Sibal’s censorship bid may cost India e-ranking

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Sibal’s censorship bid may cost India e-ranking

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SINGAPORE: India’s position on Internet freedom is expected to “fall” due to government’s proposed curbs on social media websites such as Facebook and Google, claimed Bridget Welsh, a professor of political science at the University of Singapore.

Welsh had occasion to be put-to-be-published Freedom on Internet Report-2012, where countries are ranked in accordance with their policies on the Web, such as obligations to Internet access, limits on content, and violation of user rights.

The report is published every year by US-based think tank Freedom House. In the 2011 report, India was ranked 14 among 57 nations with a score of 29, meaning “partly-free” on Internet freedom. Countries are ranked from zero to 100 on the scorecard, with zero depicting the highest level of freedom and 100 depicting the lowest.

A year later, Welsh said, India’s net is likely to fall several notches down to “not-free” or poor level of Internet freedom. It is primarily based on the whole of telecom minister Kapil Sibal’s December 2011 bid to censor sites such as Facebook and Google.

Sibal had asked these websites to submit content for screening before placing it in the public domain, much to the outrage of netizens. He also wanted these sites to preserve user content from India and remove disparaging inflammatory or defamatory content before it went online.

In her presentation at the workshop, organised by the Tomas Foundation for journalists from Asian, Welsh described Sibal’s action as a direct curb on freedom of expression on the Internet. “It is implied that it is a matter of concern to the government on websites, including the one with popular websites, that are labelled ‘not-free’.

While countries such as Estonia, United States and Germany have been decided as free, countries such as China and Iran are described as ‘not free’.

One multiple choice paper for IITs is enough, suggests Super 30 founder

Hindu ND 27/04/2012 p-2

Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI: “Super 30” founder Anand Kumar, whose initiatives have led to over 300 students from marginalised sections of society gain entry into IITs, met Union Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal here to suggest a change in the examination pattern for the existing IIT-JEE test.

Like AIIMS test

The renowned mathematician suggested one single multiple choice question paper based on Class XII syllabus, stating that All-India Institute of Medical Sciences could admit students through single test then IIT-JEE could also do it.

“For adhering to Plus Two syllabus fully, the subject experts from both IIT-JEE and Central Board of Secondary Education can jointly prepare the questions,” he said

He said this will not only minimise dependency on private coaching but also reduce stress on students, ultimately making them more serious right from the school level.

Education slowdown threatens U.S. economy

Without better educated workers, the US could lose its economic edge

By David Wessel & Stephanie Ranchero

Throughout American history, almost every generation has had substantial young working-age population that that of its parents.

That is changing. When baby boomers born in 1955 reached age 30, they had about two years more schooling than their parents, according to Harvard University economists Claudia Goldin and Lawrence Katz, who have calculated the average years of schooling for all American workers since 1970. In 1980, when American born in 1960 turned 30 in 2010, they averaged about eight months more schooling than their parents.

The counseling already has broad ramifications across the US, cited in schools with only a high-school diploma, a 40% unemployment rate in March, roughly double that of college graduates who had a 4.1% unemployment rate. Workers with 4-year degrees earn 65% more in wages on average than those of denigrating statistically similar, high-school graduates. And in today's highly advanced economy, where many manufacturers move to other countries or as college graduates, even for lower-level jobs.

Some serious consequences may be felt in the future. Without a better educated American, economists say, the U.S. won't be able to maintain its high-wage, high-growth economy and the rising standards of living that have made the U.S. so rich in the past.

The reasons American education levels are no longer increasing, measured in years of school completion, are numerous. Despite years of efforts since 1970 to raise quality and standards, the U.S. remains stubbornly high. College tuition is rising and the prospect of shouldering heavy debt discourages some high school graduates from enrolling in college or sticking with it.

There is also growing skepticism about whether a college degree will pay off. Recently, many people say, have been grans of college graduates reporting payments and shortages in others.

You can talk to the typical worker with a bachelor's degree in engineering earned for $31,900, or to those with a degree in math and computer science $48,000, according to 1990 Census data. The 25-34 years old workers at the University of Georgia's Center for Workforce Research and Analysis estimate that college graduates earn $24,000 more than those without a degree.

No bachelor's degrees are the same anymore. Georgetown University's Center for Education and the Workforce said in an extensive analysis issued this month, many jobs no longer demand a bachelor's degree. In jobs that do, they added, “The number of people with bachelor's degrees is substantially higher than the number of people who have completed a college degree.”

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that the number of bachelor's degrees awarded will increase by 47% from 2008 to 2018, or 1.6 million degrees, to 5.5 million degrees. The number of master's degrees awarded will increase by 20% to 6.9 million degrees.

Between the final college fees and the cost of living, college graduates in the early 1990s earned an average of $26,400, or 2.5 times the average earnings of high school graduates. By 1999, the average earnings of college graduates had increased to $30,000, or 3.5 times the average earnings of high school graduates.

The fraction of Americans with more education than parents of the same sex and less is S.U.S. college graduation rates, since the highest in the world, are now below the U.S. education levels.

Education achievements of those who turn 25 in the decade shown compared to the parent of the same sex in the same year.

Percentage of population that has attained a college degree: 2009

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For women, the trend is strikingly different. While male college-going fell off in the 1970s, the pace for women was much faster. Women's college-going peaked in 1964, at 17% of the population. By 1970, the percentage of female high school graduates who went on to college was 22%. By 1982, the percentage had fallen to 15%.

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On average, women who have completed 4 years of college have earned $1,500 less than their male counterparts, according to the Census Bureau.

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Central univs battle 40% staff shortage

### Varsity Woes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Sanctioned strength</th>
<th>Existing strength</th>
<th>Vacant positions</th>
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<td>JNU</td>
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**Kirtika Suneja**

New Delhi, Apr 26: The 40 central universities of the country are facing a severe faculty crunch as despite a 6% rise in student enrollment in them, there is a 40% shortage of faculty. The existing faculty strength stands at 10,609 against 15,692 sanctioned.

This implies a shortage of more than 5,000 teachers in the central universities. Delhi University tops the list with 990 vacancies, closely followed by Banaras Hindu University, which has 848 vacant posts.

The crunch, according to the ministry of human resource development (HRD), is due to the additional 5,501 teaching positions sanctioned in order to accommodate reservation for other backward classes.

"In addition, during the 11th Plan, a large number of positions were sanctioned to strengthen the existing departments and for opening new ones," said D Purandarwadi, minister of state for HRD ministry.

Interestingly, the ministry claims that the dearth in faculty is despite the fact that the entry pay for a teacher in Central University is more than the entry pay of a civil servant.

The total strength of teaching faculty in higher education is about 5.89 lakh and according to advisory firm Ernst & Young, 45% of the positions for professors, 61% positions for readers and 53% positions for lecturers were vacant in Indian universities in 2007-08. Official estimates say that besides the present shortage, the crunch during the coming decade is going to increase at the rate of one lakh faculty a year.

Besides impacting the student-teacher ratio, the failure to redress the faculty shortage will hamper the achievement of the government's target for increasing the gross enrolment ratio (GER) from 11% at present to 15% by 2012 and 30% by 2020.

The University Grants Commission says shortage of quality faculty coupled with lack of faculty mobility across the regions is a major constraint in the development of the country's higher education system.

"Faculty development programmes are insufficient and ineffective in nature. The 12th Plan should envisage effective implementation of the brain gain policy along with new initiatives to attract quality faculty to meet the national level teacher requirements," UGC has said in its approach to the 12th Plan.

The approach paper talks about faculty development initiatives in areas like entry-level orientation, curriculum development, teaching and learning, research and innovation, engagement with social concerns and leadership development.

"Customised faculty development programmes may be developed on a large scale. Besides, it should also include modernised continuous faculty development programmes of international requirements," it said.
RISAT-1: MADE IN INDIA

India's first indigenous all-weather radar imaging remote sensing satellite was launched on Thursday. A lowdown on what it can do and who it will benefit.

THE LAUNCH: At 5.47am on Thursday, PSLV C-19 carrying India's first indigenous radar imaging satellite RISAT-1 lifts off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh, 90 km from Chennai.

RISAT-1: Stands for Radar Imaging Satellite 1

WHAT CAN IT DO: The radar imaging remote sensing satellite can take pictures during day, night and all weather conditions.

WHO WILL BENEFIT: Data relating to soil moisture will help farmers, while updates on forest cover, glaciers, ocean, and water levels will help in disaster management, according to Dr N Valarmathi, project director, ISRO. Chairman ISRO, K Radhakrishnan said, "Now we can predict Kharif season effectively."

PREDECESSORS: Till now India had optical remote sensing satellites that could take pictures only during day time.

OTHER COUNTRIES THAT HAVE THIS TECHNOLOGY: US, Canada, Japan, Germany and Israel.

WOMAN BEHIND IT: N Valarmathi, 52, the RISAT-1 project director, had joined ISRO in 1984. In 2001, she was entrusted with the task of developing an indigenous radar imaging satellite. She was assisted by a team of 50 people. "It is 100% Indian. Only Indian companies supplied the components."

RISAT 1 FEATURES
Spacecraft: 1,858 kg
Orbit altitude: 536 km
Orbit Inclination: 97.552°
No. of orbits per day: 14
Mission duration: 5 years
Image resolution: 1m-50m
Power: Solar

TEXT: KV LAKSHMANA/GRAPHIC: SANJAY KAPOOR
DU to adopt 'meta college' concept

ROHINEE SINGH • NEW DELHI

The Delhi University is gearing up for multifaceted student development courses. Come academic session 2013, Delhi University Vice Chancellor Professor Dinesh Singh is to take the university to a four-year 'meta college' mode. The new model aims at inter-mixing various disciplines based on the interests of the students. To start with, the university will launch a BTech in Humanities from the coming academic session.

Professor Singh who has been ambitious about the various innovative projects and has been trying to push for outdoor research work and more of practical learning at the under-graduate level, feels that the students should be allowed to study the papers of their interest. Singh insist that even sports cannot be neglected as an important disciple. "A student who studies mathematics and his heart beats for football can play football at the university level and get credits for it along with mathematics," explains Singh.

The 'meta college' concept will also allow students to study in the various colleges of Delhi University. "All courses will carry certain credit points. The student can opt for a college of his or her own choice to study a particular paper in a course," explains Singh. The Vice Chancellor wants the

The new model aims at inter-mixing various disciplines based on the interests of the students

students to get a feel of not just one college of the university, but the entire university as a whole. Interestingly, the programme will help students not just studying in the Delhi University, but the university also plans to conduct exchange programmes with universities like Jamia Milia Islamia, the IITs and the IIIT.

The four-year trans-disciplinary programme will give the students an exit option as well. In case a student completes two years in a course, an Associate Degree will be awarded, a three-year course will give a Bachelor Degree and a four-year course an Honours. "The courses will be designed in such a fashion that after completing two years, our students will be competent to become an elementary school teacher and an excellent researcher by the end of four years," explains Singh. The students who take an exit after a two or three year programme will be giving an option to reenter and compete their Honours anytime in the next ten years.

All courses in the university from the next year will include more of outdoor research and will be designed in a more interactive fashion. The V-C also wants to give this opportunity to the students who have enrolled themselves in the School of Open Learning (SOL). The SOL is likely to get into the semester mode from the 2014 academic session. "Some students from the SOL will be given an opportunity to do some papers in the mainstream colleges and vise versa," said the V-C.
Now, Aakash for all: UbiSlate at ₹2,999

CHEAPEST TABLET from Datawind will be available from May-end

Vivek Sinha
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NEW DELHI: Gadget maker Datawind on Thursday announced the commercial launch of the world’s cheapest tablet PC in India — priced at ₹2,999. The launch enables the firm to offer its tablet PC under the “UbiSlate” brand to general customers, outside the ambit of the 100,000 customised units ordered by the human resources ministry for distribution to students under the brand name ‘Aakash’.

The company will initially ship the products to around 32 lakh customers who had pre-booked the product, followed by retail availability. The delivery starts by May end.

Datawind seemed determined to bury the ghosts of “needless” controversy that emerged soon after it bagged the much-hyped order from HRD ministry. The company said entire procurement of Aakash has now moved over to IIT Bombay after IIT Rajasthan imposed unreasonable conditions — with retrospective effect — to procure Aakash tablets.

“We are committed to providing one lakh Aakash tablets to ministry of HRD,” Suneet Singh Tuli, chief executive officer, Datawind told HT. “Today’s launch is to announce that we are honouring the bookings made by our other retail customers across India.”