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COMMENCEMENT OF A PHD FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME FOR STUDENTS FROM ASEAN COUNTRIES

Bhubaneswar:Sept 18 (TNB) In January 2018, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi had announced at the 25th Anniversary ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit in New Delhi about India's offer of upto 1000 integrated PhD Fellowships for students from ASEAN countries in the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). In implementation of this commitment, Dr. S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs (MEA) and Dr. Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', Minister of Human Resource Develop-

ment (MHRD) formally launched the Fellowship Programme at a ceremony at the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi on Monday, September 16, 2019. The fellowship programme is instituted with a total budget outlay of INR 300 crore (approximately USD 45 million) is the single-largest capacity development initiative of India in its partnership with ASEAN.

Also present at the ceremony were Mr. R. Subrahmanyam, Secretary, MHRD, Mr. Vijay Thakur Singh, Secretary (East), MEA, President, ASEAN

Countries, Ambassadors/ High Commissioners of ASEAN Member States, Directors of all IITs, officials from MEA and MHRD, CEO of NITI Aayog and Chairpersons of the University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

Speaking about the programme, Prof. R.V. Raja Kumar, Director, IIT Bhubaneswar expressed happiness about the move and termed it as extremely promising for IITs as it will help in internationalising the education of the IITs,

and opens new avenues for international collaborations and partnerships among ASEAN countries. Through this fellowship programme, we hope for enhanced participation from bright students of ASEAN countries to join our students to do research in cutting-edge areas such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, smart materials, advanced manufacturing, target drugs and bio-engineering which will provide boost to the much needed research output from ASEAN countries and India.

IIT Delhi has been designated by MHRD as the coordinating IIT for the fellowship programme. It has developed a web portal (<http://asean.iitd.ac.in>) to administer the application and admission process. Students from ASEAN countries can log in to the portal to apply for PhD programmes of their choice at various IITs.

ASEAN is an intergovernmental organisation in Southeast Asia. Its 10 member countries are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.