

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK



CEPT, Ahmedabad University and GNLU are among the educational institutes that have taken a lead in switching to technology to minimise loss of academic days

Padhai 'corona': Mounting anxiety prompts varsities to go virtual

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Ahmedabad University may be the newest of all the varsities in the city but it was one of the first to set up virtual classrooms. For around 3,200 students enrolled in its seven schools, the varsity began online classes on Tuesday. All students have to do from the comfort of their homes is to log into the system, and click to listen to the teacher's pre-recorded lectures or even to attend live sessions.

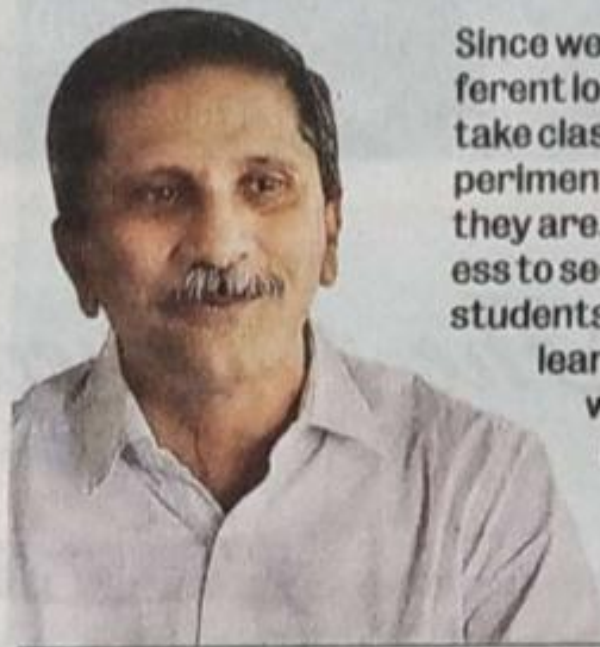
Apart from AU, CEPT University and Gujarat National Law University are also among the educational institutes that have taken a lead in switching to technology to minimise loss of academic days.

Sanjay Chaudhary, Dean of Students at Ahmedabad University, confirmed they are using technology to reach out to students at home to deliver planned course content on time.

Chaudhary, who is also professor at School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, said, "We have devised an online lecturing module where faculty members can deliver lectures, share lecture notes, assignments, reading material etc. Students can raise questions and also interact with the teachers during the session." He added, "On Tuesday, we began online lectures using Zoom (a video-conferencing tool) and received great response. Out of 79 students, 74 were present for a 45-minute online session of 'Machine Learning' course. About 100 students were present for a session of 'Probability and Random Processes' course. We are using other open-source technologies, too, to deliver online course content."

Students have adapted to the switch quite smoothly.

Yesha Dalwadi, a fourth year iMBA student of AU, said, "The first session of online classes went surprisingly well. It was a full house and we had a very interactive session. We were also provided with reading materials during the session. The accessibility provided by virtual sessions has facilitated the ease of studying for students during these

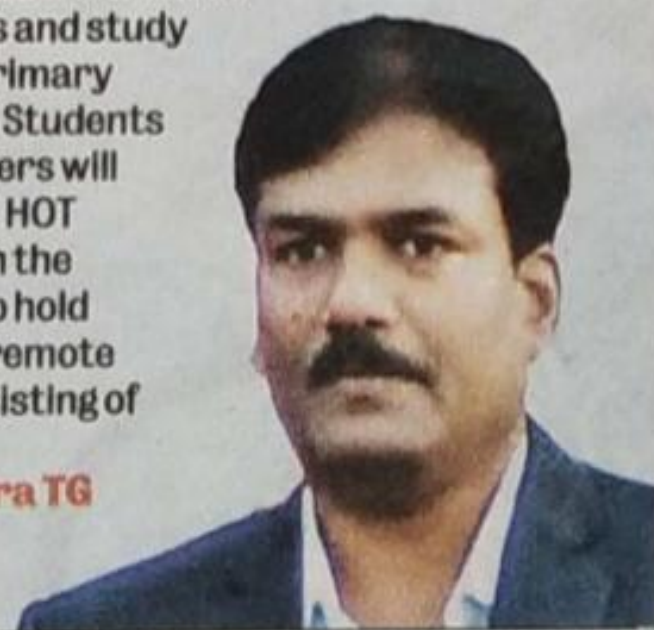


Since we have a diverse mix of students from different locations, we are exploring various tools to take classes online. We have already started experimenting with online tools to see how effective they are. We are monitoring this educational process to see how this will grow over time. We want our students to be engaged with the teaching and learning process even during these two weeks. I hope we can have our students return to classrooms as soon as possible.

— Pankaj Chandra, Vice-Chancellor, Ahmedabad University

We have asked students to go home. Giving two days for travel, we plan to start online classes from March 19. We will share pre-recorded lectures and study material through Google classroom, Primary Domain Controller server, e-mails etc. Students will be given online assignments. Teachers will employ platforms such as KAHOOT and HOT POTATOES to conduct quizzes. We are in the process of acquiring ZOOM software to hold online classes. Students already have remote access to GNLU library resources consisting of e-books, e-journals and databases.

— Jagadeesh Chandra TG In-charge Registrar, GNLU



We have 12 weeks of lecture-based classes in this session, of which 10 weeks have been completed. If we close down academics completely, we will be late in completing the course. For all UG and PG courses, online classes with provision for discussion, chat, display of drawings and design will start from next week. Students will be able to access lectures from anywhere using their CEPT e-mail id. The virtual system also has provision of having exam forms ready that students can access at a said time.

— Vishwanath Kashikar CEPT associate professor

times. These virtual sessions are indeed the second-best alternative to physical lectures."

As preparations for admissions to the next academic year begin, Director of AU's Office of Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid Hansa Sachde-

va said the varsity usually holds interactions with probable candidates in person as well as Skype every year. "This year, we are planning to carry out interactions only through Skype. This is intended to support social distancing, and provide applicants a convenient



No app-titude test for Class 10 kids

The Gujarat Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board (GSHSEB) has written to all District Education Officers (DEOs) and District Primary Education Officers (DPEOs) asked schools not to conduct the app-based test that helps Class 10 student determine which stream to opt for in higher classes. The GSHSEB had introduced Career Mitra app, a mobile-based application to test a student's aptitude so that s/he could make an informed choice. However, students have to come to the school to appear for the test. Since the Gujarat government has suspended academic sessions in schools and colleges due to Coronavirus scare, GSHSEB decided against carrying out the test which was scheduled from March 23 to March 28.

and safe way of completing admissions procedures."

Meanwhile, CEPT University has intimated as many as 200 teachers to record their lectures in a week's time.

The premier urban planning institute has two ways of conducting classes: lectures and studio work. The varsity uses Google Classroom to conduct virtual classes. Vishwanath Kashikar, associate professor with the Faculty of Architecture, said, "We have 12 weeks of lecture-based classes in this session, of which 10 weeks have been completed. If we close down academics completely, we will be late in completing the course. For all undergraduate courses and post-graduate courses, online classes with provision of discussion, chatting, showing their

drawing and design work will start from next week. The benefit of using technology is that even when it is a pre-recorded lecture, students will be able to ask questions and discuss the topic. They will also be able to access the lecture from anywhere using their CEPT e-mail id."

Going a step further, the varsity is also planning to conduct online exams if the government announces any closure after March 29, said Kashikar, adding: "The virtual system also has provision of having exam forms ready that students can access at a said time. They will be able to write MCQs and descriptive answers. We tentatively plan to begin exams on March 30." CEPT is also mulling to use this system to hold their Studio Jury.