

Singapore competes with US, UK as favourite of Indian students

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When 17-year-old Palak Gupta decided to do BSc (Life Sciences) from the University of Bradford, UK, she did not head westwards. She chose to enrol herself at the Management Development Institute of Singapore (MDIS), which has a tie-up with the British varsity.

Meerut resident Palak is among scores of students who are flocking to Singapore, which is emerging as an education hub in Southeast Asia through innovation and strategic partnerships with reputed institutions in the West.

Palak says students get the same level of education and degrees as pupils at Bradford. While she cites affordable world-class education closer home as a factor behind her decision to choose the island country, she insists, "The safe environment in Singapore was

the deciding factor to leave home.”

Over 700 students from India enrol with MDIS every year for various undergraduate and postgraduate courses, all offered by various universities from Europe, the US and Australia.

Currently, there are over 87,000 international students studying in private and government-run institutions, including the polytechnics and universities, in Singapore, a city-state of 680 square kilometres.

The number of Indian students in Singapore is growing by 20% annually, with 3,000 students going there every year, states the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education Report, 2012, which puts Singapore as one of the leading education hubs for international education.

Naveen Chopra, chairman of an education consultancy service, says, “Affordable fee, proximity to India, low levels of crime and drug-free environment are main reasons for Singapore being so popular among Indian students. We send over 500 students every year.”

Arun RP, country manager (international business) at MDIS, says, “Besides, getting a job and work permit is easy due to skewed population.”

Eugene Tan Kheng Boon, associate professor of law and co-director of Centre for Scholars Development at Singapore Management University says, “The government aims 30% of each Singaporean cohort being able to receive undergraduate education. There is also the government’s policy of making Singapore a global schoolhouse and this is where private institutions can cater to local and global demands.”

Growing demand

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