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QUIET ROLLBACK OF LPG PRICE HIKE ORDER

Monthly hikes of ₹4 per cylinder withdrawn as it was deemed contrary to the Ujjwala scheme to give the poor free cooking gas connections

DECISION TAKEN TWO MONTHS AGO

An order dated May 30, 2017 authorised an increase in prices of subsidised domestic LPG by ₹4 per cylinder per month till the reduction of govt subsidy to 'nil' or March 2018. It later dawned on the government that this would hurt the objective of the Ujjwala scheme, and it withdrew the order in October

BUT PRICES ROSE EVEN AFTER OCTOBER

■ Even after the order was withdrawn, prices of subsidised LPG continued to rise because of taxation issues, said a source
■ The price of subsidised LPG was last raised by ₹4.50 per cylinder on Nov 1 to ₹495.69, according to a notification by state-owned firms. The price was ₹419.18 in June 2016

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21% institutes don't offer industry exposure to students

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE STUDY

Four institutes out of 4,790 had in-depth linkage with industry

1,626 institutes interacted with 20 or more companies in past two years

893 institutes filed at least one patent in past two years

125 institutes earned ₹50 lakh or more from projects

854 institutes incubated at least two start-ups in past two years

114 institutes received funds of ₹50 lakh or more from industries in past two years

SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA @New Delhi

DESPITE the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) rule of mandatory internships for students in technical institutions, over 21 per cent institutions teaching engineering, management, architecture and pharmacy do not offer any industry exposure to students, a survey has found.

The AICTE-Confederation of Indian Industries Survey of Industry Linked Technical Institute 2017 on mostly private technical institutes from tier II and tier III cities also highlighted that only four out of over 4,500 institutes surveyed had industry links that can be rated as "extremely good or in-depth". Only 1,626 institutes, of the total 4,790 surveyed between June and Au-



gust this year, had interacted with 20 or more companies in the last two years, while only 114 had received funds of ₹50 lakh or more for research innovations.

The findings do not include data from the Indian Institute of Technology (IITs), Indian Institute of Management (IIMs) and

other Centrally-funded technical institutes as they did not participate in the survey.

"The survey points out that employability of students taught in non-premier institutes remains a challenge owing to the low in-training industry exposure and the quality of education

received," said an executive related with the survey.

"A strong school-industry linkage is a necessity to bring about skilled and efficient manpower. It is not only about providing on the job training or lectures to vocational students by experts but also crucial from the industry point of view," he added.

Anil Sahasrabudde, AICTE chairman said the council is "facilitating internship programmes of over five lakh students in established firms, start-ups and government departments but several institutes need to chalk out their paths".

Last year, a survey by employability assessment firm Aspiring Minds said 95 per cent of 10 lakh engineers who pass out every year don't have industry relevant skills.

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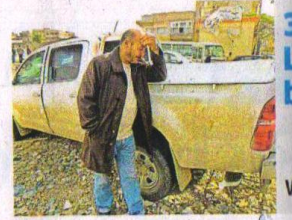
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Saras debuts at HAL airport

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Lessons on Indian values for B Tech students

Prakash Kumar

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Engineering students will have to undergo a six-week internship, take a paper on environmental studies and also learn Indian values and ethics.

Chapters on traditional knowledge and ancient wisdom in science and technology will also be part of the revised curriculum for B Tech programmes released by the government on Wednesday.

The revised curriculum,

developed by an expert team comprising faculty members from the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Industry after a gap of more than 15 years, has "drastically" reduced the hours of studies for undergraduate programmes in engineering and provides for more "activity-oriented" courses to enable students to become industry-ready.

The credit hours for all undergraduate engineering and technology programmes have been brought

down to 160 from 200 under the updated curriculum with provisions for "continuous evaluation" of the students' progress.

A three-week mandatory induction program has also been introduced for the first year B Tech students to help them "adjust to the new environment" as they come with diverse thoughts, backgrounds and preparations.

"A novel concept of Virtual Laboratories has also been introduced in the model curriculum for engi-

neering. The concerns over innovation and research have well been addressed under the revised curriculum. It will transform engineering education in India," said Anil Sahashrabudhe, chairman of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

A student will now be eligible to get an undergraduate degree (B Tech) with honours or additional Minor Engineering degree if he/she completes an additional 20 credits.

AICTE releases new model curriculum

VIKAS PATHAK
NEW DELHI

The All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) on Wednesday formally released its new model curriculum for engineering and technical courses, reducing the credits to be earned for an undergraduate degree from 220 to 160.

The time freed would be utilised for practical and creative activities, including hackathons, an official said.

The AICTE also decided to make internships mandatory for the award of degrees. While there were internships earlier too, an official said, there were no concrete guidelines.

Since all institutions did not have mandatory internships, technical graduates were sometimes found unemployable by the industry.

This was set to change with the new guidelines, it is felt. The internship would

Training for teachers

There may soon be mandatory one-year training for those who want to teach in higher technical institutions.

This was made clear at the launch of the model curriculum for technical education. In the first semester of training, an inductee teacher will have to pass eight modules.

have a minimum of 14 credits. Each credit means 40-45 hours of work.

The new framework would also mandate that all institutions must have a training and placement cell.

While the curriculum had been formally rearranged, a task force would meet in February to facilitate its implementation.

Engineering students will have to complete mini-project from this year

This is in addition to the final project that they have to submit; syllabi of several courses to be revamped

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

It will now be compulsory for engineering students of the Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU) to complete a mini-project from the 2018-19 academic year. This is in addition to the final project that students have to submit.

Speaking about this at a press conference on Wednesday, Vice-Chancellor Karisiddappa said that students would have to pursue the mini-project between the fourth and fifth semester. He added

that the aim of introducing this was to enhance “employability of students”.

According to the Vice-Chancellor, this is part of the model curriculum that would be implemented from the 2018-19 academic year. Besides, the university would also revamp the syllabi of several courses. “Students will be made to teach different computer languages. We are also planning to introduce virtual lab concept,” he said.

Starting this year, VTU would also encourage multidisciplinary projects. “A civil

engineering student can take projects in computer science or any other. We are in an era of multidisciplinary learning and projects. Students require sufficient knowledge and they can grasp it this way. Having knowledge in one domain is, however, no longer enough,” said the Vice-Chancellor. VTU is also approaching several multinational companies and government companies to improve internship opportunities.

Jumbling of papers

With the recent question pap-

er leak of one of the engineering papers, the university was considering a “digital jumbling of question papers” where papers would be set online from a common question bank. The university had found that a professor from a private college who was one of the paper-setters was involved in the paper leak and a re-exam had to be ordered.

“We are considering digital question paper setting system to avoid any kind of malpractice by paper-setters; a final decision will be taken soon about it.”

Insurance for students

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

VTU authorities are in talks with a bank to provide engineering students insurance if they meet with an accident in the labs or on the college premises. Officials said that the modalities would be finalised shortly.