



National Medical Commission to be set up in six months, says Union Minister

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The National Medical Commission to replace the scam-tainted Medical Council of India, would be set up within six months, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said here on Thursday.

Each of the 33 members of the NMC (barring the ones having ex-officio positions) will have a four years term. At the beginning and end of their tenure they will have to declare their income and assets for the sake of probity and transparency.

Once they leave, none of the members would be eligible to join any medical college for a period of two years to avoid conflict of interest issues.

The controversial bill that seeks to overhaul the cash-rich medical education sector has received the Presidential ascent on Thursday to become a law.

For the past 15 years, the Centre was trying to replace the MCI with a new agency, but two previous attempts came a cropper because of the oppo-

sition from state governments and a section of doctors.

Though the new law has a provision to form the NMC within nine months, Vardhan said the commission was likely to be in place within six months.

Contrary to the criticism of NMC being too heavily loaded in favour of the Centre, the minister said 19 out of 33 members would be from the states.

The rules would be framed in such a way so that maximum number of states can be represented in the national body, said an official.

Vardhan said a lot of misinformation was spread on the NMC bill, but after discussions with the Health Ministry officials both Indian Medical Association and protesting resident doctors saw merits in the legislation and called off their strikes.

The NMC will regulate the medical education through four boards on (1) undergraduate education (2) postgraduate education (3) medical assess-

ment and rating of colleges and (4) ethics and registration of doctors. The registry would be a live one.

In addition to the registry of doctors, there would also be a registry for specially trained community health workers, who would be granted a "limited licence to practice medicine at mid-level". Only those who are already trained in other branches of modern medicine like nursing would be considered.

Officials categorically ruled out people trained in Indian systems of medicines like Ayurveda or Unani to be eligible for such community health providers. It has been left to the NMC to decide what additional training would be required for people like trained nurses to become a community health worker.

Absence of such a cadre is one of the weaknesses of Indian public health system as the country suffers from a big shortage of doctors, most of whom are concentrated in urban areas.

Universities up their game as rankings get popular

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Bengaluru: With higher educational institutions' rankings—from the reputed London-based QS and Times Higher Education to the ministry of human resource development's NIRF, Karnataka Higher Education Council and several private magazines—gaining popularity among the public, universities have stepped up a gear.

Several universities, private and deemed, have set up internal committees to track their growth in various rankings and chart out ways to improve their slots. Every ranking exercise has its own set of parameters to rate institutions. The committees not only maintain a record of their achievements but also keep a close watch on their peers and competitors.

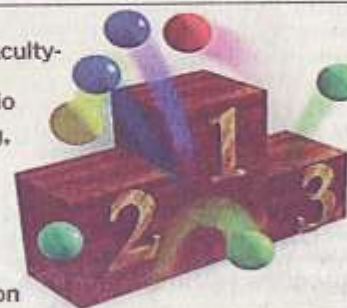
For instance, Garden City University has set up a committee in each department to catalogue its achievements. "As a young university, we are conscious of the quality of education we provide. We have picked a combination of parameters from THE, QS and NIRF rankings, including teaching and learning, research and development and international collaboration. Each department works towards improvement in these areas. We have an international advisory board only to improve our global approach. The real test is in cracking global rankings. Not just funds, but will-power is also required to crack the international lea-

RATING PARAMETERS

Quacquarelli Symonds | Academic reputation, employer reputation, faculty-student ratio, citation per faculty, international faculty to student ratio

Times Higher Education | Teaching, research, citations, international outlook, industry outcome

NIRF | Teaching, learning and resources, research productivity and impact, graduation outcome, outreach and inclusivity, perception



Panel draws up strategies to excel

“Rankings are important not just for attracting students. It's about getting to understand where we stand as an institution and how we can get better. We try to be a part of rankings released by credible agencies. Each agency has certain yardsticks. Our committee studies these parameters and plans strategies to excel in them

SY Kulkarni | VICE-CHANCELLOR, REVA UNIVERSITY

gue tables,” said Christo V Joseph, director of the varsity.

Christ (deemed-to-be) university has a six-member panel, which coordinates with all departments to collect data for NIRF rankings and draw up strategies for improvement. Reva University, that falls between 150 and 200 in NIRF rankings, also has a four-member committee with senior professors as members.

As rankings are based on comparisons, it's also important for institutions to keep tabs on their peers. With data on several parameters like number of research papers and patents in the public forum, it's easy to do so.

“Research is a major thrust area in rankings. In India, one requires at least five years for a patent to be granted. Last year,

many of our PhDs came just after we filed the data for rankings. If we were unlucky last time, we would be lucky this year. It would be the opposite for our peers. The parameter of perception is not in our hands. But it's about the noise we make being heard by the right people. Based on our previous rankings, we zero in on our shortcomings and correct them. We check what the others have got right and how they did it. We have a thumb rule of 15-25% improvement in our performance from the previous year,” explained Santhosh MS, joint registrar, Jain University.

While several academicians feel ranking is not the correct reflection of a university and needn't be taken seriously, institutions find it difficult to ignore.