

No more UGC, AICTE:

Govt plans one regulator

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THE Centre may introduce a major bill to overhaul India's higher-education regulatory framework by replacing the UGC, AICTE, and NCTE. Senior government sources said the Union Cabinet reportedly cleared the proposal on Friday, and the legislation may be tabled in Parliament during the ongoing Winter Session, which concludes on December 19.

Sources said the legislation—earlier known as the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) Bill—has been re-named the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhikshan Bill. In line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, it aims to subsume the University Grants Commission, the All India Council for Technical Education, and the National Council for Teacher Education into a single regulator. One official explained that while the UGC currently manages non-technical higher edu-

cation, the AICTE oversees technical institutions and the NCTE regulates teacher education, “the bill proposes the creation of a single regulator for higher education,” though medical and law colleges will remain outside its scope.

Another source said the proposed regulator is expected to focus on three core functions—regulation, accreditation, and

setting professional stand-

ards—while funding will continue to rest with the administrative ministry. A senior official noted that the HECI idea had undergone “extensive discussion” in earlier drafts.

liar drafts.

However, concerns have begun surfacing. In a letter to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, CPI(M) John Brittas demanded that the Bill be referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee for detailed scrutiny. He wrote that “a single, highly centralised regulatory authority” will “adversely affect institutional autonomy and academic freedom”.

