

# 'No dearth of funds for training teachers'

## Union HRD Minister Pallam Raju denies reports of proposed budgetary cuts

Special Correspondent

**HYDERABAD:** Union HRD Minister M.M. Pallam Raju has affirmed that there is no shortage of budget allocations for the teacher training programmes. He denied reports of any proposed budgetary cuts in the teacher education schemes.

"The overall budget may not be to our expectations but we will not compromise on quality", he said.

Earlier, inaugurating the Vice-Chancellors meet on 'ICT Leadership in Higher Education', he admitted that shortage of quality teachers was a challenge and it can be tackled only through maximum utilisation of technology.

The three-day meet organised by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, British Council, Commonwealth of Learning, Canada; and IGNOU, New Delhi, will discuss various issues concerned with ICT and its usage in promotion of higher education.

ICT was the leveller between rural and urban learners, the poor and the rich, the minister said, adding that the challenge lies in preparing modules to address the



M.M. Pallam Raju

first generation learners. Open universities and distance education institutions too need to instil confidence among the learners about the quality of the degrees gained. These institutions must focus on imparting primary skills at the polytechnic and ITI level too.

VCs should take a proactive role in utilising the National Knowledge Network, he said, announcing that 200 community colleges would be started in polytechnics for capacity building based on local needs.

IGNOU VC Gopinath Pradhan, BRAOU VC P. Prakash and Director of British Council-South India, Paul Sellers also spoke.

THE HINDU

## Pallam Opens VCs' Meet

Express News Service

**Hyderabad:** A three-day vice-chancellors' meeting on 'ICT Leadership in Higher Education' was inaugurated by Union minister of human resource development MM Pallam Raju here Sunday.

Lauding open universities for catering to higher education needs, Pallam Raju said distance education mode is the most effective channel to reach the uneducated. He asked open universities to fully explore and utilise the modern ICT technologies.

He said 230 million children were pursuing school education in the country and

1.10 million children in the age group of 1-12 years were covered by the mid-day meal scheme. In order to reach the such a vast population, he said, the Union government was implementing the Right to Education Act 2013. The government would expand higher education on a massive scale and improve primary education.

Former UGC chairman Arun Nigavekar, IGNOU vice-chancellor Gopinath Pradhan, Dr BR Ambedkar Open University vice-chancellor P Prakash, British Council director (South) Paul Sellers, CEMCA director Sanjahy Mishra also spoke.

Indian Express



MM Pallamraju, Union Minister for HRD, inaugurating Vice-Chancellors' Meet on ICT Leadership in Higher Education at Hyderabad on Sunday. (From left) Paul Sellers of British Council, Sanjay Mishra of CECMA, P Prakash, VC of BRAOU, and Arun Nigvekar, former chairman of UGC

## Pallam assures aid for teachers education

OUR BUREAU

Announcing that there would be no paucity of funds for teacher training programmes in next budget, Union Minister for Human Resources Development MM Pallamraju said greater stress would be on improving the quality of education. He was speaking after inaugurating a two-day conference of Vice Chancellors and academicians on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Leadership in Higher Education in Hyderabad on Sunday, he said. "Let me assure you that I am committed to improving the quality of education. This has to be taken up on a faster and wider note and the sole emphasis of 12th Five year Plan will be on this aspect only. So, we will not lower the spending on capacity upgradation in institutes of higher learning."

On community colleges, he said a concerted effort is going on to empower and train the local people for their (local) needs. Nearly two hundred colleges will be developed in a big way and they will be connected to local polytechnics and other institutions, he added.

Stating that there is 70% shortage of faculty in the new central universities, he suggested that by increasing the capacity building through various means of education, we can address the issue. "The current enrollment in Higher Education is 18% and we plan to increase it to 30% by 2020. This can be done

through increasing technological application like satellite, net, high speed fibre network in universities"

The Minister has identified some grey areas in university education system viz not using the technology to its optimum level. "The establishment of LAN is not there in many universities. For fear of public that information has to be provided through RTI and other means, many universities have not upgraded themselves. "The continuing demographic dividend in India could make substantial addition in the Higher education sphere in next ten years. We should visualize the future changes and address them. ICT should focus on all areas like skilling people in polytechnics, IITs etc. We should also try to eliminate the digital divide" Pallam Raju exhorted. Flip classrooms, education through satellites and other means will be encouraged on a larger scale, he declared.

Eminent educationist and former chairman of UGC Prof. Arun Nigvekar said nearly 4.5 crore new entrants will be there in Higher Education sector in the next eight years. "New challenges require new leaders to address them. The leaders should be technologically sound. They should have new thoughts to address the rising problems" he suggested.

The Meet was organized by BR Ambedkar Open University in association with the British Council, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and IGNOU. The

meet will prepare a blue print for developing leadership in ICT and forwarded to MHRD and UGC.

### PM enquires about effectiveness of Distance Education

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has enquired the effectiveness of Distance Education in India and the recent changes that are introduced in the system. Speaking at the inauguration of ICT Leadership in Higher Education in Hyderabad on Sunday, Union Minister for Human Development Resources MM Pallamraju disclosed this to all the vice chancellors and academics.

"How effective is our distance education system? How was it received?' the Prime Minister has asked me while I was travelling with him during his trip to Hyderabad to review the situation in the aftermath of bomb blasts here.

I told him that something more is needed to sharpen the quality and it is possible through the integration of conventional education system with technological upgradation that is now taking place," Pallamraju revealed.

"The prime minister's pertinent question assumes significance and we all should ponder over on how to improvise the system in good deal," he felt.

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