

Students petition court against IIT entrance format

HT Correspondent

■ htm metro@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: The Bombay high court has asked IIT-Bombay and the human resources development (HRD) ministry to file affidavits by October 8 in response to a petition that challenges the validity of the new pattern of the joint entrance exam (JEE).

The petition filed by nine class 12 students from Mumbai and Thane, and Forum for Fairness in Education (FFE) concerns the JEE, which was announced in June, and will govern admissions to 16 IITs across the country.

The FFE and the students have challenged the new JEE pattern on grounds that it limits the number of students to be allowed for the second examination. They have also objected to the rule requiring students to be among the top 20% from their boards for entry to the IITs.

On May 28, the HRD ministry announced a new JEE pattern involving two examinations – JEE-main and JEE-advanced. The new pattern meant that students will be shortlisted on the basis of their JEE-main score and their class 12 marks.

SIBAL ACCUSES OPPOSITION OF STALLING EDU REFORM BILLS

HT Correspondent

■ letters@hindustantimes.com

KOLKATA: Union human resource development minister Kapil Sibal has blamed the Opposition for not being able to implement several education reforms by stalling the Parliament.

“UPA has often been criticised for not taking decisions. In the education sector alone, we took several path breaking initiatives and big decisions. But the paralysis is somewhere else. It lies with those who sit in the Parliament to oppose, and do not want to have a dialogue. They stall discussions over important Bills,” said Sibal on Wednesday, while speaking at the Exclusive Interactive Session titled ‘Vision India: Challenged of good governance’, organised by the Indian Chamber of Commerce.

The Foreign Education Providers Bill, Malpractice in Education Sector Bill and National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions Bill, which was tabled in the Parliament but has yet to be passed, were the subject of the talk at the event.

The senior Congress leader said, “The paralysis is in the mind of those who take decisions. Even after sending the Bills to the Parliamentary Standing Committee and getting clearance from them, followed by a prolonged discussion with the opposition who then gave consent, when discussions for the Bills started in the Parliament they started opposing it. If this is what the political parties do, what will we do?”

Claiming that by 2030 India would become the most populated country in the world, Sibal said, “If we want to rip dividend from our workforce we will have to give them education opportunities. It’s high time we had adequate numbers of universities for our young people, or else this demographic dividend would backfire. But then, I, as a minister, cannot change that. All stakeholders must come together.”

JOHL CHANCELLOR OF CENTRAL VARSITY OF PUNJAB

CHANDIGARH: Eminent farm economist Sardara Singh Johl, 84, has been appointed as the first chancellor of the Central University of Punjab, Bathinda, for five years. A communiqué on his appointment was issued by President Pranab Mukerjee on Thursday. Johl is a former vice-chancellor of Punjab Agricultural University and Punjabi University. **P4**

UK unveils £2m fund to aid stranded Indian pupils

London: Britain on Thursday announced a new fund of £2 million to help Indian and other non-EU students caught by the revocation of London Metropolitan University's licence to admit and teach international students. LMU's licence was revoked on August 29, throw-

Cameron drops lone PIO minister

The only Indian origin member of the British administration, Shailesh Vara, has been dropped in a reshuffle by PM David Cameron. The development has shocked UK's Indian community, which was expecting Vara to be promoted. **PTI**

ing the academic future of over 350 Indian and over 2,250 other non-EU current students in disarray.

Universities minister David Willetts said told a conference that the fund was intended to "to help legitimate overseas students at London Met who face extra costs through no fault of their own".

The money will be used to help with the costs of students transferring to other universities and to make new visa applications. **PTI**