quoting TOI report against authorities of university.

CBI had received five complaints. President of India, who is an ex officio visitor to the university, had also initiated a separate inquiry into the allegations.

Gajbiye was a professor in IIT-Kanpur before his appointment as vice-chancellor of Gorakhpur University by UP government and in 2009 as the first VC of Sagar Central University.

India, China need to take steps on climate change: US

<http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/india-china-need-to-take-steps-on-climate-change-us/article6059862.ece?css=print>

The U.S. has said that it is willing to take steps to reduce its emissions but also wants countries like India and China to take responsibility to address the challenge of climate change.

“Any successful international climate agreement is going to depend on many nations, including the United States, making commitments to reduce their emissions,” said a senior administration official on Wednesday.

Noting that the domestic actions of nations should be a part of an international response, the official said, “everybody has to step up to the plate. Of course, one of the things we said is we’re willing to take steps to reduce our emissions, but we need countries like China and India that are emerging emitters to take steps as well”.

The official said steps like development of Climate Action Plan by the U.S. will enable it to meet the types of commitments it made in Copenhagen about fuel efficiency standards or coal-fired power plants.

Highlighting that climate change is a challenge that cuts across many different areas, the official said, “one of those is national security, because as the U.S. President said, this is going to pose increasing national security dangers to the United States”.

“We are going to be called upon to respond to conflicts or situations that have connections to climate change. You can’t draw a red line, but clearly there has been an uptick in extreme weather events,” he said.

He said the U.S.’ domestic efforts intersected with its leadership internationally.

“When there’s a typhoon in Southeast Asia, when there’s a tsunami, the U.S. military is often called in for disaster response.

“As the President referenced today, when there are refugees or conflicts over basic resources like food and water, which ultimately can have a bearing on national security. So there’s a very clear intersection, we believe, between a changing climate and our national security interests,” he said.

Kejriwal's daughter in top league

[Shreya Roy Chowdhury](#), TNN | May 30, 2014, 12.47 AM IST

Shreya Roy Chowdhury

NEW DELHI: With the Board exam and JEE Advanced behind her, Harshita Kejriwal (18) is now turning her attention to Dan Brown. Arguably Delhi's most famous CBSE Class XII examinee this year, the daughter of Arvind Kejriwal has scored 96%. The Noida Delhi Public School student has a 99 in physics, 96 in chemistry and English, 95 in mathematics and 94 in computer science.

"I'm satisfied with my result," she says. After quitting as Delhi chief minister, Kejriwal had cited his daughter's exams as one of the main reason for staying on at the Tilak Marg residence he was allotted as CM.

The AAP leader has had a very busy 2014. But Harshita insists that his frenetic activity caused absolutely no disruption to her studies. "I would go to my room or whenever there was any meeting at my home, I'd go to my aunt's in Kaushambi," she says. "I'd read newspapers during my breaks."

She had joined Kejriwal during his campaign in Varanasi "just after the exams got over".

She'd taken coaching for Joint Entrance Exam, qualified the JEE Main and secured enough marks to be eligible to write the JEE Advanced. "That was ok," she says of the last. She hopes to be an engineer-either software of electrical.

She's been preparing for two rather tumultuous years. "I used to read but didn't in the last two years. Now I've got myself novels by Dan Brown. I like suspense." She also likes sports "of any kind"-she plays tennis and "used to play football". And the Kejriwals catch a break too. She was at a friend's on Wednesday evening but the family was planning to dine out. She doesn't expect to draw too much attention when her family steps out into the public.