

# British centre comes to India, will offer UK university courses

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**Gurgaon:** Many students aspire to graduate from a British university but the cost of studying in the UK is a major hurdle towards realising that ambition. To change that, the British Education Centre (BEC), a private initiative backed by the British government, has set up its first facility in India in Gurgaon's Cyber Hub.

The BEC aims to make available the best courses offered by universities in the UK — without them having to leave home. With a stricter visa regime, not to mention a decline in the number of students flying to the UK for study, the timing feels just right.

"We'd like to save people a lot of money without compromising on the quality of education," co-founder Satpal Dass, BEC, told TOI at the centre's premises. Dass, a British-Indian entrepreneur, established BEC with Mark Runacres, a former deputy high commissioner to India.

An Indian student would spend an estimated Rs 30 lakh a year if he or she were to study in the UK. That expense would come down to anywhere between Rs 5 lakh and Rs 10 lakh annually if they opted



**NEW CHAPTER:** Former deputy high commissioner Marc Runacres and BEC co-founder Satpal Dass inaugurate BEC's first facility in India at Cyber Hub

to pursue the same course in India. The institute will deliver courses, either stand-alone or as part of joint courses with Indian institutions, for students and trainees to get certificate and diplomas in their chosen field. It will also teach bridge courses for further education in UK.

"We're setting up the infrastructure and paying for the staff, and providing the content and the academics."

At present, Dass points out, 1% of the target audience is benefitting from education offered by British colleges and universities. "We'll continue to attract those who can afford to study in the UK but we must cater for the rest, the 99%."

"The BEC has two main objectives — to bring British education to India and to promote it so that Indian students can go to the UK," he added.

Essentially, the BECs would act as facilitators between British higher and further education providers and their prospective students.

If a student is looking to study a particular stream, the BEC would give the student a choice of the top five courses being offered by British universities in that subject. So a corporate professional looking to further herself in her career could opt for a course in management from, say, the University of Strathclyde.

Over the next couple of years, Dass and Runacres are looking to set up a British Education Centre in 10 locations across India, including Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai and Mumbai. It is, as Dass says, all about "filling" a demand.