

Staying ahead

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Message from the Sector leader



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Dear Friend,

The month of November saw the MHRD getting new leadership: Mr. Pallam Raju has assumed charge as the Cabinet Minister and Dr. Shashi Tharoor and Mr. Jitin Prasad as Ministers of State. There are serious challenges confronting the sector and much is expected from them, in particular to continue with and push through the numerous reforms initiatives begun by the dynamic outgoing Minister Mr. Kapil Sibal. We wish them luck and success in their endeavors. Initial remarks made by them indicate that the trio is cognizant of the biggest challenges faced by the HRD ministry for long- getting education Bills to pass political muster. The not-for-profit stipulation combined with over-regulation has had the twin effect of keeping out both genuine domestic investors as well as reputed foreign academic institutions. Recognizing the urgent need for reform, the government, under the leadership of Mr. Kapil Sibal introduced a large number of legislative and administrative measures that had the potential to lay the foundation for a robust and transparent regulatory regime. Regrettably, all these are still pending in Parliament. Faced with legislative paralysis, the government opted for, wherever possible, regulation instead of legislation to achieve the objectives of these bills but much still remains to be done.

From PwC's perspective, the month also witnessed the release of 2 thought leadership reports at the recently held AICTE- CII University-Industry Congress 2012 in New Delhi for which PwC was the Knowledge Partner. These were released by the Chief Guest, Dr. Shashi Tharoor.

About the Publications:

1. CII-PwC Report-Taking stock: A sector wide scan of Higher Education in India

The report looks at the legal and regulatory framework, the reform initiatives of the Government, opportunities for private sector participation and the role of information and communication technology as an enabler for quality and market responsive higher education. It highlights the prospects of enhancing the quality of higher engineering education to comparable international standards through progressive and positive involvement of the private sector, across all facets of engineering and technology education in India

2. AICTE-CII Survey of Industry-linked Engineering Institutes

The survey was conducted by AICTE and is a first of its kind initiative to understand industry-institutes linkages in which 156 institutes participated. 7 parameters were used for evaluation including governance, curriculum, faculty, infrastructure, services, placements and entrepreneurship development. As knowledge partner, we analyzed the results of the survey that AICTE had compiled. Our team identified the key determinants/characteristics of a strong industry linkage of engineering institutes as well as three stages for developing strong industry relevance. Our findings will be an invaluable tool for engineering colleges in answering the question "What do I do to make my graduates more relevant to the needs of industry?"

In other news, quality in education seemed to be the theme of the month with AICTE recently issuing a warning to ailing engineering colleges functioning with minimal faculty or inadequate infrastructure to shape up. Notices have been sent to colleges asking them to apply for new courses and programmes, but the AICTE also expects at least a few colleges to seek closure.

In a bid to improve the quality of teachers, UGC revised the qualifying criteria for passing the National Eligibility Test (NET). The UGC NET exam is conducted twice a year and comprises of three papers: two objectives and one subjective. As per the revised norms all the three papers have been made objective. In addition, as per the original norms, candidates in general category who scored 155 marks would be eligible for consideration for the final result. However, the 155 score used to be the qualifying total of all the three papers and not the aggregate, but now only those with a total of 227.5 will make the cut. Initial reactions suggest that the move is more of an academic reform that might do little to improve the quality of teachers being churned out. What is needed is an industry based approach wherein the existing teachers get more exposure to industry practices and aspirants study curriculums that are more practical in nature. Only then will the quality of teaching and class room interaction be in line with the industry trends leading to an overall improvement in employability of graduates, a need that could help the country as well as the industry substantially.

Domestic news

01

Four new Scotland-India education projects announced

Recently, four Scottish-India education initiatives, which include a partnership between Robert Gordon University and an Indian technology school, an Indian work-placement programme for UK graduates from Dundee University, collaboration between Scottish academics from Queen Margaret University in developing sustainable tourism businesses in rural India and a new diploma launched by Scottish Investment Operations were unveiled. The announcements were made at the 'Innovation in Education' roundtable held in New Delhi, organised by the Scottish Development International, in partnership with India's Planning Commission and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

The Robert Gordon University's (RGU) agreement with the Maharashtra Institute Of Technology School Of Telecom Management (MITSOT) affiliated to the Maharashtra Institute of Technology (MIT), Pune University, will see MITSOT students, as a part of their two-year Postgraduate Diploma in Management, spend two semesters at RGU undertaking its MSc International Business, followed by a third semester dissertation project under RGU supervision at MITSOT. Also, Scottish Investment Operations (SIO), an Edinburgh-based body launched the Investment Accounting Diploma, which is an industry made professional qualification backed by the world's largest financial institutions and designed to raise the quality of human resource in the financial services industry globally.

(Source: The Times of India)

SP Jain School to open its third international campus at Sydney

The SP Jain School of Global Management announced the launch of its third international campus at the Sydney Olympic Park in Australia. "Business has gone global and business schools need to go global too," said Nitish Jain, President, SP Jain.

The business school has campuses in Dubai and Singapore as well. The tri-city model of SP Jain will offer students an opportunity to understand global business at an early age. Jain said, "We have chosen three of the most iconic cities for students, all of which are world-class and home to several multinational companies, but are different culturally. The choice of locations was based on the fact that it should give maximum diversity of learning to students." The Sydney campus will start with 150 students, including 50 undergrads. It will offer a four-year Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), 12-month Master of Global Business (MGB) and 12-month Global MBA. A 12-month MBA programme will cost about 30,000 USD and a four-year BBA programme will cost around 16,000-17,000 USD. Students will spend part of the course in each of the three global campuses.

(Source: The Economic Times)

UGC wants credit system in colleges

The UGC has reminded all colleges in the state to implement the choice-based credit and semester system (CBCSS) at the earliest, as it will be linked with accreditation as well as UGC funding. Incidentally, a committee appointed by the Kerala State Higher Education Council (KSHEC) to study the implementation of CBCSS, had recommended a partial roll-back to the annual system. The letter, sent by the Joint Secretary of the UGC to all colleges stated that the UGC's action plan for academic and administrative

reforms during the XIth Plan should be implemented at the earliest. The action plan comprised aspects such as semester system, choice-based credit system, curriculum development, admission procedures and examination reforms. Also these reforms are necessary for the promotion of quality education. The KSHEC recommendations, based on the report of the Hridayakumari Committee, which was set up to study the working of the system and to suggest improvements, had given 11 recommendations based on its findings. It had also asked the government to modify the system.

(Source: The Times of India)

UK University plans tie-up with Indian institutions

The Sheffield Hallam University (SHU), UK is planning for a tie-up with Indian educational institutions which are offering courses related to health science. The SHU faculty of health and well-being is planning to sign MoUs with institutions in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Mangalore to conduct student and faculty exchange programmes and joint research works. Every year, on an average 400 students join SHU for engineering and health science courses.

"Presently, we have a tie-up with Gautama Buddha University at Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh. Engineering students of this college pursue one semester in SHU as a part of the student exchange programme," said Mark Tock, Business Development Manager, SHU.

Not disclosing names of universities with which the SHU is planning collaboration, Tock said, "We are not here just to sign MoUs. We believe in strong long-term relationships with Indian universities which will be fruitful for both universities. The tie-ups are yet to be finalised."

(Source: The Times of India)

Gopalakrishnan, Director, Marketing and Communications, ISB, said, “The students are fully-aware of the credentials of the course, which is targeted at mid-career professionals. Student interest, the institute’s reputation and how recruiters review our students’ performance has not been affected.” Strangely, GLIM finds place in both the approved and unapproved lists. The Director of External Relations and Professor of Marketing at GLIM, T N Swaminathan believes that it is a different institution and would take it up with the council.

Arks Srinivas, CEO, Vista Mind (coaching centre), said, “Institutions such as ISB did not want to get involved with AICTE norms as they were restrictive in terms of curriculum and infrastructure. Management curriculum is always changing, and AICTE does not have the wherewithal to keep changing it accordingly.”

The council has identified 311 technical institutions offering management, hotel management and fashion technology courses without its approval. Maharashtra has the highest number of unapproved institutions at 126 followed by Delhi at 65.

(Source: The Times of India)

BAE Systems to support education and healthcare programmes

BAE Systems, the global defence, security and aerospace systems firm, joined hands with Smile Foundation (an NGO) to support education and healthcare programmes in India.

The company is committed to support the educational mainstreaming of over 1,000 children aged between 6 to 16 years across seven rural and urban locations in Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Maharashtra, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh.

It will also help establish and operate a purpose-built mobile medical unit called ‘Smile on Wheels’ equipped with the

latest equipment, trained personnel and supplies to serve selected underserved population clusters of Bangalore.

(Source: Business Standard)

State to clear decks for e-university exams

The Maharashtra government is in the final stages of putting online the process of conducting exams in all 17 state universities. The higher and technical education department will work out the final modalities of a pilot project which, if successful, could be extended across universities to prevent paper leaks.

K Sankaranarayanan, Governor, directed vice-chancellors of various varsities to build infrastructure for a full-fledged online mechanism to be put in place across universities.

The initiative is a part of recommendations made by the government’s exam reform panel. The panel suggested several reforms, including online examination and submission of thesis online. Headed by state IT Secretary Rajesh Aggarwal, the committee has also recommended a pilot project for starting technology-based examination in the universities. The objective is to bring about some transparency in the system and drastically reduce the instances of paper leaks.

(Source: The Times of India)

Saab’s education initiative to increase employment opportunities

Saab India announced an employability enhancement and skill development programme for the Indian College Engineering students. Termed the ‘Diploma Employment Enhancement Program (DEEP)’, it is designed to bridge the gap between industry’s requirements and technical education. The first pilot classes in collaboration

with the Indian Technical Institutes will start in December. Saab India, the Indian subsidiary of the Swedish-headquartered defence and security company, has initiated a skills training programme at institutes in Gudivada and Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh. The six-month programme is designed to help engineering students learn and hone the right mix of technical and soft skills while they are still in college.

(Source: The Hindu Business Line)

ACPET ties up with NSDC to meet India’s skilling needs

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) has signed a MoU with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) to meet India’s skilling needs across 21 industries. The MoU, signed by Claire Field, CEO, ACEPT and Dilip Chenoy, CEO and MD, NSDC, includes a commitment to foster partnerships between Australian and Indian education and training providers, as well as exchanging information and perspectives on education, training and skill development. The partnership also aims to skill 500 million people in India by 2022.

(Source: The Economic Times)

Delhi School of Business (DSB) launches PGDM, AICTE accredited programme

To meet India's growing professional skill demand, Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies (VIPS) launched a two year full-time AICTE accredited management programme under the Delhi School of Business (DSB). The latter will offer a dynamic curriculum that will not only respond to market needs but also anticipate them.

Located in Pitampura, West Delhi, the DSB was launched by Dr. S C Vats, an eminent educationist philanthropist and former member of the Delhi Legislative Assembly. Registration for the first batch (June 2013-2015) of 120 students is open by submitting CAT, GMAT, CMAT or MAT scores. Applicants can also submit more than one test score.

(Source: www.moneylife.in)

Pearson launches tablet-based education solution for schoolchildren

Pearson recently announced the launch of a new tablet-based education solution for schools in India. The 'MX Touch' platform will give students access to more effective personalised and collaborative digital learning with rich digital content, 3D animations, quizzes and videos. It is compliant with the school syllabus and comes bundled with tablets at a variety of prices to ensure it is affordable and accessible by the broadest possible cross-section of students. While supporting the core syllabus, the service will also help promote Information Communication Technology in the Indian school education by familiarising students with the latest learning technology. The product also allows parents to monitor the academic progress of their children more accurately than ever before with easy access to assignments, difficult lessons covered during school hours and archived assessments and tests.

(Source: *Business Standard*)

Macmillan and Frank Bros tie up for digital books

Macmillan Education and Frank Bros have joined hands to provide digital content interface to textbook teaching. "We will provide digital books, which will have links to visual and audio resources that the teacher can use to make the classroom experience more effective and rewarding," said Yash Mehta, Sales and Distribution Head, Macmillan Education.

A part of the Macmillan Publishing Group, it is the preferred knowledge partner of around 15,000 schools in the country. Recently, the publishing house also organised a 'Principals Symposium' in Hyderabad to address their partner schools in the country. The integration of the two companies Macmillan and Frank Bros Publishing House will enrich its offering to schools, especially the CBSE, ICSE and State Board.

They will continue to provide text books and digital materials for students and teachers. "The merger will give access to high quality editorial input as well provide latest information about the new researches in the field of education," said R C Govil, Chairman, Emeritus.

(Source: *The Hindu Business Line*)

Manipal University signs MoUs with two Chinese universities

The Manipal University has signed comprehensive partnerships with two of China's top universities, thus becoming the first Indian institution to enter the flourishing Chinese education market. The Manipal University, one of the top Indian private educational institutions, has signed partnership agreements with Tianjin University and Shanghai's Tongji University. The memorandums of understandings (MoUs) were signed by the Vice Chancellor of Manipal University, K Ramnarayan. The academic collaborations include research, joint and dual degree programmes, twinning and credit transfer programmes, vocational education programmes, faculty and

student exchange programmes, study abroad in India programmes, etc. The Manipal University has overseas campuses in Dubai, Nepal, Antigua and Malaysia.

(Source: *The Economic Times*)

Magadh University (MU) to open centre for media studies

The MU has decided to open a media centre on its sprawling campus at Bodh Gaya. The UGC has approved the proposal and is likely to grant 90 crore INR to the university to build the centre. According to Arun Kumar, VC, MU, "The main objective behind opening the media centre is to provide an opportunity to students of the university in the field of journalism and mass communication. Besides, the centre will be assigned the task to make documentary films on educational, social, cultural and historical heritage, which will be exchanged with other universities in the country."

(Source: *he Times of India*)

ISB, IIFT under AICTE lens

The latest list of unapproved institutions put out by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) features some popular names second only to the IIMs or even considered on par with them. The Indian School of Business (ISB) in Hyderabad, the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) in Delhi, and the Great Lakes Institute of Management (GLIM) in Chennai have made a name for themselves within and outside the country, but are also on the AICTE's list of unapproved institutions. Others include the Indian Institute of Planning and Management, ICFAI, Amity Business School and ITM.

However, the institutions are not unduly worried by this. The official statement released by the ISB "stated that the institution's one-year postgraduate programme does not fall under the ambit of AICTE's current regulatory mechanism for business schools and therefore no approval was sought." Sriram

servicing, healthcare, construction technology and textiles. Students will be offered world-class training which is adapted to the Indian market and industry requirements. The CMC Academy currently offers job-enabling training in IT, accounting and finance and several skill areas through 250 plus training locations across the country. India's accelerated economic growth and increasing demand for skilled manpower will require intensive efforts to achieve the target of up-skilling 500 million workers by 2022. Recent estimates show only 10% of the total workforce in the country is receiving some kind of skills training (2% with formal training and 8% with informal training). According to the NSSO survey, only 6% of the total workforce (459 million) is in the organised sector. The World Economic Forum indicates that only 25% of all Indian professionals are considered employable by the organised sector. The unorganised sector is not supported by any structured skill development and training system to acquire or upgrade skills.

(Source: www.infoline.com)

Reading habits of north-east youth better than the rest of India

Recently, the Union HRD Minister, Dr M M Pallam Raju released a report-Youth of North-East India: Demographics and Readership in New Delhi. Dr Raju said, "Reading as a habit grows in a conducive ecosystem, where libraries, book shops and teacher encouragement play an important role." The report attempts to give an analytical and detailed account of the reading habits of the literate youth in the north-eastern states and their exposure to different forms of media, and how diverse socio-economic and motivational factors impact their reading habit. The reading of 'leisure or non-text books' among the literate youth is the special focus of the study.

The report is a follow-up study of the National Youth Readership Survey (2009-

10) assigned to the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) by the NBT under the National Action Plan for the Readership Development among the Youth (NAPRDY) mooted by the NBT. To have a better understanding of the status of the north-eastern states as compared to the rest of country in this sector, the findings are compared with similar results for one developed state (Maharashtra) and one economically backward state (Bihar), chosen on the basis of their per capita gross domestic product. This is over and above the comparison of the findings in respect of the NE states with the overall Indian situation.

(Source: www.pib.nic.in)

Mock tests for students taking IIT entrance examination

Students taking the first single exam for entering the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) and other engineering colleges will get a chance to take part in mock tests as part of an effort by the government and the IITs to familiarise admission seekers with the new format. Students will also be allowed to make changes in their application form after the ongoing registration process for the exam ends in mid-December. "The mock test will be conducted for almost three months beginning in the second week of January 2013," said Vineet Joshi, Chairman, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), which is in charge of conducting the joint entrance exam main (JEE Main) for all centrally-funded technical schools. CBSE functions under the HRD ministry.

In May, the government decided to allow admission to all IITs and centrally-funded engineering institutes through a single test to reduce stress on students who sit for multiple entrance examinations. The so-called one nation, one test formula was adopted after a nationwide debate. For selection to the elite IITs, students who finish among the top 150,000 in the entrance test will sit for another

exam. To qualify for admission, they will need to finish in the top 20 percentile of their respective school board exams. There will be more than one sample test available for aspirants. According to an official estimate, more than 1.2 million students are expected to appear for the test. The test will be conducted both in the pen-and-paper and online formats. There are nearly 25,000 seats available in all centrally-funded engineering schools, including 9,700 at the 15 IITs.

(Source: *Mint*)

Higher education sector needs 5,500 million square feet realty space by 2020

According to the 'Indian Higher Education - Real Estate's New Emerging Sector', a study by real estate consulting firm, DTZ, the Indian higher education sector needs 5,550 million sq ft of additional educational space (excluding support services such as hostel, cafeteria, recreational facilities, etc.) to meet 30% gross enrolment ratio (GER) targets by 2020. India's current GER at 12% is less than half of the average global GER at 26%. The government has set up an aggressive target to achieve a GER of 30% in higher education by 2020, which translates into an additional enrollment of 37 million students over the next eight years. The current scenario, which is inundated by shortfall in availability of seats in professional courses coupled with an aim to achieve a GER of 30%, provides significant opportunities to real estate developers for creating physical infrastructure in the education landscape. As per the study, while reforms in regulatory policies and use of new technologies are expected to facilitate growth and dissemination of higher education, it is unlikely to be a substitute for creation of physical infrastructure. The quantum of physical infrastructure and real estate development required to address the aspiration of GER enrollments is herculean and cannot be achieved by government or education institute operators alone. About 900 million sq ft

Shiv Nadar University inks deal with Duke University to establish a collaborative academic framework for educational excellence

The Shiv Nadar University (SNU) announced its partnership with Duke University, a North Carolina-based top ranked global research university. The alliance will establish a broad framework for collaborative academic programmes and experiential learning opportunities for the faculty and students of both universities. The SNU and Duke University under the aegis of Duke's globally renowned Talent Identification Programme (TIP) will further collaborate on the development and implementation of educational activities for academically talented students in India.

The scope of the partnership includes development of student exchange agreements, development of faculty exchange agreements, development of joint teaching programmes, development of joint research programmes and centres.

(Source: www.indiaeducationdiary.in)

India unveils Aakash 2 tablet at UN

India recently launched its low-cost Aakash 2 tablet PC at the United Nations in the presence of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and other member nations. Datawind, the company which was assigned to design, develop and manufacture the device, also gave a presentation on it. Speaking at the launch, India's Permanent Representative, Hardeep Singh Puri said, "With pricing determined through an open international tender, Aakash 2 is the world's lowest cost tablet at end-user pricing. It harnesses top of the line technologies at costs, which the neediest can embrace. The technologies and applications that have been put in it, are indeed the world's best. It bridges the digital divide within our societies," he said. In India, the National Mission on Education through Information Communication Technology will equip

220 million students across the country with low cost tablets and internet access. The government is subsidising 50% of the cost of this device. With state governments and local institutions along with other development partners chipping in, the devices will ultimately be made available free to all students.

(Source: *The Times of India*)

Cox and Kings to roll-out education tours in India

In a move that could transform Cox and Kings Ltd's tour business in India and also the way subjects such as history and geography are taught in the country's schools, the travel company is set to introduce education tours in India. The move, part of the company's plans to integrate its European business model with the domestic market, comes over a year after Cox and Kings acquired the UK-based Holidaybreak Plc for about 2,300 crore INR. Peter Kerkar, Executive Director, Cox and Kings, confirmed the move but ruled out large-scale acquisitions for now.

"Education tours will be rolled out next year in India and the company is developing a site within the country for its education tours," told Kerkar. This will include both residential and leisure facilities and will follow strict European standards on health and safety.

However, Kerkar refused to outline the investment plan, but said the company expected 25% return on capital invested in developing this new business segment in India. Student tours cater to children under the age of 12 and activities include guided tours to historical monuments or science parks. Within Europe, education tours are an integral part of the curriculum and students take these trips and write reports at the end of tours. In India, such tours are not part of the education policy.

(Source: *Business Standard*)

All India Survey on Higher Education report released

The Union Minister for HRD released the first provisional report of the ambitious All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE). The report contains countrywide estimates of GER on the basis of data collected till 31 July 2012, from higher education (HE) institutions of the country including universities, colleges, and stand-alone institutions. The overall GER of the country stands at 18.8% (based on estimated figures collected till 31 July 2012).

The key idea behind this survey and the resulting document is to prepare a sound database on the large and diverse system of HE in the country. The survey compiles and manages statistics directly online from respondent institutions. The Ministry has constituted a task force to carry out the survey. The task force comprises representatives from stakeholders including the Ministry, the UGC, the AICTE, various regulatory bodies, as well as departments of HE of the various states.

(Source: www.pib.nic.in)

NextEducation targets 500 crore INR turnover in four years

Technology-driven education enterprise NextEducation, offering innovative learning solutions to CBSE, ICSE and state board schools, is aiming 500 crore INR turnover in four years by covering 10,000 schools pan India. The company has researched and developed technologies designed for the country. Technological advancements such as 2D and 3D graphical interactive content mapped to the curriculum of international standards, engrossing voice-overs by Indian artistes, clear sound and innovative course design are easily accessible. The company, which now covers 5,000 schools in various states, including Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra and Leh, had 100 crore INR turnover last year. NextEducation has introduced additional

content offering customised for Kerala state board for their 'LearnNext' for class 6 to 10 for maths, physics, chemistry and biology. LearnNext was initially launched only for CBSE and ICSE syllabus in 2008. Now it has over eight lakh registered members and is used by over 50,000 students across the country.

(Source: The Times of India)

Educomp signs deal to tap into the Gulf region

India's largest digital education company Educomp Solutions will now work with the Centre of Excellence for Applied Research and Training (CERT) at Abu Dhabi to help build a strong workforce and help enhance organisational efficiency in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region. As part of the MoU signed by Educomp and CERT, the latter will use Educomp's digital education initiatives to introduce innovative technologies in the GCC region, comprising the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait. The GCC has identified the education sector as a focus area in the immediate future and a growing share of government spending is being channelled towards building new schools, colleges and universities. Apart from basic tertiary education, GCC countries are also keen to enhance vocational and special education programmes to encourage higher education among their nationals.

(Source: The Hindu Business Line)

225 B-schools, 52 engineering colleges close in two years

Since 2011, 225 B-schools and over 50 engineering colleges across India have downed shutters. Many more colleges have trimmed programmes, branches of engineering or streams in the management course. On the academic floor, the MBA programme was once

supreme. Unambiguously, it became the final sign-off to schooling, attracting not only those interested in business but also those who wanted to master the tools of management. Now, for the first time, the overall growth of MBA education is negative in the books of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). In 2011-12, 146 new B-schools came up and 124 that were already running closed down. This year, 101 management colleges have closed down, only 82 have started. Similar is the story with the Master of Computer Application (MCA) course—84 colleges stopped offering the programme this year; only 27 started MCA courses. For students who choose not to apply to an MCA college, the decision is a no-brainer. With many more engineering seats available now, an undergraduate would rather earn a BTech degree followed by a two-year master's than enrol for a bachelor's in computer application and back it up with a three-year MCA that would also eat up six years.

The AICTE has decided to allow colleges to offer a five-year dual degree programme and also permit graduates of science, BSc (computer science) and BSc (information technology) to jump to the second year of the MCA course. Yet, the small positive growth in the sector is from the engineering colleges where new institutes are coming up faster than closures, largely in Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab and Rajasthan.

S S Mantha, Chairman, AICTE said, "This is a turning phase for the professional education sector. Colleges in remote India and institutes of poor quality are not getting students. And for colleges, there is just one key to attracting students: institutes need to be top-of-the-line colleges. There is no pay-off in running a bad college."

(Source: The Times of India)

UGC launches dedicated academic job portal

In keeping with the demand of job aspirations of NET or PhD qualifiers, UGC has launched a dedicated academic job portal enabling candidates to register and create their profile online. The portal, www.ugc.ac.in/jobportal, will facilitate the employers to search and browse academic profile of available candidates and post job vacancies. The HRD Ministry had also strongly advocated for such a website taking in view of the aspirations of the prospective candidates and higher education institutes for an academic job site. "This portal is going to serve the two constituencies namely the job seekers and employers. While it will help students create their academic profile and bring them to the notice of the universities, colleges and other potential employers, it will also enable the employers to post their job vacancies for talent hunt," said Ved Prakash, Acting Chairman, UGC. The portal will also provide browsing, searching, filtering of academic profiles created by qualified candidates on a number of parameters. In addition, universities and other institutes as employer can also verify the NET qualified candidates through the same interface.

(Source: The Indian Express)

Mandatory accreditation for polytechnic institutes mooted

If the HRD Ministry has its way, polytechnic institutions in the country will soon be required to undergo mandatory accreditation and assessment by an industry-sponsored agency recognised by the AICTE. The state boards of technical education will be involved in such rating exercises. As of now, the National Board of Accreditation assesses the courses offered by polytechnics, but the process is not mandatory. The rating from such assessment is given to individual courses and not to the institutions. The Ministry plans to implement reforms such as textbooks for polytechnic subjects in vernacular languages, information and communication technology-enabled classrooms, mentoring polytechnics by established colleges or universities, dual-track education involving mandatory apprenticeship with the industry and a shift from the examination-based assessment and evaluation system to the continuous competency-based assessment.

(Source: The Times of India)

LLM to be a one-year course

The Masters in Law (LLM) programme will now be of one-year duration instead of two.

The UGC has given its nod for this. The aim behind the move is to stop the best legal minds from going abroad to pursue similar programme in less time and retain the best talents in the field. According to the prevailing system, a student has to spend at least seven to eight years after intermediate to gain a masters degree in law. The UGC had set up an expert committee under N R Madhava Menon, Founding Vice Chancellor, National Law School of India University, Bangalore to examine the proposal. The committee endorsed the move and recently submitted its report to the UGC. The committee was set up after the HRD Ministry had

backed recommendations made by the roundtable on legal education in 2009. Only India, Bangladesh and Pakistan impart two-year LLM. The duration had led to students taking up master's programme in universities abroad.

(Source: The Times of India)

UGC to relax rules for selection of heads in state universities

It has decided to relax norms for selecting vice chancellors in state universities. UGC said, "The move followed requests from several state governments to ease the standards. The selection norms prescribed by the UGC will not be mandatory for state-run universities. UGC has mentioned recently that, it is the responsibility of the state to maintain quality and transparency in the selection process. The present UGC norms insist that a VC candidate should be an academician with a minimum of 10 years experience as professor in a university system or 10 years of experience in an equivalent position in a reputed research and/or academic administrative organisation. With the recent move, these norms will no more be mandatory.

(Source: The Times of India)

AICTE warns colleges on fee refund

Engineering colleges and technical institutions including those offering management and catering programmes may lose the AICTE's approval if they fail to refund fees to students who withdraw from the course. The AICTE (Grant of Approvals for Technical Institutions) Regulations 2012 notified a few days ago warns that institutions which do not adhere to the guidelines regarding refund of fees on cancellation of admissions or delay refunds shall be liable for punitive action. The likely action will include withdrawal of approval granted by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) for the programme or the course. Alternatively, the regulatory agency could stop admissions in the course concerned for one academic year or suspend the

approval for supernumerary seats, if any, for an academic year. Besides, the college might be fined up to twice the amount of fees collected per student.

Presently, self-financing colleges and deemed universities rarely refund fees when students withdraw from a course even if they choose to discontinue before the commencement of classes in an academic year. Many institutions withhold the transfer certificate (TC) and academic certificates of students who wish to discontinue unless they pay the fees for the entire duration of the course. Such institutions may also attract a penalty of five times the total fees collected per student for each excess admission. Similarly, colleges which do not have a qualified principal or director for more than 18 months might be barred from admitting students for one year.

(Source: The Indian Express)

New qualifying criteria disappoints many NET aspirants

A large number of teaching aspirants who appeared for the national eligibility test (NET) of the UGC are disappointed with the commission's decision to change the qualifying criterion post publication of the results.

A number of candidates are planning to file a petition against the commission for the alteration. As per the original UGC notification, anyone in the general category who scores 155 marks would be eligible for consideration for the final result. However, the 155 marks score used to be the qualifying total of all the three papers— 100, 100 and 150 marks respectively—and not the aggregate, but now only those with an aggregate of 65% for the three papers, which means 227.5 marks, will make the cut. For the SC and ST category, the new qualification cut-off will be 192.5 and for OBC candidates, it is 210 marks. Surender Singh, Deputy Secretary, UGC (NET) said, "There is no new criterion. The UGC had already notified during inviting applications that the minimum eligibility marks scored

by candidates in each paper would be considered for the preparation of the final result. The methodology for qualifying, after making the exam totally objective had to change, which we had notified. The aspirants must have interpreted it in their favour." The notification on the UGC website states that the final qualifying criteria for junior research fellowship (JRF) and eligibility for lectureship shall be decided by the UGC before the publication of (the) result. In all 5,75,000 candidates took the exam, of which 43,957 have qualified.

(Source: The Times of India)

Study centre tech degree is now invalid

Terminating the validity of degrees and diplomas in technical courses issued by various deemed universities and institutes to the students of the region through distance learning programmes, the Punjab and Haryana High Courts held that the issuance of such academic certificates is illegal. The candidates cannot be deemed to be qualified in the purported subjects in the absence of approval from the UGC.

The decision will primarily affect thousands of employees in Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh, who received promotions on the basis of such degrees and diplomas. The Division Bench, comprising Justices Hemant Gupta and Rajiv Narain Raina, passed the judgment stating that the UGC and AICTE did not approve of this practice.

(Source: The Times of India)



Ireland has the most employable graduates in EU

To double the number of Indian students, Ciaran Cannon, Minister for Education and Skills, Ireland, was in India with one of the biggest education trade delegations, which included representatives from 16 Irish universities and institutes.

The Irish delegation, a mix of representatives from universities and institutes such as Dublin City University, National University of Ireland, Galway, Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin, consider India, Brazil and China to be the key markets. A government body, The Irish Universities Association awarded seven fully-funded scholarships to Indian postgraduate students in 2012. For 2013, the association will award a total of 22 scholarships to students from China, Brazil and India. "The purpose of this trade delegation is to build lasting relationships between Ireland and Indian institutes and attract Indian students to Ireland. We currently have around 100,000 overseas students and around 850 of these students are from India. We are looking at doubling this number in the next two to three years," said Cannon. Irish institutes such as Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin and National University of Ireland, Maynooth have also introduced specific scholarships to woo Indian students. The scholarships can be for any undergraduate course offered in arts, humanities, social science, science, computer science and engineering. The University College Dublin will offer 10 undergraduate scholarships to Indian students in 2013, which will cover 50% of the tuition fee in the science, business, social science and arts programmes. The Irish government

has also relaxed the visa norms for post graduate students coming to the country. Post graduate students can stay in the country for 12 months after the completion of their course to look for jobs. "Ireland has the most employable graduates in the European Union. This is because of strong integration between educational institutes and key industries such as financial services, ICT, pharmacy, life sciences and medicine. The relaxed visa norms will also enable Indian students to work in the country after finishing their studies," said Cannon.

(Source: The Economic Times)

Finland, South Korea top country rankings in providing education

The United States ranks 17th in the developed world for education, according to a global report by education firm Pearson.

Finland and South Korea, not surprisingly, top the list of 40 developed countries with the best education systems, followed by Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore. The rankings are calculated based on various measures, including international test scores, graduation rates between 2006 and 2010, and the prevalence of higher education seekers. Sir Michael Barber, Chief Education Adviser, Pearson told BBC that the high ranking countries tend to offer teachers higher status in society and have a 'culture' of education. The study notes that while funding is an important factor in strong education systems, cultures supportive of learning is even more critical. E.g., the highly ranked Asian countries, where education is highly valued and parents have grand expectations. While Finland and South Korea differ greatly in methods of teaching and learning, they hold the top spots because of a shared social belief

in the importance of education and its 'underlying moral purpose'. The study aims to help policymakers and school leaders identify key factors that lead to successful educational outcomes. The research draws on literacy data as well as figures in government spending on education, school entrance age, teacher salaries and degree of school choice. Researchers also measured socioeconomic outcomes such as national unemployment rates, GDP, life expectancy and prison population.

(Source: www.bbc.co.uk)

MT Educare acquires majority stake in Lakshya Forum

Indian coaching services provider MT Educare has agreed to acquire a 51% stake in its local peer Lakshya Forum for Competitions, the buyer reported. Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed. According to the source, the total deal amount would be paid by MT Educare over three years and is dependent on certain milestones to be achieved by Lakshya. The deal agreement also provides an opportunity to MTEL to acquire complete 100% stake in Lakshya up to 30th November 2018. The acquisition is in-line with MT Educare's offerings in the science section. It will now offer the entire end to end training to all its students aspiring for boards, JEE mains & JEE Advanced and NEET examinations for a successful career in the engineering and medical stream. Lakshya is a test preparation institute founded in 2006. It currently serves to more than 2500 students with faculty strength of 40 teachers of which 20 are IITians and doctors. MT Educare is the holding company of Mumbai-based Mahesh Tutorials, which runs the country's largest school and college tutorial chain and is gaining ground in multiple new training segments. The institution has more than 188 centres in 110 locations across India.

(Source: Business Standard)

McGraw-Hill sells education unit to Apollo for 2.5 billion USD

McGraw-Hill Cos agreed to sell its education unit to Apollo Global Management LLC for 2.5 billion USD as Harold Terry McGraw III, Chief Executive Officer, remakes his family's 124-year-old company. The transaction is expected to close by the year-end or in early 2013. It will have a non-cash impairment charge

of about 450 million to 550 million USD in the fourth quarter and use an estimated 1.9 billion USD in net proceeds to fund share buybacks and debt payments. The shares of McGraw-Hill rose 1.75% to 52.85 USD. Following the sale, McGraw Hill Financial, the new company, will have at its core Standard and Poor, the world's largest credit-rating company. More than a year ago, McGraw-Hill announced plans to split into two businesses, one focussed on educational publishing and the other on financial operations. The sales from the education business have shrunk in seven of the past eight quarters as states and cities have cut school budgets for textbooks. Apollo, co-founded more than two decades ago by Leon Black, is buying the division as the industry reinvents how it publishes content.

"The unit is migrating to a more subscription-based business model, which would have more predictable revenues, and could conceivably have better profitability because you could eliminate the manufacturing and inventory costs," said Peter Appert, Analyst, Piper Jaffray and Co .

(Source: www.bloomberg.com)

Unilazer acquires minority stake in Tree House Education

Indian venture capital investor Unilazer has acquired a 3% stake in a local pre-school operator Tree House Education and Accessories for 172 million INR (USD 3.2mn), the VCCircle news portal reported. According to the source, Unilazer bought 800,000 equity shares of Tree House at a price of INR 215.04 per share from India-focused equity hedge fund Steadview Capital in a bulk deal. In 2011, Tree house had raised around INR 1.12bn through its IPO.

In a recent transaction, it acquired a pre-school division of a local tutoring and test preparation firm MT Educare. Tree House was co-founded by Rajesh Bhatia and Geeta Bhatia in 2007. The company provides pre-school services under its flagship. Unilazer Ventures Ltd is Indian private equity firm backed by businessman Ronnie Screwvala. It is focused on agriculture, healthcare, education and e-commerce sectors.

(Source: www.dealcurry.com)

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