

Newspaper Clips September 9, 2014

Times of India, ND 09/09/2014

P-13

Smriti, 39 univ VCs to draw new vision for higher edu

To Brainstorm In Chandigarh For Two Days

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New Delhi: HRD minister Smriti Z Irani will be in a retreat with vice-chancellors of 39 central universities in Chandigarh for two days, September 12-13, to discuss ministry's new vision on higher education, take stock of their function and prepare the road ahead.

Irani already had similar interactions with directors of IITs and IIMs. The minister is likely to stress on greater synergy between higher and school education.

One of the key issues to be discussed will be the report by the AM Pathan committee that had prepared a single legislation to govern all central universities. Currently, each central university is governed by its own Act passed by

Parliament. Pathan's report and draft bill was unanimously criticized within the HRD ministry last year. It was felt that the proposed legislation will not only take away the historical character of many universities but will also compromise their autonomy. The bill was also criticized for proposing a tedious process of governance. For instance, it had said the office of chancellor should be abolished and replaced by a Council of VCs (CVCs) to be headed by HRD minister. It had

also suggested a separate recruitment board for appointment of teachers and non-academic staff in central universities.

The ministry will also impress VCs about the need to get accreditation from National Assessment and Accreditation Council. Sources said, when it comes to quality, central universities cannot be getting different treatment than private universities.

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



Smriti Irani

Rudderless UGC worries review panel

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New Delhi: In the first meeting of the UGC's Review Committee the overwhelming view was that the regulator is facing a leadership crisis for the past one decade or so. The Committee headed by former UGC chairperson Hari Gautam met on Friday and Saturday and heard stakeholders, educationists, vice-chancellors and even senior staff of the University Grants Commission (UGC).

The idea of having an overarching regulatory body like the National Commission for Higher Education Research proposed during the UPA II did not find favour.

One member of the committee said, "UGC is facing crisis at various levels. Restructuring of the Commission should be done keeping in mind what ails the institu-

tion. It should not be a mindless exercise." On the first day of the meeting there was unanimity that UGC's regulatory mechanism needs to be revisited and a new dynamic system should be put in place. Many also pointed out that UGC is not able to cope with the fast-changing scenario of higher education, especially the manner in which private, state and deemed universities are mushrooming. "UGC should be strengthened to regulate private and deemed universities. Current process is very lengthy," he said. One suggestion was that the number of UGC members should be increased and they should be given permanent status.

On Saturday, many invitees said UGC's failure is because of the leadership it has got.

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

5,000 govt scientists to teach in schools, colleges

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The government has decided to make it mandatory for over 5,000 scientists, working in different central agencies including the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), to undertake 12 hours of lecture classes in an academic year in public-funded schools and colleges across the country.

Announcing the decision, Union science and technology minister Jitendra Singh said it would be “mandatory” for the scientists to formally take classes in schools and colleges which would be identified for this purpose in coordination with the ministry of human resources development. The minister said this kind of engagement would be “free of any honorarium”.

He said the government was devising a methodology depending upon the scientists' area of interest, area of excellence and specialisation.

The minister also announced a special promotion scheme—KIRAN (Knowledge, Involvement, Research, Advancement through Nurturing) for women scientists “to bring about, as far as possible, gender parity in the field of science and technology”.

“There are a number of women

The government is devising a methodology based on the scientists' area of interest, excellence and specialization

scientists who have inevitable break in the continuous career...we are trying to evolve a mechanism (to see) that we don't lose out to them and they don't lose out to us,” Singh said while listing initiatives of his ministry.

Giving a detailed account of the achievements and initiatives taken in the first 100 days of Narendra Modi government, Singh said the ministries under his charge had been able to scale-up scientific research to address several key socio-economic issues. This has been achieved by collaborating with other ministries while making a concerted effort to build scientific temper among the youth.

Highlighting specific achievements, he said that the department of science and technology got approval of Expenditure Finance Committee for India's participation in Thirty Meter Telescope project involving astronomy research institutes in India, US, Canada, Japan and China.

Now, it's must for scientists to teach at colleges, schools

EXPRESS NEW SERVICE

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 8

SCIENTISTS at all publicly-funded research institutions have been told by the government that it would be compulsory for them to teach at the undergraduate-level or even at schools while pursuing their research work.

Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh said that scientists would have to take a minimum of 12 hours of lectures at schools or colleges in an academic year. This extra work would not entitle the scientists to any extra remuneration or benefits, he said.

The minister, while releasing the 100-day report card of his ministry, said this had been done to ensure that the scientific community

comes out of the confines of their laboratories "to serve the society in a wider capacity". He said this would also address the problem of shortage of good science teachers.

This teaching programme would be reviewed for its implementation after the end of one year, and the performance of the scheme would be evaluated after three years.

The scientific institutions have been asked to design teaching programmes for their researchers and get it ratified by their respective governing bodies. Singh said the scientific community does not always have enough opportunities to interact with students in a structured manner, and this programme would let them get involved with students at all levels.

Why India is Losing its 'Bachelors' to US & UK

Many students from India are looking to study abroad at the undergraduate level

Rica Bhattacharyya & Anumeha Chaturvedi

Mumbai | New Delhi: A few months ago, Rimi Khanna (name changed), studying Maths honours at Sri Venkateswara College, Delhi, approached CollegeCore Education for guidance for transfer to a US college. "She did not find her course engaging enough. Nor did she like the crowd," says Urvashi Malik, founder and managing director at education services firm CollegeCore Education.

Rajat Agarwal from Calcutta wanted admission into St Xavier's College. However, the high cutoff could only fetch him a berth in B-grade colleges, which he was not willing to enter. Finally, Agarwal got admission into University of Warwick in the UK, which was willing to provide him a berth with their cut-off of around 85%-86%, lower than the 92%-93% or even 100% required to get into the top league Indian colleges, says Rohan Ganeriwala, co-founder at Collegify, an admission consultant.

Like Khanna and Agarwal, an increasing number of students from India are looking at options to study abroad at the undergraduate level, pushed by the difficulty of getting admission into a good college due to high cut off marks, limited number of seats in the general category, lack of flexibility in the courses offered and quality concerns.

"More and more Indian students are finding value in a global degree. Earlier what was mostly seen at the post graduate level is now shifting to the undergraduate level," says Malik. This year, she says, she has to close registrations in a few days' time, whereas in other years it would continue till October.

SAT, the standardised test widely used for college admissions in the US, witnessed the highest growth in volumes from India in the last administration cycle (October-December 2013 and January, May and June 2014). "With over 24,000 tests being taken (including SAT and subject tests), this translates into roughly 26% growth from the previous administration cycle," says Lisa Jain, country representative — India, The College Board.

Adding to this is the confusion over four-year undergraduate programme in colleges under Delhi University, which was introduced last year and scrapped this year after a dictat from the UGC. The tussle between the UGC and DU also led to admissions being put on hold.

Destination Education

SAT witnessed the highest growth in volumes from India in Oct-Dec 2013 and January, May and June 2014

POPULAR UNIVERSITIES: Princeton, Yale, University of Virginia, University of Pennsylvania, London School of Economics, Harvard, Brown University, Warwick, New York University, MIT, Berkeley



POPULAR DESTINATIONS: US, UK, SINGAPORE, CANADA, AUSTRALIA

THE REASONS

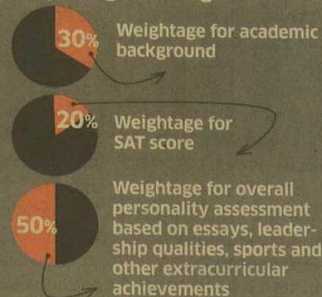
LOCAL COLLEGES DON'T LOOK TOO ATTRACTIVE BECAUSE...

- High cut-off marks
- Limited general category seats
- Lack of flexibility in courses
- Quality concerns
- Confusion over four-year undergraduate programme in colleges under Delhi University

₹ 80 Lakhs - 1.5 Crore
Estimated cost of doing a 4-year undergraduate course at a private university in the US



In Ivy League colleges in the US



More and more Indian students are finding value in a global degree. Earlier what was mostly seen at the post graduate level is now shifting to undergraduate

URVASHI MALIK,
Founder and MD,
CollegeCore Education

"Nearly two-thirds of every class from good schools in Delhi are going in for overseas admissions. This wasn't the case in the past," says Malik.

She says people from Delhi schools, who cannot get admission due to the high cut-offs, would now rather go abroad than to cities like Pune, Bangalore and Mumbai.

An increase in cost of education abroad — with dollar prices and fees going up — has not really affected the number of students going to study abroad. Some of the popular destinations include the US, UK, Singapore, Canada and Australia.

The estimated cost of studying at a private university in the US at the undergraduate level will be around ₹35-40 lakh per year, which amounts to about ₹80 lakh to ₹1.5 crore for a four-year undergraduate course.

"There is a very unusual hike this year compared with the previous years... We can easily put this estimate to around 25% year-on-year increments," says Jatin Bhandari, CEO and co-founder PythaGurus, an admission consultant.

He says the number of applications to the US has gone up at the cost of UK and Australia applications, due to the relatively friendly

immigration system in US.

Aradhana Khaitan Mahna, co founder and managing director of Manya Education, the master franchise for Princeton Review in India says the recent years has also seen an increase in the number of students applying to countries like Singapore and New Zealand. Rising middle class income levels, greater risk-taking ability, easing of the job markets outside, and overseas education being viewed as a status symbol are the other reasons.

Some of the popular universities that Indian students are targeting at the undergraduate level include Princeton University, Yale University, University of Virginia, University of Pennsylvania, London School of Economics, Harvard University, Brown University, Warwick, New York University, MIT and Berkeley.

Students who are not satisfied with the quality of education in India are even willing to take a one-year gap before they get into a college abroad.

Sahil Singh, secured admission into Hindu College as well as Cornell University last year, although he did not manage to get a full scholarship. So he studied in India for a year, applied again this year and got into Brown University with a full scholarship. "He thought he deserved better," says Ganeriwala of Collegify, where Sahil had gone for guidance for overseas admission.

Also, universities abroad give more flexibility in combining subjects. For instance, a person studying physics can combine it with music. "The subject choices abroad are meant to grow your worldview," says Ganeriwala.

While Indian colleges are making admissions tough with high cutoffs, the top institutes abroad look at a person's overall profile. Typically, Ivy League colleges in the US give 30% weightage to academic background, 20% to the SAT score and 50% to overall personality assessment based on essays, leadership qualities, sports and other extracurricular achievements, to see if they fit into the institute's culture, says experts.

At an undergraduate level, we find students opting for STEM (Science, Technology, Mathematics and Engineering) or business, says Vibha Kagzi, founder and CEO ReachIvy. In 2012-2013, 58.9% of Indian students studied STEM and 13.7% of Indian students opted for business in the US.

ETS which conducts the GRE exam also reported increased interest in India year on year. "GRE test-taker trends during the current testing year from July 1, 2013, through January 31, 2014, show greater growth than last year. More and more test takers are learning about the advantages of the GRE revised General Test," said a spokesperson for ETS.

Engineering students now have PALS as mentor

S SHYAMALA

Chennai

INDIAN Institute of Technology (IIT) alumni are known for their startups worldwide. But this one is starkly different.

Its famed alumni in the city have come together to mentor students of non-IIT engineering colleges under the pan IIT alumni leadership series or the PALS initiative.

Though the community is based in Chennai, it is open to alumni from all IITs and intends to help non-IIT students to not just to hone their skills but also to improve their job prospects.

The trigger for such voluntarism has come from the prime minister in his recent meeting with the IIT directors where he urged the institutions to take up such initiatives across the country.



Sandeep Singh

Seven institutions in and around Chennai, including Agni College of Technology, BS Abdur Rahman University, KCG College of Technology and Hindustan University, have signed up as partner institutes with PALS.

The initiative, launched three years ago, had only campus lectures for the first two editions. Expanded a bit last year, it has now become a full-fledged programme this year, said N

Alamelu, head of PALS.

This year's programme also includes an innovation competition that would invite projects from students of partner institutions. While the projects will be assessed for viability, angel investors in the panel of judges would also help to implement the ideas, she said.

Turn to P10

Scientists told to take classes at schools, colleges P10

Engineering education

From P1

"It is now a one-year programme, consisting of campus lectures, industry visits, IIT-Madras department visits, faculty improvement initiatives and innovation camps aimed at benefiting the students and faculty of engineering colleges and management institutes in and around Chennai.

PALS aims to contribute towards enhancing the quality of engineering education and the industry readiness of students graduating from these institutes. The initiative will leverage the vast reservoir of experience and expertise available within the IIT alumni community across corporate, academic and entrepreneurial worlds," she added.

The IIT alumni club Chennai has been the forerunner to start this initiative.

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Campus Startups Get a Boost, IIG to Spot Promising Ideas

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New Delhi: Venture-capital firm India Internet Group (IIG) has launched a campus ambassador programme across IITs, IIMs and other top institutes to identify promising startup entrepreneurs and hackers, a step aimed at better understanding the entrepreneurial culture at campuses and deepening connections with students launching startups.

It has so far identified 20 such ambassadors at campuses like IIT-Bombay, IIT-Madras, BITS-Pilani, IIM-Ahmedabad, and XLRI-Jamshedpur, focusing primarily on mobile app development. The campus ambassadors are expected to stay abreast of promising startups and hackers, not just at their campuses but in other institutes across the region. They are expected to notify the firm on top events related to startups and entrepreneurship and may be considered for an internship or full-time placement at IIG's office in New Delhi at the end of this academic year.

All campus ambassadors will be presenting their top selected ideas on a monthly basis in an IIG investment call, and will work closely with the IIG team to conduct further diligence into the startups, as required.

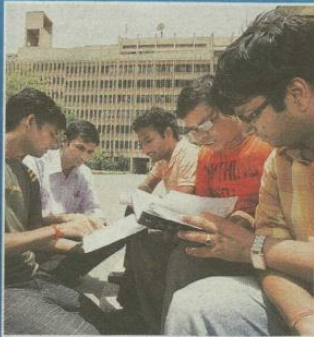
Students from various under-graduate and graduate schools can apply to be a part of this initiative. IIG, which focusses on early-stage Internet and mobile technology startups, will provide necessary resources to help promote the entrepreneurial ecosystems on these campuses. "We're becoming a more mobile focused fund, and at the macro level, we see youngsters being at the helm of the mobile revolution in India. Most of the mobile app developers are the young engineering graduates who are already beginning to code for mobile apps from campuses," said Anirudh Suri, founding partner of IIG.

All campus ambassadors will present their selected ideas on a monthly basis in an IIG investment call

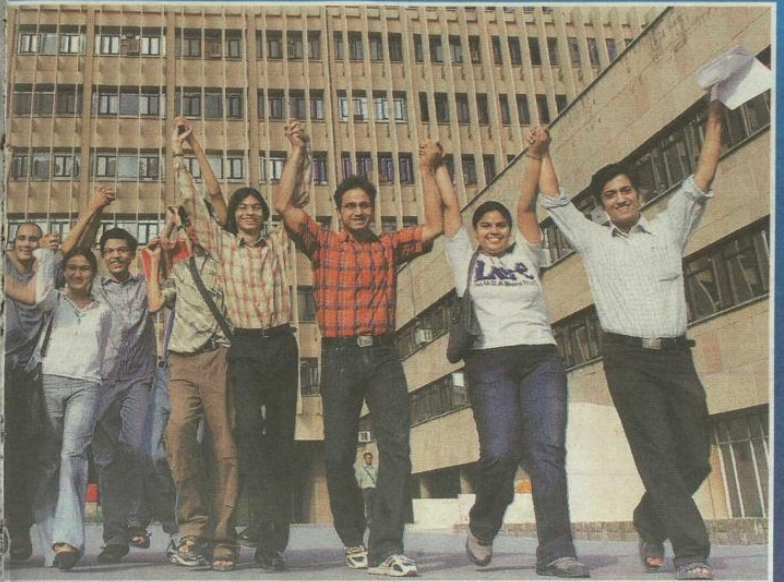
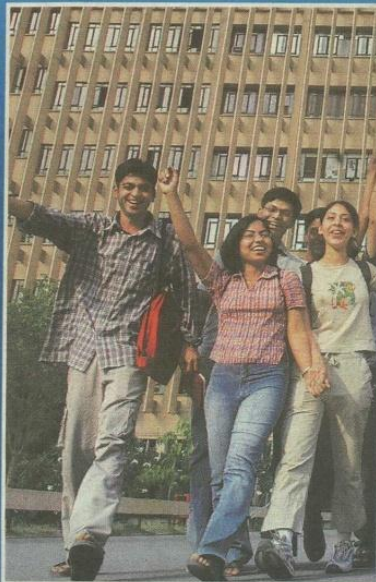
Campus ambassadors are selected through an application process where they are questioned on their startup experience to gauge their engagement levels and involvement with the venture.

Students are expected to mail a list of startups coming out of their institutes and other educational institutes in their city or state every month by establishing contact with other prominent institutes in the region.

IIG will pitch in as a sponsor, mentor and employer at events depending on the needs of the students.



GATE scores will now be valid for up to three years. Students at IIT Delhi (right and above)



The new GATE will provide aspirants with more flexible work-study plans

By Education Mail Bureau

FREEDOM and flexibility beckon applicants of GATE 2015 — the aptitude test in engineering that enables graduates to pursue higher study options or take up jobs in the public sector.

The scores of the test will now be valid for three years, instead of two. This means B.Tech graduates can gain more work experience before going for an M.Tech, ME or MS. It will also enhance their prospects of getting selected in companies such as BHEL, NTPC and Indian Oil Corporation, where vacancies sometimes open only after two years. A stipend of ₹8,000 is also given to all GATE qualifiers by the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

“By increasing the validity of the GATE score to three years, the IITs want to encourage even working professionals to take up M.Tech courses,

without having to prepare for GATE again,” says Abhijit Chaudhari, Director, Gateforum, a coaching service centre based in the newly formed state of Telangana.

However, with GATE going entirely online, it is not a good idea to take the exam lightly. “A lot of practice is needed to familiarise oneself with a computer-based test,” says Chaudhari. “A peculiar problem that can arise in the online version might be while

attempting a question that requires replicating a complicated figure or a diagram,” he says. “In the case of a paper based test the same can be done on the question paper itself. But on a computer, it requires practice,” says Chaudhari.

Yet another challenge would be with respect to making calculations during the exam. GATE 2015 will not allow students to carry a calculator inside the examination hall and they will have to rely on an online scientific calculator provided by the organisers. But then using a virtual calculator is an entirely dif-

THE GATEWAY



By increasing the validity of the GATE score to 3 years, the IITs want to encourage working professionals to take up M.Tech courses, without having to prepare for GATE again

— ABHIJIT CHAUDHARI, DIRECTOR, GATEFORUM

ferent ball game and students who are not used to it are likely to waste more time in the examination hall. For instance, to find the value of 'sin 30' in an ordinary calculator, all you

need to do is press 'sin' and then enter the value '30,' but doing so in a virtual calculator will not yield result. Here you have to enter value '30' first and then select 'sin' to get the result.

So a student needs to practice a lot using virtual calculators. Downloading scientific calculator app from Google is a good option to gain the required practice.

Held jointly by the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, and seven Indian Institutes of Technology, GATE 2015 will be conducted by IIT Kanpur. The test will run from January-end to mid-February. The dates are as follows: January 31 and February 1, 7, 8 and 14. The last date for submitting the application form is October 1. The application form for general and OBC category students is ₹1,500 and for female and SC/ST students, the amount is ₹750.

The last date for submitting application forms for GATE 2015 is October 1

IGDTUW HOSTS DATA MINING CONCLAVE

AN INTERNATIONAL conference on 'Data Mining and Intelligent Computing' was organised jointly by the department of Computer Science and Engineering and the department of Information Technology at Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University for Women (IGDTUW), last week. The conference was attended by leading academicians and researchers in the field.



Nupur Prakash, Vice-Chancellor, IGDTUW, delivered the presidential address.

K.R. MANGALAM UNIV FINDS STUDENT FAVOUR

The interdisciplinary approach followed by the newly inaugurated K.R. Mangalam University, Gurgaon, is beginning to gain popularity among student and teachers alike with its multi-pronged and hands-on learning approach, according to a statement issued by the university. The university, started last year, ensures

NEWS ALERTS



active participation from both students and faculty members in national and international events and seminars on relevant issues, the statement said.

NIU VC WARNS AGAINST RAGGING

Vikram Singh, vice-chancellor, Noida International University (NIU), has urged students to desist from ragging on campus. He was speaking at the orientation meet for new students at NIU, last week. “Ragging is banned in the university. The management would take strict action against students who indulge in it. So don't think about it,” he said. Ved Krishna, Managing Director, Yash Group, was



the chief guest of the event. Later, the faculty members of the university were introduced to the students.

Times of India, ND 09/09/2014 P-15

God particle can destroy the universe: Hawking

London: The elusive 'God particle' discovered by scientists in 2012 has the potential to destroy the universe, famed British physicist Stephen Hawking has warned.

Hawking, 72, said that at very high energy levels the Higgs boson, which gives shape and size to everything that exists, could become unstable. This, he said, could cause a "catastrophic vacuum decay" that would lead space and time to collapse, Express.co.uk reported.

"The Higgs potential has the worrisome feature that it might become megastable at energies above 100bn giga-electron-volts (GeV)," Hawking wrote in the preface to a new book called 'Starmus'. "This could mean that the universe



'CATASTROPHIC VACUUM DECAY': Hawking said very high energy levels could destabilize the Higgs boson, causing space and time to collapse

could undergo catastrophic vacuum decay, with a bubble of the true vacuum expanding at the speed of light. This could happen at any time and we wouldn't see it coming."

Hawking said such a disaster is unlikely to happen in the near future. However, the danger of the Higgs becoming destabilized at high energy is too great to be ignored. PTI