IIT Bombay to enter New York in six-member consortium

Express News Service

Mumbai, Apr 23: The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay plans to set up a Centre for Urban Science and Progress (CUSP) in Brooklyn, New York City, in a consortium mode. The centre will be set up jointly by IIT Bombay and five other institutions that include New York University, University of Toronto, University of Warwick (UK), City University of New York and Carnegie Mellon University.

The New York City Economic Development Corporation had launched an initiative in December 2010, which sought a university, institution or consortium to develop and operate a new or expanded campus in NYC, USA. The six-member consortium was declared the second winner of this initiative on Monday.

The consortium proposes to create an applied science institute which will focus on researching and developing solutions to complex urban challenges, locally and even globally. “It will be the first such entity by an Indian institution in the US in a consortium mode,” said AQ Contractor, dean of alumni and corporate relations, IIT Bombay.

IIT Bombay...

Even as NYC will be used as a real-life setting for research and development work, they aim to work with municipal agencies in partner cities by focusing on actual problems, while simultaneously applying solutions to real settings. A similar centre will be set up at IIT Bombay to look at problems of Indian mega-cities in particular.

“The CUSP will look at all areas like health, sanitation, communication, water, schools, transportation among others. The centre will have 20 faculty members, equal number of post-doctorates and 100-200 students in the first year. The number of students will go up to 500-600 in five years,” said professor S Chundhuri, dean of international relations at IIT Bombay. It will be located at 370 Jay Street in Brooklyn. In an already existing building, opposite the Brooklyn Poly. The centre will offer a master’s programme, an executive programme and interdisciplinary PhD programme, all in the area of urban science and engineering. The New York University is leading the consortium.

“The centre presents a great new opportunity to address the challenges of megacities by the generation of new knowledge using New York City as its laboratory and by imparting education with a focus on the planning, building and managing megacities. The centre’s work will benefit New York City directly and will provide a template to address many issues of megacities, in general. The issues of our home city Mumbai, will provide unique new insights and will be a source of ideas for the work of the Center,” said IIT Bombay director Devang Khakhar.

*Continued on Page 2*
IIT-B to set up campus in NY, study infra issues

Mumbai: The Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay (IIT-B), along with five other universities, will establish a centre for urban science and progress (CUSP) in Brooklyn, New York (NY). New York will be the laboratory as the six institutes develop solutions for ‘regenerating’ the city’s infrastructure — the buildings and services dating back to the 17th century.

The consortium, comprising IIT-B, New York University (NYU), City University, NY, Warwick University, UK, Toronto University and Carnegie Mellon, will set up an applied science institute offering a full-time master’s programme, executive programmes and PhD, all in the area of urban science.

The New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), which had invited universities from around the world to come to NY to fuel research for existing industries, declared CUSP as second runner-up on Monday out of all the entries it received. The Cornell/Technion Consortium was the winner and it will set up a campus on Roosevelt Island.

IIT-B director Devang Khakhar said, “The centre presents a new opportunity to address the challenges of megacities. The work of the centre will also provide a template to address issues of megacities in general.”

IIT-B, partners to set up US institute

The Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-B) has formed a consortium with other universities in the US, to create an applied science institute in New York. IIT-B in a press statement said the applied science institute would be created by a consortium of universities led by New York University. Carnegie Mellon University, City University of New York, University of Toronto and University of Warwick will be academic partners. IBM, Cisco and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority will also join in as industry partners. The consortium has forged a partnership to establish the Center for Urban Science and Progress in downtown Brooklyn.

Decks cleared for building IIT Indore campus: The land row for the proposed IIT Indore’s campus has been settled now, thus paving the way for the institution to have its own campus with an estimated cost of Rs 2,000 cr.
Sibal reaches out to oppn leaders

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: At the receiving end of the opposition’s ire against his legislative agenda, HRD minister Kapil Sibal is reaching out to key parties to iron out the differences.

With 16 bills related to education sector pending before Parliament and hardly any movement in the past two sessions on important legislations, Sibal met Leader of Opposition of Rajya Sabha Arun Jaitley.

"I have also fixed an appointment with BSP chief Mayawati and will also meet SP chief Mulayam Singh Yadav. I was to resolve the differences, if there are any," Sibal told reporters.

While bills related to HRD ministry could be passed in the Lok Sabha, the minister is facing problems particularly in Rajya Sabha, where the UPA is in a minority. The BJP, SP and BSP have 49, 9 and 15 MPs respectively in the Upper House.

Sibal also continued his emotional appeal: "Many of these bills are related to the future of our children. I don’t think parties will have any fundamental differences on issues that relates to the future of the country’s children."

Signalling his intention to push the pending list of bills, Sibal has also listed two bills—the central educational institutions (reservation in admission) bill and amendments to Right to Education— for Tuesday, the opening day of the second half of the budget session.

"The pending bills include almost 80-90% of the recommendations of the standing committees," Sibal said, driving home the point that the government is responsive towards the wishes of different political parties.

A section of the Congress, however, feels that Sibal may have to calibrate his ministry’s equation with different stakeholders and states to ensure smoother passage for the bills.
Lecture series on energy at IIT-I from Tuesday

*OUR STAFF REPORTER
Indore*

The Indian Institute of Technology, Indore has organised a series of lectures on issues related to energy from April 24 to 27. The keynote speaker is Dr Ing Habil Manfred Groll, who is a professor emeritus of University Stuttgart, Germany. Dr Groll had chaired the Department of Energy Conversion and Heat Transfer at the Institute of Nuclear Technology and Energy Systems (IKE) and had also worked for two years at NASA Ames Research Centre on the development of heat pipe technology for satellite applications.

He would deliver lecture on “Energy Supply Options for the 21st Century” on April 26. Besides him, other speakers too would give lectures on subject related to energy.

The inaugural lecture would be given on “Energy and Society” on April 24 while subject for April 25 and April 27 are Hydrogen - Electricity Energy Economy and Heat Pipe Science & Technology.

The IIT Indore said that the lectures by eminent scientists would expose students to know the energy challenges the world in general and India in particular are facing.

The institute believes that the knowledge gained during the lecture series would encourage students to work in the field of energy generation through renewable sources.
Grads from top B-schools, IITs make a beeline for e-tailing cos

Raj Kurururi, 24, has been working for e-commerce start-up BuyThePrice.com for over a month now. Kurururi, who graduated from IIM-Indore this year, opted to join the online deals site that started only in late 2010, rejecting offers from major technology players. The meteoric rise of the e-commerce segment in the last one year is driving sharp minds from the country’s premier B-schools and engineering colleges to be a part of the sunrise industry.

This year, Snapdeal made over 20 offers across IMAs and 75 at IITs, e-tailer of books and electronics Flipkart hired 120 graduates from IMAs and 23 from IIMs and other top B-schools. Online fashion store Myntra hired seven ITI graduates, five from ISB, and two from the IIMs this year. Naaplo, which was among the first-timers at the IIM campuses this year, made 15 offers across leading management schools, including Narsee Moonje and IISB, all of which were accepted.

Industry experts point out that it is the prospect of bigger responsibilities and faster growth that are driving the graduates to look for opportunities in the e-commerce space. “I was looking at various sunrise sectors, but I was particularly interested in e-commerce because of the pace at which it is growing. What worried me about joining an established firm, is that I feared getting lost amongst 150,000 other employees, without ever knowing what my work was actually amounting to,” says Sachiin Singhal.

He has been on a two-month stint with BuyThePrice. Kurururi has laid his hands across departments, including sales, operations, promotions and category development. “This is in a big firm would be unimaginable. Also, the people you work with drive a lot of passion into you, because their lives are built around their organisations,” he says.

This year, the total 423 offers at IIM-Bangalore, 46 from e-commerce firms. The first-timers among the e-commerce companies this year at IIM campuses include RedBus, Valyoo Technologies, Via, and Naaplo.

“We went to the IIMs for the first time this year. A total of 12 offers were made across the top-tier B-schools, all of which were accepted. Average salaries for IMAs was Rs 12 lakh, others were Rs 9 lakh. We hired 10 IIT graduates with a package of about Rs 4-5 lakhs as well,” says Naaplo.com e-commerce head Sachin Singhal.

The e-commerce company has a staff strength of 1,500 and is adding 70 people every month.

According to an IIM-B report, the e-commerce sector this year was represented by Flipkart, Infodega, Snapdeal and Amazon. Flipkart recruited nine students offering senior manager profiles in sales and marketing, and supply chain.

Companies feel that there aren’t many experienced people in the e-commerce space yet, and supply and demand are not proportionate. “The obvious place to look for these employees, where they may not be experienced in the field, but are definitely bright enough to work in it,” adds Sachin.

Recruiters point out that the age profile of the candidates from top B-schools are between 25-30 years and they look for jobs that offer areas to explore. They have a huge appetite for learning and start-ups give them that opportunity.

Notwithstanding the global recessionary trends, 2011 witnessed a resurgence of the e-commerce sector. The largest investments in the space till date came last year when Snapdeal.com raised $40 million from Besserer Venture Partners and FashionAndYou.com raised $40 million from a group of investors led by Norwest Venture Partners and Intel Capital.

In all, in 2011, this space saw 32 investments. “In the last one year, the sector was successful in attracting a lot of funding from major VC/PE players that equipped the e-commerce players to pay heavy amounts to get talents from top management and engineering institutions. Money, and at the same time chance to do something new and exciting attracts these candidates,” says Sangeeta Lala, senior vice-president (sourcing), of start-up company TeamLease Services.

Average salary offered by an e-commerce company to an IIM graduate varies between Rs12-15 lakh. While at ISB it is between Rs7-10 lakh. “Salaries for tech and management freshers have been in the range of Rs 12-15 lakh annually plus ESOPs and other benefits. For laterals, compensation was adjusted accordingly. At ISB it was in the range of Rs20-25 lakh because of lateral hires,” says Myntra.

“This year, we have made about 20 offers across IMAs and IITs. We have hired from top-tier schools for functions across marketing, sales, operations, product management, and vendor management. This year for the first time we visited IIM campuses,” said head of marketing at Snapdeal.com Sanjeev Komaravely.

Snapdeal, which currently has 1,700 people, started its operations in February 2010. However, some are on the opinion that it is not always that start-ups can match the offers of other big players but try to match them with benefits like ESOPs. “Start-ups can’t always match salaries quoted by the biggies, but we do tend to make up with perks like ESOPs. This has more to do than providing a monetary value. It instills a sense of entitlement and ownership, and in many ways makes people want to do better,” says Buytheprice.com founder and CEO Ranjit Boyanapalli. The firm made two offers in IIM Indore and Ahmedabad this year and both were accepted. Operational for two years now, the company currently has about 70 employees.

Debolijoti Ghosh & Shreya Roy

SACHIN SINGHAL, head of e-commerce, Naaplo.com

This year we have made about 20 offers across IMAs and IITs. The phenomenal growth in e-commerce is driving young B-school graduates to want a piece of the pie. It is the prospect of having bigger responsibilities and faster growth that make these graduates look towards e-commerce start-ups.

Mukesh Bansal, founder and CEO, Myntra.com

The e-commerce market has started growing exponentially since 2010 creating a demand for qualified talent. Competitive salaries, ESOPs and faster growth opportunities in the sector have attracted a lot of talent across premium to an e-commerce start-up. We are looking to add 500 new hires this year.

Sanjeev Komaravely, head of marketing, Snapdeal.com

There aren’t many experienced people in the e-commerce space yet, and supply and demand are not proportionate. The obvious place to look for is these colleges, where they may not be experienced but are definitely bright enough to work in. We went to the IIMs for the first time this year.

Santosh Bhadra, head of marketing, FashionAndYou.com

Retail deal

• This year Snapdeal made over 20 offers across IMAs and IITs.
• Flipkart hired 120 graduates from IMAs and IITs.
• Average salary offered to a graduate is between Rs 12-15 lakh, while for IITs it’s Rs7-10 lakh.

Ranjit Boyanapalli, CEO, Buytheprice.com

• Excellent opportunities available for 2012.
• ESOPs available for all talented candidates.
• Recipes for start-ups at Flipkart, Infodega, Snapdeal and Amazon.

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Debolijoti Ghosh & Shreya Roy
'Ved Prakash can apply again for UGC post'

HT Correspondent

NEW DELHI: University Grants Commission (UGC) vice-chairman and acting head Ved Prakash is entitled to re-apply for the post, which is in the process of being filled, say UGC officials.

“There can be no restriction on the part of an academician such as our present head of the institution to offer his candidature for the post,” said a senior UGC official. A section of the academic opinion had alleged that a bid is being made to re-appoint him to the post through questionable means, but these charges are rubbished by UGC officials.

Alleging that Prakash's three-year tenure had lapsed on March 3, 2012, and his date of joining (May 8, 2012) had been “forged”, the Society for Values and Ethics in Education had complained to the Prime Minister that the advertisement for the post had been made in a hushed manner on the website on April 4 to re-appoint him.

However, UGC officials point out that Ved Prakash, then Vice-Chancellor of NUEPA, had just been given additional charge as UGC vice-chairman in February-end, 2009, and that he had taken the additional charge on March 2, 2009.

It was months later, on May 8, 2009 that the government appointed him UGC vice-chairman for a period of three years and he was relieved from NUEPA the same day to do so. In other words, his three-year term hasn’t lapsed yet.

As for the charge that there is a 'bid' to re-appoint him surreptitiously, sources in the Human Resource Development Ministry rubbished them, saying that the re-appointment process is transparent and all prominent higher institutions have been informed about it so that eligible candidates may apply.
Search & Science are Set to Collide at CERN Now

OLGA KHARIF
BLOOMBERG

As a physicist for the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN), Andrei Golubtsov spends his days smashing subatomic particles into one another at the Large Hadron Collider, a 16.7-mile ring of superconducting magnets buried 328 feet under Switzerland and France. The high-energy collisions of his experiment, one of four currently under way at the LHC, hint at the answers to some of nature’s greatest mysteries—and generate about 20 billion data points each year. Searching the enormous archive for collisions that match specific criteria can take hours.

Golubtsov got weary of waiting. A few months ago he asked for help from Yandex, the dominant Web search company in his native Russia, and on April 10 the two organisations unveiled the result of their collaboration. The custom-built search engine lets more than 700 physicists working on Golubtsov’s experiment instantly sift through about one-twentieth of the data they produce, and tailor searches by 600 criteria, such as time of collision. The Yandex software also produces QR codes to embed into scientific papers so that other scientists can easily access the underlying data with their smartphones. The tech “can shorten the chain from idea to realisation” of an experiment, says Golubtsov.

Yandex is helping the research group for free and even lending the scientists server capacity. About 13% of the computing power for Golubtsov’s experiment is supplied by the Moscow-based company. Andrey Ustyuzhanin, a Yandex researcher, headed the search company’s five-person team, which created the CERN tool in three months. The software crawled tens of thousands of files spread across CERN’s servers, working at night while the scientists slept.

Only a portion of CERN’s existing records have been crawled, but Ustyuzhanin wants to index all of the 20 billion or so particle collisions recorded this year—a number that exceeds the total volume of indexed Web pages. The pro bono work could help Yandex hold its ground against Google, which has slowly but steadily gained market share in Russia and now controls 28% of searches. (Yandex accounts for 60% of searches.) Giving away technology to CERN—a where a young Tim Berners-Lee wrote the paper that laid the groundwork for the World Wide Web in 1989—is a great marketing move, says Ram Akella, a professor of information systems and technology management at the University of California at Santa Cruz. Consumers might think, “If those smart people are using Yandex, maybe we should too,” he says. “It’s about branding.” It could help Yandex abroad, too. Since its $1.3 billion US IPO in May 2011, Yandex has opened two offices in Switzerland and launched in Turkey.

Yandex’s Ustyuzhanin says the company hasn’t decided whether to undertake similar science projects in the future. There’s definitely demand for it. As research becomes more computational, especially in fields such as genomics and biomedicine, scientists “are drowning in data, and they don’t know how to find what they want,” says Akella. Customised search tools help scientists collect, crunch, and share data. The company also donates some of its server capacity to run computations for select researchers.
सत्रह तकनीकी संस्थाओं की मान्यता रद्द

अतिथिय खाता
किसी संस्थान की मान्यता दर्ज होने के बाद तकनीकी संस्थाओं की मान्यता की स्थापना के लिए अतिथिय खाता चाहिए। इसके लिए केवल अनुमति दे रहे हैं।

सबसे ज्यादा संस्थान
महाराष्ट्र व अंध्र प्रदेश के दिग्गज हर्षनाथ सूरेश ने इसके लिए संस्थान की मान्यता की अपील की।

Business Bhaskar ND 24/04/2012
Now, Gujarat to cover Narmada canals with solar panels!

Canal solar power: Gujarat has attracted investments of Rs 9,000 crore so far on solar energy projects.

Virendra Pandit
Gandhinagar, April 23

Close on heels of commencing use of wastelands in northern districts and rooftops in towns and cities, Gujarat is set to potentially use the existing 19,000 km-long network of Narmada canals across the State for setting up solar panels to generate power.

The Chief Minister, Mr Narendra Modi, will inaugurate the first of a series of this project, known as Canal Solar Power Project, when he launches a 1 megawatt (mw) pilot project, which is already commissioned, on Narmada branch canal near Chandrasan village of Kadi taluka in Mehso district on Tuesday.

Last week, he inaugurated a 600-MW solar power project spread across 11 districts. This included a 214MW Solar Power Park, the largest such generation centre at a single location in Asia. Also, Azure Power, leading independent power producer in solar sector, announced a 2.5 MW rooftops project in Gandhinagar.

Gujarat, which invests nearly Rs 2,000 crore an year on renewable energy, has attracted investments of Rs 9,000 crore so far on solar energy projects.

The pilot project has been developed on a 750-m stretch of the canal by Gujarat State Electricity Corporation (GSECL) with support from Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Ltd (SSNNL), which owns and maintains the canal network.

ENERGY, WATER SECURITY
The pilot project will generate 16 lakh units of clean energy per annum and also prevent evaporation of 90 lakhs litres of water annually from the canal, an official told Business Line here on Monday. The concept will, therefore, tackle two of the challenges simultaneously by providing energy and water security.

The cost of per megawatt of solar power, in this case, is likely to be much less than the estimated Rs 10-11 crore, as the two banks of the canal will be used to cover the canal by installing solar power panel and the government will not have to spend much on creating basic infrastructure, including land acquisition.

Today, Gujarat has about 458 km of open Main Canal, while the total canal length, including sub-branches, is about 19,000 km at present.

When completed, the SSNNL’s canal network will be about 85,000 km long.

Assuming a utilisation of only 10 per cent of the existing canal network of 19,000 km, it is estimated that 2,200 MW of solar power generating capacity can be installed by covering the canals with solar panels.

This also implies that 11,000 acres of land can be potentially conserved along with about 2,000 crore litres of water saved per annum.