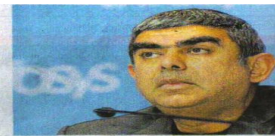




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One-third of BE colleges seek lower fee

Reshma Ravishanker

BENGALURU, DHNS: At least one-third of the engineering colleges in the state have sought a lower fee this academic year compared to that of the previous year.

Chairman of the Fee Regulation Committee Justice Shyelndra Kumar said that

these colleges, which had approached the committee housed at the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) have sought a fee of less than Rs 1.75 lakh, which is lower than the average upper limit fixed by the committee.

"There are around 200 engineering colleges in the state.

Of these, at least one third these have proposed a fee less than what we have fixed. There was an upper limit of Rs 1.75 lakh," he said on Thursday.

This could be largely attributed to a lower demand for engineering seats in professional colleges, according to experts.

The last academic year, after the KEA had complet-

ed its counselling process for engineering college seats in the state, 20,000 seats had remained vacant.

While some medical colleges have demanded a fee as high as Rs 44 lakh, the highest that an engineering college has quoted does not exceed Rs 5 lakh.

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One-third of BE...

BE fee, from Page 1

Some engineering colleges have quoted a fee that is less than Rs 50,000 a student per year. According to the Fee Regulation Committee, the highest fee has been quoted by RV College of Engineering at Rs 4.45 lakh. "A few engineering colleges are doing well. These are housed in Bengaluru, Tumakuru and Belagavi. Barring these, colleges have told us that seats are lying vacant as there is lesser demand. Students believe that there are fewer job opportunities and are exploring alternative career options," said a senior official from KEA.

M K Panduranga Setty, secretary, Karnataka Unaided Private Engineering Colleges Association said, "There are 212 engineering colleges in the city. Last year, 40% of engineering seats fell vacant. This time, it is expected to drop even further. This is because there is no employment."

He explained it could also vary between colleges. "The quality of engineering colleges has come down. Engineering colleges are mushrooming. The better colleges follow AICTE norms for providing a certain salary for lecturers. They are colleges that have NAAC and NBA recognition. They are bound to charge a higher fee and provide better education," he said.

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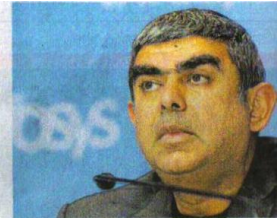
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Panel wants professional colleges to collect fee in cheques

BENGALURU: In the days to come, professional colleges across the state could be asked to collect fees only through cheque and not cash.

According to official sources, the Admission Overseeing Committee is all set to seek that the state government makes this mandatory.

Colleges that charge fees above Rs 20,000 will be made to collect fee by means of cheque only.

Justice B Manohar, chairman, Admission Overseeing Committee, Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) said that provisions of the Income Tax Act made them lay down such a mandate. "Section 269 (SS) of the In-

come Tax Act's chapter 20B has a provision where colleges can be asked to collect fee only by means of cheque. The committee is contemplating on discussing this with the government in the upcoming meeting and have an amendment introduced in the Karnataka Professional Educational Institutions Act in this regard," he said.

Complaint to PMO

This comes in the wake of an individual complaint that the committee had received, forwarded by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) recently. A copy of the complaint is available with *DH*.

An anonymous complaint was sent to the PMO about a private engineering college

in Mangaluru that had insisted the parents to pay a part of the fee in cash only. The same was referred to the Admissions Overseeing Committee.

The committee had looked into the complaint and a show-cause notice was issued to the college, seeking an explanation within 10 days. "The college wrote back to us. We did not find any concrete evidence against the college. Also, we could not reach out to the complainant as it was an anonymous letter. We had to stall it there after seeking an explanation from the college," said Justice Manohar.

The college had in this case responded to the committee stating that 80%

of their seats were filled through KEA. "Only for the remaining nearly 20% of students who take admission under the management and COMED-K quota, the admission process is completed at the college counter.

Majority of these students pay their fee through cheque, bank draft or by digital way. Sometimes, such students who are from distant places having not brought sufficient amount, perhaps drawn money from the ATMs available at the campus and paid the same to the college office as it was deemed to be convenient for them. Henceforth, we will avoid such practises," the college responded.

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