

# What Byju's Teaches Us



**Kiran Somvanshi**

For most onlookers of Byju's debacle, there is some consolation that it is not a listed company. For parents, it is a relief that Byju's isn't a full-fledged educational institution granting degrees.

In 13 years, Byju's became market leader of the Indian edtech sector, commanding peak valuations of \$22 billion two years ago. The pandemic — prompting a shift to online education — provided the wind to the edtech industry's sails. However, expensive acquisitions, questionable business practices and misgovernance soon brought trouble for the company. The latest developments have been about ED issuing a lookout circular for the company's founder and CEO, Byju Raveendran, over forex violations and a group of investors voting to oust him from CEO's position.

From being part of the Hurun India rich list in 2022 to suffering over 90% dip in the company's valuations to having travel restrictions imposed on him, Raveendran has charted a disparaging journey. In Hindu culture, it is believed that if one pursues Saraswati (the goddess of knowledge), then Lakshmi (the goddess of wealth) follows suit.

Incidentally, Byju's attempt of dispensing Saraswati to gain Lakshmi couldn't sustain for long — with allegations of mis-selling, unfair trade practices, unethical accounting practices, expensive acquisitions, mishandling of user data, forex violations, toxic work environment, financial mismanagement, loan defaults and unpaid employees.

Unveiling of Byju's not only underscores the need for governance in the unlisted startup space but also shows how this need gets accentuated when

the entities are proliferating in areas that are considered as public goods or essential services, such as education, healthcare and banking.

Education, healthcare and banking services are vital public services in India. Education is seen as a critical route to achieving social and economic mobility for Indian households. Families across socioeconomic strata save money or take loans to ensure their kids get a good education.

Affordable and accessible healthcare is a critical public service in a country that does not yet have universal health coverage. Most in the country are one major health calamity away from slipping into indebtedness. Likewise, accessible banking and financial services remain essential in India, where millions are joining the formal economy every year.

Startups in consumer products, retail, entertainment or space exploration can mushroom, experiment or fail, without having any significant socioeconomic repercussions for the masses. But when new-age businesses with innovative business models engage in essential services and fail, the loss hits harder; the pain is more widely felt, and the trust deficit is graver.

India, as a developing country, cannot afford to go down the same path as that of a developed market like the US, which can continue to lead the world economy despite expensive education, unaffordable healthcare and banks with chequered track records.

However, this does not mean India's education, healthcare and banking sectors should remain bereft of any startup-driven innovation. It needs to be encouraged with necessary guard rails so that affordability, accessibility and frugal innovation are incentivised, instead of pursuing fancy valuations and profit maximisation at all costs. Self-regulation isn't a strong guard rail, as has been made evident by Byju's debacle.

In 2022, India's edtech industry set up a self-regulatory body, the India EdTech Consortium. In July that year, GoI warned edtech companies against unfair trade practices, stating that it would formulate stringent guidelines if self-regulation did not work. But there is an inherent conflict in the idea of self-regulation — it is difficult to police one's failings. Little wonder, then, that a body manned with the who's who of the edtech industry failed to check the misgovernance happening in the sector's leading player.

It is also a wake-up call for the private equity and venture capital industry that funds and backs startups to realise what business models would create long-term

value in a price-sensitive, low-paying but high-volume market like India. The business models that have worked in the US and other similar markets don't necessarily work here. Stakeholder value creation doesn't only mean rising valuations and a successful public listing, it also means happy employees, satisfied customers and a well-governed business.

Byju's, however, did end up providing education for all — its stakeholders — on how not to run down a promising business.



**Detention time**



# KTU snubs Kerala Governor's diktat on V-C selection panel

APJ Abdul Kalam Technological University (KTU) has become the third State-run university to defy Governor Arif Mohammed Khan's ultimatum to nominate a representative to the search-cum-selection committee to appoint its next Vice-Chancellor. The decision to reject the directive was taken by the KTU's Board of Governors (BoG) which met on Monday. Notably, the meeting was chaired by Vice-Chancellor in-charge Saji Gopinath, whose future at the helm of Digital University Kerala hangs in the balance following a hearing conducted by the Governor.

# Drop the 'garland model' to let science in India blossom

**S**cientific meetings, or conferences, are where researchers with similar or aligned areas of interest gather and serve as important avenues for the discussion and dissemination of science.

These meetings often include presentations or talks on contemporary research findings, along with expert interactions on topics of science and professional development. Across the international scientific ecosystem, several academic conferences or meetings are organised every year, often by scientific societies, research institutes, universities, and organisations.

## The 'bouquet giving' model

The standard academic meeting model involves a core group of organisers – or a scientific society – responsible for a range of tasks, that include planning the meeting programme, inviting experts, disseminating the meeting information to researchers in the field, and raising and allocating funds for the event.

Scientists at these meetings include invited speakers, who are often those with exceptional accomplishments in an area of work, along with several other researchers and professionals who have to pay a fee to attend the meeting and share their latest research discoveries.

In recent times, scientific conferences across the world have increasingly adopted reimagined conference formats that, in addition to robust scientific discourse, support contemporary academic practices such as non-hierarchical interactions, career-stage equity, diversity, and sustainability. Every year, India hosts a multitude of such meetings and conferences across various fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. These meetings are organised by communities of scientists or scientific societies and, depending on the scale, are held at institutes or universities or at larger convention centres and conclaves. While the content of scientific meetings in India conforms to the standard academic model of talks, presentations, discussions, and interactions, the conduct of meetings deviates sharply from contemporary and emerging conference formats.



**Karishma Kaushik**

is the Executive  
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The persistence of outdated frameworks in the conduct of the scientific meetings in India is affecting its scientific practice

To start with, scientific conferences in India continue to uphold bureaucratic and hierarchical frameworks that are largely outdated. Often called the "institutionalisation of meetings", this includes the mandatory presence of institute administrators on conference committees, organisers listed in order of 'senior' and 'junior' members, and the obsequiousness in the distribution of work responsibilities based on scientists' designations.

This bureaucratic footprint is also reflected in the proceedings, which often begin with prolonged talks by science administrators, with the sessions commencing only after the arrival of dignitaries, and running sequentially late. Other aspects that underscore this hierarchy are segregated seating in order of academic designation, bouquet and shawl ceremonies, and elaborate gift-giving rituals for speakers.

We also need to critically reevaluate certain meeting practices in India in the context of growing calls for secular scientific practice and the need for gender and social inclusivity and diversity in science. It is not uncommon to find scientific programmes in India starting with 'inauguration' ceremonies, that include 'lamp lighting' and devotional songs, and conference materials replete with religious symbolism.

In addition, the lack of gender and diversity awareness is well documented in meeting programmes, that include all-male speakers or panellists (also known as manels) and sessions such as 'women in science' that completely fail to account for larger diversity issues in science, such as historically marginalised groups and LGBTQIA+ scientists.

## As a contrast

In spite of this, there are examples of scientific meetings in India with frameworks that support informal and non-hierarchical engagement and interactions. The annual meeting series, 'No Garland Neuroscience' (NGN), uses a simple, sustainable, and low-in-cost approach, while keeping the focus on the scientific content and discussions.

The long-term Young Investigators' Meeting

(YIM) series from IndiaBioscience (the organisation that this writer is affiliated with) is another example. Initiated in 2009, the YIM series has focused on scientific networking and mentorship among life scientists in India, and has continued to do so with 'no-garland' features' such as speaker lists in alphabetical order, round table seating, equal gender representation, open interactions among scientists who are in every stage of their careers, and the absence of religious symbolism, formal inaugural ceremonies, prefixes and salutations for speakers, and souvenir and bouquet distributions.

## A revamp will send a clear message

These examples indicate that communities of scientists in India recognise the need to revamp the conduct of scientific meetings in the country.

The persistence of outdated frameworks in the conduct of the majority of scientific meetings in India has immediate implications related to the nature and the culture of scientific practice in the country. Bureaucratic scientific engagements continue to fuel long-standing academic challenges such as hierarchical and career-stage inequities. Non-secular and non-inclusive meeting practices overlook pressing challenges and persistent advocacy related to gender representation, intersectionality and non-denominational science in the country. On the other hand, re-imagining the structure and conduct of scientific meetings could make planning and budgetary room for improved practices such as hybrid and multi-hub conference formats, a conference code of ethics, a conscious inclusion of diversity, and caregiver support and childcare grants for attendees.

Importantly, the revamp of scientific conferences in India could also have long-term implications related to India's aspirations to be a serious player in the international science and technology research ecosystem. The larger message will be that science in India supports contemporary conversations on egalitarianism, diversity, inclusivity, accessibility, and sustainability, and is ready to adopt them in the practice and the dissemination of science. *WJS*



# CISCE defers chemistry board exam for Class 12

**HT Correspondent**

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**NEW DELHI:** The Council for Indian School Certificate Examinations on Monday cancelled its class 12 chemistry theory exam, hours before candidates were meant to write the paper, and rescheduled it to March 21, citing unforeseen circumstances amid unconfirmed reports that the questions may have leaked.

The cancellation was announced by Sangeeta Bhatia, deputy secretary of the council, in a public notice that merely cited “unforeseen circumstances” — without offering specific reason. The test will now be taken on Thursday, March 21, at 2 pm, she added.

“A fresh set of question papers of the exam will be sent to conveners,” Bhatia told HT. “Besides this, I just cannot say anything to the press.”

While these could not be con-

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firmed, reports said a number of ICSE-affiliated schools, especially in Kolkata, raised the possibility of the paper have leaked.

Several students and parents demanded an explanation from the council for cancelling the exam on the day it was to be taken.

Many students came to know about the postponement after they had reached the examination centres. “As soon as I reached the school with my niece, we were informed at the gate that the exam had been postponed and parents and family should take

their wards back home,” said Vikas Singh, who went to drop his niece to Loreto Convent Intermediate College in Lucknow.

The mother of an ISC student, who studies at City Montessori School in Lucknow, received a WhatsApp message from the school at 12:47pm that read: “Dear parents and students, kindly note that as per the circular from the Council the Chemistry exam scheduled for today 26th February has been postponed to 21st March due to unforeseen circumstances.”

The rest of the exams will continue as per schedule, the school informed parents.

St Francis College in Lucknow sent a notice to parents at 12.40 pm for the cancelled exam that was to start from 2 pm. The ISC exams started on February 12 and will continue till April 3. There are around 2,700 schools in India and abroad affiliated with the council.

HT



# IIMC 2024 alumni awards announced

*New Delhi:* Film director Vivek Ranjan Agnihotri and Indian Air Force Squadron Leader Sumita Yadav were conferred the Alumni of the Year award by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication Alumni Association (IIMCA).

The association held its 12th annual alumni meet, 'Connections 2024', on Sunday in the Capital. Awards were presented to 23 winners. The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to newsreader Rini Simon Khanna; and journalists Bernard Vivian Fernandes and Rajeev Deshpande. Sanjive Shukla, DIG – UP; Rajvardhan Singh, former MP minister; Assam Police SP Numal Mahatta; IAS officer Mitali Namchoom Singh; and Manipur's MLA Sheikh Noorul Hasan were honoured with the Public Service Awards.

Vineet Handa, convenor of the IIMCAA awards, posted on LinkedIn that this year, the awards were open to non-IIMCians as well. **ENS**



# Fast food education



SANJAY SRIVASTAVA

Byju's fall is a cautionary tale, opportunity to question quick-fix and technocratic attitudes towards education

THERE IS AN episode in Kashinath Singh's fictionalised Hindi language memoir, *Kashi Ka Assi* (2004), that goes something like this. It is 1953 and the author has recently arrived in Kashi, having left his village. The young Kashinath has high hopes that the city will be a site of enlightenment and deliverance from the debilitations of rural existence, marked by the dead hand of custom and the economic and cultural dead ends that smother aspirations. Kashinath is staying with an elder brother, another supplicant for the city's imagined capacities for improving blighted lives.

The brother suggests that the first step to secure an alternative future lies in acquiring expertise in the English language and offers an immediate lesson. The teacher leads the pupil to the banks of the Ganges and, facing a peepal tree, orders attentiveness. Standing a little distance away — "to attention" — the brother addresses the tree: "What is your name?" Then, moving closer to the tree, he responds: "Sir, my name is Ramji Singh". He then moves even further away and asks the tree: "What is your father's name?" and, then, moving closer to it, answers, "Sir, my father's name is Sri Nagar Singh". The self-appointed mentor repeats his actions till he is exhausted and drenched in sweat. He orders young Kashinath to repeat the exercise. "The truth to tell", the perplexed narrator of the tale notes, "I didn't learn any English but understood that there is some connection between knowledge and perspiration".

There is a sad seriousness to the novel's comedy that is a commentary on the futile attempts at social mobility that — rather than providing an avenue for it — bind many to the sterile hopes of rote learning. What Kashinath Singh means to point to is that in milieus of desperation, imagined techniques of salvation only condemn supplicants to never-ending cycles of hopelessness. The younger brother comprehends the pointlessness of the exercise the befuddled elder one carries out with mechanistic reverence. An uneven and poorly designed education system, he realises, cannot simply be overcome by occultic

conversations with a tree, notwithstanding its sacred status.

This pithy episode from *Kashi Ka Assi* could serve as a cautionary tale regarding the ongoing controversy over the edtech firm, Byju's. The company, as we know, has gone from being (as one media report put it) "India's hottest tech startup" to its most troubled. Over the past six to eight months, it has been raided by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) over suspicions of foreign exchange violations; accused of financial mismanagement; faced attempts by major investors to oust its founder and allegations of breaching corporate ethics; and had its market worth slashed to a fraction of its earlier value. The Byju's case is, however, mainly discussed as an instance of poor corporate strategy rather than — as Kashinath Singh's warning-offered-as-bemusement might suggest — an instance where education has been converted to a five-minute noodle dish. In this process, education — that process of making us genuinely human — has been converted to a machine for profit-making without much proof that it produces any public good.

The pervasiveness of rote learning as an educational strategy is, not, of course, new and has a relatively long and, by now, well-established modern history. It is serviced by urban dystopias — consisting of coaching institutes, accommodation and allied industries — that have taken deep root. Here, failure and success are measured primarily through success in examinations that privilege rote learning. These are, as might be expected, also landscapes of bereavement. The calculus of success and failure pioneered by this system produces grim statistics of youth suicides at its epicentre. Through narrowing the capacity for human thought as well as the possibility of adjusting to changes in economy and society — when, for example, the nature of jobs changes because of dramatic technological interventions — this model severely handicaps those who have been entangled in its net.

And yet, public commentary on the Byju's phenomenon continues to be in the

languages of good and bad corporate management, imagining education as a packet of chips that has proved unpopular because the promoters forgot to add the right kind of masala mix. The salve for anxieties regarding uncertain futures cannot, however, be found in decrepit, quick-fix and technocratic attitudes towards education.

First, there is a vast arena of livelihood choices that can also produce happiness, which has not only been marginalised by the fast-food model of education but also effectively stigmatised. This means that young people with an interest in, say, urban design, filmmaking or journalism, face familial and social pressure to pursue careers for which they might not be suited. Failures at examinations that require capacity for rote learning are, subsequently, experienced as failing one's family as well as marks of personal inadequacy. Second, there is a difference between acquiring a technical qualification and being subject to a technocratic one. An engineer with broad learning not only builds good bridges but is also equipped with skills of switching tracks should bridge-building go out of fashion. Technocratic education, with its incredibly narrow methods and processes, leads to an incapacity for thinking on one's feet.

Finally, the capacity for thinking broadly derives from learning to engage with human complexity. One of the hallmarks of fast-food education is the withdrawal of students from normal schooling — an indispensable period of learning the skills of social interaction — and their insertion into the abnormal milieu of the coaching institute. This produces both under-socialised young people and dysfunctional adults.

And, yet, we hear almost nothing about what the "edtech" model means for human capacities and creativity. We hear little about the fact of the great human wastage that multiple years of perspiration and formulaic learning lead to for so many of its hapless subjects.

SE/10

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# Single window challenges

Key to CUET's success is collaborative approach, alignment with diverse curricula

SHILPI BANERJEE

THE DILEMMA BETWEEN exit and entry exams is a perennial issue in the Indian education system. It leads to multiple problems including teaching to the test, perpetuating inequality, and causing undue stress and anxiety. This dilemma is further exacerbated when students are compelled to prepare and appear for multiple entrance examinations while exploring admission opportunities in various universities across the country. The introduction of the Common University Entrance Test (CUET), then, is seen as a silver bullet to resolve this issue. The CUET 2024 is scheduled from May 15-31 and aims to establish a common entrance examination for undergraduate and postgraduate admissions in all central universities and affiliated colleges.

By replacing multiple entrance exams with a single-window CUET, students can now concentrate their energy and attention on one exam, thus reducing mental stress and enabling them to perform better. Furthermore, the CUET intends to provide equal opportunities to students from diverse backgrounds, including rural and urban areas, as well as students from national, international, and state boards by providing better access to higher educational institutes. This ensures standardisation and fairness in

the selection process for higher education.

However, the CUET also poses a potential threat to the higher education system. It may add to the already rampant coaching class culture and dummy schools in the country. Students from privileged and urban backgrounds who have access to coaching centres and dummy schools may have an advantage in terms of exam preparation and familiarity with the exam format, resulting in higher success rates. On the other hand, students from marginalised backgrounds who cannot afford coaching may be at a disadvantage. Similar to other entrance exams like the IIT-JEE and NEET, CUET too will face the challenge of inclusivity due to an uneven social structure and the digital divide in India.

Additionally, since the CUET is a multiple-choice question (MCQ) exam, it may have limitations in terms of the types of competencies that can be assessed. This may influence the teaching-learning process, with teachers prioritising what will be tested in the exam over focusing on the core material of subjects. In such a scenario, the educational focus may shift from being holistic and well-rounded to solely preparing students for an objective exam, which inherently has a limited scope for creativity and expression.

Most importantly, in a country as diverse as India, each state possesses unique social, cultural, and political characteristics that also influence the learning process. Different state boards consider this when designing curricula, textbooks, and examination systems. But given the diversity of state board curricula, students from such boards may find themselves at a disadvantage. It may be unfair to evaluate their learning using a single benchmark like CUET, which is based on a national-level curriculum. So far in India, central universities have had autonomy in matters related to their administration, academic decision-making, curriculum design, admissions, faculty appointments, and overall functioning. Since every state university offers specialisation in a variety of courses, these universities were earlier given absolute autonomy in designing selection tests for their courses by taking into account the desired prerequisite knowledge, skills and dispositions for each of the courses. Thus, the move towards a centralised single-window entrance to the higher education world undermines the crucial role of ensuring equity in the process of designing selection tests.

CUET has been introduced to address grave issues within the education system,

and it can only be successful if certain larger principles and quality considerations are kept in mind. Key stakeholders, including teachers across the country, practitioners working in the area of education and policymakers, should be involved in the design and review of the examination. This collaborative approach will ensure a more comprehensive and well-informed assessment that will accommodate the diversity of state board curricula. Also, each of these stakeholders should be well-informed about subject-specific competencies. The classroom pedagogy and assessment need to be well-aligned with subject-specific competencies, equipping students to critically apply their subject knowledge as required, irrespective of the examination format — and without requiring additional coaching to perform well in the CUET entrance examination. In conclusion, the implementation of the CUET must be carefully navigated to mitigate potential challenges by engaging all stakeholders in the design and review process, prioritising subject-specific competencies, and ensuring alignment with diverse state board curricula.

IE/h

The writer is faculty, Azim Premji University. Views are personal



# WHY MAHARASHTRA IS EXEMPTING SOME PVT SCHOOLS FROM RTE QUOTA

**AJOY SINHA KARPURAM**

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

MAHARASHTRA RECENTLY became the latest state to dilute private schools' obligations under The Right Of Children To Free And Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act). The state has passed rules that make it possible for some schools to not reserve 25 per cent of seats for "weaker section and disadvantaged group in the neighbourhood".

## The rule

The amendment brought in by the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly states that the "local authority shall not identify the private unaided school, for the purposes of 25 per cent admission of disadvantaged groups and weaker sections ... where government schools and aided schools are situated within one-kilometre radius of that school."

Instead, students in these neighbourhoods will be considered for admission into said government or aided schools first. This exemption will also apply to private schools established in the future, as long as they are within a 1 km radius of a government or aided school.

With this rule, Maharashtra joins Karnataka and Kerala as states that have provided private schools with exemptions from providing RTE admissions.

Karnataka introduced the rule in December 2018, and specifically referenced the Kerala rules introduced in 2011. In Kerala, the fee concession for students is only made available to RTE quota students if there are no government or aided schools "within walking distance", which is 1 km for students joining in Class 1.

## Rationale behind the rule


There are two reasons for certain states to make this move. First is the drop in en-

rollment in government schools. While introducing the amendment in 2018, Karnataka law minister Krishna Byregowda had said: "Till date, Karnataka had allowed parents to admit children in private schools despite having government schools in the same neighbourhood. This has resulted in the enrollment ratio [in government schools] dropping drastically."

Private schools have also highlighted that states have often failed to reimburse the fee for students admitted through the RTE quota. According to Section 12(2) of the RTE Act, state governments are bound to reimburse expenses incurred by the school per-child, or the fee amount, whichever is less. In Maharashtra, the Maharashtra English School Trustees Association threatened to boycott RTE admissions last December citing pending payments of Rs 1800 crore in reimbursements. This figure has now risen to Rs 2000 crore.

## Diverging responses

Private unaided schools have welcomed the new rules. "This is a good decision and we welcome it. The number of RTE admissions in private schools will considerably reduce... the number of students in government schools will also increase," Rajendra Chorge, the vice president of the Independent English Schools' Association in Maharashtra, previously told *The Indian Express*.

Others, however, have been critical. "Section 12(1)(C) of the RTE Act that mandates 25 per cent reservation of seats to children from disadvantaged backgrounds is in the direction of contesting the education apartheid in the country, and bringing parity and equality of opportunity for all children. Maharashtra government's amendment is unjustified" Shantha Sinha, a member of the sub-committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education, which played a crucial role in drafting the RTE Act, said. 



# Kerala's education system in a disarray



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

The recent senate meeting at Kerala University offered a stark portrayal of the tumultuous state of affairs within the CPI(M)-led Govt's education sector



One step forward and four steps backward seem to be the driving force of the CPI(M)-led Government if what happened during Friday's senate meeting of the Kerala University is any indication. The meeting was convened by Mohanan Kunnummel, the temporary vice-chancellor of the university to elect a representative for the search committee formed to find out the new vice-chancellor for Kerala University. Interestingly, all universities in the State have been functioning without full-time vice-chancellors for last year following the Supreme Court verdict that all the appointments of vice-chancellors made by the CPI(M)-led Government violated the laws of the land and the norms prescribed by the University Grants Commission. The senate meeting of Friday was convened by the vice-chancellor and he was expected to preside over the session. But R Bindu, the minister for higher education, rushed to the stage and usurped the chair meant for Mohanan Kunnummel. When the latter reached the Senate Hall for the meeting, he found himself to be without a chair while the minister claimed that she, as pro-chancellor, would preside over the meeting. Though the vice chancellor showed her the rule book that stated that the pro-chancellor had no role in the meeting as the Chancellor was very much present in the State, the minister (spouse of CPI-M polit bureau member A Vijayaraghavan) did not budge even an inch leaving

**MILITANT TRADE UNIONS HAVE ALWAYS PLAYED HAVOC WITH THE PROGRESSIVE MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE CPI(M)-HEADED GOVERNMENTS IN THE PAST**

Mohanan high and dry. "Minister Bindu turned out to be a right buffoon the party commissars were looking for in their bid to subvert the meeting. They did not want the meeting to take place and this lady played her role well. This will go down in history as the best comic interlude by a minister of higher education whose role is to elevate the standard of higher education to new heights," said R S Sasikumar, president, of Save University Forum, an apolitical outfit working to restore the quality of the State's higher education. The subversion of Friday's senate meeting would lead to a delay in selecting the ideal candidate for the post of vice-chancellor. This comes at a time when universities outside the State are busy switching over to four-year bachelor's degree courses in tune with the National Education Policy. The delay has cost the State dear as most intelligent and efficient students are leaving Kerala for higher studies and they are unlikely to return. K N Balagopalan, the State Finance Minister, in his budget speech 2024-2025 presented early this month proposed revolutionary changes in Kerala's higher education sector. On the anvil were red carpets for private universities and off-shore campuses of reputed foreign universities.

The CPI(M) leaders declared that the day would not be far off when Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard and even the London School of Economics opened their branches in Kerala so that the students would benefit from world-class education here. But the minister and the party bosses made a U-Turn within two days and declared that they would not open the doors for private as well as foreign universities. "It was only a proposal and not a decision. If the stakeholders are not happy, we will drop the idea itself," Balagopalan told the media following outbursts by the leaders of the SFI, the students wing of the CPI(M). In Kerala, the SFI leaders, who would not have passed the Plus Two examinations had they been born anywhere outside the State, decide the persons who should be appointed as vice chancellors of universities and as faculty members. This is not an exaggerated statement. Where else on earth you would come across student leaders who demand only persons of their choice be appointed as VCs and teaching faculty? The manifesto of the SFI has promised the students that they would insist that all university examinations should be held only after 1 PM and there won't be any examinations during the pre-lunch hours. The charter that has

been submitted to the university has one more interesting demand: the staff council should have a student representative and the college authorities should not interact with the parents/guardians of students! The day is not far off when they will ask for the right to prepare question papers for the semester examination. Militant trade unions have always played havoc with whatever progressive measures adopted by the CPI(M)-headed Governments in the past. Those days are over as it is nouveau riche like Elamaram Kareem who leads the trade union wing of the party. The children of trade union leaders are enrolled in high-end public schools in Oottil and Kodaikanal while offsprings of party workers continue toiling in Government schools. Leaders of SFI are entangled in cases ranging from murder, attempted murder, sexual offences and above all mass copying and fake degree certificates. There were many instances of students who had failed in their bachelor's degree examinations passing out of postgraduate courses from colleges in the State. Did you hear the pangs of Goddess Saraswati? (The writer is a special correspondent with the Pioneer, views are personal)




## IIITD, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SYSTEM INK MOU

**NEW DELHI:** Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology Delhi (IIITD) and the University of Illinois System have joined hands to strengthen educational and research endeavors on a global scale. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was formalized during the visit of University of Illinois System President, Timothy L. Killeen, to IIITD's campus recently.

The MoU outlines a comprehensive framework for cooperation, including faculty exchange programs, collaborative research projects, and mutual participation in academic events and conferences.

Professor Ranjan Bose, Director of IIITD, expressed optimism about the partnership, emphasizing its potential to cultivate academic excellence and promote cross-cultural learning. At the same time, President Killeen highlighted the importance of international partnerships in advancing education and research on a global scale.

Covering a diverse range of disciplines, from agricultural resilience to quantum technology, this collaboration signifies the convergence of intellectual expertise and innovative spirit. By leveraging each other's strengths and resources, both institutions aim to drive impactful research and education initiatives that address complex global challenges, said a statement here. 

# Pradhan lays foundation stone of Kendriya Vidyalaya in Odisha's Angul



## STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SAMBALPUR, 26 FEBRUARY

Union Education Minister laid the foundation stone of Kendriya Vidyalaya in Chhendipada, situated in the Subhadra area within the Talcher Coalfields operated by Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL), in Odisha's Angul District.

On the occasion, Uday A Kaole, Chairman-cum-Managing Director of MCL, and other company officials were also present.

The event marked a stride towards enhancement of educational infrastructure, enriching learning opportunities for the local populace.

The inauguration of Kendriya Vidyalaya, Sub-

hadra area, is an effort in bringing affordable quality education to rural areas.

The newly established school will cater to 280 students up to the 7th grade initially, with provisions for extending education up to the 12th grade in subsequent years.

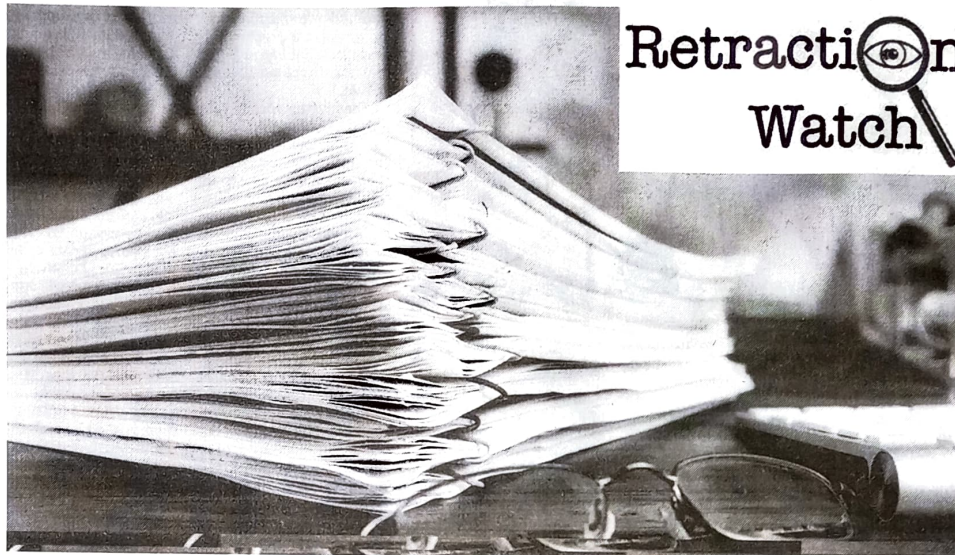
Aligned with the objectives of Centre, MCL is undertaking the establishment of two more Kendriya Vidyalayas across Odisha.

This ceremony underscores MCL's commitment to providing high-quality education in command areas, nurturing talent, and fulfilling its corporate social responsibility by contributing to the holistic development of the community. *std*



# Retracted research ~ I

The influence or impact of fake research lingers on due to a long time lag — 9.5 months being the median of retraction. By the time the retraction decision is taken, the studies might have been extensively cited, used as the premise of many other genuine research studies or guided technology and public policy



## Retraction Watch

The study published in *Nature*, a leading international journal, has taken the academic world by storm. Richard Van Noorden's analysis based on the database of Retraction Watch, one media organisation, and other journals reveals record retraction of scientific papers from research journals — more than 10,000 papers in 2023, a 2.5 fold spike from the preceding year.

Ironically or fortunately, 8,000 of those papers had exclusively been from journals owned by Hindawi, a subsidiary of Wiley. The analysis also evinces that the retraction rate has trebled in the last decade.

In India, the incidence and number of retractions have increased manifold since 2010 — from 595 papers between 2017-19 to 1550 during 2020-22, or a 2.5 fold jump. India holds the 3rd rank in the world. Specifically from older IITs, many scientific papers had been retracted, for reasons like plagiarism of text and article and duplication of papers. Two IIT (School of Mines) scientists have had 50 papers retracted.

India has the dubious distinction of publishing the highest number of predatory journals — Madhya Pradesh tops the states — and resultant research papers. Predatory journals, otherwise a cottage industry, are a different genre without an editorial board and peer review system and publish almost anything for a hefty publication fee. Moreover, shadow agencies, commonly known as paper mills or manuscript mills, are doing thriving business in India.

Retraction is the outcome of the process where editors or external experts raise critical questions about the underlying idea, dataset, experiment and findings of research papers, for which the published papers cannot be relied upon. Being the last resort, retraction is invoked when the integrity and veracity of the paper come under the hammer.

Retraction Watch enlists 109 reasons for retraction, like errors in data collection or classification, fabrication or manipulation of data, oversight of research protocol, plagiarism, simultaneous publication, fake peer review and ethical or other misconduct. Though the boundary

between acceptable human error and intentional misconduct is rather tenuous, it is unequivocal that deliberate fudging is responsible for more than three-fourths of retractions.

The whopping numbers and alarming increase in retraction rates are pushing scientific academia to an epochal juncture. The phenomenon points to the overwhelming sweep and hold of sham science all around, belittles public trust in scientific research and shrouds and misleads the trajectory of knowledge and even public policy.

The fake research papers are stretching the credibility of research to a screeching, if not crushing point. Bogus publications are vindicating an international publishing scandal. The ominous and appalling eventuality points to overpowering problems for the future trajectory of science per se. What is exposed now is, ironically, the tip of the malpractice iceberg.

The retraction figures habitually exclude conference papers, books, and above all, social science papers; otherwise, the aggregate would have swelled. Flagging is relatively easy for scientific papers, as these are based on a specific or verifiable dataset, experiment or laboratory test.

However, the detection process seems messy for social science papers, where replication is almost impossible. Papers dealing with survey data and critical or theoretical discourse can, at the most, be subject to plagiarism and multiple submission tests. The phenomenon of deception and misconduct is obviously much more extensive and multifaceted.

With the publication of fraudulent papers, the damage is already done and not much could be done to undo their fallouts, particularly in action-oriented research, except naming and sharing the authors and publishers.

The influence or impact of fake research lingers on due to a long time lag — 9.5 months being

the median of retraction. By the time the retraction decision is taken, the studies might have been extensively cited, used as the premise of many other genuine research studies or guided technology and public policy.

The large observational study in *Lancet* concluded that hydroxychloroquine was responsible for more deaths and heart related complications among Covid-19 patients.

Accordingly, the WHO stopped clinical trials of the drug. However, subsequent investigation uncovered inconsistencies in the database of "Surgisphere," the base of the study, and the paper was retracted. Similarly, laboratory studies indicated that the anti-parasite Ivermectin is the magic drug for treating Covid-19 patients. Later on, these studies were found to have committed clear evidence of fraud.

Retraction does not necessarily imply that the study will disappear altogether from circulation and use. Studies found that 90 per cent of the retracted articles continued to receive citations after retraction.

For the print version of the studies, a retraction notice in a subsequent issue of the journal remains the only viable option. Yet, not everyone can keep up with such notification. The digital version of the papers may conveniently be preceded by a retraction notification. But that step is not always evinced: one-half of the retracted research papers on Covid-19 are still available in full-text without retraction notices.

From an alternative perspective, the insistence is that the increasing rate of retraction is heartening as it demonstrates the concerted efforts and improving skills of the journal editors and watchdog agencies.

Surely, more and more detections are due to the initiatives and surveillance by many stakeholders. And variegated methodologies are being employed — analysis of the manuscript content, identification of software-generated "tortured phrases" de-

signed to skirt plagiarism probes, screening of citation patterns and scrutiny of problematic papers. The newer method factors in the combination of authors that is likely to flag bought-in authorship.

Nonetheless, it is equally explicit that more and more academics are resorting to spurious means. Estimates attest that the retraction rates are outstripping the number of research papers or that the rates are inversely proportionate to the increase in publications. The journal publishers tend to be in a quandary as to how to detect pseudo research papers or how to reinforce their filtering mechanisms.

For decades, the peer review process has served as the gold standard for determining the validity or authenticity of submitted manuscripts. The review is intended to examine and assess the quality and accuracy of the method employed, the analysis and the findings of the study by the subject experts.

The review process — either concealing or disclosing the identity of the authors and reviewers — filters out the poor quality papers or ensures improvement with suggested modifications. The appraisal report of the reviewers is the basis on which journal editors make final decisions.

However, exponential retractions substantiate the deficiencies ingrained in the review system. It is more often hobbled by inconsistencies, loopholes, systemic manipulation and vulnerability. The review process is not yet organized, or infallible. As JT Torres puts it, the reviewers are professionals, but peer review is not a profession as yet.

The review process is susceptible to compromise or scheming. Occasionally it may be a namesake; otherwise, Computational and Mathematical Methods in Medicine would not have published the article "Contemporary Value Assessment of Marxist Ideology under the Context of Deep Learning."

The special issues of journals, owned by the Hindawi Group, were manipulated by way of selective guest editors and reviewers which eventually led to the retraction of 8,000 research papers in 2023.



AMAL MANDAL

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# Janitor's daughter hopes to change her fortunes with medal at KIUG Ashtalakshmi



**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**  
GUWAHATI, 26 FEBRUARY

A podium finish in the Khelo India University Games

**I m looking forward to giving my 100 per cent in KIUG. I will be participating in the 800m event. This platform has produced many stars for India over the years and remains one of the most prestigious sporting events in the country**

(KIUG) Ashtalakshmi 2023 would not only aid Jyoti Katimani's dream to represent the country one day but it will also help her convince her parents to keep up her pursuit as an athlete.

Born in a humble family, the 24-year-old studying Physical Education never let her financial setbacks come

in the way of her dreams. Her father works as a scrap dealer while her mother works as a housekeeping staff in the same sports hostel in Dharwad where Jyoti trains.

However, she now finds herself in the crossroads with her parents insisting on her giving up the sport and taking up a job – thanks to her family's depleting finances.

Jyoti's family of eight members (including four sisters) expanded to 13 after two of her elder sisters returned home with their children after a few years of marriage.

"It was getting increasingly difficult to maintain the family, so my parents won't approve of me continuing with sports. Instead they have asked me to join some job and support the family. My mother, who has issues with her

knee, and is a senior citizen, has restarted working at the hostel as a housekeeping staff to support the family," she said, adding that her elder sisters now work as domestic help to support the family.

Jyoti arrived in Guwahati this week with hopes of changing her fortunes. "I always dreamt of being a good athlete and wanted to pursue sport. I would take part in open races and use the prize money to support the family. I also took up odd jobs to earn some money. I feel, if I do well in such a big event like the Khelo India University Games then I can convince my parents and perhaps even make them understand that I could land a job in sports quota one day," she added.

All through Jyoti's strug-

gles, her biggest support has been her coach Shamla Patil. "My coach has been very supportive, and she has sponsored my fees at the University, where I'm pursuing my graduation. I have taken part in four major tournaments in my career so far, including last year's Open Nationals where I came up with my best performance of 2:12 in 800m," she said. Jyoti, who made the cut for the KIUG 2023 after finishing eighth at the All-India University Games, is hopeful of an improved show at the event. "I'm looking forward to giving my 100 percent in KIUG. I will be participating in the 800m event. This platform has produced many stars for India over the years and remains one of the most prestigious sporting events in the country," she said.



# Medical science now goes beyond treatment: Murmu

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**New Delhi:** President Droupadi Murmu on Monday said the scope of medical science has widened in today's world and is not just limited to treatment.

"The gap between the physical, digital and biological realms is shrinking due to the 'fourth industrial revolution'," she said while addressing the 107th annual day and convocation ceremony of Lady Hardinge Medical College.

"New experiments in synthetic biology and new techniques like CRISPR gene editing are proving helpful in finding solutions to problems that have persisted for centuries. But the problem of misuse of these technologies remains," she said, expressing confidence that the medical fraternity will work in accordance with ethics and high values and try to solve problems with the integrated approach of 'one health'.

Murmu said as people considered them "god", doctors should understand the moral responsibility and behave accordingly.

"They will be truly successful doctors or nurses only if they have professional competence as well as human values like compassion, kindness and empathy. To be a good healthcare professional, it is also important to be a good person," she said, adding their primary aim should be "service before self".

She said LHMC has produced several doctors, including health minister Dr Sushila Nayyar, who was associated with India's freedom struggle and actively participated in Bharat Chhodo Andolan.



During the ceremony, 580 MBBS students were awarded degrees

## PRESIDENT SAYS

**They will be truly successful doctors or nurses only if they have professional competence as well as human values like compassion, kindness and empathy**

"She started a hospital in Sevagram in the name of Kasturba Gandhi. Her life is an inspiration for everyone as she left an attractive career after getting a doctor's degree in the US and served the nation. Another Gandhian, T S Sundaram, was also a product of LHMC and established Gandhigram Rural Institute in Tamil Nadu," Murmu said.

The President also stressed the nation's need for more medical professionals to improve the doctor-population ratio beyond WHO recommendations.

During the ceremony, 580 MBBS students were awarded degrees and 68 meritorious

students received gold medals.

Congratulating the students, Union minister of state for health and family welfare, Dr Bharati Pravin Pawar, said it is important to continuously enhance one's knowledge and skills as well as have a compassionate approach towards patient care. LHMC, she added, holds a unique place among the oldest medical institutions in the country.

In its 107-year history, LHMC and its doctors have time and again proved their devotion to the country and to health. The college excelled in the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, playing an important role in treatment and providing essential services for non-Covid patients, said Pawar.

Presenting the annual report for the year 2022, the director of LHMC, Dr Subhash Giri, highlighted achievements, new facilities and future plans of the medical college. He said in the coming time, the institute will be expanded with the development of super speciality departments.



# Over 1200 athletes participate in inter-university sports meet

**Greater Noida:** Over 1,200 athletes from 51 universities and colleges across India participated in the four-day inter-university sports meet Sportikon 2024, which concluded here on Sunday. The meet, which was conducted for 14 sports, was marked by the participation of a large number of women athletes, as well as workshops for students pursuing a career in sports, in line with the vision of Union sports minister Anurag Thakur.

The meet was organised by Bennett University. While winners across the 14 disciplines came from a wide ar-

ray of universities and colleges, the hosts won gold in football, kabaddi, powerlifting, shot put (men) and discus throw (women), while OP Jindal Global University was declared champion in cricket, tennis, table tennis (men and women) and chess.

Apart from sports competitions, the meet also conducted various training programmes and workshops for students interested in pursuing a career in sports. This was in keeping with the emphasis laid by Union sports minister Anurag Thakur, who had, during his virtual

address as chief guest for the meet on Feb 22, said students should now consider sports as a viable career option.

Thakur had also highlighted how Khelo India and Target Olympics Podium Scheme (TOPS) have revolutionised the sports landscape in India and revealed that over 300 sporting infrastructure projects worth Rs 3,000 crore have been established under the Khelo India umbrella.

He had also described how the Khelo India program annually adds 1000 new athletes, providing them with comprehensive funding for training,



# Skill varsity confers degrees, diplomas on 675 pupils

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

PALWAL, FEBRUARY 26

As many as 675 students were awarded degrees and diplomas at the second convocation of Shri Vishwakarma Skill University (SVSU) at Dudhola village in the district here on Monday. Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya was the chief guest on the occasion.

Addressing the students and staff, Dattatreya emphasised the increasing importance of skill education for youth aspiring to excel in their professional careers. He highlighted that a curriculum aligned with industry needs would further enhance their prospects. Dattatreya praised SVSU for being among the selected government institutions leading the



Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya with medal winners at the second convocation of the Shri Vishwakarma Skill University, Palwal, on Monday. TRIBUNE PHOTO

way in this regard, potentially becoming a game-changer in the long run.

He commended the university's innovative experiments in related fields, noting the significant impact on hundreds of youths who receive training in various skills each year. The success-

ful convocation in the second year served as a testament to the achievements made.

Degrees and diplomas were awarded in a total of 35 subjects or fields at the convocation ceremony. Among the recipients of gold medals in their respective courses were Vikram, Akhilesh

Kumar, "Aarti" Kumari, Komal, Pooja Devi, Kamal Kishore Pandey, Pinky, Payal, Kanchan and Kanak.

Additionally, eight individuals who made significant contributions in the fields of industry, entrepreneurship and art were honoured with honorary degrees.

The recipients of Honorary Doctorates include Ramesh Kumar from the Bikanerwala group, renowned MasterChef Ranveer Brar and JBM Group President Bharat Bhushan Gupta.

Honorary degrees of Master of Vocation Entrepreneurship were conferred upon Arvinder Saini for entrepreneurship and Shiv Charan for Banchari folk poetry.

Diploma in Entrepreneurship was awarded to Dharamvir Kamboj of Yamunanagar for entrepreneurship in agriculture, Hanuman Saini of Rajasthan in the field of miniature painting and Chandrakant of Jhajjar in the field of wood carving.

Vice-Chancellor Dr Raj Nehru and Registrar Professor Jyoti Rana were among those present at the occasion.

# एप्लाइड एआइ पर उत्कृष्टता केंद्र बनेगा

जागरण संवाददाता, नई दिल्ली: भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान (आइआइटी) दिल्ली और आर सिस्टम्स इंटरनेशनल लिमिटेड ने एप्लाइड एआइ पर उत्कृष्टता केंद्र स्थापित करने के लिए सोमवार को साझेदारी की। इसके तहत डिजिटल उत्पाद इंजीनियरिंग और प्रौद्योगिकी समाधान में काम कर रही आर सिस्टम्स इंटरनेशनल लिमिटेड (एक ब्लैकस्टोन पोर्टफोलियो कंपनी) आइआइटी दिल्ली में सस्टेनेबल सिस्टम के लिए एप्लाइड एआइ पर उत्कृष्टता केंद्र (सीओई) स्थापित करेगी। इसमें एक अत्याधुनिक अनुसंधान प्रयोगशाला, उन्नत फैकल्टी, योग्यता-आधारित छात्रवृत्ति की शुरुआत शामिल होगी। यह पहल नवाचार को बढ़ावा देने, नए जमाने के कौशल को बढ़ाने और गहन तकनीक विकसित करने के लिए आर सिस्टम्स की रणनीतिक प्राथमिकता को बताती है। इस पर आइआइटी दिल्ली के निदेशक प्रोफेसर रंगन बनर्जी ने एक स्थायी दुनिया के लिए भविष्य के अनुसंधान को तैयार करने में उभरती प्रौद्योगिकियों की महत्वपूर्ण



आइआइटी दिल्ली के निदेशक प्रो. रंगन बनर्जी और आर सिस्टम्स इंटरनेशनल के सीओ नितेश बंसल। आइआइटी में स्थापित की जाएगी अत्याधुनिक प्रयोगशाला, नई फैकल्टी और योग्यता आधारित छात्रवृत्ति की होगी शुरुआत

भूमिका पर जोर दिया। उन्होंने कहा, हमें आइआइटी दिल्ली में आर सिस्टम सीओई की स्थापना की घोषणा करते हुए खुशी हो रही है। टिकाऊ कंप्यूटिंग और सिस्टम भविष्य में बेहद महत्वपूर्ण होंगे। आर सिस्टम्स के साथ हमारे सहयोग के परिणामस्वरूप टिकाऊ कंप्यूटिंग के लिए नवीन दृष्टिकोण और अत्याधुनिक एआइ तकनीकों का विकास होगा। यह रणनीतिक निवेश

और साझेदारी एक महत्वपूर्ण मील का पत्थर है जो एआइ के क्षेत्र में उन्नत अनुसंधान और नवाचार की सीमाओं को आगे बढ़ाएगा। आर सिस्टम्स के सीओ और प्रबंधक निदेशक नितेश बंसल ने कहा, आर सिस्टम्स और आइआइटी दिल्ली के बीच यह सहयोग उद्योग-अकादमिक साझेदारी को सुविधाजनक बनाएगा जिसका उद्देश्य सैद्धांतिक अनुसंधान और एआइ समाधानों के व्यावहारिक अनुप्रयोग के बीच अंतर को पाटना है। आर सिस्टम्स सीओई एक रिसर्च एंड डेवलपमेंट हब के रूप में काम करेगा, जो बड़े पैमाने पर वास्तविक दुनिया की समस्याओं का समाधान करने के लिए संकाय सदस्यों और छात्रों के साथ आर सिस्टम शोधकर्ताओं को एक साथ लाएगा। आइआइटी दिल्ली के कोर्पोरेट रिलेशंस डीन प्रो. रंजन पांडा ने कहा, ऐसे युग में जहां उद्योग-अकादमिक सहयोग अपने सबसे रोमांचक चरण में है, हम सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी, सीएसआर और अनुसंधान के एकीकरण को आगे बढ़ाने के लिए आर सिस्टम्स और आइआइटी के प्रति अपना आभार व्यक्त करते हैं।



# विज्ञान व प्रौद्योगिकी दोनों भारत को आगे ले जाने में सक्षम : एम जगदीश

जासं, नई दिल्ली: आज पूरा विश्व भारत की ओर देख रहा है। ऐसे में विज्ञान और प्रौद्योगिकी दोनों ही विकसित भारत को आगे ले जाने में सक्षम साबित हो सकते हैं। 'वैश्विक



यूजीसी के चेयरमैन  
एम जगदीश कुमार

कैनवास पर उभरते भारत' पर अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सम्मेलन में यूजीसी के चेयरमैन एम जगदीश

कुमार ने यह

बात कही। उन्होंने कहा कि विकसित भारत बनाने में शिक्षा महत्वपूर्ण योगदान दे सकती है, ऐसे में शिक्षकों को भी चाहिए कि वह भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा को लेते हुए भारत को विकसित बनाने में अपना कर्तव्य निभाएं। शिक्षाविद और मुख्य अतिथि प्रोफेसर चांद किरण सलूजा ने कहा कि दुनिया के सामने आने वाली विभिन्न समस्याओं का

समाधान प्राचीन भारतीय सभ्यता और भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा में निहित है। राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति-2020 विकसित भारत के लक्ष्य को प्राप्त करने का सच्चा रास्ता है, जिसमें वास्तव में भारतीय ज्ञान प्रणाली का समावेश किया गया है। डा. अंबेडकर इंटरनेशनल सेंटर में दो दिवसीय सम्मेलन का आयोजन अखिल भारतीय राष्ट्रीय शिक्षक महासंघ (एबीआरएसएम) द्वारा किया गया।

भिवानी के चौधरी बंसी लाल विश्वविद्यालय के कुलपति आरके मित्तल ने कहा कि वर्तमान गतिशील युग में समग्र विकास के लिए निरंतर तकनीकी अद्यतनीकरण और पंच कोशिये शिक्षा के साथ रोजगार के अवसर उपलब्ध कराए जा सकते हैं। इनके माध्यम से भारत विश्व पटल पर चमकेगा। सम्मेलन की अध्यक्षता एबीआरएसएम के राष्ट्रीय अध्यक्ष प्रोफेसर जेपी सिंघल ने की।



# डीयू व क्यूंगपुक विश्वविद्यालय करेंगे कोरियाई भाषा को बढ़ावा देने पर काम



कोरियाई भाषा को बढ़ावा देने के लिए समझौता ज्ञापन पर हस्ताक्षर करते दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय और क्यूंगपुक राष्ट्रीय विश्वविद्यालय कोरिया के पदाधिकारी • सौ. डीयू

**जासं, नई दिल्ली:** डीयू और क्यूंगपुक राष्ट्रीय विश्वविद्यालय कोरिया के बीच कोरियाई भाषा को बढ़ावा देने के लिए दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय में एक समझौता ज्ञापन पर हस्ताक्षर किए गए। डीयू के कुलसचिव डा. विकास गुप्ता और क्यूंगपुक राष्ट्रीय विश्वविद्यालय के अंतरराष्ट्रीय विकास संस्थान के निदेशक प्रोफेसर ह्वांग ह्वा-सेओक ने दस्तावेजों का आदान-प्रदान किया। कुलपति प्रो. योगेश सिंह ने कहा कि दोनों विश्वविद्यालयों के बीच दोस्ती की भावना से यह पहला कदम है।

डा. विकास गुप्ता ने कहा, इस समझौता ज्ञापन के तहत, क्यूंगपुक राष्ट्रीय विश्वविद्यालय कार्यक्रम के विकास और संचालन के लिए भाषा प्रयोगशाला एवं बुनियादी ढांचे के नवीनीकरण जैसे कार्यों के लिए डीयू को फंड प्रदान करेगी। इसके अतिरिक्त उन्होंने एक कोरियाई भाषा

प्रशिक्षक भी नियुक्त किया है और पूर्वी एशियाई अध्ययन विभाग से सालाना दस विद्यार्थियों के लिए छात्रवृत्ति की पेशकश करने के लिए प्रतिबद्धता जताई है। इसके तहत उन्हें क्यूंगपुक राष्ट्रीय विश्वविद्यालय में विद्यार्थी विनिमय के रूप में भाग लेने की अनुमति मिलेगी। यह समझौता ज्ञापन एक वर्ष तक प्रभावी रहेगा और अगले तीन वर्षों के लिए प्रतिवर्ष नवीनीकृत होगा। पूर्वी एशियाई अध्ययन विभाग के प्रमुख प्रोफेसर नबीन पांडा एवं कोरियाई अनुभाग के अन्य संकाय, इंटरनेशनल रिलेशन की चेयर पर्सन प्रो. नीरा अग्निमित्रा, प्रो. अनिल राय, डीन इंटरनेशनल रिलेशन (सामाजिक विज्ञान और मानविकी) और प्रोफेसर आशुतोष भारद्वाज, डीन इंटरनेशनल रिलेशन (विज्ञान और प्रौद्योगिकी) के साथ के अन्य अधिकारी भी मौजूद थे। ७५



# मेडिकल छात्र दे रहे जान, टास्क फोर्स करेगी जांच

File

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■ नई दिल्ली: मेडिकल स्टूडेंट्स की आत्महत्या और उन पर हावी होते तनाव के बारे नैशनल मेडिकल कमिशन (NMC) काफी गंभीर है। NMC ने देशभर के मेडिकल संस्थानों के प्रफेसर और मेडिकल एक्सपर्ट्स की 15 सदस्यों वाली नैशनल टास्क फोर्स बनाई है। यह मेडिकल छात्रों के तनाव से जुड़े हर पहलू की पड़ताल करने के बाद अपनी रिपोर्ट तैयार करेगी। टास्क फोर्स 31 मई 2024 तक अपनी सिफारिशें देगी। हर महीने NMC की एंटी रैगिंग सेल को प्रोग्रेस रिपोर्ट भी सौंपनी होगी।

नैशनल टास्क फोर्स को उन सभी मेडिकल कॉलेजों का दौरा करने की जिम्मेदारी भी दी गई है, जहां छात्रों की आत्महत्या के मामले सामने आए हैं। फोर्स के सदस्य और NMC के मीडिया डिविजन प्रमुख डॉ. योगेंद्र मलिक का कहना है कि मेडिकल स्टूडेंट्स का तनाव



दूर करने की दिशा में कई अहम फैसले लिए जा रहे हैं। यह टास्क फोर्स उन कारणों की पड़ताल करेगी कि आखिर छात्र इस तरह के कदम क्यों उठाते हैं? टास्क फोर्स जिन मेडिकल कॉलेजों का दौरा करेगी, वहां पर केस स्टडीज पर फोकस होगा। जिन कॉलेजों में छात्रों ने आत्महत्या की है वहां के माहौल से लेकर दूसरे छात्रों से भी चर्चा होगी। NMC ने कहा है कि टास्क फोर्स को तय समय सीमा के भीतर ही अपनी रिपोर्ट देनी होगी, क्योंकि NMC इस मसले पर काफी गंभीर है।

**NBT**  
**Lens**

समझिए खबरों के  
अंदर की बात

## क्यों अहम है यह जांच?

देश के सबसे मुश्किल एंट्रेस टेस्ट को पास कर मेडिकल कॉलेज में एडमिशन पाने के बाद भी अगर कोई छात्र आत्महत्या करता है तो यह सिस्टम पर बड़ा सवाल है।

NMC की नैशनल टास्क फोर्स बनाने की यह पहल काफी महत्वपूर्ण साबित होगी, क्योंकि फोर्स को उन मेडिकल कॉलेजों में जाने को कहा गया है, जहां पर छात्रों ने आत्महत्या की है। कमिटी उन कॉलेजों में जाकर स्टाफ, दूसरे छात्रों से बातचीत करेगी। पैरेंट्स से भी बात होगी। सबसे जरूरी है कि समस्या के मूल कारण सामने आने चाहिए। सही वजह पता चलनी चाहिए कि आखिर छात्र परेशान क्यों हो रहे हैं? उनके डिप्रेशन में जाने और फिर आत्महत्या जैसे कदम उठाने के पीछे असली वजह क्या है? NMC का कहना है कि सही कारण सामने आने के बाद सुधार के उपाय कारगर साबित होंगे।



# ऑनलाइन कोर्सेज के लिए नया पोर्टल

■ विस, नई दिल्ली : केंद्रीय शिक्षा मंत्रालय ने अलग-अलग इंडस्ट्री के साथ मिलकर नए कोर्सेज शुरू करने की पहल की है। इस कड़ी में एक नया प्लैटफॉर्म स्वयं प्लस (SWAYAM Plus) तैयार किया है। केंद्रीय शिक्षा मंत्री धर्मेंद्र प्रधान मंगलवार को इस पोर्टल को लॉन्च करेंगे। स्वयं पोर्टल (SWAYAM portal) पर स्टूडेंट्स को पहले ही अपनी पसंद के ऑनलाइन कोर्सेज को करने का मौका मिल रहा है। बड़े-बड़े शिक्षा संस्थान इस पोर्टल से जुड़े हुए हैं। स्वयं पोर्टल के जरिए IIT, IIM जैसे संस्थानों से सर्टिफिकेट और डिप्लोमा जैसे कोर्सेज भी कर सकते हैं।

NBT