

BIG-BANG EDUCATION REFORM ON WAY

HEERA to Bring Back the Shine in Higher Education

Modi govt working on single higher education regulator, replacing UGC & AICTE

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New Delhi: Big-bang education reform is on its way – the Modi government is all set to scrap the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and replace them with one higher education regulator, tentatively christened Higher Education Empowerment Regulation Agency (HEERA).

The decision to go ahead with this radical change, long advocated by experts but never implemented, was taken after a meeting on education chaired by the prime minister in early March. If required, and since setting up a new regulator may take some time, amendments to existing rules will be considered as an interim reform measure. Senior officials who spoke off record told ET that work is on at a rapid pace on framing the HEERA legislation. The human resource development (HRD) ministry and the Niti Aayog are working on the new law. A committee that has, among others, Niti Aayog CEO Ami-

Why Single Higher Education Regulator:

Multiple regulatory bodies with overlapping jurisdiction and grey areas

Excessive and restrictive regulation & lack of institutional autonomy

Regulatory and grants/funds-giving roles mixed up

Ambiguous and subjective norms prescribed by regulators

tabh Kant and higher education secretary KK Sharma as members, is working on the detailed blueprint.

One senior official said replacing UGC and AICTE by a single regulator will be the “cleanest, most sweeping reform” that will “eliminate all overlaps in jurisdiction and also do away with regulatory provisions that may no longer be relevant”. While the idea of replacing multiple regulatory authorities with a single and streamlined one is not new – several committees including the Yashpal Committee and the National Knowledge Commission of the UPA era and the Hari Gautam Committee set up by this government have recommended the same – the reform never happened.

