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Pakistani students want to study in India

Large number of students from Afghanistan and Bangladesh received their degrees at the South Asian University convocation in New Delhi

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Despite the frosty diplomatic relations between the two countries, many Pakistani students want to study in India. But hurdles in getting visa approvals has limited the number of students. At the South Asian University (SAU) convocation held in Delhi, five students from Pakistan were awarded degrees. Afghanistan topped the list with 21 students being awarded degrees, while 17 from Bangladesh, 11 from Nepal, 5 each from Pakistan and Bhutan were awarded degrees.

It was the first time since its inception that the SAU handed out PhD degrees to six of its scholars — one each from Afghanistan and Bangladesh and four from India. Two students from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh were also conferred with gold medals.

Despite the enthusiasm among students from Pakistan, not many can enrol in the university due to various hassles. "Many students want to come to India for studies but they face several roadblocks. The visa process was not as difficult three years back, thus, I could secure an admission here," said Muhammad Waqas Gujjar, a student from Lahore, who finished LLM degree from the India-based university.

Last year, none of the eight Pakistani students selected by SAU could join college, due to restricted visa approval.

SAU, established by the governments of the eight SAARC nations in 2010 to provide academic opportunities in the subcontinent and promote a sense of the South Asian community.

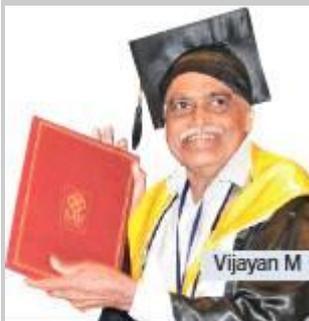
Omar Sadr from Afghanistan, who received his PhD in international relations, said that the university gave him regional exposure which cannot be obtained while studying in the US or other countries. "At SAU, I could research, learn, and explore my own society, country, regional politics, and engage with students from the same region. A multi-disciplinary teaching approach helped me," said Omar.

For Mafruz Sultana from Dhaka, Bangladesh, who received her LLM degree in international law, said studying in India was a great learning experience for her. She now wants to come back to SAU to pursue her PhD.



Students pose after being awarded degrees at SAU, New Delhi

Age no bar



Vijayan M

A 65-year-old, retired banker, Vijayan M, from Kerala who was studying refugee law was conferred with the degree. He now wants to continue his academic quest to explore new areas.