

“Do what is right, not what is easy nor what is popular.” Roy T. Bennett

NATIONAL**STUDY IN INDIA PROG OF HRD MINISTRY LAUNCHED WITH THE LAUNCH OF 'STUDY IN INDIA PORTAL'**

Institutes of National Importance to be opened to foreign students in the first ever initiatives of its kind, 160 Institutions offer 15,000 seats under the programme in the first round

Students across the world will now be able to pursue the education in prominent Indian Educational Institutions. In another ground breaking initiative of HRD Ministry, Union External Affairs Minister, Smt Sushma Swaraj and Minister of State for HRD, Dr. Satya Pal Singh jointly launched the Study in India programme of HRD Ministry by launching the 'Study in India' portal.

The "Study in India' is an innovative initiative to attract students from our partner countries in South Asia, South-East Asia, Middle East and Africa to come and experience the very best of academic learning from the top institutions in India.

This will be achieved through systematic brand-building, identifying quality institutions for receiving the students, creating suitable infrastructure and facilitation structures.

The "Study in India Portal" will be a single window to cover all aspects relating to studying in India for foreign students.

The programme will not only encourage more foreign students to choose India as a destination for higher education but will also double India's market share of global education exports from less than 1% to 2%. The move is also aimed to improve global ranking of Indian educational institutes.

Under the programme, meritorious students would also be provided with fee waiver and scholarship. The Institute concerned will bear the expenditure on the fee waiver based on cross-subsidization or through its existing funding. One of the objectives for the programme is to improve global ranking for Indian educational institutes.

This will be achieved through systematic brand-building, identifying quality institutions for receiving the students, creating suitable infrastructure and facilitation structures.

India's system of higher education is the third largest in the world. While the engineering schools have been the flag bearers of the India's higher education, in keeping with the times and the skill needs of the global workforce India universities are offering a host of other courses such as Masters in Business Administration, Sciences, Liberal Arts, Artificial Intelligence, Photonics and Design Thinking among others.

As a result, many of its higher education institutions figure in the top 100 Asian Universities as per QS and The World University rankings of 2018. At the same time, interesting and niche courses such as Yoga, Ayurveda or Buddhism are also on offer.

The integration of e-SANAD portal and NAD – National Academic Depository (of HRD Ministry), was also launched by Smt Sushma Swaraj on the occasion.

e-Sanad:

e-Sanad is a project aimed at online submission/verification of documents with an ultimate object to extend contact less, cashless, faceless and paperless document attestation service for apostille and normal attestation to applicants in India (to be extended to Indians residing abroad as well in a phased manner).

The project is being implemented by NIC in coordination with CBSE, States/UTs and the Ministry of External Affairs in a phased manner.

National Academic Depository (NAD):

National Academic Depository (NAD) is a 24X7 online store house of all academic awards viz. certificates, diplomas, degrees, mark-sheets etc. duly digitized and lodged by academic institutions / boards / eligibility assessment bodies.

The UGC has signed a tripartite agreement with NSDL Database Management Limited (NDML) and CDSL Ventures Limited (CVL) for operationalising NAD.

NAD not only ensures easy access to and retrieval of an academic award but also validates and guarantees its authenticity and safe storage.

National Academic Depository comprises of two interoperable digital depositories viz. CDSL Ventures Limited (CVL) and NSDL Database Management Limited (NDML).

SUPREME COURT RULES NCMEI HAS WIDE POWERS

The Supreme Court has held that the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI) has original jurisdiction to determine which institution should be granted minority status.

The NCMEI Act empowers the Commission to decide all questions relating to the status of an institution as a minority educational institution and to declare its status as such ensuring Fundamental right under Article 30.

The Constitution grants a fundamental right to all minorities, whether based on religion or language, to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

The wide power given to an independent forum like the NCMEI to declare an institution as a minority educational institution furthered the fundamental right guaranteed under Article 30.

The 2006 amendment to the NCMEI Act conferred powers of appeal against orders of the competent authority to the NCMEI. A power of cancellation was also vested in the NCMEI to cancel a certificate granted either by an authority or the NCMEI

National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI):

The National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI) was established to protect and safeguard the educational institutions which are established by the minorities in India.

The key objective is to ensure that the true amplitude of the educational rights enshrined in Article 30(1) of the Constitution is made available to the members of the notified religious minority communities.

This entails, inter alia, addressing all issues that pertain to the denial, deprivation or violation of the constitutional rights of the minorities to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice, including all issues related to the grant of NOC, minority status certificates and affiliation to universities, wherever applicable.

The commission is headed by a Chairman who belongs to a minority community and has been a Judge of a High Court.

Two members are nominated by Central Government. They too must belong to a minority community and must be "persons of eminence, ability, and integrity".

RESERVE BANK OF INDIA (RBI) NOT TO RELAX NEW BAD LOAN RULES

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) seems to have ruled out relaxations in its new bad loan rules.

The new norms mandate banks to start the resolution process even if there is a default for one day. In many cases, banks have to increase provisioning if the resolution is implemented.

They also mandate banks to report defaults weekly to RBI.

Indian banks are sitting on a stressed assets pool of over Rs10 trillion, of which gross non-performing assets (NPAs) are Rs8.86 trillion. The new framework aims to reduce the arbitrage enjoyed by borrowers in taking loans from banks compared with raising funds from markets.

The new framework has replaced earlier schemes such as strategic debt restructuring (SDR), 5/25 refinancing and Scheme for Sustainable Structuring of Stressed Assets (S4A).

Strategic debt restructuring (SDR):

Under SDR banks who have given loans to a corporate borrower gets the right to convert

the full or part of their loans into equity shares in the loan taken company.

The SDR gives banks more power in the management of the company who has taken the loan and has defaulted.

The SDR initiative can be taken by the group of banks or JLF that have given loans to the particular defaulted entity.

Scheme for Sustainable Structuring of Stressed Assets (S4A):

The S4A Scheme aims at a deep financial restructuring of big debted projects by allowing lender (bank) to acquire equity of the stressed project.

The scheme makes financial restructuring of large projects at the same time helping the lender's ability to deal with such stressed assets.

It is intended to restore the flow of credit to critical sectors including infrastructure.

For an account to be eligible for restructuring under the S4A Scheme, the total loans by all institutional lenders in the account should exceed Rs 500 crore (including rupee loans, foreign currency loans/external commercial borrowings).

Under the S4A Scheme, banks would allow existing promoter to continue in the management even while being a minority shareholder whereas in the case of SDR, the promoter is delinked and ownership is changed.

LAW COMMISSION SUGGESTED GOVT. TO TURN THE BCCI INTO A GOVERNMENT BODY

The Law Commission has suggested to the government that it turn the Board of Control of Cricket in India into a government-controlled body. The Commission has asked the government to classify BCCI as a national sports federation and bring it under the ambit of the Right to Information Act (RTI).

Key recommendations made by the law commission:

BCCI should be classified as "state" under Article 12 of the Constitution so that it is

answerable to authorities like the Supreme Court.

RTI Act should be made applicable to BCCI along with its entire constituent member cricketing associations, provided they fulfill the criteria applicable to BCCI.

By virtue of being the organizers of competitive cricket, BCCI is de facto legislating on sport-related activities.

BCCI, though not a national sports federation, nominates cricketers for the Arjuna Awards. Therefore, the BCCI virtually acts as a national sports federation.

It receives "substantial financing" from governments in the form of tax exemptions and land grants.

Also, functioning of BCCI shows that the government does exercise control over its activities and functioning.

Non-consideration of the role played by the BCCI as monopolistic in the regulation of the game of cricket has resulted in the board "flying under the radar of public scrutiny, encouraged an environment of opacity and non-accountability".

Since BCCI exercises 'state-like' powers affecting the fundamental rights of the stakeholders, guaranteed under the Constitution, it should be viewed as an agency or instrumentality of the state, under Article 12 of the Constitution, thereby making it amenable to the writ jurisdiction of the Supreme Court under Article 32.

OLIVE RIDLEY TURTLES TURNED UP FOR MASS NESTING FOR THE SECOND TIME

In a rare occurrence, olive ridley turtles have turned up for mass nesting for the second time at Rushikulya rookery on Odisha coast. The Rushikulya coast, in Ganjam district of Odisha, is considered to be a major nesting site in the world and lakhs of olive ridleys come here every year to lay eggs.

Also known as the Pacific ridley sea turtle, Olive turtles are a medium-sized species of sea turtle found in warm and tropical waters, primarily in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

They are best known for their behavior of synchronized nesting in mass numbers.

The olive ridley is classified as Vulnerable according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), and is listed in Appendix I of CITES.

The Convention on Migratory Species and the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles have also provided olive ridleys with protection, leading to increased conservation and management for this marine turtle.

SCIENCE AND TECH

MAJOT TECH. GIANTS SIGNED TECH ACCORD TO ENHANCE CYBER SECURITY

Major technology companies including Microsoft, Facebook, Cisco, and SAP have signed onto a pledge, known as Cyber security Tech Accord, to protect their users around the globe against cyber security threats and to abstain from helping any government launch a cyber attack. This is hailed as a “watershed agreement” among companies representing every layer of internet communication.

The tech sector accord will help companies take a principled path towards more effective steps to work together and defend customers around the world.

The accord declares that the signatories will protect all of their customers from threats and will not “help governments launch cyber attacks against innocent citizens and enterprises from anywhere.”

OBJECTIVE:

- Protect all of our users and customers everywhere
- Oppose cyber attacks on innocent citizens and enterprises from anywhere.
- Help empower users, customers and developers to strengthen cyber security protection
- Partner with each other and with likeminded groups to enhance cyber security
