

IONEDUCATION NEWS-LETTER

March 2018 - Volume 1 / Issue 24



India, France Mutual Recognition of Academic Qualifications pact 'Historic': Javadekar

Underlining the strong and long-standing relationship between France and India, Union Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar termed as "historic" the inking of an MoU on "mutual recognition of educational qualifications" between the two countries.



"It is historic for the first time, a government to government MoU has been signed to mutually recognize academic qualifications. It will help the student community. There used to be only bilateral arrangements between institutions to institutions," he said while speaking at the Knowledge Summit at Pravasi Bharatiya Bhawan, New Delhi in the presence of French Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation Mrs Frederique Vidal.

"I hope more and more countries, like France, will come forward for mutual recognition of academic qualifications so that the mobility of students and professionals improves," Mr. Javadekar added.

The first high-level India-France Knowledge Summit, 2018 was jointly organised yesterday by French Institute in India, along with Ministry of Higher Education, Research & Innovation (MESRI), France and co-Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

Pointing that more than 5000 Indian students are studying in France and about 1500 French Students in India, the Minister said the HRD Ministry would launch "Study in India" initiative to attract more and more students from other countries to India.

Apart from MoU on Mutual Recognition of Academic Qualifications between India and France, 15 MoUs between various institutions of India and France in the areas of Higher Education, Research, Innovation, Faculty exchange, Scientific Cooperation were exchanged.

Mrs. Frederique Vidal, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Government of France said that the knowledge summit is an essential step toward the goal set by the French Government to attract 10,000 students to France by 2020.

Last year, over 5000 Indian students chose France as a study destination, showing a 60% increase from the previous year.

The summit explored seven priority sectors for collaboration: space and aeronautics, mathematics and information technology, agronomy and food processing, Eco-energy, natural resources and bio-active compounds, architecture and urban planning and urban mobility.

In a major expansion of strategic ties, India and France yesterday inked 14 pacts in key areas of defence, security, nuclear energy and protection of classified information besides resolving to deepen cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region and step up joint efforts to contain terrorism.

The agreements were signed after extensive talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron, including on the changing security dynamics in the Indian Ocean and Pacific.

UGC grants full autonomy to 62 higher educational institutes

The University Grants Commission (UGC) approved full autonomy for 62 higher educational institutions, including JNU, BHU, AMU, TERI and University of Hyderabad, which have maintained high standards of excellence.

The decision was taken at a UGC meeting where five central universities, 21 state universities, 26 private universities besides 10 other colleges were granted autonomy under the Autonomous Colleges Regulation.

Union Human resource Development minister Prakash Javadekar hailed as "historic" the UGC move which will enable the selected institutes to decide their admission procedure, fee structure and curriculum, among others.

"Today is a historic day for higher education in India. These quality institutions will get complete autonomy by which they can start new courses, new departments, new programs, off campuses, skill courses, research parks, appoint foreign faculty, take foreign students, offer variable incentive packages, introduce online distance learning," Javadekar told reporters here.

These institutes can also get into academic collaboration with top five hundred universities of the world. And for all of this they will not have to come to the regulator again and again for seeking permission because they have maintained quality and achieved a benchmark of 3.26 and above NAAC (National Accreditation and Assessment Council) ranking.

The central universities which have been granted autonomy include - Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Banaras Hindu University (BHU), University of Hyderabad and the English and Foreign Languages University, Telangana.

The state universities which have been granted the autonomous status are Jadavpur University, Andhra University, Aligappa University, National University of Law, Utkal University, Kurukshetra University, Osmania University, Guru Nanak Dev University, University of Jammu, University of Mysore, Anna University, Panjab University and University of Madras, among others.

OP Jindal Global University, Sonipat and Pandit Deen Dayal Petroleum University, Gujarat are among the private institutions selected by the UGC for the autonomous status.

The colleges will be free to conduct admissions, decide curriculum, conduct exams on their own and evaluate them and declare the results. However, the degrees which will be awarded will have the university name along with theirs.

Refer the link :

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=share&v=cauWpUekgws>

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UGC move should be inclusive, profit can't be motive: Faculty

The UGC's move to grant full autonomy to three universities has failed to amuse students and faculty members who fear that the status might not only push the existing facilities southwards, but also prove to be a step towards commercialization of education in case the state government gets involved in the various activities.

Hoping that the managements do not start running the universities for profit, they urged the authorities to ensure that these institutes are still within the reach of economically backward classes.

“While academic and administrative autonomy is welcome, financial

autonomy might mean that the universities increase the fee at whim and start more self-financing courses to become self-sustained. Indirectly, this might mean inching towards privatization,” said K Laxmi Narayana, professor, UoH. He also questioned the universities’ need to recruit foreign faculty, when the unemployment rate in the country is alarmingly high, and said that the move will give rise to different in salary structures within varsities, which will adversely impact local professors.

One section of the faculty, however, hoped that universities would recruit foreign faculty only for certain courses that do not have adequate local talent.

The apprehensions of students were rooted in welfare of those studying in these universities, which they insisted must not be ignored. “When a varsity is given full freedom, there is a chance the state gets involved in its functioning. This should be avoided. Authorities should make welfare of students their priority,” said P Srihari, a student of OU. Students also hoped that universities have the freedom to start new courses as per industry demands.

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IonIdea

38-40, EPIP Zone, Whitefield, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560066

Office Phone: +91 (80)-665-81500 (extn. 1052, 1064)

Email : edu@ionidea.com | Website : <http://www.ion-education.com/>

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