

## Mumbai varsity now has Harvard-style virtual classroom

Mumbai, Aug 17 (IANS) University learning will now be directly accessible to millions of students in the remotest parts of the state with the new Multipurpose Virtual Classroom (MVC) launched at Mumbai University here Saturday.

The MVC will initially be used to live-stream special lectures by eminent resource persons, workshops and conferences, and solve the acute problems of shortage of qualified teachers, besides making interactive learning possible within limited resources.

Stated to be the first of its kind in India in a regular university, the MVC has been designed on the lines of a similar one in Harvard University, USA, and will be used for multiple academic activities including online courses, in future.

Maharashtra Governor K. Sankaranarayanan, who inaugurated it, urged Mumbai University Vice Chancellor Rajan Welukar to prepare a roadmap to catapult the university to the top varsities of the world in a time-bound manner.

Ruing that it was hardly a matter of pride that no Indian university figures in the list of the top 200 in the world, the governor said that being one of the oldest in India, Mumbai University had all the ingredients to break into the world-class league.

"We need to introspect why our students are enrolling in the universities in the US and UK. Why can't we provide them the same programmes and learning experience here in our own university?" Sankaranarayanan asked, urging the varsity to focus on campus development and offer latest programmes to students.

Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan said that Indian universities lacked global ranking because of lack of faculty.

"Unless we get the highest quality of faculty who are ready to adapt to new technology, our universities will not be able to get world-class ranking", Chavan said.

Assuring full support from the state government to all other universities in the state in implementing such MVS, Chavan expressed the hope that the virtual classroom will also be used for teachers' training and skill development, and to provide education to working people in the evening.

The MVC is fully automated and controlled using touch panels, entirely designed by the varsity's in-house computer team.

As many as 420 of the 700 colleges affiliated to the university have already enrolled for the digital system, A-VIEW and videos of important academic events would be uploaded on the university website for later viewing.

The MVC will make available through Internet all facilities of the National Mission Education through Information and Communication Technology (NME-ICT) of the union ministry of human resources and the A-VIEW virtual learning tool designed by Amrita University.

Present on the occasion were Maharashtra Higher and Technical Education Minister D.P. Sawant, Mumbai University Vice Chancellor Rajan Welukar, Pro Vice Chancellor Naresh Chandra, academics and industrialists.