IIT-B STARTS CENTRE FOR URBAN STUDIES

HT correspondent

MUMBAI: A new centre for Urban Science and Engineering (C-USE), inaugurated at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-B) by chief minister Prithviraj Chavan, will focus on interdisciplinary research, teaching and skilled manpower development to improve urban quality of life.

The centre will soon start a PhD programme in urban science and, in consultation with urban experts around the world, is also working towards developing a postgraduate programme. The courses will cover urban domains such as transportation, land use, urban design, water, food, public health, urban informatics and governance.

“The objective is to look at the challenges faced by urban cities of India and the developing world in a holistic manner, and focus on integrating science and technology with social science and planning to provide solutions to those challenges,” said Devang Khakkar, director, IIT-B.

While IIT-B had set up a Centre for Urban Science and Progress (CUSP) in New York in May 2012, which works on global solutions to urban challenges, C-USE focuses on urban challenges specific to Indian cities.
HT, New Delhi

UPA to spend ₹3 lakh crore on education in 12th five year plan

POLL MEASURE This educational reform plan is a way to beat the latest claims by Narendra Modi on the governance of the government

Chhotu Chauhan

NEW DELHI: To beat BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate Narendra Modi's claims on governance, the UPA government will soon unveil its major educational reform plan worth ₹3 lakh crore.

The country's top advisory body the Planning Commission has approved major increase to the levels of funding for higher education institutions.

Chhotu Chauhan, a senior government official said, "The overall aim of the Nirman mission is to increase Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in higher education from present 25% to 50% by 2020. To achieve the target, the government will have to set up quality higher education institutions, an important cornerstone of the mission."

The biggest fillip, the government aims to give is to school education whose budget for the 12th five year has been more than doubled to ₹1.55 lakh crore. The majority of the money would be utilised to improve school infrastructure and improve quality of school education based on outcomes. The government aims to improve attendance and reduce dropout rates at the elementary level to below 10 percent and to increase Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) at the secondary level to over 90 percent and at the Senior Secondary level to over 5 percent.

The education plan emphasises on improving learning outcomes at all levels of school education with a special focus on ensuring that all children master reading.
Economic gap widens in IITs
11.6% Students' Kin Earn Less Than ₹1L

Hemali Chhapia | TNN

Mumbai: Students making it to India's best public engineering colleges this session might have more to tackle than study pressure. Making for a sharp economic divide on campus, two large cohorts of students in the class of 2017 in the IITs are from the upper middle classes and from the lower income groups.

This year, one out of every five students (over 20%) who qualified disclosed that the annual family income is over Rs 8 lakh. Two years ago, data released by the colleges revealed that about 9.3% of the qualified candidates had an annual family income of over Rs 10 lakh.

Equally stunning is the jump of students with family income of less than Rs 1 lakh: from just 1.5% two years ago to 11.6%. Another 12.7% IITians this year is from the Rs 1-2 lakh per year family income bracket. "This is not verifiable data. But there is a section of students that is very well off and another slice of really poor students who are getting into the IITs. There is a huge economic divide on campus," said Gautam Barua, former IIT-Guwahati director.

A key factor in the steep rise of students from economically weaker sections is the bigger and better coaching support that they are getting. The first that comes to mind is Patna's Super-30 that for some years now has been picking poor meritorious students and successfully coaching them.

Now, several coaching centres in other cities are offering free seats to bright students who can bag a rank, like P Sai Sandeep Reddy (JEE-2013 topper) who did not have the funds to translate his dream to reality. Hostels rooms at IITs are often a picture a contradiction. Small rooms with basic furniture — a cot, cupboard and a desk — soon get packed with gadgets. Students who come from families with an annual income of less than Rs 4 lakh can avail of the government's merit-cum-means scholarships.

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