

Germany has advantage of cheap living

By **Bincy Mathew**

IN THE past decade, Germany has seen a rise in the number of Indian students, who enroll in that country's colleges and universities at the rate of 5,000 a year. Other than research opportunities, world-class engineering and IT courses have made this Central European country a global hub for higher studies.

Among the leading educational institutions in Germany, the George Simon Institute is listed among the top three for its top-notch MBA programmes. Higher education of another kind is provided at the Kunst und Musikhochschulen as well as the Gesamthochschulen, which offer training in music and the fine and performing arts.

German universities are state-funded, so the tuition fee is minimal. "The cost of living in Germany is the cheapest in Europe," says M.S. Anand, managing partner of The Calculus. "It works out to approximately 600 euros (Rs 40,700) per month. Students need to bear their living expenses." The Calculus is a German education consultancy based in New Delhi. Its services include career counselling, shortlisting of German universities for students, preparing applications, offering scholarships assistance and visa guidance.

Germany is one country where the completion of study programmes in universities is followed seamlessly by paid internship in top MNCs and these eventually lead to full-time placements. Close ties with companies such as Daimler-Chrysler, SAP, Siemens, BMW, Bosch and several others brighten career prospects.

After completing their study programmes, students are allowed to stay on for a year and look for work. "With the rising demand for engineers and IT professionals, placements are guaranteed after students complete their Master's programmes," says Anand. "Germany is facing a shortage of 100,000 engineers and IT professionals. It is the right time for students to apply for these universities."

A common myth is that you need to know the German language well to be able to study in a German university. German is optional because most of the courses are taught in English. For those that require German, you'll have to pass a German language test to be admitted to, or registered with, a higher education institution. This is usually administered by the institution itself and is taken before you start your studies.

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) offers scholarships for study and research in Germany and provides information on higher education in the country. For details, go to www.daad.de. Some useful websites:

www.howtogermy.com/pages/education.html

www.international.niedersachsen.de/en/hochschule.html

www.intstudy.com/study_abroad/llvfiles/andsa4104.htm