AICTE norms for engineering colleges upheld

Stating that possibility of misuse cannot be a ground to challenge the statutory rules, the Hyderabad High Court has upheld the regulations issued by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) allowing engineering colleges to resort to voluntary disclosure of their infrastructure while seeking online approvals for their courses.

According to the petitioner, this self assessment is leading to several ineligible colleges getting approvals and therefore physical inspection by the council should be made mandatory.

The bench pointed out that "no statutory Regulations can be challenged merely on the ground that there is a possibility of misuse. The rules should be either unconstitutional or contrary to the AICTE Act. The bench made it clear that if a Regulatory Body imposes a greater responsibility, accountability and obligation upon an institution, the same cannot be faulted by suspecting the credentials of all the educational institutions."

All first-year engineering pupils to get special orientation

The All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has begun orientation for undergraduate engineering courses on the lines of some Bachelor in Technology programmes to prepare students for professional education as they shift from school to higher education, especially to a demanding stream like engineering.The six-month mandatory programme will roll out in

100 colleges across the country including a few in Pune and Maharashtra, AICTE chairman Anil Sahasrabuddhe told TOI on Sunday .
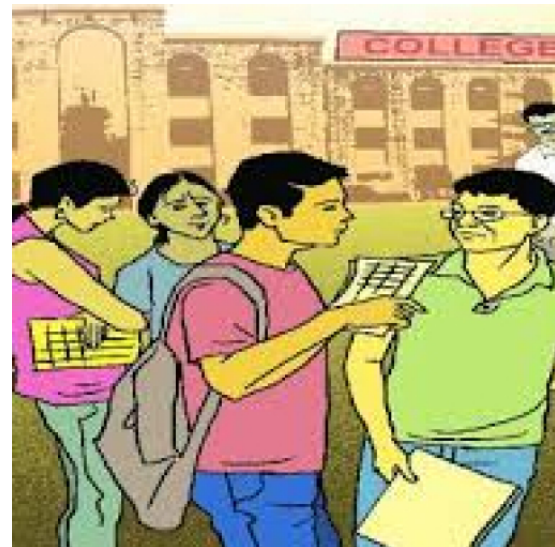
At the end of the six-month programme conducted during the first semester, students would be able to easily deal with academic pressures, time management, study habits and other related matters. A few Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) in the country have started a refresher course for firstyear students.

There have been instances when many quit the course mid-way . To deal with this problem, they designed a special programme in the first semester that would make the students ready ."The council is in the process of identifying the 100 colleges where the programme could be rolled out from 2017-18 academic year". Sahasrabuddhe said the council plans to have at least two colleges in each state this year and then run it full-fledged from the 2018-19 academic year across the country.

Madhya Pradesh's education department signs MoUs with Nasscom, CII to improve hiring

Madhya Pradesh's technical education department will sign MoUs with Confederation of

1,553 private junior colleges seek affiliations with TSBIE this year

A total 1,553 private colleges out of 2,452 applied for affiliations with the Telangana State Board of Intermediate

Indian Industry (CII) and Nasscom in Mumbai on May 19 with an aim to improve placement ratio in engineering colleges The department hopes to rope in the two organizations and allow them to use engineering college labs to enhance cooperation between industry and students and improve academics.Sources said the technical education department is eyeing to improve the placement figures from engineering colleges in the state to 15,000-20,000 annually."During the meeting with Nasscom and CII the department will convince them that there is a large scope of engineering studies in the state. Almost every colleges have huge infrastructure and they can use it. Through this, students studying in that college will be benefited as they also get the opportunity to get training," said a senior official without quoting his name. Department wants the industry bodies to tell colleges about industry requirements and make adequate arrangements so that students can get better job prospects.

Education(TSBIE) as on Friday.

The TSBIE has tightened the affiliation process this year."We have received thousands of online applications seeking affiliations this year where we will conduct inspections and issue affiliations," said Narasimha Reddy, joint secretary of academics at TSBIE.

While the TSBIE officials are awaiting orders from the Telangana government over conduct of online admissions, the affiliation process shall run simultaneously. "If the admissions are conducted online, only affiliated colleges will participate in the admission process. Students will be able to access credentials of each college and will not fall prey to unaffiliated colleges

TSBIE also increased the inspection and affiliation fee by nearly 300 percent. However, the Telangana Private Junior College Managements Association flayed the board's decision to hike inspection and affiliation fees without increasing the tuition fees of the students

"This idea will also help us opening several avenues for the students. In a group of 50-60 students they could be taken by the companies regularly," said officials.Incidentally, the technical education department is keen to improve the placement scenario in the state. Last year, it had decided to start a placement society which would work round the year and provide placement facilities to the engineering students.

Since college managements are functioning purely on scholarships and fee reimbursement, members of the association urged that the board increases the tuition fees from existing Rs 20,000 to Rs 25,000 in science groups in municipal corporations, Rs 15,000 to Rs 18,000 in municipalities and Rs 12,000 to Rs 15,000 in grama panchayats.

From now on "Performance" to determine autonomy of educational institutions

The performance of educational institutions, measured on quality parameters, will henceforth determine the extent of autonomy and the level of regulatory scrutiny they will face. The government has also decided that top-ranking institutions will be exempt from the UGC's review mechanism.

To be applicable to all universities established under a Central Act, a Provincial or State Act as well as Deemed to be University and all autonomous colleges, this regulation will come into effect as soon as it is notified in the Gazette of India. The framework for 'Graded Autonomy' will hinge on the score of an institution given by the Academic and Administrative Audit (AAA) peer team and the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF).

- **TIER I** : For eligibility to this category, an institution must conform to two criteria –– it needs a score of A+/A++ in the accreditation carried out by AAA (score greater than 3.5 on a

4 point scale) and also be ranked among the top-75 institutions in the NIRF rankings for that year.

- **Level of Autonomy:** Having attained the desired level of institutional excellence, these institutions will be free from UGC review mechanism completely. These top category institutions will be free to start new courses and departments, enter into academic collaborations with foreign educational institutions, undertake curricular reforms and introduce academic innovations in tune with the global best practices.

- **TIER II:** For eligibility to this category, an institution must have one of the following criteria –– it needs to score A+/A++ in the accreditation carried out by AAA (score of greater than 3.5 on a 4 point scale) OR be ranked among the top-75 institutions in the NIRF rankings for that year.

- **Level of autonomy:** With a high level of institutional excellence having been achieved, these institutions will not have to go to the UGC to start new departments and courses, set up new campuses, fix fees for programmmes or undertake curricular reform.

- **TIER III:** Institutions which have either scored Grade A in AAA accreditation (score 3-3.5 on a 4 point scale) or which ranks among the top 150 institutions in the NIRF rankings for the year, will fall in this category.

- **Level of autonomy:** With a moderate level of excellence, these institutions will not need to approach the UGC for starting new courses and undertaking curricular reforms. They will, however, be reviewed by the UGC's expert committee every 5-7 years.

- **TIER IV:** Any institutions which has neither scored a Grade A in the AAA accreditation nor is among the top 150 in the NIRF ranking

- **Level of Autonomy:** These institutions will be reviewed and visited by a UGC Expert Committee as per UGC Regulations. These reviews will aim at identifying constraints and lacunae

hampering the institution. A peer team will 'mentor' and handhold such institutions and suggest best practices to improve in the required areas.

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If any of the tier-1 and tier-II institutions fail to get the required ranking for the second consecutive year, it will automatically slide down to a lower level of autonomy and open itself to greater UGC scrutiny.

The autonomy of institutions granted under various categories will be protected and override all other UGC regulations that may come into conflict with it.

Every institution which gets autonomy must take it upon itself to ensure basic minimum requirements such as infrastructure, faculty and other facilities prescribed by UGC. They will also be expected to strictly follow UGC regulations on specific degrees.

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