

VidyaGyan – A Rural Leadership Academy Celebrates its 1st Convocation

The founding batch registers a 100% pass rate with an average score of **85%**

New Delhi, August 4, 2016: VidyaGyan, a leadership academy for economically underprivileged, meritorious students from rural Uttar Pradesh, today celebrated the convocation of its founding batch of students. A total of 187 students passed out of the academy this year after appearing for their CBSE Class XII board exams. **Mr. D Shivakumar, Chairman & CEO, PepsiCo India** and **Ms. Barkha Dutt, Consulting Editor of NDTV** attended the convocation ceremony as guests of honor and addressed the gathering.

The School registered a **100% pass rate** with **139 students scoring above 80%**, including **53 students who scored above 90%**. Shikha Sirohi, the school topper and the second highest scorer in the Bulandshahr district scored 96.6% in her exams. As of now, 50 students of the founding batch have now secured admission in some of the top colleges of Delhi University including **St. Stephen's College, Hindu College, Lady Shri Ram College, Ramjas College and Gargee College**. Another 50 students have made it to several other leading institutions including **Jamia Millia Islamia, the National Institutes of Technology, National Institute of Fashion Technology, Delhi College of Arts, Shiv Nadar University, Banaras Hindu University, Aligarh Muslim University and SSN Institutions**. Also noteworthy is that five students from the founding batch have gained admission to prestigious international institutions including, **University of Massachusetts, Amherst and London College of Fashion**.

Congratulating the students on their performance, **Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Trustee, Shiv Nadar Foundation** said, *"We started out with a concept that was unlike any other – guided by the belief that India's urban-rural divide needs to be bridged by enabling access to quality education to those that have the potential to become leaders of tomorrow. As a rural leadership academy, VidyaGyan is the catalyst that strives to enable a positive impact on the academic and socio-economic structure of the economically weaker communities - to a point where it can truly uplift and transform their lives. The stellar performance of our founding batch is an important step in that direction and while I acknowledge that we have miles to go, an important milestone has been achieved!"*

VidyaGyan provides underprivileged, meritorious students free, world-class education to help them transcend the disadvantages they face and compete with their urban counterparts. VidyaGyan students come from families of farmers, daily wage earners, among others in rural Uttar Pradesh with an annual family income of less than Rs. 1 lac. Every year, VidyaGyan handpicks approximately 200 meritorious students from a pool of 250,000 children who apply from across 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh (UP).

About VidyaGyan Leadership Academy

Established in 2009 by the Shiv Nadar Foundation, VidyaGyan (www.vidyaGyan.in) today houses 1900 students across two campuses in UP in Bulandshahr and Sitapur. The Academy was launched to bridge the urban-rural divide by selecting, nurturing and developing future leaders from the underprivileged communities of rural Uttar Pradesh. A fully residential academy, VidyaGyan not only takes care of the education of its students but of all their needs. VidyaGyan addresses social imbalances and envisions nurturing and creating leaders who would be the inspiration and role models for their families, communities and society at large. The Foundation hopes that this will raise many more aspirations.

About Shiv Nadar Foundation

The Shiv Nadar Foundation (www.ShivNadarFoundation.org) has been established by Shiv Nadar, Founder, HCL - a \$7 billion leading global conglomerate. The Foundation's mission is to contribute to the process of national development and social transformation by establishing institutions and undertaking new initiatives in the fields of education and culture. The Foundation is committed to the creation of a more equitable, merit-based society by empowering individuals to bridge the socio-economic divide through philanthropy-based transformational education.

The Shiv Nadar Foundation set up the SSN Institutions (www.SSN.edu.in) in 1996, comprising the SSN College of Engineering (already a highly ranked private engineering college in India), in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The Foundation has also set up VidyaGyan, a residential leadership academy for meritorious rural children, at Bulandshahr and Sitapur in Uttar Pradesh. In addition, the Foundation runs the Shiv Nadar University (www.snu.edu.in), an international multidisciplinary university with strong research orientation located in Greater Noida in India's National Capital Region and the Shiv Nadar School (www.shivnadarschool.edu.in), a network of progressive urban schools across India aimed to provide children with education that creates lifelong learners. The Foundation has also set up the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (www.knma.in), India's largest private philanthropic museum in modern and contemporary art with the vision to take art to the common public.