



SC asks Centre to review status of deemed varsities

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NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Supreme Court on Friday directed for reviewing status of deemed universities in the country and ordered the UGC to restrain them from using the word 'university' within one month.

Finding "flagrant violation of norms and policies" by them, the top court directed the Union government to form a three-member committee to suggest a road map for strengthening and setting up of oversight and regulatory mechanism for those varsities within six months.

It restrained all deemed universities from carrying on any courses in distance education mode from the academic session 2018-2019 onwards, unless and until specifically permitted. The court also ruled that engineering courses cannot be run by the deemed universities through distance education mode without guidelines and approvals from the AICTE.

Passing a slew of directions, a bench of Justices Adarsh Kumar Goel and UU Lalit said the extent of commercialization of education has seriously affected credibility of standards in education. "It has come to our notice that many institutions which are conferred the status of Deemed to be Universities are using the word "Univer-

SC observation

- Union govt to appoint committee within one month to review deemed universities
- Govt told to put in place regulatory & oversight mechanism within six months
- AICTE regulations 1994 apply to all deemed universities
- No deemed university to carry on any courses in distance education
- UGC directed to restrain deemed university from using word 'university'
- SC cancels engineering degrees granted by four varsities after 2005 without approval
- SC directs CBI probe against officials who abused their position to advance commercial interests

sity", which in our view is opposed to the spirit of Section 23 of the UGC Act. The UGC shall take appropriate steps to stop such practice," the bench said.

In its 118-page judgement highlighting lack of effective oversight and regulatory mechanism over "the Deemed to be Universities", the apex court said, "The UGC had completely failed to remedy the situation. Serious question has therefore arisen as to the manning of the UGC itself for its effective working."

Relying upon then UGC chairman Ved Prakash's affidavit that disclosed how permissions were granted to introduce courses by the deemed universities without any authority, the bench said, "On one hand, the authorities were proclaiming their policy state-

ments and on the other, despite there being complaints, they went about granting permissions. Their conduct and approach is difficult to explain on any rational basis and leaves much to be desired."

The court directed CBI probe against officials for allowing deemed universities Vinayaka Mission's research Foundation, Salem, Tamil Nadu, IASE Gandhi Vidya Mandir, Sardarghahr Rajasthan, JRN Vidyapeeth Udaipur, Rajasthan and Allahabad Agriculture Research Institute, Allahabad to run B E/B Tech courses through distance education. It also ordered for cancellation of the degrees awarded to candidates after academic session 2001-05 and recalling of any consequent job benefits.

Deemed universities can't offer distance education

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THE Supreme Court on Friday restrained all deemed universities across the country from continuing any distance learning courses from the next academic year without prior approval of the regulatory authorities and ordered a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into granting of retrospective approvals to four of them.

The apex court also directed the University Grants Commission (UGC) to restrain such institutions from using the word 'University' within one month.

Ordering a CBI inquiry onto the officials who had allowed deemed universities to offer the distance learning courses which was not allowed, the court also asked the government to constitute a high-level committee to examine the functioning of deemed universities within one month.

"We direct the CBI to carry out thorough investigation into the conduct of the concerned officials who dealt with the matters and went about the granting permissions against the policy and who abused their position to advance their commercial interest illegally," the court said.

The Committee may examine the issues indicated above and suggest a road map for strengthening and setting up of oversight and regulatory mechanism in the relevant field of higher education and allied issues within six months.

The Committee may also suggest oversight mechanism to regulate the Deemed to be Universities and government may examine the report and take such action as may be considered appropriate within one month and apprise the court by August 31, 2018.

The court was hearing a batch of appeals against the decisions of Orissa High Court and Punjab and Haryana HC.

