HRD panel to check vacancies at IITs, NITs

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THE MINISTRY of Human Resource Development set up a three-member committee headed by IIT-Kharagpur Director Partha Pratim Chakraborty on Tuesday to suggest ways to reduce the number of seats falling vacant at IITs and NITs every year.

The move comes in the wake of almost 3,000 seats falling vacant this year despite six rounds of joint counselling for the IITs, NITs and centrally funded technical institutions. Of these, 73 seats were lying vacant at the IITs and 1,518 at the NITs.

Though the HRD ministry had initially considered the option of holding another round of counselling after students made representations to the President, it finally decided against it as it was way past the August 15 deadline set for admissions by the Supreme Court.

The panel, set up by the HRD Ministry on Tuesday, is expected to submit its report in three weeks.

Sources said the committee has been asked to consider a number of options, including scrapping of fee refund in case a candidate does not join the institute.

Currently, an aspirant pays Rs 1 lakh to block an engineering seat at an IIT, but is eligible for almost a complete refund after three to four months in case he takes admission elsewhere. This, sources said, encourages students to block multiple seats across different institutions, resulting in vacancies eventually.

Another option discussed on Tuesday was that students should be allowed to register again after the academic session begins. This would allow aspirants to change the course they had opted for which would help fill up the vacancies.

It was felt that students, who register again, might miss a few weeks of the first semester, but would be able to make up the backlog quickly.

Govt appoints 7 NIT directors

New Delhi: The Union HRD ministry on Tuesday appointed directors to seven National Institutes of Technology (NITs) across the country. According to officials, Rajeev Tripathi was appointed Director, MNIT, Allahabad, while Dr Uday Kumar RY was appointed to MNIT, Jaipur.

Dr Lalit Kumar Awasthi was appointed the Director of Dr BR Ambedkar NIT, Jalandhar, while Dr Satish Kumar was appointed Director of the NIT in Kurukshetra.

Others who were appointed as directors to various NITs were Dr Animesh Biswas (NIT, Rourkela) Dr S R Gandhi (SVNIT, Surat) and Dr Muni Shaji Thomas (NIT, Tiruchirappalli), PTI.

Newspaper Clips
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नियम में मिलेगी छूट
विदेशी फैक्टरी के लिए आईआईटी, आईआईएम में पढाना होगा आसान

फ़ाक्टरी न्यूज़ नेटवर्क

राजस्थान पात्रिका

नई विलिंग. देश के प्रशिक्षित आईआईटी व आईआईएम संस्थाओं में विदेशी फैक्टरी के लिए पढाना अब आसान होगा। केंद्रीय नीति से जुड़े नियमों में हिस्सा चालू करना जा रहा है। नयी नियम के अनुसार आईआईटी में 10 लाख के अधिक और आईआईएम में 75 हज़ार के अधिक विद्यार्थी को हमेशा भरना होगा। 

प्रशिक्षण और विद्यालय सचिव ने कहा कि यह नियम विदेशी फैक्टरी के हिस्से में आईआईटी व आईआईएम में छात्रों को आसानी से पढ़ने की स्थिति में लाने के लिए बनाया गया है। ये नियम के तहत विद्यार्थी को विदेशी फैक्टरी के हिस्से में पढ़ने के लिए नयी नीतियों के अनुसार विद्यार्थी को आंकने के लिए नयी तरीके का उपयोग किया जाएगा। आईआईटी के अनुसार ये नयी नीति विद्यार्थी को विदेशी फैक्टरी के हिस्से में पढ़ने के लिए आसानी से आवश्यक रूप से तैयार करने के लिए बनाया गया है।
Education cover can be expanded without compromising quality: President

President Pranab Mukherjee Monday said education cover can be expanded without compromising on quality as he expressed hope that the outward flow of students from India can be reversed.

Speaking at the 60th Founders Day ceremony of Scindia Kanya Vidyalaya, he expressed “shock” on learning from Delhi’s education minister that a large number of students cannot read text books. It is pathetic, he said.

“Education can be expanded without compromising quality... We have so many good educational institutions. Still in the list of top 100 institutions of the world rated by top international agencies no Indian university or institution has found a place,” he said, adding that change had started and IIT-Delhi and IISC, Bengalore, found a place among the leading global institutions.
The President said that he is confident that many Indian institutions will be among the top in the time to come, as he recalled that ancient India led the world in higher education while referring to Taxila and Nalanda.

“Almost 1700 years, starting from year 6 century BC to 11 century AD, from the glorious days of Taxila to the collapse of Nalanda, India led higher education in the world. Taxila became the conclave of four civilisations; Greek, Chinese, Persian and Indian.

“I feel pained that every year more than 6,000 students leave India for higher education to Europe, Australia and North America...I want the flow to be reversed. That will depend on the type of education provided,” he said.

Madhya Pradesh Governor O P Kohli, Union minister Narendra Singh Tomar and Madhavi Raje Scindia, President of the school’s Board of Governors, were among those present on the occasion.

Stressing that education is the alchemy that can take India to its next golden age, Mukherjee called upon teachers and students to work towards the democratisation of quality education.

He said education and learning are a lifelong process, and quoting Swami Vivekananda, added, “Education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion; is it worth the name?....”

The President also praised Vijaya Raje Scindia, the late BJP leader, for the vision and courage of establishing an educational institution exclusively for girls at a time when the national literacy rate among women was around 10 per cent.

He also congratulated the Board of Governors of the school and expressed hope that the high standard set by its founders would be upheld in the future too, according to an official statement.

Earlier, Governor O P Kohli called for maintaining a balance between modern and traditional values of the country in imparting education.

He said that while intellectual efficiency was important, equally important was emotional efficiency in a person.

“In the urge to become modern, we should not forget our rich traditions and heritage. Spirituality and religion form part of the country’s traditions and we should follow them also while seeking modern education,” he said.

Kohli said one can achieve intellectual efficiency by becoming modern, but one is not complete without getting emotional efficiency and sensitivity.

He also called for providing “man-making” education as Swami Vivekananda had sought.

President Mukherjee said: “As education is the alchemy of change in this society, it is needed that it should be democratised but democratisation does not mean mere mindless physical expansion.”

“Expansion of education can take place without compromising on its quality,” he said.

IIIT-Kharagpur to help GVMC implement BRTS

Visakhapatnam: The Department of Architecture and Regional Planning of the ‘Indian Institute of Technology-Kharagpur’ (IIIT-K) has embarked on a research project to find out ways to implement the BRTS (bus rapid transit system) network of Visakhapatnam in a better way.
Their team has descended on Vizag, started exploring the radial roads and mixed traffic stretches (where the BRTS network is integrated with the national highway) and collected data and feedback from the RTC, GVMC, auto unions, etc. It was learnt that they would come up with the suggestions as to how the GVCM can operate the buses in these mixed stretches without the BRTS losing its distinction.

Meanwhile, a delegation from the GVCM, city police, APSRTC and BRTS Consultancy and Urban Consultancy visited Ahmedabad to study the best practices of the BRTS network there and adapt them in operating and managing the BRTS at their backyard in Vizag.

According to sources, each official from the delegation had jotted down their observations and proposed some recommendations, which would be soon presented to the GVCM commissioner.

As part of their visit, the officials observed the revenue model, administration, staffing, infrastructure, operations and other particulars of the Ahmedabad BRTS.

"The APSRTC procured about 50 buses under the JNNURM scheme and they would be run exclusively in the BRTS corridor. Some buses would also cover the entire stretch in a single trip. There were about 1,000 guards for the entire 87-km BRTS corridor of Ahmedabad. We would also need to recruit some guards in Vizag and adopt the revenue model of Ahmedabad BRTS. There are also proposals to mark about 5-mt area on the highway, from Maddilapalem to Hanumanthawaka, exclusively for the city buses to ensure the highway flow doesn’t affect the very purpose of the BRTS," he added.

GVCM commissioner Hari Narayanan informed that the IIT-K has been conducting a research project on how to improve the services of the BRTS in Vizag.

"The officials, who headed to Ahmedabad to study the BRTS model there, would present their observation and recommendations before the Visakhapatnam Urban Transport Company Limited (VUTCL)," he said.

Even though the BRTS roads are being used for many years, confusion has been still reigning among the commuters due to lack of awareness over some lanes, which are exclusively earmarked for city bus transport, often leading to accidents. Experts are of the opinion that the GVCM needs to bring some awareness among the commuters before the formal launch of the BRTS.

Other than the 2-km BRTS stretch between Patha Adavivaram to Gosala near Simha-chalam, the majority of the works of the 43.3-km BRTS project have been completed. In some places, the GVCM is yet to lay two-lane service roads.

**Young IITs join hands with medical institute for cancer treatment**

Punjab has the highest rate of cancer in India and this joint initiative by the Ropar-based Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) with IIT Mandi and Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh, for treatment of cancer and other ailments could not have come at a better time. Though young, having been set up in 2008 (Ropar) and 2009 (Mandi), both IITs have strong faculty expertise in engineering coupled with very sound research programmes in biomedical life sciences. With support from PGIMER in the form of complementary clinical expertise, the initiative, named Bio-X consortium, is poised to tackle complex challenges in medicine.

A brainchild of Prof SK Das and Prof TA Gonsalves, directors of IITs Ropar and Mandi, respectively, the consortium has already identified projects and got seed funding for them. “We and IIT Mandi have contributed around Rs 1 crore for the initiative and selected around seven to eight projects,” Prof Das told HT Education recently.

Discussions held by Das and Gonsalves about the development of affordable health-care solutions, particularly for problems relevant to India, led to the first networking meeting in February at IIT Mandi. More than 15 faculty members from IIT Mandi and 10 from IIT Ropar attended. The need was felt for a strong networking with clinicians to foster the research and technology development to meet the consortium’s goals. “The two directors offered to support the collaborative projects established under this consortium with seed funding of up to 10% of the total cost of the project, which would be submitted for further extramural funding. The faculties were advised to establish collaborative projects involving the three institutions (including PGIMER) and apply for the funding,” says Dr Tulika Srivastava of IIT Mandi.

After another meeting in March this year, six project proposals were presented for evaluation for the seed grant and three awarded with funding of up to Rs 20 lakh. Following this, Das and Gonsalves met with the director of PGIMER to further strengthen the participation of the three institutions in the consortium.

The three to four major areas for research are related to biomedical instrumentation (diagnostic, control and monitoring equipment used for medical purposes), imaging (visual representation of organs and interiors of the body) and diagnostics, biomechanics (study of mechanical laws related to the movement or structure of organisms), low-cost MRI, biomedical nanotechnology, cancer therapy and laser therapy. Faculty from the three institutes will be involved in all projects and the same will be taken forward by postgraduate students and research scholars.

Dr Deepti R Bathula from IIT Ropar, a coordinator associated with the project, says it’s for the first time that the two IITs have joined hands to work towards a common goal of disease prevention and affordable health care in India. There is a clear division of work among IIT Mandi, IIT Ropar and PGIMER Chandigarh and the roles and responsibilities have already been divided. The consortium is in constant touch through regular meetings - face to face or through video conferencing.

So far, seed grants of Rs 48 lakh have been given for development of a low cost low magnetic field MRI; determination of mechanical and biological osteoporotic bone for Indian patients and surface modified upconversion nanoparticles (involving use of fluorescent chemical compound that can re-emit light on light excitation) for diagnostic and therapeutic applications in cancer.

All three projects are progressing smoothly with preliminary work and experiments underway and the teams are planning to apply for extramural funding within one year, says Bathula.

Dr Chirag Kamal Ahuja, assistant professor of radio diagnosis and imaging (neuroimaging and interventional radiology) working with PGIMER, says the hospital had been having some problems in medical image analysis (MRI and CT scans) which required sophisticated analytical tools to better classify diseases and increase accuracy in diagnosis. The faculty from IIT seemed to have certain methods by which they could devise techniques and protocols for improving the image analysis.

Similar tools that are currently available with the industry vendors are expensive and cannot be easily acquired. In-house development of such techniques can help the doctors at large in India to improve the overall diagnostic accuracy. “Instead of teaming with our colleagues abroad (who have the ways and means to devise technological tools for development), we can now use the brilliance of our information technology friends from the IITs to aid us in many fields including cancer research, stroke, atherosclerotic disease and neurodegenerative disorders which are prevalent in our population,” Ahuja adds.
What UGC’s new rules mean for research scholars

As per the UGC regulations 2016 for MPhil and PhD degrees, the maximum duration to complete an MPhil course is two years and for PhD it is six years. Women candidates and persons with disability (more than 40% disability) can be allowed a relaxation of one year for MPhil and two years for PhD in the maximum duration. Women will also be eligible for maternity leave/child care leave once in the entire duration of MPhil/PhD for up to 240 days.

All universities and institutions, including deemed to be universities, will admit MPhil/PhD students through an entrance test. They have been authorised to outline separate terms and conditions for PhD entrance test for students who qualify UGC-National Eligibility Test (including Junior Research Fellow)/UGC-Council of Scientific and Industrial Research JRF/State Level Eligibility Test/Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering/teacher fellowship holders or those who have passed MPhil programme. A similar approach can be adopted in case of entrance test for MPhil programme.

The guidelines also state that there will be a Research Advisory Committee, or an equivalent body, for each MPhil and PhD scholar. The research supervisor of the scholar will be the convener of this committee. This committee will review the research proposal and finalise the topic of research. It will also guide the research scholar to develop the study design and methodology of research and identify the courses that he/she intends to do. Besides, it will periodically review and assist in the progress of the research work of the scholar. The scholar will have to appear before the committee once in six months to make a presentation of the progress of his/her work for evaluation and further guidance.

Currently, both conventional and open learning universities for MPhil/PhD programmes follow the same process for short-listing candidates for admission to the MPhil and PhD programmes.

A candidate is usually allowed to join the programme once her/his research acumen is tested, either through a written examination or oral examination. A research supervisor is allotted and the topic of research is defined. Hereafter, the interaction is essentially between the researcher and the supervisor; though occasionally other researchers or other faculty members also get into the picture and interact with the researcher. Once the work is completed, essentially to the satisfaction of the researcher and the supervisor, it is subjected to evaluation by independent examiners followed by viva-voce examination. The award is declared after the researcher has successfully cleared the evaluation.

With the new regulations in place, now there is no question of comparison between MPhil and PhD in conventional and ODL modes, says Professor Ravindra Kūmar, vice chancellor (incharge) IGNOU. "The universities, whether conventional or open learning, have to abide by the UGC regulations,” he says.

GAURI KOHLI