



Announcements

ASERF has instituted **Dr Stya Paul Young** Educationist Award' for honouring Young Educationists who have demonstrated their potential by making an impact on Indian education. Applications from the eligible scholars are invited for the Award of the year 2013. [Click here](#) to download the prescribed format along with the terms and conditions.

Apeejay Stya University announces admission for the session 2013-14

Apeejay Stya University is offering diverse catalogue of technical, scientific, management and liberal arts courses for the Fall Admission 2013-14. Applicants for admission accepted on the basis of comprehensive merit, judged by their academic excellence, their extracurricular achievements, and their utilization of the resources they have had available. As part of the application, the University recognize a number of examination scores to establish academic excellence, including AIEEE, GMAT, SAT, SAT-II. **For more,** [click here](#)

Apeejay Stya University announces Founder's Scholarship

On the Death anniversary of our beloved founder Dr. Stya Paul, Apeejay Stya University (ASU), Haryana announces a Merit - Based Scholarship Scheme for *Undergraduate, Post Graduate and MBA Courses*

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Please visit our website for more: [click here](#)

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Partnership

Dear Partners,

The Apeejay Stya Education Research Foundation (ASERF) invites news, articles, resource material, opinions and analyses on relevant educational issues that can be highlighted in our by-monthly e-bulletins and on the ASERF portal.

We request if you could spare a few moments of your valuable time to have a look at our website and guide us on our regular initiatives.

Editor

[Dr. Mithilesh Kumar Singh](#)

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ASPECT

Midday Muddle: An ambitious scheme gone awry

1. Even as no incident of food poisoning has been reported, the quality of food supplied at schools in the city is poor, and most children complain that they are served 'cold' stuff

It has taken the Bihar tragedy to galvanise officials here to check the quality of food being supplied under the midday meal scheme in schools.

A flurry of activity was seen on Thursday, with School Education Commissioner and Director Vani Mohan visiting some schools in the Nampally zone. She inspected the food quality first hand and interacted with students and staff.

Having got a wind of her visit, several schools took extra precaution to spruce up the premises and serve food in a clean environment. But such inspections are few and far in between.

“There is no regular monitoring, and for months together no official comes to enquire about the midday meal,” a teacher said.

While no untoward incident has been reported in the city, the quality of the food supplied leaves a lot to be desired. A common complaint from children is that the meal served is always “cold”.

The centralised kitchen at Uppal run by the Nandi Foundation cooks food at 6 a.m., and it reaches schools by 10.30 a.m. Naturally, it is not steaming hot when the lunch bell goes at 12.30 p.m.

This apart, a look at the quality of rice and watery curry is enough to kill one's appetite. This year, teachers say, the rice quality is slightly better. But complaints abound about water content being more in 'dal' and other curries.

Often children are left searching for non-existent vegetables. Shockingly, the government allots just Rs. 4.25 a student towards the cost of vegetables and LPG.

“With vegetable prices shooting up, what kind of vegetables can be cooked?” asks a teacher.

No wonder, not many children relish the food. They show interest only when items like *khichdi*, vegetable biryani and *pulihara* are served. Some children just eat boiled eggs and banana and leave the rest untouched. Another problem facing them is lack of plates and glasses.

There is no budgetary provision, and teachers themselves have to pool money to purchase plates. Owing to shortage of plates, several kids have to

wait till others finish their meal. Poor water facility is another hitch, and the result being some eat well past the lunch hour.

Mandal Educational Officers (MEOs) are supposed to regularly monitor the operation of the scheme. But in Hyderabad, out of the 24 MEO posts, 20 are lying vacant. And headmasters are given full additional charge of MEOs, with the result that there is no monitoring for months together, it is said.

In Hyderabad district, 71,534 children from classes I to X in 944 schools and 6,895 children in 69 madrasas are availing the scheme. Interestingly, the government has kept this welfare scheme in the green channel for speedy clearance of bills so that the quality does not suffer for want of money, officials say.

Source: July 19, 2013/ [The Hindu](#)

NEWS

Recognition withheld for private schools

For non-compliance of pupil-teacher ratio

The Department of School Education has begun to withhold renewal of recognition for private matriculation schools that are not in compliance with a pupil-teacher ratio of 1:30, mandated by the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act.

Even though the Act came into force only from the last academic year, the department officials were instructing the schools to immediately adhere to the norms on all standards from L.K.G to Class XII, R. Visalakshi, President of Tamil Nadu Private Schools Association, told *The Hindu* here on Monday.

Many schools have been operating for decades with an average of 45 students per section. They cannot increase the number of sections as the School Education Department had recently begun clamping down on the number of sections to four per each standard, she said. Increase in the number of sections could be done only with the permission of the Inspector of Matriculation Schools.

Even otherwise, she said that the schools cannot construct additional classes to comply with this norm as Education Department officials object to construction activity after the academic year had begun. The officials contended that this could pose a threat to student's safety.

The only other alternative to comply with the pupil-teacher ratio was to reduce student strength by sending some of them out of school, which was a highly unpalatable choice.

She said that with the Act having come into force only in the previous academic year, private schools must be given at least three years to comply with it. The recognition given to schools must also be renewed every three years.

Ms. Visalakshmi said: "The Association will request the Department of School Education to factor in the interest of students and provide recognition without delay. The RTE Act itself seeks to enforce all these norms only from 2014-15."

The move to keep the recognition pending had serious financial consequences for the schools. Section 18 (1) of the rules framed under RTE Act stated that no school could function without obtaining the recognition. Those found violating this rule would be levied a penalty of Rs. 1 lakh on the first day of functioning without recognition and Rs. 10,000 for every day from there on.

Source: July 16, 2013/ [The Hindu](#)

President Delivers the 85th Foundation Day Lecture of the Indian Council of Agriculture Research

President Pranab Mukherjee delivered the 85th Foundation Day Lecture of the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) today (July 16, 2013) at National Agriculture Science Centre Complex, Pusa, New Delhi.

Speaking on the occasion, the President said that we have to achieve higher productivity levels to attain the agricultural growth target for the Twelfth Plan period. We must place greater emphasis on productivity-driving measures such as diversification of crops, improvement in seed replacement rate, adoption of high yielding hybrid seeds, and improvement in water management practices.

The President said that the need for balanced use of fertilizers and pesticides should be propagated amongst our farming community through agriculture education and extension programmes. He said that ICAR and other agricultural institutions are engaged to promote fertilizer use efficiency. He stated that latest technology must be deployed to assist decision-making by farmers regarding selection of crop variety, right agricultural practices and right markets to sell the produce.

The President said that about 85 per cent farmers of India have small land holdings of less than 2 hectares, which restricts their full potential for production. To spur productivity growth in such farmlands, it is necessary to develop low-cost, light-weight, multi-purpose farm equipments. He said that mechanization of small farms is the need

of the hour as it can also mitigate labour scarcity during peak season. Mechanization in agriculture should be facilitated by efficient energy management. He added that to reduce dependence on conventional fuels and ensure sustainability, our research institutions must focus on renewable energy models like solar power and biofuels.

The President said that we must make agriculture an intellectually stimulating discipline and a rewarding profession to attract talent in this sector. Agricultural education should focus on the contemporary challenges of food insecurity; declining productivity; depletion of natural resources; increased risk from climate change; regional imbalance; rising input costs; changing food habits, and post-harvest management. It must provide an academic framework to these issues for greater understanding by our policy makers. He said that the quality and relevance of Agricultural research must be enhanced to bring within its domain cutting edge technologies like biosensors, genomics, biotechnology, nanotechnology and alternative energy sources.

On the occasion, the President launched 'Kisaan SMS Portal' and presented ICAR National Awards.

Among the dignitaries present on the occasion were Shri Sharad Pawar, Union Minister for Agriculture & Food Processing Industries, Dr. Charan Das Mahant, Minister of State for Agriculture & Food Processing Industries and Shri Tariq Anwar, Minister of State for Agriculture & Food Processing Industries.

Source: July 16, 2013/ [India Education Diary](#)

India calls for research alliances

INDIA'S Education Minister admits new laws to allow foreign universities to establish campuses in India are too restrictive and instead urges institutions to develop intensive research collaborations, student-faculty exchanges and joint degree programs.

In Australia last week with a 22-member delegation, Pallam Raju also stressed India was eager to explore possibilities around mass-scale, in-country vocational training as the country strives to train 400 million young people by 2022.

Source: July 17, 2013/ [The Australian](#)

Higher education to bank on veterans

Reeling under acute shortage of teachers, the state government is now mulling to appoint retired teachers in universities and colleges on contractual basis. The proposal made by the department of higher education is already in place and is seeking cabinet's approval for implementation.

"It is under consideration," said a senior government officer. Officials have proposed that 70 years old retired teachers take up teaching work, but after negotiation finally it was decided to keep it at 65. As of now, the retirement age in government colleges is 60 while in universities and government-aided colleges it's 62 years.

At present, a total of 934 out of 2,119 posts for lecturers in 138 government colleges and 2,800 posts in 331 aided colleges are lying vacant. The state government advertised 552 posts in 2007 which were filled in 2012. Principals of aided colleges said with UP Higher Education Service Commission (UPHESC) working at snail's pace, it will take 30 years to fill up all vacant positions in the state. The appointments in government colleges are done through UP Public Service Commission (UPPSC).

State-wise figures for vacant seats in universities are 101 out of 201 sanctioned posts for professors, 138 out of 384 posts for associate professors, 264 out of 1,042 posts for assistant professors. The scenario is grim in residential as well as state universities-Lucknow University and DDU University, Gorakhpur. In LU, 31 out of 59 posts for professors are unfilled. Out of 135 sanctioned posts for associate professors, 42 are vacant, and 69 of 322 posts for assistant professors are unoccupied. Likewise, in DDU, appointments are to be done in 26 out of 34 sanctioned posts for professors, 25 of total 77 for associate professors and 90 out of 247 for assistant professors.

Dismal is the state of some colleges where many departments have not even a single teacher. There is no Statistics teacher in DAV Degree College. All posts for Botany teachers are vacant in Nari Shiksha Niketan. Students at Lucknow Christian Degree College have never seen an English teacher. The most affected is Vidyant Hindu College where there is no teacher in Social Work, Urdu, Persian, and Arabic departments. Besides, there are other colleges where some departments are being managed single teacher.

Severe staff crunch in higher educational institutions has led to rethinking of roping in retired teachers.

According to Education officials, the government has proposed to pay Rs 20,000 every month to retired teachers teaching UG courses and Rs 25,000 for those taking PG classes. Sources say the entire process will take not less than two months. Once the chief minister agrees, the proposal will be put in the cabinet, said officials.

The proposal, if approved, will help in quality improvement. Appointment of retired teachers is a temporary solution to the existing problem. The teacher-student ratio is unimaginable. In universities, it has shot up to 1:100, in colleges, it is 1:110. The government needs to be serious enough to fill up posts lying vacant for years. "Once the unemployment at UPHESC is sorted out, vacancy of teachers will be in process," said Moulindu Mishra, former president of college teachers' association.

Source: July 17, 2013/ [Times of India](#)

Singaporean University expanding education programmes in India

After signing six agreements with Indian universities, Singapore Management University (SMU) is now set to sign an MoU with IIM Lucknow as part of its plan to expand executive education programme in the country.

SMU is ready to launch a number of higher educational programmes in India this month onwards, SMU's deputy president for academic affairs, Rajendran K Srivastava, said on Wednesday.

"We want to link up and work with Indian universities as they provide us a landing spot to do research work in India," he said.

SMU has signed six MoUs with Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Bangalore; Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur; Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), New Delhi; Bombay Stock Exchange Institute, Mumbai; Birla Institute of Management Technology (BIMTECH), Noida; and Indian Institute of Management, Rohtak.

SMU would soon be signing another MoU with IIM Lucknow for a programme in executive education in the Delhi region.

A team from SMU would work with IIT Kanpur from the end of this month to co-design a masters' programme in innovations.

"We already have one such programme at SMU but we are going to adapt it to the Indian context," Srivastava said.

SMU would also conduct a programme with the Bombay Stock Exchange Institute on financial strategy for small and medium enterprises by September.

SMU would also join IIM Bangalore for a programme for Certification in Wealth Management late September.

Explaining interest in India, he said, "We are finding people that we can work with on similar skills that we have and develop executive programmes."

Srivastava said the SMU links with Indian universities were part of its global link-up but with focus on Asia, including China and South East Asia.

Source: July 17, 2013/ [Times of India](#)

New committee to regulate admissions in Haryana technical colleges

Haryana government has constituted a five-member state admission and fee regulation committee for private technical educational institutions in the state numbering over 600.

A spokesman of Technical Education Department said that the Committee headed by Justice SD Anand, Retired Judge of Punjab and Haryana High Court, has been constituted under the Haryana Private Technical Educational Institution (Regulation of Admission and Fee) Act, 2012.

He said that the other members of the Committee included Dr Ranjit Singh of New Delhi, Dr Surender Deswal of Kurukshetra and Vikram Goel of Panchkula while Director General, Technical Education Department would be Member Secretary.

He said that the Committee will regulate admissions in private technical educational institutions and also fix the fee in diploma as well as under-graduate or post-graduate level technical institutions in the fields of Engineering and Technology, Management (MBA), Pharmacy, Architecture, Library Science and MCA.

He said that the term of the earlier Committee headed by Justice NC Jain, Retired Chief Justice of Guwahati High Court had come to an end on September 17, 2011.

Source: July 17, 2013/ [Times of India](#)

35% of India's autonomous colleges in TN

More than 35% of the autonomous colleges in the country are in Tamil Nadu.

In a recently released report "Indian higher education - quest for excellence," the University Grants Commission identified 441 autonomous colleges, including 155 from TN, across 21 states. The idea of partially delinking colleges from the affiliating structure of universities and promoting autonomy was to allow institutions to design their own curricula, prescribe syllabi, evolve pedagogy and appropriate assessment techniques to improve the quality of undergraduate education. But, many

are sceptic about whether the purpose has been served in the state.

"There are so many autonomous colleges in TN because the state is considered a testing lab for any new academic reform," said All India Federation of University and College Teachers Organisation vice-president S Vivekanandan. "But, they are not all autonomous in the true sense of the word."

The academic environment is not as vibrant as one would expect. Many deemed universities have done a better job of revamping curricula to suit market needs and update them regularly.

He said autonomous colleges were given administrative, academic and financial freedom to a certain extent, but, often, much of it is curtailed. "The nomination of members to the governing council depends on whether the person is liked by the management or not," Vivekanandan added.

A former principal of Chennai's Presidency College, one of the oldest autonomous colleges in the state, agrees. R Sabanayagam said that during his nine months as principal he found that "heads of autonomous colleges in the state have no power to bring in change". When he tried to impose a rule requiring a minimum of 50% attendance for students to sit for exams in Presidency College, the director of collegiate education asked him to postpone the decision to the next semester, he said. Even to renovate the college infrastructure, which was falling apart, funds from the UGC were first sent to the department of higher education and had to be sourced through the PWD. Others, like Loyola College have had better luck in making academic changes to improve the quality of education. The UGC has said TN is also second on the list of states that get the highest departmental research support from the UGC, after Andhra Pradesh.

Source: July 18, 2013/ [Times of India](#)

REC extends CSR support under 'Abhayanand Super 30' initiative

As part of its CSR initiative, Rural Electrification Corporation (REC), a Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Power, has committed financial assistance to provide free one year residential JEE/IIT coaching and mentoring 20 underprivileged meritorious students from Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Bihar, J&K and Delhi under the `Abhayanand Super 30` initiative.

Inaugurating the Delhi chapter of the `National Super 100` programme, Rajeev Sharma, CMD, REC, hoped that the Programme will help the aspiring students to successfully compete and gain

admission in prestigious engineering colleges of the country.

This initiative, co-founded by Shri Abhayanand, presently Director General of Police, Bihar, for providing free coaching to 30 students of Bihar, has achieved high success rates, and over the years, has expanded to become the `National Super 100`, by providing coaching to 100 students from underprivileged sections of society in seven centres across the country, with the vision of transforming the lives of deserving children with little or no means. The selection of the students is done through transparent procedure.

Source: July 18, 2013/ [India Education Diary](#)

SC verdict on Entrance Tests evokes mixed reactions

The Supreme Court's 2:1 verdict holding the Medical Council of India (MCI) notification on National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) ultra vires of the Constitution has evoked a mixed reaction from stakeholders. While some welcomed the judgment quashing NEET saying it would benefit students, others felt students would now be forced to write multiple tests.

The three-judge bench of the apex court in its order on Thursday said that the MCI notification was in violation of Articles 19 (Protection of certain rights regarding freedom of speech, etc), 25 (Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion), 26 (Freedom to manage religious affairs), 29 (Protection of interests of minorities) and 30 (Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions) of the Indian Constitution.

While deciding on 115 petitions challenging the MCI notification on NEET for UG and PG medical courses, Chief Justice of India Altamas Kabir and Justice Vikramajit Sen quashed the MCI notification while Justice A R Dave dissented on the ground that holding of NEET is legal, practical and a need of society.

Commenting on the verdict S Vaidhyasubramaniam, Dean, Planning of Sastra University in Thanjavur felt the verdict is a setback to the national policy of 1986, which visioned a National Testing Facility to streamline admission to professional colleges.

Welcoming the judgment G R Ravindranath, general secretary of the Doctors' Association for Social Equality (DASE) said the verdict had protected the State government's right and also removed the anxiety of parents.

He suggested there should be only two entrance tests, one by the State government for seats filled by it and another by the Central government to fill all-India quota seats, seats in Central government run medical institutes like All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education (JIPMER) and also for management quota seats in private colleges.

Source: July 19, 2013/ [New Indian Express](#)

Eight India-U.S. Educational Partnerships Announced

In a continuation of the educational partnership between India and the United States, the State Department recently announced eight institutional partnership projects for the second round of the Obama-Singh 21st Century Knowledge Initiative awards.

This initiative strengthens collaboration and builds partnerships between American and Indian institutions of higher education in priority fields.

Each project will receive an award of approximately \$250,000 that can be utilized over a three-year period, with the objectives of cultivating educational reform, fostering economic growth, generating shared knowledge to address global challenges, and developing junior faculty at Indian and American institutions of higher learning.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Barack Obama announced the Obama-Singh Initiative in November 2009 as an affirmation of their commitment to building an enhanced India-U.S. partnership in education. Each government pledged \$5 million for this endeavor, for a total of \$10 million.

The American-led partnerships include Ohio State University and Aligarh Muslim University who will participate in the STEM Faculty Project, "Training the Next Generation of STEM Faculty at Higher Education Institutions in India."

The project shared by the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and the University of Pune is "Inclusive Universities: Linking Diversity, Equity and Excellence for the 21st Century," while the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore are partners in "Partnering for Success: Advancing Sustainability Research and Education in India."

The Indian-led partnerships involve Annamalai University and Tennessee Technological University in "Tamil Nadu Energy Futures: Mapping Uncertainties and Risks," as well as Assam Agricultural University and Washington State University in "Engineering

ADP – Glucose Pyrophosphorylase enzymes for heat tolerance in rice.”

Meanwhile, the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women and the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, are partners in “A Sustainable ‘Response to Intervention’ model for successful inclusion of children with disabilities – A India-US Partnership.”

Also partners are the National Institute of Technology, Trichy, and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in the project, “Cognitive based Curriculum Development Tool for Emerging Areas of Computer Engineering and Management Studies for improving Teaching-Learning Process.”

Source: July 19, 2013/ [India West](#)

Montek to meet HRD minister to finalise PPP format in education

Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahuwalia will meet human resource development minister M M Pallam Raju on Saturday to finalise a structure on Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) in education.

The meeting will take place ahead of the Plan panel's discussions to be held next week with higher education secretaries of states on the 12th Five Year Plan (2012-17), sources said.

Tomorrow's meeting will be attended by Advisor to Plan panel, Gajendra Haldea, prominent educationists and others.

The Planning Commission has set up working group on private participation in the sector, especially PPP mode for school education.

The discussions are expected to include implementation of ambitious programmes of the Ministry such as Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan which seeks to improve access, equity and excellence and strategic planning for the states.

The programme entails setting up of cluster universities and incubators be realised through PPP.

A major thrust of the deliberation, in fact, is expected on the PPP model in execution of the programmes.

The HRD Minister would dwell upon the agendas to be discussed during the meeting on July 22.

The agenda includes consolidation of new institutions set up during the 11th Plan, skill building through PPP approach, issues relating to quality including Accreditation, research and innovation and a database of higher education.

During the 12th Plan, the HRD Ministry proposes to set up innovation universities through active private partnership during the current plan.

Source: July 19, 2013/ [Times of India](#)

966 govt schools in Punjab don't have separate toilets for girls

The Punjab government has informed the Punjab and Haryana high court that 966 government schools in the state are without separate toilets for girls and at least 110 classrooms in 10 districts are unsafe.

Anjali Bhawra, principal secretary, school education, in her reply informed that Rs. 43.44 crore had been released for building common toilets and separate girls' toilets, adding that the construction was under process. It was informed that Rs. 1.97 lakh per separate girls' toilet had been released by the government.

The officer also told the court that at least 110 classrooms in government schools of 10 districts Bathinda, Ferozepur, Fazilka, Hoshiarpur, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Moga, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar (Nawanshahr), Patiala and Rupnagar were unsafe. She stated that the director general of school education had on July 5 issued instructions to all district education officers that students should not be made to sit in unsafe buildings/rooms and before starting of the rainy season, these should be demolished.

If it is found that students are still made to sit in these unsafe rooms, then respective district education officers would be responsible for the same, it was stated. The officer also informed that the education department had forwarded a proposal to the state government to release Rs. 5.50 crore (Rs 5 lakh per classroom) at the earliest.

The reply was filed in response to the high court directions on a public interest litigation filed by advocate HC Arora, highlighting the dilapidated condition of schools in Ludhiana. Later, the scope of the case was widened to the whole of Punjab.

The case would come up for hearing on July 23.

Source: July 19, 2013/ [Hindustan Times](#)

Mid-day meal tragedy: Centre says need for collective responsibility

Amid the blame game between the Centre and Bihar government over the mid-day meal tragedy, HRD Minister Pallam Raju today said it is time to “wake up” and take “collective responsibility”.

The minister said government wants that the central government scheme is implemented

properly and has hence constituted a review committee, which will look into the quality of the programme.

"It is certain that we will be strengthening the mechanism towards implementing the scheme," he told reporters here.

The Union minister said he has received the report by the Saran administration over the incident, which talks about "shortcomings in the way food was stored and how that one factor led to the unfortunate incident. But we are awaiting forensic report, which will give greater detail about what is happening."

To a question about the Bihar government denying receiving any alert as claimed by his ministry, Raju said, "I know there is a monitoring mechanism committee whose job is to find out loopholes and shortcoming. They have particularly pointed out to those 12 districts."

He, was, however, quick to add, "Now this is not a question of who has done what."

"It is the time that all of us should wake up...It is a collective responsibility. It is not responsibility of state alone. It is the responsibility of local community, school management committee and district administration to ensure things are going to function," Raju said.

The minister said that when we know that this is the scheme, which is going to provide nutrition to our children, "we should strengthen it and the focus should be on that".

The mid-day meal tragedy has sparked a blame game with the Bihar government refuting Centre's contention that it had sent alerts to 12 districts, including Saran, where 23 children died after consuming food, over implementation of the scheme.

Source: July 20, 2013/ [New Indian Express](#)

Model schools under PPP mode to roll out from 2015-16: Raju

The Government's ambitious plan to provide quality secondary education through model schools in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode is all set to become operational from academic session 2015-16, said HRD Minister M.M. Pallam Raju.

"...the academic session 2015-16, you will have these schools (operational) because you need time for construction of building," he told reporters after a meeting with stakeholders and Planning Commission officials here.

However, some stakeholders present at the meeting said that they would try to operationalise the schools from the next academic session itself.

The ministry along with Planning Commission officials finalised the model concessional agreement (MCA) to set up 2,500 model schools under PPP mode across the country.

Commission's Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia informed that the MCA would now be placed before the inter-ministerial committee headed by Secretary Education on July 31 for approval.

After the committee's approval, government would seek request for proposals (RFPs) to set up model schools in PPP mode in 41 non-educationally backward blocks (NEBB) on a pilot basis.

The government has shortlisted 65 applicants for these 41 blocks on the basis of request for qualifications furnished by the private players.

These 41 blocks are in nine states including Andhra Pradesh (1), Haryana (13), Rajasthan (11), Madhya Pradesh (6), Punjab (3), Uttar Pradesh (2), Karnataka (2), Gujarat (1) and Maharashtra (1).

According to Mr. Ahluwalia, under this PPP arrangement, the private players will invest in land, building and manage the school and state government would help them in acquiring land for schools. He said that these schools would have at least 40 per cent select students from whom no fees would be charged.

The Central government will pay operation cost for teaching these select students at the rate applicable for Central-run school.

According to estimates, the operational cost of teaching a student in a central school was around Rs. 21,000 per year in the financial year of 2011-12. However, the non-select students will have to pay the fee prescribed by these schools.

According to Mr. Raju, after the 41 schools under PPP model are inaugurated, this model would be replicated in 478 blocks.

The government has planned to have 6,000 model schools in the country including 3,500 under public mode and 2,500 under PPP mode.

Source: July 20, 2013/ [The Hindu](#)

Vocational courses pay off

There simply aren't enough seats for students vying for one in Delhi University colleges. In Delhi region alone, the number of students taking Central Board of Secondary Education's Class XII exam shot up to

2,58,998 in 2013 from 2,05,384 three years ago. The numbers simply don't add up.

While in NCR alone, 2,24,765 students cleared the boards this year, DU, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University and Jamia Millia Islamia together manage to cobble up 81,000 undergraduate seats. Experts feel 60% students don't find a place in the conventional higher education set-up. They would rather do well for themselves via a vocational education course, experts said.

According to former DU vice-chancellor Deepak Pental, the higher education set-up can never absorb all school-leaving students and there is no point pushing them all for a "useless BA and BSc degree". "The government is focusing on vocational education and it should be implemented in the right spirit. There will be lots of skill-based jobs which will be created in years to come, for example, in the manufacturing sector. Who will do these jobs if we don't have skilled resources? These 60% students should go for skill-based education and a two-year intensive skill-based training from Class XI onwards will make sense," he said.

Stating that all students don't have academic aptitude and would perform better in vocational areas, principal of Shri Ram College of Commerce P C Jain said, "All students don't have academic aptitude, but will have other skills. A vocational course is more paying and rewarding. The government has set up a National Skill Development Corporation which also finances such courses."

But experts have cautioned that unless the mindset that "vocational education is inferior" is changed, matters can't move forward and there is need for a well-thought out policy. "Despite being more remunerative, many don't want to opt for vocational courses. A well thought out policy is needed. More polytechnics should be opened," S M Sajid, officiating VC, Jamia Millia Islamia, said.

The way forward, according to vice-chancellor of Ambedkar University Shyam B Menon, is to make students of vocational education feel rewarded. "One must take a holistic view as everybody can't afford higher education. In Tamil Nadu, for example, the vocational stream at Class XII level has done very well, which is not the case in Delhi. There are a large number of polytechnics in Delhi. There should be lateral movement to engineering colleges," he said.

Source: July 21, 2013/ [Times of India](#)

Aided education institutions come under RTI'

In a significant order with far-reaching consequences, the Madras High Court has brought aided private educational institutions under the ambit of the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

The case pertains to the Thiagarajar College of Engineering in Madurai and the court held that it was indeed a 'public authority' as defined in the RTI Act and hence could not deny information with regard to its functioning to those who seek it.

Given that Tamil Nadu has a number of such aided private institutions whose functioning has time and again been questioned by educationists, the order clearly provides an opportunity to usher in greater transparency.

Thiagarajar College of Engineering receives aid from the State government for payment of salary to teaching and non-teaching staff.

In 2009 one T K Ravindranath made an application under the RTI Act seeking information on the fee structure of certain courses. In reply the college registrar maintained that the institution was not a 'public authority' and hence did not fall under the purview of the RTI Act. An appeal was preferred by Ravindranath with the Tamil Nadu Information Commission, which directed the college to provide the information.

Subsequently, the college filed the current writ petition challenging the order.

Senior counsel G Masilamani, appearing for the college, argued that the commission had pre-determined the status of the college on the basis of the letter head which declared it to be a government-aided college without giving sufficient chance for the college to make its case.

He said that college was not a government body or an instrument of the State, which alone can be brought under the purview of the Act and though the college received 37 per cent of the total expenditure as aid from the government, it could not be deemed as substantial funding.

Counsel for the respondents contended that the college was indeed substantially funded by the government. Once aid is received from the government, that alone is sufficient to hold that it is a public authority, the counsel submitted.

Passing orders, Justice S Manikumar observed that imparting education was not an independent activity. It is an activity supplementing the principal work carried out by the State through the educational institutions established by it.

The judge held that any interested person could seek information on how grant-in-aid was spent. "If the college receives any concession from the government or receives a grant or sanction for disbursement of fee concession to any under-privileged person and if the same is not fully paid or is partly paid, then the aggrieved student or any person, with a pro bono interest can seek information," Justice Manikumar said.

As such, the judge held that the college could be brought under the ambit of the RTI Act and dismissed the petition.

Source: July 22, 2013/ [New Indian Express](#)

Use of technology can transform education system'

A three-day workshop on 'Innovative Practices in Education' started on Monday at the Nimora-based State Administration Academy in association with Centre for Innovation in Public System, Hyderabad.

Educationists from Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Andhra Pradesh are participating in the workshop.

"Challenges in imparting modern education can be overcome through innovations with a blend of technology and smart thinking. Moving beyond the classroom walls, creative use of technology can completely transform the education system and unleash new ways of learning skills," said D S Mishra, director general of state administration academy, while addressing the inaugural session.

Director of Centre for Innovation in Public System, Hyderabad D Chakrapani said that innovations have great importance in the field of education.

"Use of latest technology for better teaching and learning experiences is the key to innovative education system. The workshop was also addressed by secretary school education Dinesh Shrivastav and secretary technical education Nidhi Chhibbar.

Source: July 23, 2013/ [Times of India](#)

US varsity asked to shut down, leaves Indian students stranded

The University of Northern Virginia has been ordered to shut down with immediate effect, leaving a large number of Indian students stranded and jeopardising their academic career.

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia in an order dated July 16, which was made public last week, said that the University of Northern Virginia, which calls itself the most popular American university for students from India, "must

cease operations immediately" as a post-secondary institution.

Given that the University of Northern Virginia (UNV) has a significantly large number of foreign students, mostly from India, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia has asked these students with F-1 visas to approach the Department of Homeland Security with issues related to immigration and optional practical training.

The now closed university has been asked to provide information regarding students' academic and financial records.

UNV, which was once run by a chancellor who reportedly maintained a sex dungeon, was raided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement in July 2011.

At that time the university had more than 2,000 students, majority of them being Indians.

At the time of university being ordered to shut down last week, there were some 500 students enrolled in various courses, with a significant number of them from India.

Source: July 25, 2013/ [The Hindu Business Line](#)

MBA, MCA courses: SC rejects AICTE appeal

The Supreme Court has found no merit in an appeal by the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) against a verdict that colleges affiliated to a university were not obliged to take separate permission from it for conducting MBA and MCA courses.

"We have considered the averments in the review petitions. Having regard to the facts and issues involved, in our opinion, no case for review is made out. There is no error in the impugned order. Hence, the review petitions are dismissed," said a Bench of Justices B S Chauhan and V Gopala Gowda as it dismissed the AICTE's review petition.

In its April order, the Bench had ruled that MBA was not a technical course. Although MCA was a technical course, the court said, role of AICTE for its regulation could be advisory only.

"The AICTE Act does not intend (the council) to be an authority either superior or to supervise or control universities and thereby superimpose itself upon them merely for the reason that it is laying down certain teaching standards in technical education or programmes formulated in any of the department of units," the court had noted.

Writing the judgment, Justice Gowda had said: "The role of AICTE vis-à-vis universities is only advisory,

recommendatory and one of providing guidance and (it) has no authority to issue or enforce any sanction by itself."

The Bench said it was the University Grants Commission which had been given the power to regulate universities in relation to granting sanction/approval, maintaining educational standards and overseeing the fee structure including admissions to various courses offered by them, their institutions, constituent colleges, units and affiliated colleges.

The AICTE however had decided to file a review petition against this order, claiming it had been trying to bring in transparency in matters of recognition of technical programmes, run by various colleges and institutes, over several years now and so they would not want this exercise to go in vain.

Source: July 26, 2013/ [Indian Express](#)

More than 80,000 engineering seats remain vacant in Tamil Nadu

As many as 80,689 government quota engineering seats in Tamil Nadu have gone vacant this year. And, colleges will have to pay "it will hit the quality of the education they provide and, in some cases, cause heavy financial losses to the institutions.

Of the 2.05 lakh seats made available through the single window counselling process, which ended on Friday, only 1.24 lakh were filled. Experts said the economic slowdown had impacted engineering education to a large extent: students were making informed decisions and were willing to risk signing up for alternate courses.

District-wise data shows students believe that if it has to be engineering, it has to be in Chennai or nearby places. "Engineering has not lost its charm," said S Vaidhyasubramaniam, dean, planning and development, Sastra University, Thanjavur. "Students are only rejecting engineering education in a bad institution."

Close to 96% of seats in the seven Chennai colleges have been filled, while it is 68% for Kancheepuram and 73.44% for Tiruvallur. Colleges in Virudhunagar, which steadily churns out school toppers, have also been able to fill a good number of seats. The rate of seat allocation in 12 colleges there crossed 76%.

One reason is that the district is home to topnotch institutions like Mepco Schlenk Engineering

College. "This keeps other colleges in the region on their toes to face the competition," said an expert.

Ariyalur, on the other hand, had the lowest rate of seats allocated. Five colleges in the district have been able to fill only 33% of seats. When a college fails to fill even 10% of seats, as is the case with some institutions, it has far-reaching consequences. "They cannot offer sustainable quality education," said Vaidhyasubramaniam.

When rural colleges fail to fill more than 10% or 20% of seats, it will have a strong bearing on the rural economy, says C Thangaraj, former vice-chancellor of Anna University of Technology, Chennai. "The government should have insisted on quality maintenance on colleges, and encouraged edupreneurs to start engineering colleges in rural areas," he added.

The All India Council for Technical Education mandates that colleges seeking approval must have facilities commensurate with their intake and not with the number of seats filled. This means that the financial position of colleges, many of which are funded by banks, will already be in the negative. "Those without strong industry backing or without good investments will be forced to approach bigger players for a takeover," said S Alfred Devaparasad, CEO of Alpha Group of Institutions.

Those who don't come in for outright sale will try to cut losses by compromising on faculty salary and additional inputs. Devaprasad believes colleges that know that the trend will change in a few years are likely to keep investing - in faculty, infrastructure and R&D.

Source: July 27, 2013/ [Times of India](#)

Obama-Singh initiative: University bags social science project

In a big achievement, University of Pune (UoP) has been awarded the Social Science project in the second round of "Obama-Singh 21st Century Knowledge Initiative" (OSI).

Titled "Inclusive Universities: Linking Diversity, Equity and Excellence for the 21st Century," the project will be taken up jointly with the US-led University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Announced by the US and Indian governments, OSI aims to strengthen collaboration and build partnerships between American and Indian institutions of higher education.

A total of eight institutional partnership projects have been announced by the US State Department recently as a part of the OSI with each project

entitled to receive an award of approximately \$250,000 to be utilised over a three year period.

Addressing media on Friday, Vice-Chancellor Wasudeo Gade said the project awarded to university in second round of OSI was the first across the country in the field of Social Science with other seven projects belonging to the field of science and technology.

"The project awarded under OSI will develop appropriate research and analytical tools, build institutional capacity and generate policy directions for a genuine synergy between shared commitments to equity and excellence in higher education," he said.

Sangeeta Kamat, associate professor, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, who is principal investigator of the project, said the main aim was to dispel presumed opposition between equity and excellence in higher education and make a compelling case for how diversity and excellence reinforce one another and are essential to innovation and progress in multicultural democratic societies.

Elaborating on activities and programmes of the project, Gade said, "The project will involve exchange of study material, facilitating discussions among research teams, collection of demographic data, survey and qualitative and quantitative research work among other activities."

The vice-chancellor said outcome of the project would help government in framing and shaping its policy decisions among other crucial benefits.

Source: July 27, 2013/ [Indian Express](#)

IIM Kozhikode Makes its Mark in Jammu and Kashmir

Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (IIMK) trailblazers of so many unique milestones plans to exponentially expand the higher education system to areas which remain neglected for many reasons. With an objective to make premium executive management education accessible to working executives of Jammu and Kashmir, IIMK has opened two classroom centres for their Executive Post Graduate Programs (EPGP); one in Jammu and the second in Kashmir.

Last date of application is 25th August, 2013

For further information, please click on the following website:
<http://www.iimk.ac.in/newwebsite/> or contact Mr. Binoy, Assistant Manager, EPGP office, Ph: 0495-

2809471 /412 or Mr. Vinod, Administrative Officer, EPGP office, Ph: 0495-2809223 /224

This initiative would provide an opportunity to enhance managerial and leadership skills for the locals who are forced to move to metropolitan cities to pursue higher education.

Opening these two centres will facilitate executives from Jammu and Kashmir to acquire formal management education from a premier institution of this country. Executives serving Indian Army will also be benefited as they will now have access to formal learning of management functions which they can apply in their professional life. Professor Debashis Chatterjee, the Director of IIM Kozhikode said: "IIM Kozhikode stands by its commitment to the nation for embracing the marginalised sections of India's youth in its quest for excellence. Our footprints in Jammu and Kashmir will pave the way for opening the doors of management education to those who need it the most."

Executive Post Graduate Program of IIMK is flagship programme for working professionals, which are offered through in-campus classes and Interactive Learning Platform classes conducted during evenings and weekends. IIMK offers this program with technology partner Hughes Education. According to the Chairman of Executive Post Graduate Programs, Professor Atanu Adhikari, this initiative of our Institute is centered on its socially participative academic philosophy; and that's how great institutions are made, he says.

Last month, IIMK also announced the admission of 54.29% women students in its PGP batch 17 (2013 -15) narrowing the gender divide for the first time in the history of IIMs. IIMK began its unsurpassed journey of significantly contributing to the growing trend of women leaders from 2010 with an intake of 100 women students. There has been a steady rise of this number from 31.5% in 2010 to 35.48% in 2011.

Source: July 29, 2013/ [India Education Diary](#)

US-India bolster teaching skills

The United States, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has announced a new \$4.3 million partnership with Arizona State University's (ASU) Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, for sharing educational best practices with Indian teachers.

In partnership with the Human Resource Development (HRD) ministry, the India Support for Teacher Education program (In-STEP) will send 110 educators from teacher training institutes in the

eastern and northeastern states of India to ASU to participate in a three-month program.

The intensive training course will cover a range of topics including teaching methods, in-service and pre-service teacher education, and assessment techniques.

As part of this customized program, ASU will provide the Indian educators with opportunities to observe American schools and educational best practices. They will see firsthand innovative teaching and learning approaches.

In addition, the Indian participants will work closely with ASU professors to prepare proposals for reform in specific areas of education, which they would then be able to implement in their respective states. The ultimate goal is better-trained teachers and improved educational outcomes for Indian students.

Source: July 29, 2013/ [Times of India](#)

USAID announces \$4.3 mn program to train Indian teachers

The United States, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has announced a new \$4.3 million partnership with Arizona State University's (ASU) Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College. This program will share educational best practices with Indian teachers.

According to a statement from the US Consulate General, Kolkata, in partnership with the Government of India ministry of human resource development, the India Support for Teacher Education program (In-STEP) will send 110 educators from teacher training institutes in the eastern and northeastern states of India to ASU to participate in a three-month program.

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Source: July 29, 2013/ [Economic Times](#)

India lessons for US pupils

UGC lines up unique crash course with scholarships

India's arts, culture and growth story will be showcased in a crash course for some 200 American students under a first-of-its-kind scholarship scheme starting next summer.

The Connect India programme, finalised by the UGC, will be offered at 15 universities, including Jadavpur University and Calcutta University in Bengal. The others include JNU, University of Mumbai, Banaras Hindu University and Osmania University.

The fellowship programme, which aims to help US students understand India right from the Indus Valley ages to the contemporary period, is being launched under the India-US higher education partnership.

The partnership was announced last year when then HRD minister Kapil Sibal visited the US but the UGC took a while drawing up the scheme.

"The idea is to tell American students about the India story. It will also enhance diversity on campuses as Indian students will benefit from such multiculturalism," UGC chairperson Ved Prakash said.

He said the course would be spread over four to six weeks and would include visits to local communities and villages. The host universities will facilitate interaction of the international students with civil society organisations working on community development and women empowerment.

Trips to sites of historical importance are also planned, as is participation in a variety of cultural events and yoga sessions.

"We have asked the universities to accommodate 10 to 20 students each. The first batch is expected in May next year," Prakash said.

The Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR), an autonomous body, offers scholarships to foreign students to come and discover India, but hardly gets any response from the developed countries. Also, its courses last a full academic year, which makes it less attractive for students from countries like the US.

"In our university, there are about 100 foreign students pursuing graduation and post-graduation courses under ICCR scholarship. They are all from developing countries mostly Afghanistan and Kenya," said P.V. Valsarajan, dean of students' welfare at Calicut University.

Under the latest scheme, accommodation, food and expenses on local visits will be taken care of by the host university. The students will pay for the airfare, visa and medical expenses.

The 15 universities selected for hosting the programme will identify at least three "host families" in the vicinity to help familiarise the students with local culture and assist them in local trips.

Prakash, the UGC chief, said the crash course would offer lessons on India's political and financial systems, society and administration.

But some questioned the plan in the absence of reciprocity. "When the UGC will spend so much to educate American students, it is natural that they should come up with similar scheme for our students. But unfortunately there is no reciprocity," former UGC secretary R.K. Chauhan said. Prakash said the UGC may ask the Centre to discuss a similar scheme for Indian students with the US.

Source: July 31, 2013/ [Telegraph India](#)

ANALYSIS/OPINION/INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

Expansion, equity, excellence and employment main pillars of education: Tharoor

Minister of State for HRD, Shashi Tharoor has said that "There are 4 Es in the Indian education system? Expansion, Equity, Excellence and Employment. Expansion is the key. When we got independence, our literacy rate was 17 per cent; we had barely 30 universities in the country. Today we have a literacy rate of 74 per cent and boast of 700 universities. We have around 33,000 colleges across the country. He expressed his view during an interactive session on 'Great Expectations' organized by Young FICCI Ladies Organization.

He emphasized that education was the backbone for inclusive growth and development. India enjoys a demographic dividend which could take the country to great heights if the quality of education was improved and right skills were imparted to the country? Employable youth.

Dr. Tharoor further said that the second 'E' stood for easy equity. Out of the 74 per cent of the literate population, 82 of them are men and 65 women. The third 'E' stood for excellence. There are many outstanding and renowned Indian education institutes such as the IITs and IIMs. But the foremost challenge is to improve all-round excellence and raise the standards of students, teaching and infrastructure, he stated.

Employability was the last 'E'. 'Many companies conduct classroom sessions to train the employers. Due to the lack of quality employment skills amongst freshers, it has become very difficult to generate candidates fit for the job. Using the PPP model, the crises of unemployability can be overcome. We just need to ensure a right mix of curriculum and vocational skills,' remarked Dr. Tharoor.

Speaking on safety of women, Naveen Jindal, Member of Parliament and Chairman Managing Director, Jindal Steel and Power Limited, stated that violence against women was rampant in the country and was not restricted only to his state, Haryana. He said that the government was putting in a lot of efforts and also pumping funds in schemes such as scholarships for the girl child to encourage them to study and help combat practices such as female foeticide.

Ms. Vani Tripathi, National Secretary, Bharatiya Janata Party, said that for education to be inclusive, the focus must be on imparting education to the girl child and women. It was necessary to leverage the power of women and policies need to be formulated to facilitate in this endeavor.

Namanji, Principal Guide & Adviser, Oneness Movement, remarked that we demand respect from others when we do not respect ourselves. Women must learn to love and respect themselves and break the shackles imposed on them by society.

Ms. Fatima Karan, Senior Anchor, CNN-IBN, moderated the session. Ms. Garima Jain, Chairperson, YFLO and Ms. Pooja Jain, Senior Vice Chairperson, YFLO also addressed the session.

Source: July 16, 2013/ [News Track India](#)

Diving rupee crashes foreign education dreams of many

Though the government has directed banks to be more liberal in giving education loan to students, interest rates are still high, to add to the middle class families' woes arising out of the depreciation of the rupee.

With the rupee touching 60 against the US dollar and 90 against British pound, many families here have put off their plan to educate their children overseas.

June-July is the period when students are expected to pay their fees for the course or start the admission procedures, but the fluctuating rupee is acting like a roadblock for those who dream of making it to the best universities abroad.

Though the government has directed banks to be more liberal in giving education loan to students, interest rates are still high, to add to the middle class families' woes arising out of the depreciation of the rupee.

According to experts, for Indian students, the cost of education in any US university ranges between \$20,000 and \$40,000, depending on the university and the course.

However, that is just the tuition fee. Add \$20,000 per year as living expenses, the overall cost for students studying professional courses in prestigious universities shoots up to \$60,000. With \$5,000 a year for travel and other expenses, the total cost touches \$65,000 per year.

In case of education loan from banks, if a student were to take a loan of \$50,000 in 2012, Rs 46 to the dollar, the loan would have amounted to around Rs 23 lakh.

A loan for the same sum in dollars would be Rs 30 lakh in July 2013, when the rupee is hovering at 60 to the dollar. The woes do not end here. Since the rupee fluctuates every week, any further depreciation would add to the loan burden.

"I got a seat in a UK university and was initially planning to take a loan of Rs 20 lakh. However, since the rupee has depreciated further in past 3-4 months, I have to apply for a loan of Rs 28 lakh now," says Archana Menon, who plans to pursue an MBA from University of Glasgow.

Since, state-owned banks have a cap of Rs20-30 lakh for overseas education loans, Archana's amount is definitely on the higher side.

"Given the market scenario, I am not confident whether I will be able to pay back that amount.

I don't want to be a burden on my parents." Archana has put her decision on hold for now.

Since there is little one can do about exchange rates, counsellors suggest students to revise their plans and look for a country where expenses would be low. Some even suggest waiting till things normalise.

"The best universities are in the US and UK. I have decided to wait for another year and see how rupee behaves against the dollar.

If things come back to normal, I will apply for a university in the US next year," says Anjum Shah, who works in an IT company in Electronic City.

Source: July 16, 2013/ [DNA India](#)

Indian students in Australia influenced by migration policy: Study

Indian students in Australia were strongly influenced by the country's migration policy when it comes to enrolling in higher educational institutes, according to a latest study.

"Apart from traditional motivators such as higher rates of returns and employability associated with a foreign qualification, Indian students are very responsive to changes in Australia's labour market, immigration and student visa policies," said the study published in the Australian Journal of Education.

The study titled 'Indian higher education students in Australia: Their patterns and motivations' said demand from new Indian international students moderated post migration policy revision which started in 2008.

The study tracked Indian students first in accounting and IT courses, and next in cookery and hairdressing, as they chased changing incentives in the skilled migration system.

The report said it appeared that recent skilled migration policy changes were closely related to Indian demand for Australian education as found by decreasing enrolment numbers, student visas granted and student stocks.

In a bid to counteract this decline trend, Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) introduced few changes and reduced the financial requirements for student visa candidates.

It also proposed changes to work restrictions to make them more flexible by introducing post-study work visas from this year onwards that would let international students work for up to four years in Australia after graduation.

These steps by DIAC, along with positive publicity to emphasise the standing of Australia as a safe destination and the opportunities for part-time work in Australia compared to its competitors in the post-GFC recession, may result in a rebound in student numbers from India, it said. Analysis of international student data showed the behaviour of recent cohorts of Indian students has been influenced by changes and incentives provided by the general skilled migration programme in Australia.

There were 3,820 new Indian students in higher education in the year to May, 46.3 per cent up on the same period last year, and above the 2010 figure.

Source: July 16, 2013/ [Economic Times](#)

Nitish 'helpless' in lifting Bihar higher education sector

Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar on Tuesday admitted that higher education was the Achilles' heel of his government as he had been helpless in shoring up the sector.

"I have the desire to turn it (higher education) around, but have not been able to do much," Kumar said.

The higher education scenario in the state is a mess, with nine universities functioning without vice-chancellors and six of them without even pro-vice chancellors since March 18, when the Supreme Court struck down the appointments made by former chancellor Devanand Konwar.

The order had come after a long-drawn-out spat between the chancellor and the state education department, with the chief minister himself claiming that the appointments were not made in consultation with the state government.

Kumar's disappointment with the higher education sector was evident at the 3rd foundation day function of the Bihar State Educational Infrastructure development corporation (BSEIDC) on July 10.

"The government wants to improve the health of state universities — as it has done in the primary and secondary education sector — but nothing is in the state government's hand," he said, in an oblique reference to the supremacy of the chancellor in matters concerning universities, as per the two state acts governing them.

According to Kumar, his government was spending Rs. 3,500 crore annually on universities alone, but "the outcome is unknown".

"I don't know exactly what the outcome of all this expenditure is," he said. "But let me tell you, we are giving funds and will continue to do so. I wanted centres of excellence to be developed and am prepared to allocate adequate funds, but it's not in my hands."

The Supreme Court had directed the state government and Raj Bhawan to put into place a transparent mechanism, comprising a search committee, in accordance with University Grants Commission regulations, to finalise the appointments of vice-chancellors.

The court had struck down the state government's bid to make changes to two statutory acts governing education.

Source: July 16, 2013/ [Hindustan Times](#)

And the brand played on

In India, the US, the UK and beyond, branding is an inescapable part of higher education, for good or ill

There has always been the risk of the unfortunate juxtaposition when it comes to advertising and if anything it is greater in the digital age - the danger that a website hosting a news story about an axe murderer will pull in an advert for cut-price axes.

And it is not just online or in newspapers that such problems can occur: take journalist Katherine Boo's recent book about life in a Mumbai slum, *Behind the Beautiful Forever*.

The title was taken from billboards on a wall abutting the shanty town where Boo lived for three years, all advertising the same brand of Italianate floor tiles to wealthy Indian motorists using the expressway on the other side. The slogan repeated along the length of the wall, "Beautiful forever", was a piece of branding so at odds with the poverty of the slum that it made a perfect title for a book about modern India's contradictions, struggles and aspirations.

One leading private institution in India, Amity University, is already advertising on the helmets of cricket stars

Our cover feature this week - on India's plans to raise the quality of its higher education at a time of dramatic expansion - cites another advertising slogan as a small indicator of the country's extraordinary rate of growth, and the increasing spending power of a portion of its population.

This one is a roadside hoarding advertising luxury apartments in Bangalore with the blunderbuss of a line: "Where you live says who you are".

Such lack of subtlety may be par for the course for estate agents, but what if one of the many private universities that dominate Indian higher education, or a Western university competing for international students, used a variant of the slogan: "Where you study says who you are"?

This might seem a bit of a stretch, but as our feature records, one leading private institution in India, Amity University, is already advertising on the helmets of cricket stars, associating its brand with those who have made it to the top of the most aspirational field of all in this cricket-mad country.

Explaining the thinking behind the campaign, Amity's chancellor says: "In education, it is all about feeling pride...and people around you feeling proud of where you are."

There's no getting away from the growing importance of "brand" in higher education, whether in India, the US or the UK.

So does the growing status of branding in universities matter? Are its values and those of higher education so at odds that the former will poison the latter?

Writing in this week's Times Higher Education, Fred Inglis, honorary professor of cultural history at the University of Warwick, argues unequivocally that they are. Branding is an "abominable monster... threatening the intellectual health and the integrity of pure enquiry", he says, "the clinching force marketising the idea of the university".

Offering an alternative view, Robert Jones, who works at branding agency Wolff Olins and as a visiting professor at the University of East Anglia, argues that, done properly, branding can challenge and inspire rather than simply browbeat or provoke despair. "Like it or not, universities will have to explain their role, their value, to the world," he adds.

Inglis does not like branding, but comes to pretty much the same conclusion: it isn't his idea of beautiful - far from it - but he fears it may now be for ever.

Source: July 18, 2013/ [Times Higher Education](#)

Columnist: Is there a reverse brain drain underway among Indian students?

There are credible reports (an Open Doors report published annually by the Institute of International Education in partnership with the U.S. Department of State) that suggest that the number of Indian students opting for higher education in the United States has dropped, even though they still represent 14 percent of foreign students. This is alarming since most students from India aim at studying in universities in the US to broaden their cultural and intellectual horizons, improve upon their job prospects and prepare them for their next steps in education and career.

In a study conducted by IIE on prospective Indian students, engineering was the most popular intended field of study, chosen by 30-percent of respondents, followed by business and management (26 percent), physical and life sciences (9 percent) and math and computer science (5 percent). A higher proportion of men than women prefer engineering as their intended field; among women, business was slightly more popular. The most frequently cited reason for studying abroad was the quality or type of academic program (cited by 76 percent of

respondents). Over one-third (37 percent) cited preparing for a future career in a foreign country or foreign-based company and about one-fifth each cited the cultural experience (21 percent) and making professional contacts (19 percent).

Look at any university website or brochure; all seem to promote a strong global presence allowing international students an opportunity to share their food, music, and traditions with their U.S. peers. Not surprisingly, the United States is host to about one quarter of all internationally mobile students according to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). This group of students are individuals who have crossed a national border to study, or are enrolled in a distance learning program abroad. UIS estimates that 2 million students currently study outside their home country. Among leading host countries, the U.S. share is 40 percent, and more than double the number hosted by any of the other leading hosts. Students from Asia comprise 43 percent of globally mobile students, the largest group of international students in the world. The over 820,000 students from China alone who are studying in other countries comprise 15 percent of the world total. In addition, over 268,000 Indian students are studying outside their home country. California is the leading host state for international students with 75,032 in 2004/05, followed by New York (61,944), Texas (47,367), Massachusetts (27,985), and Florida (26,264). Some states or regions within the United States tend to be particularly popular among students from certain world regions.

Within the US institutions continue to develop various types of linkage programs or joint degree programs with universities around the globe to facilitate the exchange of students and scholars and encouraging future applications from abroad for full degree study. Fearing that high tuition costs might be deterring international students from coming to the United States, many campuses have started to offer special foreign student scholarships or "in-state tuition" rates, and have increased the number and amount of stipends to graduate assistants. While the U.S. government does not provide significant direct funding to international students, federal research funds do support international graduate students through their host institutions. Campus funding options include fellowships and international awards/scholarships, research or graduate assistantships, teaching assistantships, on-campus employment.

Many campuses have also reviewed their marketing materials and websites targeting potential international students to insure that the message is

strongly welcoming and contains all the necessary information, including a suggested timeline for the application steps. Others have developed new marketing plans and strategies, and have carefully analyzed their competitor institutions.

What changes this picture is when one looks at the immigration reform and its impact on foreign students. It is a major contributor to the declining number of students from India. The F-1 student visa, for example, allows a foreign student to work as an employee or in internships with companies in his/her field of study, but appears to preclude them from being self-employed in a business venture – including active involvement in launching startups to gain real-world experience as part of an entrepreneurship program. There have been discussions at the policy level on creating a green card for foreign students receiving graduate degrees in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields so that they can work in the United States immediately post-graduation. Yet, some fear that an accelerated inflow of foreign workers may depress wages and crowd out opportunities for Americans. It is unfortunate that these baseless fears emanate from lack of information. The Department of Labor has explicit laws on Foreign labor certification programs and these are designed to assure that the admission of foreign workers into the United States on a permanent or temporary basis will not adversely affect the job opportunities, wages, and working conditions of U.S. workers.

Additionally the large majority of America's foreign master's and doctoral STEM degree students hail from India and China, comprising 54 and 22 percent respectively, of all such students. Under the current visa system, citizens from these two countries face waiting times that exceed 10 years for a green card due to country caps backlogs. Given these circumstances, students are pulled back and away from contributing to the US economy and are driven to their countries of origin which are now burgeoning and growing economies. A reverse brain drain has been in process which is unfortunate considering how pertinent it is for US to maintain its leadership and a center for learning and innovation.

Source: July 18, 2013/ Boston.com

India-Asean FTA falters just before finalization over services pact

India may not get its sought-after services pact with Asean this August because of concerns on both the sides as the details of the broad agreement finalised in December last year are

worked out. Issues related to movement of professionals under mode 4 and mutual recognition of qualification in medical and education are learnt to be the main roadblocks, a person familiar with the development told ET.

India and the 10-member Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) had in December finalised the much-awaited free trade agreement in services and investments. "The signing looks a bit difficult now. The negotiating team is legally scrutinising the text, where there are minor issues related to one or two services and investment," the person told ET. But a senior official in the commerce and ministry played down the issue. "We have had two rounds of legal scrubbing and made some progress, and signing depends upon domestic procedures of all the members. So, after it is concluded and legally scrutinized, each of the member states goes through its domestic procedures and then it will be signed," he said.

The two sides have signed an agreement for trade in goods, which benefited Asean more, giving it access to India's vast consumer market. India has a bigger stake in the services agreement, as it can help push exports to the region. The comprehensive agreement on services and goods is expected to boost trade to \$100 billion by 2015.

India's exports to Asean declined by 10.2 per cent in 2012-13 to \$32 billion, while imports grew by 2.86 per cent to \$43.7 billion, leaving a trade gap of about \$11 billion. The pact on services will help India gain some ground. Asean's share in India's IT export is a mere 5 per cent, as per estimates. Countries like Malaysia and Thailand are not keen on allowing mode 4 of the services pact, which will make entry of Indian professionals easier in their countries.

Under mode 4, Indian professionals will be able to work in the Asean nations. These countries believe that it will affect their workforce with the increased presence of Indian workers, and are opposing the agreement. "These countries apparently want Indian professionals to get an additional qualification from their countries to be eligible under mode 4 movements. It makes sense for India to sign the deal only if we get mutual recognition agreement," said an expert.

For instance, to practice medicine in Thailand, a person needs a licence from the Thai Medical Council, with the council conducting its examination in Thai, which only a few foreign practitioners can clear. While in education, foreign professionals require an invitation from the education institute that will employ them and also should meet the criteria set by the ministry of education. Some

Asean countries, it is learnt, have an issue with India providing subsidies in higher education, whereas they give it at full cost price, which would give Indian professionals an edge, he added.

India wants mutual recognition agreement with Asean which will enable qualifications of professional service supplies such as engineering, medical and education among others to be mutually recognised by signatory member countries. If such an agreement is not signed at the Asean level, India would have to sign MRA degrees and licence of equivalence agreements with individual Asean members, making the process more cumbersome.

Source: July 19, 2013/ [Economic Times](#)

16 lakh school seats, but only 9 lakh students in Hyderabad: Report

In what seems to be an irony, the city has more number of seats being offered by schools than students. In direct violation of the Supreme Court order in 2012 which had asked governments to regulate the surge of private schools, Hyderabad has at least eight private schools in every 5 km radius. The statistics by the school education department reveals that cities like Chennai, Bangalore and Mumnai have only 3-4 schools in every 5 km radius.

The alarming increase in the number of schools is a trend seen in the last five years, with big schools setting up branches in different areas. While there are around 9 lakh students in the city, the number of seats being offered by the 2,000 government and private schools in Greater Hyderabad is close to 16 lakh, a figure critics say is unheard of in other cities. Sadly at the same time, students in neighbouring districts like Nalgonda, Warangal and Ranga Reddy are struggling to get a seat given the less number of schools there.

"The government has sanctioned more schools for the city this academic year, adding on to the existing schools. Close to 40 per cent of the seats in most schools are left vacant every year as there are no takers," said S Srinivas Reddy, president, AP Recognised Schools Managements Association. The association had petitioned the state government as early as September 2012, asking it to regulate fresh sanctions being accorded to schools.

"Private managements set up schools in prime localities like Hyderabad as they tend to reap more benefits from cities than rural areas. But the government must allow for an equal distribution of schools in both rural and urban areas as per the

requirement," said R Venkat Reddy, director, M V Foundation, an NGO working on school education.

However, when asked about the massive increase in the number of schools, officials of the school education department said they are left with no option but according sanctions. "The constitution allows for the setting up of institutions and we have been giving permission to institutions which have fulfilled the requirements specified under the AP Education Act," said an official. Critics, however, said that the city has way more schools than the department can inspect regularly.

Times View

The government should immediately crack down on the proliferation of schools in congested localities. It is saddening to see that on the city outskirts and in remote districts, students have to trek for hours to reach their schools. The government should immediately impose a ban on city schools trying to open branches and instead ask them to set up schools outside the city. Hyderabad wants quality education for its children and they have enough schools for it.

Source: July 20, 2013/ [Times of India](#)

Collaborative tie-ups

It is not just in India; many South Asian universities are joining hands with educational institutions in the West to meet the demand for quality higher education at home, according to a report by The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Indian students have over the years been regularly going to universities abroad and universities here have also received a steady stream of students from foreign countries.

A recent trend however, in many South Asian countries, has seen institutions in these countries collaborating with universities abroad to offer courses designed, monitored and certified by the latter.

For instance, Afghanistan has tie-ups with Stanford Law School (US) and the American University of Afghanistan that offers a full, five-year integrated degree in Law. Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology and the University of Houston (US) are involved in faculty exchanges, mentoring, and training sessions.

The India-Oxford Cancer Research Network, collaboration between Oxford University and six leading cancer research centres in India, has established itself as one of India's leading academic oncology networks.

In Nepal, the University of Wyoming (US), Tribhuvan University and Kathmandu University are involved in multiple research collaborations in the Himalayas, with focus on conservation and the impact of humans on natural ecosystems. Also in Pakistan, Newcastle University (UK) and University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore, have a tie-up on the development of water scarcity management strategies.

In India, reportedly 600 foreign institutions cooperate in this manner — predominantly with universities in the UK, US and Canada.

The MoU's these universities have signed with institutions abroad can be looked at from many angles, says Haridas Manohar, a retired professor, Delhi University. While for some, the tie-ups are the only medium to provide quality education, for others it is also a way of enhancing its education offerings. Prof Manohar also feels the need to monitor the collaborations is essential, especially when they increase in number.

A custom research report for British Council by The Economist Intelligence Unit has studied trends in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in higher education, and particularly provides insights into transnational education. The report and its findings were discussed at a recent seminar — Global Education Dialogues: South Asia Series in Colombo, organised by The British Council, which had over 500 participants from various countries.

High demand

The report highlighted the fact that rising demand in South Asia for higher education is currently not being met, despite its growing significance to economic development. Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka together account for around 25 per cent of the world's population.

India's Foreign Universities Bill may have attracted a lot of interest, despite being pending due to opposition even after gaining cabinet approval in 2010. However, India accounts for a major chunk of the number of students going abroad for education. Last year, the UK played host to over 21,000 Indian postgraduate students while the US hosted over 59,000, along with 2,041 from Bangladesh, 2,822 from Nepal, 1,900 from Pakistan, and 1,412 from Sri Lanka.

Critics point out assurance, and lack of effective accreditation and quality assurance mechanisms, remain shortcomings, when it comes to transnational education. India, for instance, is consistently among two of the largest foreign

markets (along with China) for higher education in the US, UK and Australia.

So, how do other countries fare in this regard?

Afghanistan serves as the most striking example, where funding for public sector higher education is provided exclusively by the government. This is with the exception of postgraduate courses, where fee is charged.

In Nepal, the proportion of education funding allocated to higher education declined steadily throughout the 2000s, as the government shifted away from a policy of fully-funded higher education to one of cost recovery. Campuses of public universities receive government funding but affiliated campuses do not.

Among all countries in South Asia, Nepal and Sri Lanka have yet to fully embrace privatisation in higher education. In Sri Lanka, where higher education has historically been fully state-funded and free, resistance to the concept of privatisation of education has led to strikes by academics as recently as 2012. The events had resulted in a three month shut-down of state-funded universities.

Athula Pitigala-Arachchi, chief executive officer, Asia Pacific Institute of Information Technology, acknowledges a need for Sri Lanka to liberalise the sector. "The government does not have enough funds to expand the public sector, so the private sector has to play a key role", he says.

Private funding

The emergence of private universities is a relatively recent development in South Asia, and the report acknowledges the rapid growth of private institutions in India.

Pakistan, on the other hand, say experts, has managed to shake off its dependence on public funding. The budget allocated to the highest decision-making body in higher education was drastically slashed almost by 80 per cent and universities were told to generate funding.

Pawan Agarwal, higher education adviser to India's Planning Commission suggests an approach that mixes both standard allocation to universities and competitive funding for research, suggesting universities be encouraged to raise funds through consultancies, research contracts and donations.

Students on the other hand, at least those in countries such as Sri Lanka, feel collaborative initiatives offer the best of both worlds. "It is very difficult to get into the universities of Sri Lanka, and going abroad is not affordable for many families that have more than one child. I chose to study

here because I get a global exposure, customised to suit local requirements," said Sarath Jayate, a student who studies at the Sri Lanka University of Surrey (UK) that has partnerships with Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology (SLIIT) to allow undergraduate students to continue their MSc studies through a joint programme with the University of Surrey's Department of Computing.

Source: July 21, 2013/ [The Hindu](#)

Time to bring in a system to appraise teachers

In the current scenario of world ranking of universities and national-level debate about the status of Indian universities struggling to get into at least the top 200 is a matter of great concern, necessitating urgent higher education reforms.

Reforms at an individual and institutional level can only result in sporadic excellence. System-built higher education reforms alone can make a "quantum jump in quality". The quality of university is determined by quality of teachers, who make it a fertile soil of knowledge by perpetuating quality.

Since teacher maturation and upgrading quality became imminent, the UGC notified the "Regulations on Minimum Qualifications for Appointment of Teachers and Other Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education, 2010". This regulation, besides providing a compendium of all UGC norms related to teachers, evolved an Academic Performance Indicator (API) for appointment and promotion of teachers. These APIs are objective indicators grouped under: (a) Teaching—learning, evaluation-related activities, (b) Co-curricular, extension and profession-related activities, and (c) Research and academic contributions.

This will create a system to ensure that all teachers are present in their departments throughout the working hours, efficiently discharging their duties under the above three areas and facilitate academic productivity.

A scoring weightage formula has been proposed, setting up minimum annual score requirement for every teacher in each criteria which would be cumulatively considered at the time of promotion/selection. The entire system has been designated as the Performance Based Appraisal System (PBAS) supported by structured-cum-evidence-based proforma combining self and institutional appraisal system with equal

participation of the potential candidate/teacher and institutional machinery of appointment/promotion.

The API-based PBAS was aimed at bringing in a paradigm shift from the era of selection of teachers influenced by extraneous factors, including the whimsical approach of certain vice-chancellors to an era of objectivity and transparency. Besides, it eliminated promotions based on mere years-of-service and focus on academic performance.

Although, these regulations were notified after a consultative process with all stakeholders, there is still resistance from one section of teacher association and a few higher education experts to the API system. The points: (a) teacher freedom and university autonomy should not be curtailed and (b) API system has paved the way for proliferation of sub-standard journals and mediocre quality publications.

The need of the hour is accountability-linked autonomy, not unmonitored freedom. The regulations provide the API system as a template framework of objective academic parameters which can be tailored by each university without diluting scoring pattern. For the first time in India, research is made integral component of teacher performance and at least 75 per cent of the 6,99,464 teachers on rolls during 2011-2012 are making their first publication because of this.

In view of this, a transient phase of mediocre quality articles is inevitable. The best way forward is to motivate these entry-level teachers and first generation research publishers to improve their quality of research through innovative and effective faculty development programmes along with performance-linked incentive system.

After a period of renewed resistance, the regulations are currently slated for reinforced implementation, thanks to the Ministry for Human Resource Development.

This dynamic process, if implemented with due diligence, teacher maturation will materialise in all spheres of university activity and a 'quantum jump' in the overall quality of higher education comparable to global standards could be anticipated in the next five years.

Source: July 21, 2013/ [New Indian Express](#)

Higher education in Bihar, UP disappointing: Meira

The condition of higher education in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and some other states is disappointing, Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar said on Monday and

stressed on establishing institutional machinery to ensure that it was relevant with changing times.

"The present condition of higher education is disappointing in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand," she told the fifth annual convocation of LNMU.

Kumar lamented that the number of illiterates in India was maximum in the world. "There is a big gap between literate and the well-to-do in urban areas and illiterate and deprived sections in villages. Similarly, there has been a gap between male and female literacy rate and also between states."

She emphasized on greater investment in education to bridge the gaps.

Kumar, while delivering the convocation address at the 5th annual convocation of LNMU at Dr Nagendra Jha stadium of the university on Monday, said an institutional mechanism should be developed to maintain the relevance and usefulness of higher education in changing times.

"This is possible when emphasis would be given on the continuous internal assessment of students and frequent interaction between teachers and students to improve the quality of education," she said and stressed on making the universities' management highly democratic so that attention should be paid to every section of university.

The LS speaker was very pleased to know that LNMU has one Women Institute of Technology for creating women technocrats in this area. "Girl students of this university have excelled and this was evident during distribution of gold medals to toppers of different subjects of masters degree, where majority of toppers were girls," she said.

Among the 25 gold medalists, who received gold medal for emerging toppers in various subjects of post graduate (PG) course, 16 were girl students. One girl student Divya Sinha received two gold medals one for being topper at MEd exam and other for being the best masters student securing highest marks in all subjects together. Altogether 1,455 students were awarded masters degree at the convocation and 60% of them were girls, said examination controller M M Pandey.

Kumar urged the students to take three vows - First, they will neither give dowry nor accept it, secondly, respect parents and elderly persons and third, won't waste even a drop of water.

Governor-cum-chancellor D Y Patil, who was to preside over the convocation function, could not attend the convocation due to indisposition. This

was announced by LNMU VC Samrendra Pratap Singh during convocation. Education minister P K Sahi, mentioned as guest of honour in the invitation card, was conspicuous by his absence.

VC Samrendra Pratap Singh presented his report at the convocation. Continuation of the mentor system to bring teachers and students closure to each other, provision of mobile teaching to facilitate students of remote areas to share learning experiences with some of the most competent teachers of the university, complete regularization of academic sessions, introduction of semester system at the post graduate level, full automation of the examination department, central library and the account section of the university were some of the many highlights in the VC report.

Source: July 23, 2013/ [Times of India](#)

Schools warned against practising "educational untouchability"

Action comes pursuant to news report carried in 'The Hindu'

The Inspector of Matriculation Schools (IMS) has warned private schools in the district against practising "educational untouchability" by following two different school timings — shorter duration for students who paid government prescribed fees and longer for those who paid more.

The warning comes in the wake of a report published by The Hindu on July 7 about Mary Ann Matriculation Higher Secondary School in D.R.O.Colony here introducing dual timings and holding computer classes for a section of children and charging additional fees towards extra-curricular activities.

Following the publication of the news report, C. Suresh, a lawyer and secretary of the School Students Welfare-Parents Association, lodged a formal complaint with Collector L. Subramanian as well as Chief Educational Officer C. Amuthavalli seeking appropriate action.

Acting on their directive, the IMS (in-charge) K. Vijayarani wrote to the school on July 18 saying that conducting classes for a shorter duration for those who pay government prescribed fees was a clear violation of government rules and regulations.

She attached a copy of a calendar prepared by the School Education Department along with her letter and directed that the school should follow the timings as prescribed in the calendar for all students. "The timings should not be changed according to the convenience of the school management," she said.

The IMS also said that the school should take classes only according to the Samacheer Kalvi (uniform syllabus) scheme being implemented by the State government and should not distribute books meant for the Central Board of Secondary Education or other boards to its students.

Marking a copy of the communication to the Collector, Director of Matriculation Schools as well as the CEO, she said that suitable recommendations would be made to the higher authorities concerned for initiating appropriate action against the school if it failed to follow the directives.

When contacted, Ms. Vijayarani told The Hindu that apart from writing to the Principal of Mary Ann school, she had conveyed a similar message to the managements of all other private schools in the district during a meeting convened last week. However, the student welfare association secretary, Mr. Suresh alleged that after the IMS' communication, Mary Ann School was allowing all children to stay back on the campus in accordance to the common timing but taking special classes for those who paid an additional fee toward extra curricular activities.

Denying the allegation, school correspondent A. Jayapaul said that he had given up the dual timing system and reverted to the old system of following a common timing for all children without any discrimination.

He accused a section of parents of attempting to tarnish the image of the school by spreading falsehood.

Source: July 23, 2013/ [The Hindu](#)

'No hidden agenda in India-Africa engagement'

There is no hidden agenda in India's engagement with Africa, which is purely meant to cooperate on developing a continent with similarities and a desire to offer tried and tested solutions, India's Deputy High Commissioner to Ghana Ajaneesh Kumar has said.

Ajaneesh Kumar, who has spent the past month meeting heads of the country's universities, told the faculty and students of the University of Development Studies (UDS) at Tamale, the northern regional capital, that his country's engagement with Africa is "based on solidarity, lack of conflict of interest and shared historical experiences."

He said India and Ghana would continue to foster cordial relations which were established decades ago.

UDS vice chancellor Haruna Yakubu appealed to the Indian High Commission to offer scholarships to its students to push their education, adding: "The university needs to build a strong collaboration with India in the form of scholarships in areas that are beneficial to both countries to facilitate development, especially in the area of ICT."

In another meeting with officials from the Valley View University (VVU), a private institution, Ajaneesh Kumar said the Indian government provides a wide range of educational scholarships and training programmes to institutions and individuals who seek to further their studies in India.

He said students from the public universities have been benefitting from scholarship opportunities offered by the Indian government and the high commission intends to extend its support to universities outside Accra. This was one of the reasons the high commission wanted to establish a relationship with Valley View University.

The diplomat was pleasantly surprised to find that among the VVU team, two faculty members were trained in India. He encouraged them to serve as ambassadors for their institutions to promote Indian education in Ghana.

During a visit to the University of Cape Coast (UCC) in the central region, Ajaneesh Kumar said the high commission was interested in collaborating with it to promote academic excellence with Indian universities.

He said the cooperation would lay the foundation for the high commission to link UCC to universities in India for staff and student exchanges and noted that it would also be eligible for educational grants from the Indian government and other organisations.

UCC Vice Chancellor D.D. Kuupole expressed his gratitude to the high commission for showing interest in the university and expressed confidence that the partnership would contribute to exchange of knowledge and culture. He said the School of Medical Sciences (SMS) was a priority area where the university needed a lot of support for capacity building and staff and student exchange programmes.

Source: July 24, 2013/ [Business Standard](#)

Research Stream Witnesses the Lowest Enrollment in India

Here is a shocker for the research community in India! The future of Indian research sector seems to be very bleak as a mere 1 percent of the students are opting to pursue research as a path across various universities in the country, said a document on "Higher Education In India At a Glance" prepared by UGC (University Grants Commission), as reported by Preetu Venugopalan Nair of TNN.

The report also revealed that the maximum numbers of PhDs were awarded in the field of science (32.51 percent), closely followed by arts (31.3 percent) and the law stream garnered the lowest number of PhDs with about 1.37 percent of the total share.

This document was disclosed to all the universities in the country and UGC chairman Ved Prakash also requested the vice-chancellors of various universities spread across pan India to give their insights about how to deal with the issue.

Source: July, 25, 2013/ [Silicon India](#)

Private sector should ask varsities to do research in industry-sponsored ideas; absorb student-innovators in companies: Dr. Shashi Tharoor

Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Minister of State for Human Resource Development, suggested here today that the private sector should ask universities to undertake research on an industry-related idea and their R&D efforts could be rewarded by absorbing the student-innovators in companies sponsoring the research.

Dr. Tharoor was speaking at the 'Global R&D Summit 2013 – Destination India' organized by FICCI in association with Dept. of Science & Technology, Government of India, He said that India ranked poorly in terms of global R&D expenditure. While the figure was 33 per cent for the US, 24.5 per cent for Europe, 12.5 per cent for China and Japan, India's R&D spend was a meager 2.1 per cent for India. Also, FDI flows into R&D in India stood at 0.5%, according to a Wharton report published in 2005.

Dr. Tharoor ascribed this situation to the fact that "for far too long we have taken the complacent view of the role of R&D in nation building."

"The challenges of the 21st century for India were tackling the demand for food and water and eradicating poverty and illiteracy," he said and added that several Bill pertaining to education were

pending in Parliament. These needed to be debated and passed by the two houses. Once this happens India's education sector, including technical education, will undergo a sea change. On the occasion, Dr. Tharoor released the FICCI-Battelle Knowledge Paper on 'India's Emerging Competitiveness as Destination of Global R&D'.

Dr R. Chidambaram, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, in his keynote address emphasised the need to put R&D high on the national agenda, backed by high quality manufacturing skills and leveraging international cooperation to reap the advantages of the third industrial revolution.

He said that India was beginning to realise that it not enough to get proven technologies, a synonym for obsolete technology and the benefits that can be reaped from being the first mover in the R&D space.

Dr. Chidambaram said the third industrial revolution that is being witnessed now is bring driven by the internet, digital manufacturing and other advanced technologies as also by the desire to develop green technologies. Dr. T. Ramasami, Secretary, Department of Science & Technology, who gave the theme address, pointed out that the need of the hour was to convert knowledge into wealth. He said that majority of research was currently focussed on achieving excellence. It was important to channelise the fruits of technological excellence into the prosperity of the people.

He also stressed on the need for making innovations affordable so as to reach the benefits to the masses.

Dr. Birendra Raj Dutt, Chairman & MD, APIC, USA, underlined the need to cultivate researchers who work on mission mode, have commitment to leadership and consider promotion of R&D as a national effort.

He said 'Being First' in R&D requires courage to try hard and a profienct understanding of technology that provides the ability to s and execute the future and an understanding of how to execute large, new projects.

Ms. Naina Lal KIdwai, President, FICCI, suggested that the National S&T policy should be oriented towards 'output directed development path', as opposed to 'input driven strategy' followed up till now. Basic research should be followed on 'goal oriented approach' to connect knowledge generation with wealth generation and practical problem solving and Government funding policy in R&D should have a 'venture funding model' for private sector projects (particularly for SMEs) as adopted by some developed countries, she said.

She said that India's public spend in R&D is below average of China, South Korea and most Western countries. It was therefore imperative that the Government should stick to its commitment for steady increase in budget outlay for R&D and double current investments over next 5-8 years. Further, India's private sector investment in R&D is less than 25% of overall R&D spend. It was therefore necessary to create an aggressive policy environment for boosting private sector investment in R&D. Apart from the existing R&D offset credit policy for industry, there should be adequate tax-break incentives and a fast track patenting facility for breakthrough innovations. The Government should introduce legislation for allowing public sector scientists to file patents, create new enterprises and share financial returns of their inventions, the FICCI chief pointed out.

Ms. Kidwai said that there is considerable lack of industry-academia-public lab linkage in the R&D ecosystem, leading to low competitiveness. The Government, she said, needed to introduce structured platforms for open collaboration between all R&D stakeholders under different S&T sectors and facilitate researcher exchange from academia and public labs to industry and vice-versa to create better synergy in public-private and basic-applied R&D. The inaugural session of the two-day conference was also addressed by Dr. Marakand Phadke, Chairman, FICCI National Committee on S&T/Innovation and Senior Vice President-Innovations, Reliance Industries Ltd. and Dr. A. Didar Sigh, Secretary General, FICCI.

The two-day summit has brought together local and global R&D experts from government, industry and academia, along with key stakeholders such as policy-makers, business leaders, innovators, entrepreneurs and investors constituting the R&D ecosystem.

It is exploring the emerging role of scientific and industrial R&D as cornerstone for economic development of the country and create an international platform for open exchange of ideas, best practices and strategies with various stakeholders across the globe.

The exhibition organized alongside the summit is showcasing some of the most innovative and successful R&D projects, programs and initiatives from government, industry and academia and offers a high-level networking and business opportunity platform for participants.

Source: July 27, 2013/ [India Education Diary](#)

Bihar likely to miss higher education target

Will Bihar achieve the national target of raising the gross enrolment ratio (GER) in higher education to 30% by 2020? As per indications, it seems impossible.

Less than 1% of state's population is enrolled for higher education. The total number of boys and girls admitted in 250 constituent colleges and 350 affiliated colleges under 13 universities of the state is less than eight lakh against the Bihar population of nearly 10 crore. The GER in higher education in Bihar is just about 8% against the national average of about 20% and even below Jharkhand and Rajasthan. The GER is the ratio of students between 18 and 23 years enrolled in higher education institutions against the entire population in that age group.

Educationists say that so far as access to higher education is concerned, Bihar is way behind other states. As many as 25 districts out of 38 in Bihar are educationally backward. Expressing his serious concern over the sluggish growth of higher education in the state, Federation of University Teachers' Associations of Bihar (Futab) working president Kanhaiya Bahadur Sinha said the number of really good colleges for talented students is much less than desired. There is an acute shortage of engineering, medical and polytechnic institutions, compelling a vast majority of the youth to migrate to other states.

To attain the national level, the state needs additional 373 general colleges (arts, science and commerce), 236 engineering colleges, 139 medical colleges, 253 education colleges and 163 polytechnics.

In the 11th Plan, the state government had signed an MoU with the central government for opening 25 model colleges at district level. The Centre was to provide all the necessary funds for the purpose. But, not a single model college could be established so far. The state government's scheme of increasing the number of universities has also not materialized so far. The recent government move to convert 50 selected colleges into centres of excellence is also moving at a snail's pace.

Sinha said instead of wasting its energy on pay verification and other futile exercises, the state government should concentrate on improving the infrastructure of the existing colleges and universities, starting model institutions of higher education and initiating the process of appointment of teachers against vacant posts. "Unless our institutions are made globally competitive, students

would continue to migrate to other states," he added.

When contacted, state education department special secretary Sanjivan Sinha said the government was quite concerned about raising the GER in Bihar and it had initiated several steps for the purpose. A foolproof plan for revamping higher education during the next 10 years has been chalked out under Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) and it is to be implemented on priority basis, he added.

Source: July 29, 2013/ [Times of India](#)

AICTE toothless as govt drags feet on ordinance

As per the SC ruling, for last three months AICTE is nothing but an advisory body

The country's watchdog for technical education has been rendered "ineffective" thanks to the government that has been dragging its feet on an ordinance meant to restore its powers.

The All Indian Council for Technical Education (AICTE) — the apex regulatory authority for technical education — has been defunct for all practical purposes for the last three months as the HRD ministry hasn't moved an ordinance to amend the AICTE Act to undo a Supreme Court judgment that reduced the Council to a mere advisory body.

As per the SC ruling in, AICTE has no authority to issue or enforce any sanctions on colleges affiliated to the universities as its role is to provide guidance and recommendations. The ministry's review petition on this matter was also shot down by the SC last week. There are close to 12,000 institutions across the country offering technical education, of which almost 99% are affiliated colleges, that the majority is now outside the purview of AICTE.

Soon after the judgment in April, HRD minister MM Pallam Raju cleared a proposal to amend the AICTE Act through an ordinance to prevent unscrupulous institutions from misusing the absence of a regulator. But now, with the monsoon session of the parliament being notified, it's too late to even take the ordinance route.

Worse, the ministry hasn't even prepared a Bill for the amendment of the AICTE Act, which means the Council will be a regulator only in name for at least another month.

Raju was unavailable for comment. Although AICTE chairman SS Mantha did not want to comment on the delay on the government's part, sources in the Council told that after the judgment, AICTE has put all its proposals on hold and restricted itself to

fighting old court cases. AICTE's plans to start an entrance test to attract foreign students to technical institutions here, for instance, have been put on the backburner.

"When this judgment came, we had finished approving new institutions for 2013-14. Now there is barely any scope to control anything as far as functioning of the institutes are concerned. We can't lay down standards, but only issue advisory which a college isn't obligated to follow," said an AICTE official.

Source: July 31, 2013/ [Dna India](#)

RESOURCE

Around 260 m 'literate' people in India cannot read, says study

Private schools are increasingly trying to fill the vacuum created by low quality of education and facilities in government schools, topped with rampant teacher absenteeism. For those who cannot afford private school education, emergence of Hindutva-oriented schools, on one hand, and madrasas on the other is also a cause of concern as they teach a narrow sectarian interpretation of culture and social values.

Professor Brij Kothari of IIM-Ahmedabad maintains that the literacy rate in India is highly exaggerated and based on the report by parents and not on proper evaluation of the children's ability to read and write. His study reveals that the 260 million so-called 'literate' people, according to the census, in practice cannot read.

The update of the People's Report on Basic Education, which covered Hindi speaking States, have found that quality of education in private schools is uneven and doubtful. The report recommends setting up of local committees of parents and concerned local persons to act as a watchdog to ensure that the teachers turn up and teach well and that proper and regular mid-day meals are being served. Voluntary organisations like Bodh in Jaipur, which pioneered community-based education of slum children, can use its experience to help in setting up and training such local community committees.

Including topics such as peace, environment, justice and secular human values in education remain neglected the study points out. Special needs of scheduled castes, tribals, the disabled and other marginalised children, particularly in rural areas and in urban slums need to be addressed. For this appropriate teaching aids and methods need to be

developed, which will help enhance the self esteem and confidence of the children and make their environment more safe and enjoyable.

The Alternative Development Center (ADC) in Jaipur, after many years of experience in running four schools for slum children, has realised that it is difficult to retain older children in school because their parents insist that the children go to work and get a certain income every day. According to a plan suggested by ADC, in order to bring the laboring children to school, some financial incentives to parents should be given. There is an effective model followed in Brazil for this where along with better social services, employment for the adults in the family is made possible by imparting them skills. Vocational training for older children makes a direct connection between education and employment which is the main consideration for poorest families. For marginalised children, medical support to mother and child, extra nutrition, hygienic conditions and psycho-social development need to be combined with mainstream education.

This plan can achieve abolishing of child labour, providing universal education, reducing child malnourishment through mid-day meals and uplifting families out of poverty. Passing very progressive laws are not enough. Recently, the International Labour Organisation has also advised that the families of child labourers need to be skilled and provided opportunity for micro business to improve their economic condition.

Civil society groups are now demanding that the age of children covered under the Right to Education Act should be extended to 19 years. After the age of 14, the child should have the option to undertake vocational training, given that only formal school education cannot always provide jobs. Provision of vocational training is also a kind of education and should be an integral part of the Right to Education Act.

Shikshantar in Udaipur is working towards a kind of 'de-schooling': unlearning and re-learning. It opposes conventional schooling or what it calls the 'factory system'. It is experimenting with open schools where creativity is allowed to blossom and traditional knowledge and skills learned within the family and community is respected.

Digantar, another group in Jaipur, is known for its emphasis on a pedagogy which focuses on learning through understanding, rather than depend on memory and rote learning. Digantar can expand its pedagogy to include development of emotional and social intelligence to balance IQ and cognitive development.

Aruna Roy and her group Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sanghatan are developing a School for Democracy for rural areas. Hopefully such a school will introduce participatory education for democracy, conscientization and pedagogy for the poor villagers to strengthening grass roots democracy.

Source: July 17, 2013/ [The Hindu](#)

India's soft power moves in African higher education

The fruits of a conference held in Delhi in 2008, hosted by the Indian government and attended by African heads of state, are beginning to ripen – perhaps more in the field of higher education than in any other area of cooperation. The Asian country is setting up a string of institutes and collaborations across Africa.

The India-Africa Forum envisaged closer economic and cultural ties in a 'soft power' move seen by analysts as an effort by the emerging South Asian giant to make its mark alongside China. The latter's footprints can be seen across the continent, especially in the area of infrastructure development.

Cooperation in the field of education has ballooned since the 2008 conference, with India setting up institutes, supporting programmes and thousands of African students enrolling at Indian universities – a situation last seen in the 1980s, when African countries still had only a handful of public institutions and few or no private universities.

Africa now has close to 50,000 students in Indian universities, around 15,000 of them on Indian and Commonwealth scholarships.

India and Africa also enjoy close trade relations dating back hundreds of years. Africa is India's fourth largest trading partner after the United States, China and Europe. The value of trade was estimated at US\$57 billion in 2011 and was projected to grow to US\$90 billion by 2015.

Analysts say that India's approach to relations with Africa is focused on the areas of knowledge transfer and bilateral trade. There is hope that India could help develop higher education in Africa, as competition between India and China grows.

West Africa

In West Africa, prominent Anglophone countries Ghana and Nigeria have taken full advantage of growing ties with India.

Hundreds of students are now studying in India and university partnerships and joint institutes have been created in efforts to transfer Indian expertise

and training standards, especially in the field of information and communication technology (ICT).

Under the auspices of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme, some 1,200 Nigerian students enrolled in universities in India in 2011 alone, in what Indian High Commissioner to Lagos Mahesh Sachdev described as a significant step towards regaining a "glorious bilateral past between the two countries".

With more students expected to head east, an Indian Education Expo was held in Lagos in May, bringing together more than 12 Indian higher education institutions. It was a great success, judging by the growing number of attendees since the expo was first held in 2011.

The high number was partly driven, ITEC sources said, by scholarships offered to students under the Special Commonwealth Assistance for Africa programme. It has thus far awarded at least 500 scholarships, with most students heading for India because of its vibrant higher education sector and affordable fees.

In Ghana some 1,100 students are enrolled at Indian institutions in fields that include medicine, engineering and ICT.

India and Ghana are also involved in institutional and capacity-building partnerships aimed at knowledge sharing and transfer. The Ghana-India Kofi Annan Centre for excellence in ICT is being set up in Accra, aimed at helping young graduates to polish their ICT skills.

Ghana will also house a planned India-Africa Institute of Information Technology, which will offer courses in software development with the help of Education Consultants India, a government-owned consultancy.

The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology is working on collaborations with Indian universities for high quality training in ICT-related degree courses.

Indian support for institutes and collaboration

Indian government leaders have said that the country will support the establishment of a dozen institutes across Africa.

They will include a diamond-training institute in southern Africa, an Institute of Administration, Planning and Education (IAPE) in Burundi, an Institute for Foreign Trade in Uganda, an Institute for Information Technology in Ghana and a Pan-African Stock Exchange Institute in Egypt.

Timelines for establishing the bodies have not yet been finalised. But the *Hindustan Times* reported that the National University of Educational Planning and Administration, India's chief higher education policy planning university, would help set up the IAPE in Burundi, which will be an apex body to lead education policy and administration planning across Africa.

The Pan Africa e-Network, or PAEN, in which India is involved with the African Union, aims to deliver tele-education to African students in 53 countries through a satellite and fibreoptic network to India.

It was launched in 2009, is already active in some 34 countries, and is enabling access to and sharing of expertise between India and Africa in areas including tele-education, tele-medicine, resource mapping, meteorological services, and e-governance and e-commerce.

According to India's external affairs ministry, the PAEN network hopes to link 10,000 African students to some of India's best universities by 2015.

India has been asked to support the Pan-African University (PAU), a continental research-oriented institution aimed at training PhD students and conducting problem-solving research. India appears set to assist the PAU's Earth and Life Sciences Institute at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria.

African Union Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology Jean-Pierre Ezin was reported in the Indian press as saying that Africa wanted to foster bilateral relations with the rising Asian power, focused on human resource and capacity development.

He told the Indo-Africa News Service while visiting India in 2010 that Africa hoped for low-visibility projects focused on the future of the continent. What Africa needed from India was knowledge transfer and building human capital to accelerate development.

These are some of the initiatives agreed to by India and the African Union at the second India-Africa conference, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, two years ago – a follow-up to the first forum in 2008.

At the summit Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh pledged to contribute US\$700 million to education and skills development in Africa, part of which would go towards ICT development.

Source: July 21, 2013/ [University World News](#)

Access granted

A new initiative by IITs and IT organisations promises to widen the scope of India's knowledge economy

Seven IITs are joining hands with IT industry leaders and Nasscom to offer free courses online, in a move that promises to revolutionise access to technical education. This would widen the pool of talent from which the IT industry can draw, and provide an alternative to privately run courses that sometimes fall short of industry requirements. The principal beneficiaries would include working professionals who feel that they have unused capacities and want to branch out or switch careers, and people who have been unable to access formal education for reasons that have nothing to do with their intellectual ability. Many potential workers find themselves excluded by geography and conflicting responsibilities. Others are unable to access continuing education while they work, for purely logistical reasons. This move should unshackle those who have an interest in IT and produce a bigger, better-trained work force.

The initiative is clearly inspired by the massive open online courses (MOOCs) promoted by Western campuses. Perhaps the biggest was launched at Stanford University and spun off as Udacity.com. Other platforms backed by leading universities have developed since. This is the future of distance learning and it is wonderful that Indian stakeholders in IT education have chosen to be quick off the block. The New York Times had named 2012 the 'Year of the MOOC' and Time magazine welcomed services that are genuinely free and openly licensed as the 'Ivy League of the masses'.

The weakness of Indian students for Western courses is legendary, and the idea of distance is meaningless on the internet. So, while it is nice to have an Indian flavour of online education on tap, the promoters will have to bear in mind that for the first time, they will be going head to head with top US campuses. Since cost of travel, the discomfort of relocation or cultural and communication barriers will no longer remain factors for prospective students, perhaps Indian courses will have to remain half a step ahead of overseas campuses to remain competitive. The initiative by the IITs and IT organisations is an important first step, and the free availability of expert teaching across disciplines will widen the scope of India's knowledge economy.

Source: July 22, 2013/ [Indian Express](#)

Higher education must be upgraded

The government has an important policy-making and infrastructure-providing role to play in guiding the country's education sector.

But the wider society and other organs of the state cannot disavow their responsibility if we want India to scale up to the next level of development with properly trained and qualified manpower.

The recent judgment of the Supreme Court striking down the common entrance test conducted by the Medical Council of India for all medical colleges in the country, public and private — which was the last for former Chief Justice of India Altamas Kabir — is retrograde.

It can raise doubts that the judiciary is not cognisant of the issues at stake and has focused too narrowly on the right of private and minority educational institutions in the country to manage their affairs.

That, in fact, was hardly the point at issue, whatever the colouring. Private institutions in other educational fields, or minority bodies, have had no occasion so far to complain of having to cede ground.

This should have alerted the bench led by the CJI as to the game behind private medical colleges going to court against the idea of a centralised entrance test for all medical colleges.

In any case, the apex court should have kept both considerations before it — ensuring that the province of the private and minority bodies is not rendered insecure (if that is indeed happening, although the suggestion is open to serious doubt) while permitting no dilution by design in medical education — from the entrance stage to the final examination and award of the last degree.

In the case of doctors, this has an especial meaning as the life of millions of patients is in their hands on an everyday basis.

Rough calculations suggest that about 20 per cent of doctors finishing from our medical colleges each year may have bought their entry to medical schools by paying hefty capitation fees at a large number of private institutions, and have not been tested in a standard all-India way for quality.

The apex court judgment encourages the production of such doctors through mushrooming medical colleges that don't have the faculty and infrastructure. It's a scary thought. The sooner the government seeks a review of the regrettable judgment the better.

With hundreds of students this year declining admission at the older and world-famous IITs, and

choosing to go to lesser known institutions in search of their preferred field of study, it is clear that IIT seats (and also at other institutions) are too few.

Major upgrading is called for without loss of quality. Important areas of higher education in science and technology seem to be heading towards a crisis.

Source: July 22, 2013/ [Deccan Chronicle](#)

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