

Press Release

115,000 meritorious students from disadvantaged communities of Uttar Pradesh appear for the VidyaGyan written tests (for the 2016 academic session)

February 25, 2016, Lucknow:The Shiv Nadar Foundation today announced that over 115,000 meritorious girls and boys appeared for the preliminary written test to seek admission to the **2016 academic session of VidyaGyan, India's first rural leadership academies** based in Uttar Pradesh. The admission tests were held on Sunday, 21 February across 218 test centers spread across 75 districts of the state.

Of the number of admission seekers who appeared, 55,615 were girls and 60,148 were boys. The children who clear the preliminary written test will be invited for a second and final written test. This will be followed by a background check of the final list of successful candidates to ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria. A total of () students are expected to be admitted to the VidyaGyan leadership academies in Bulandshahr and Sitapur this academic year.

Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Trustee, Shiv Nadar Foundation said, "*VidyaGyan is set apart by its unique and largest private admission process for rural school children that handpicks the best students from all 75 districts of UP. It is a unique social investment that was set up with the aim to provide world class education to children from economically underprivileged communities. Our endeavor is towards providing the finest mentoring and nurturing to students and create an enabling environment to help them become the leaders of tomorrow. Our model therefore has been to reach out to the top of the bottom of the pyramid, create leaders for tomorrow and bridge the urban-rural divide. We are delighted with the response we have received over the past six years; from around 2500 applicants in 2009-10 we have reached to 115,000 applicants in 2016. We look forward to induct the best and brightest students from rural UP into the two VidyaGyan leadership academies.*"

The **eligibility criteria** for admission into the VidyaGyan Leadership Academies are as follows:

- Students should be studying in Standard 5 in a rural school.
- Age of girls should be less than or equal to 13 years and age of boys should be less or equal to 12 years.
- Students from rural, low-income families (family income not more than Rs. 1 lakh per annum) can apply

VidyaGyan was first set up at Bulandshahr in 2009. The first batch of VidyaGyan students will graduate (Standard XII) from school in 2016. As early indicators of success, 25% of first batch of VidyaGyan students have appeared for their CBSE Standard X in 2014 scored over 90% while 17% of the second batch that appeared in 2015 scored in the same percentile bracket. VidyaGyan students have also gone on internships to US universities like Brown and Lehigh.

The Foundation currently has two campuses with over 1600 students. The VidyaGyan, Bulandshahr campus is spread over 20 acres with the total facility area is 250,000 square feet. The school building has 30 classrooms and the campus includes a hostel for 700 students, a language lab, a computer lab, a math lab, a library, an amphitheater (seating 800), an auditorium, an athletic track, a football field, a skating rink and indoor sports facilities. The Foundation established the second campus at Sitapur in 2011. Spread over 27 acres, the Sitapur campus has 30 classrooms and include multiple language and science labs and state-of-the-art indoor and outdoor sports facilities.

About VidyaGyan Leadership Academy

Established in 2009 by the Shiv Nadar Foundation, VidyaGyan (www.vidyagyan.in) is a radical social experiment in nurturing leadership from among highly gifted rural poor children in Uttar Pradesh. VidyaGyan currently runs two schools in Bulandshahr and Sitapur and houses over 1400 students. VidyaGyan is not any other school for the underprivileged, but is a state-of-the-art leadership academy that 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 and contribute to leveling the urban-rural divide and inspire others to undertake more such initiatives.

About Shiv Nadar Foundation

The Shiv Nadar Foundation (www.ShivNadarFoundation.org) has been established by Shiv Nadar, Founder, HCL - a \$6.5 billion leading technology and healthcare enterprise. 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 multi-disciplinary 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.