NEW DELHI: Thousands of students, researchers and varsity teachers across India may soon be able to apply online for University Grants Commission (UGC) scholarships and track their applications at the click of a mouse.

The UGC plans to introduce online application and tracking mechanisms for all scholarships, fellowships, awards and grants in a move that could stymie criticism over a lack of transparency top sources said.

Acting chairman Ved Prakash is keen on the initiative, which follows close on the heels of the UGC’s decision to provide those selected through the National Eligibility Test (NET) electronic certificates within six days of the announcement of results.

Thousands of students, teachers and researchers — apart from educational institutions — who apply to the UGC each year for financial support at present have no clear mechanism to track applications.

This has often led to complaints that tours or middlemen use this opacity to fast-track select applications in exchange for bribes. These allegations have played a key role in damaging the UGC’s reputation, senior commission officials argue.

“One of the biggest criticisms of the UGC over the years has been a perceived absence of transparency. These moves could help counter that perception and help create a new image for the UGC,” a senior government official said.

The UGC, India’s apex higher education regulator, offers scholarships at various stages of higher education to single girls, students belonging to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, and minorities.

It also offers 20 different schemes under which universities can seek fund support apart from an additional two programmes meant for colleges.

The UGC offers three financial assistance schemes for university departments.

It also offers six grants and fellowship schemes for individual faculty members and researchers.

The commission is at present running a limited pilot programme, allowing researchers and faculty members to track their applications for a travel grant that the UGC offers to facilitate visits abroad for conferences.
A thumb-sized PC for school kids:
A UK game developer has created a thumb-sized computer for school children that will cost as little as $23. David Braben has developed a tiny computer based around a USB stick called the Raspberry Pi. With its USB port on one side and HDMI port on the other, it can function as a real PC. Having both those ports allows you to connect a keyboard and monitor respectively. Surprisingly, there’s enough room for a 700 MHz ARM11 processor, 128 MB of RAM and OpenGL graphics with enough power to display 1080p video.
Rajasthan to kick off free tutorials for rural engg aspirants

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Jaipur
The Rajasthan government is starting a free, online pre-engineering tutorial from May 15 for students in the state’s remote rural areas who can’t afford coaching institutes.

The proposed 10-month programme is slated to be the country’s largest, with over 7000 students from all over the state together preparing for entrance exams like IIT-JEE, AIEEE and PET through video conferencing.

Students will be required to attend centres in their respective panchayats and district councils. All the learning centres have been connected through satellite with the main hub — Indira Gandhi Panchayatraj Sansthan in Jaipur — where the faculty will deliver lectures in subjects like mathematics, chemistry and physics.

The sessions will be spread across 120 classes, and students can clear their doubts online.

"Every year, thousands of students from Rajasthan clear engineering entrance tests. But there are very few from rural areas. This can be a game-changer for them," says RK Verma, principal secretary, state science and technology department, the nodal agency for this programme.

The government is spending Rs 90 lakh in the first phase of this programme, said Verma, adding from next year, the sessions will begin from April 1. Students securing 50% marks in mathematics stream are eligible for this programme. The state government will conduct feedback session every three months to improve the teaching methodology.

"If things move in the right direction, more students from villages will be able to make it to engineering colleges," says RP Yadav, vice chancellor, Rajasthan Technical University, which conducts engineering courses in the state.

The government-run coaching class, however, will not be a threat to the booming coaching business in Kota.

While the government is targeting students from remote villages, Kota’s coaching institutes attract aspirants from urban centres. Kota’s coaching institutes together corner around 25% of the total IIT-JEE seats.

However, high fees and living costs deprive rural students of good coaching and guidance needed for cracking exams like the IIT-JEE.

"It’s a good initiative. If the state government approaches us for any support, we will be happy to offer it. Success, however, will depend on the quality of faculty and execution," says Career Point CMD and CEO Pramod Maheshwari.
‘PROTESTS WON’T WORK’

DU Vice-Chancellor talks about issues that have become a bone
of contention between teachers and varsity administration

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FOR some time now, Delhi University has been witnessing a series of protests on issues varying from implementation of semester system to decentralising of admission process both by the teachers and the students. The Vice-Chancellor of the University, Prof Dinesh Singh, told MID DAY how these decisions are apparently made for the welfare of the students and the process against them are a sheer waste of time.

Why this sudden decision to decentralise the whole admission process in the university?
The decision has been taken keeping in mind the welfare of the students and the university on the whole. I don’t know, and it does not matter, if it interests everyone or not. What is certain, however, is that it is the best step we have taken to make the admission process simpler and less cumbersome. The decentralised system with no pre-admission forms is going to make it less difficult for the students to apply for the admissions. Also, for the first time, the university has made the forms available online too from this year, which is a step ahead.

Will the new system ensure admission for every aspiring student? Well, it’s difficult to say if everyone applying will get a seat as this was not the case even when the system was centralised. Every college has fixed number of seats and as we have already decided, there will be five cut-off lists this time instead of three earlier. It is a fair system and all the deserving ones will get their due. We cannot solve each and

How do you plan to accommodate the increasing number of students with limited number of hostels? There shouldn’t be any problems with accommodation this year. There are a few adjustments that have to be made every year. Apart from that, two hostels for girls with a capacity of thousand students each are under construction and they would be ready anytime before the session begins.

Why has admission under sports category been exempted from the decentralised admission system? The sports infrastructure in the university is in a shambles. We are working on the sports policy. It has not been left out; it is under consideration. The policy for Extra Curricular Activities and games should be out in 2-3 days. You should be ready for it. As far as infrastructure in concerned, first, there was no sports head for long. Now that we have appointed a new chairman, things will start moving in the positive direction. The plan includes improving upon the existing training infrastructure.

The teachers have been protesting for long against the semester system and have even defied the court directives. What do you have to say about this? I am speechless about this. It’s up to them what they want. All these protests won’t bring about any drastic changes in the system. They should concentrate on their work and carry out their duties properly. The students are suffering because of these protests. A new academic session has begun and it is high time the students start working for their semester exams. It will affect their future if they don’t perform well.
परिशोध-तंत्र को फूलपूर्वक व पारदर्शी बनायें

इस समय देश में इंजीनियरिंग और मेडिकल की कई तरह की प्रोफिलों वाले लोगों का जन्म हो जाता है जिसे छात्रों के बीच समाप्त होने के बाद वैज्ञानिक और वैज्ञानिक के मुहूर्त में प्रवेश करने के लिए आयोजित किया जा रहा है जिसे छात्रों के बीच समाप्त होने के बाद समय, स्वभाव और धृष्टि का बेहतर समय में निकाल होता है। इस तरह मेडिकल और एमबीटी प्रशिक्षाओं के लिए छात्रों का वैज्ञानिक समय समझने के लिए एक तरह दिखाया जाता है।

अब तो इस तंत्र की भी जानकारी मिल रही है कि इस्तेमाल संदर्भ में प्रोफिलों वाले लोगों का प्रोफाइल लगाने के लिए मजबूत होता है। इस तरह प्रोफ़ाइल कार्यान्वयन से छात्रों की किरातीलामी, कमेटिया तथा उनकी रचनात्मकता पर गहरा असर पड़ता है।

इस तात्कालिक प्रोफाइल कार्यान्वयन से छात्रों की किरातीलामी कम हो जाती है। इस प्रक्रिया का उपयोग नए लोगों को संदर्भ में समाप्त होने के बाद समय, स्वभाव और धृष्टि का बेहतर समय में प्रवेश करने के लिए एक तरह दिखाया जाता है।

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