Andhra Pradesh to get IIT and IIM

AN IIT and an IIM would come up soon in Chittoor and Visakhapatnam districts in Andhra Pradesh among 11 prestigious institutions as part of the state bifurcation plan approved by the Centre this year.

Accordingly, the IIM would be set up at Aanandapuram in Visakhapatnam and the IIT at Yerpedu in Chittoor district, a state government release said on Wednesday.

An IISER (Indian Institute of Science Education and Research) would also be set up at Yerpedu. The Centre has approved the location of all the three institutions, the release said.

CM N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday directed that admissions be started in seven out of the 11 institutions.

PTI
मनरेगा की
निगरानी से जुड़ेंगे आईआईटी के छात्र

एम संजय

नई दिल्ली। मनरेगा में बदलाव की कसरत में जुटी मोदी सरकार इस योजना के साथ आईआईटी छात्रों को भी जोड़ने की तैयारी कर रही है। मनरेगा के कामकाज की निगरानी अब निजी कंपनियों और एनजीओ के बजाय गड्ड़बड़ी का सुझाव उठाया स पर निरीक्षण हो रहा है। सरकार के बाद भाजपा राजनीतिकार इस योजना की खामियों की दृष्टि में जुटे हैं।

केंद्र सरकार की कोशिश है कि तीसरे पक्ष के अड्डे के रूप में मनरेगा के कामकाज की निगरानी आईआईटी, एनआईटी, विद्युत, इंजीनियरिंग और प्रबंधन संस्थान के छात्रों से करवाये जाएं। अब तक मनरेगा के कामकाज की निगरानी निजी कंपनियों और एनजीओ के जरिये होती है।

इस सामग्री के पर केंद्रीय शाही विकास मंत्री विजय केशरी नायक का कहना है कि मनरेगा की निगरानी के काम में छात्रों को जोड़ना चाहिए। इससे बेहतर परिसंरक्षण के साथ बढ़ाएगा आईआईटी के स्तर पर सप्ताहों और हफ्तों के लिए योजना का समाप्त होने का काम होगा।
Indian Institute of Science set to translate Innovation to Entrepreneurship

December 10, 2014 Alpa Sharma


One of the leading research institutes, the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) is planning to promote start-ups. It is filtering through its innovations and Intellectual Property collected since its inception 105 years ago and is encouraging its students and faculty to come up with more entrepreneurial ideas.

IISc Director, Anurag Kumar commented, “the emphasis on science research will not change, but we are interested in making it more impactful”. IISc’s contribution towards the scientific and technological advancement of the country has been noteworthy. It has produced a lot of exceptional intellectuals to run industries, business houses and institutions. IISc runs a lot of translational programs which intend to take research forward and prepare it for implementation in the real world.

“For research to be beneficial to the society you have to create more products and services. So such translational work needs to happen. I’d like to see more and more professors and venture funds supporting businesses coming out of research”, added Kris Gopalakrishnan, co-founder of one of India’s largest software firms Infosys. Mr. Gopalakrishnan recently contributed INR 225 Crore to establish the Centre for Brain Research at the IISc. IISc has been focusing on incubating IP based start-ups that commercialize science and technology for societal advantage.

To help start-ups incubating in its premises, IISc is also a raising INR 20 Crore micro fund, partially supported by the Government, humanitarians and alumni. C S Murali, Chairman of the Entrepreneurship Cell (EC) and the Society for Innovation and Development (SID) at IISc stated, “it will take us about six months to give it shape”.

Parliament passes bill to establish second central university in Bihar


The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha have passed the Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2014. The Rajya Sabha passed it on Tuesday. Human Resource Development Minister Smriti Irani said the amendment is a reflection of the "Voice from the people of Bihar."

The statement of objects and reasons of the bill states that it seeks to set up a central university in Bihar. It was felt that the requirement of higher education was not being met by just one central university in the state.

The new university will be called Mahatma Gandhi Central University and will be located in Motihari in East Champaran. The bill also changed the name of the existing university to Central University of South Bihar, as it is located in south of the river Ganga.

HRD Minister Smriti Irani, while replying to a debate on the bill for setting up of the central university in Bihar, said higher education per se is facing challenges and "There is a long way we need to go". She has also
promised to fast-track the filling vacant faculty positions of central universities, including vice chancellors, adding that common people are also encouraged to express their views on government website.

The government has also set up two committees to review the functioning of UGC and AICTE.

**Smriti Irani to head Council of NCPSL**

Hindustan Times (Delhi)

Council of National Council for Promotion of Sindhi Language (NCPSL) has been constituted under the chairmanship of Smriti Irani, Union Minister of Human Resource Development. Aruna Jethwani will be the Vice-Chairman of the council. It is an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Human Resource Development with its headquarter in Delhi. It’s aim is to promote, develop and propagate the Sindhi language and take action for making available in Sindhi the knowledge of scientific and technological development.
Government looks to give start-ups more opportunities

By Mohindershri Srivastava

NEW DELHI

The eggs have hatched, and the chickens are looking for food.

Under a government scheme that opened in 2008, start-ups incubators in India spurred 99 enterprises, but many of them are still struggling because of lack of opportunities. The scheme was initially valid till 2014, but was later extended to 2017. And even as the government looks to revive the scheme, the new focus on domestic manufacturing may call for higher funding.

"What we need is an opportunity," says Lepesh Parat, chief executive officer and managing director of Zesty Beats Technologies Pvt. Ltd., one of these 71 start-ups. Incubated at the National Institute of Technology Calicut, the Kerala-based start-up provides customized enterprise resource planning solutions. "The government should at least make a scheme to provide us with opportunities in the e-governance space, because it is very difficult for start-up companies like us to bid for government projects considering the requirements," says Parat, sitting at the back of a conference room in the department of electronics and information technology (DEITY), where senior government officials deliberate on whether and how to go ahead with the scheme.

Under the Technology Incubation and Development of Entrepreneurs (TIDE), which ran since 2008, a total of 27 incubation centres for ICT (Information and Communication Technology) and electronics start-ups were set up in government colleges with a total outlay of ₹40.33 crore.

DEITY has now dusted off the old scheme, following the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government’s thrust on start-ups and e-governance in line with its larger Digital India initiative. The department is assessing and modifying the scheme to address some of the concerns raised by these start-ups. Parat was in Delhi to attend a DEITY workshop on 3 December called Innovation Promotion by Nurturing Start-ups, to discuss if the scheme should be taken to the next level. And it seems there’s more work to be done in this regard.

The government is now looking to launch the new edition of TIDE called TIDE Plus, under which the number of incubation centres in higher education institutions like IIITs and IIMs will be doubled. They will also be granted more money from a ₹100 crore start-up fund announced in July.

DEITY has appointed C-DAC (Centre for Development of Advanced Computing), Noida, as the nodal agency for TIDE Plus, in an attempt to take the scheme to the next level. A draft report was submitted during the workshop that underlined the challenges faced by these incubates and the recommendations by the centres.

"Essentially, we are very confident that we will increase the funding for the innovation in the start-up. With Digital India coming in, we have assessed the scheme to take it to the next level," said R.S. Sharma, secretary at DEITY.

What’s the scheme outlay was, many of our initial centres have been able to use that; so, we are not able to fund any more. Based on the recommendations from the centres and the incubates, we are working on another scheme called TIDE Plus, deciding on the contours of the new scheme," said R.S. Sharma, secretary at DEITY.

The presentation on the draft report, which was reviewed by MHRD, said DEITY has indeed helped in accelerating the pace of innovation and entrepreneurial activities in ICT and thus can be expanded in terms of quantum of funding and creation of additional centres.

Under the scheme, we are looking at how we can help start-ups in our country. We started concentrating on 27 centres, which are essentially based in institutes of higher learning, including IIITs and NITs. As a thumbrule, these centres could nurture up to five companies, with each of these start-ups getting ₹25 lakh as seed fund," said Debasish Dutta, group coordinator and senior director at DEITY.

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Bengaluru: The Indian startup attempting to soft-land a craft on the Moon has just won funding from a host of bigwigs in the venture capital, technology and startup ecosystem, and accolades from some of India’s leading space scientists.

The startup—Team Indus, founded by IIT-Delhi alumnus Rahul Narayan and four others—was earlier this year placed among the top contenders for the Google Lunar XPrize, the grand global competition to land a robotic spacecraft on the Moon by December next year and for which 18 teams are in the race. Team Indus is the only one from India, and is competing against much more established and well-funded teams.

The new investors in the venture include Subrata Mitra & Shekhar Kirani of Accel Partners (they have invested in their individual capacities), Sharad Sharma, former Yahoo India R&D head, Vivek Raghavan, chief product manager of UIDAI (the Aadhaar project), Sunil Kalra, entrepreneur & investor, Paras Chopra and Pallav Nadhani, both founders of successful startups.

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If Team Indus succeeds in its venture, it would be the first time India would be soft-landing a craft on the Moon. ISRO’s Chandrayaan-1 orbited the Moon and then hard-landed, crashing itself on the Moon’s surface. The Google Lunar XPrize, which carries $40 million in prize money, also requires that a rover will dismount from the landing craft and travel 500 metres on the lunar surface, and take high quality images. “The audacity of the plan was what attracted me to Team Indus. It’s such a big and complex project,” said Raghavan, who has been with the UIDAI project since its inception.

It’s literally a moonshot, said Sharad Sharma. Team Indus, he said, is the embodiment of the new type of Indian entrepreneur — the missionary, the big risk taker. “Our earlier tech entrepreneurs were arbitrage guys and copy cats of global businesses, and they took very safe bets,” he said.

Going by the latest reviews of the project by top space scientists, Team Indus could well achieve its mission. V Adimurthy, a senior ISRO advisor and designer of the Mars orbiter mission, said about two years ago, when he first met Team Indus, there were many loose ends. “Three months ago there was another review, and what I saw made very good sense. It has become a very feasible project, and I think they can do it,” he said.

Pallav Sharma, director of analytics at Microsoft based in Redmond, Bala Parthasarathy, serial entrepreneur and part of the AngelPrime angel investor group, Sunil Kalra, entrepreneur & investor, Paras Chopra and Pallav Nadhani, both founders of successful startups.
Bill to set up more SPAs passed

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 10

PARLIAMENT on Wednesday passed a Bill to declare three Schools of Planning and Architecture (SPA) as “institutions of national importance” and establish new such schools. The government said said such schools will contribute to developing ‘smart cities’, announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi earlier.

During the discussion, HRD Minister Smriti Irani said the government plans to forge international tie-ups and will rope in global experts to impart world class education in these institutions. Allaying the apprehensions expressed by some members, she said the existing reservation policy with regard to admission of students and recruitment of faculty will “completely be followed” in the SPAs on the lines of what is being done at the IITs, NITs and IIMs.

With the passage of the Bill, the SPAs located in Delhi, Bhopal and Vijayawada will be able to grant degrees to students. The Bill also has a provision to set up a council that can recommend creation of new SPAs across the country. The Bill found no resistance from the opposition parties.

Now, students can run tests in space

London: Leading UK space organizations have joined forces with British and European Space Agency astronaut Tim Peake along with Raspberry Pi to offer students a chance to devise and code their own apps or experiment to run in space.

Two Raspberry Pi computers are planned to be flown to the International Space Station (ISS) as part of Peake’s six month mission and both will be connected to a new “Astro Pi” board loaded with a host of sensors and gadgets.

The Astro Pi competition will be open to all primary and secondary school aged children who are resident in the UK. During his mission, Peake plans to deploy the Astro Pi computers at various locations on board the ISS. He will then load up the winning code whilst in orbit, set them running, collect the data generated and download this to Earth, to distribute it to winning teams.

Business secretary of the UK Space Agency Vince Cable said, “So much technology relies on big data but not enough people are being trained in this field. This challenge helps the next generation to have fun whilst learning the skills that industry needs.” To help students on their way in developing their code, five inspirational themes have been devised.
Believe it, potato can help you control weight

Extract Rich With Polyphenols Is Magic Ingredient

Kounteya.Sinha@timesgroup.com

London: You may be blaming your love for potato as the cause of your bulging waistline.

But, scientists now say the humble vegetable that is a dietician’s nightmare can actually help you cut a few kilos, terming it “the miracle ingredient to fight obesity”.

Extracts of Irish potatoes, rich in polyphenols has been found to reduce weight gain from a diet that is high in fat and refined carbohydrates, according to scientists at McGill University.

The results of their recent study were so surprising that the investigators repeated the experiment just to be sure.

Investigators fed mice an obesity-inducing diet for 10 weeks. The results soon appeared on the scale: mice that started out weighing on average 25 grams put on about 16 grams. However, mice that consumed the same diet but with a potato extract gained much less weight: only seven more grams.

The benefits of the extract are due to its high concentration of polyphenols, a beneficial component from the fruits and vegetables.

“We were astonished by the results,” said professor Luis Agellon, one of the study’s authors. “We thought this can’t be right – in fact, we ran the experiment again using a different batch of extract prepared from potatoes grown in another season, just to be certain.”

According to this study, potato extracts could be a solution for preventing both obesity and type 2 diabetes. “The daily dose of extract comes from 30 potatoes, but of course we don’t advise anyone to eat 30 potatoes a day,” says Stan Kubow, principal author of the study, “as that would be an enormous number of calories.”

What the investigators envisage instead is making the extract available as a dietary supplement or simply as a cooking ingredient to be added in the kitchen.

Popular for its carbohydrate content, the potato is also a source of polyphenols. “In the famous French diet, considered to be very healthy, potatoes – not red wine – are the primary source of polyphenols,” says Kubow. “Potatoes have the advantage of being cheap, and they’re part of the basic diet in many countries,” Kubow explains. “We chose a cultivated variety that is consumed in Canada and especially rich in polyphenols.”

Although humans and mice metabolize foods in similar ways, clinical trials are absolutely necessary to validate beneficial effects among humans.
New treatment ups hopes of fight against superbugs

Washington: Researchers have pioneered a treatment far more effective than traditional antibiotics at inhibiting the growth of drug-resistant bacteria, including so-called “superbugs”.

The findings provide a needed boost to the field of antibiotic development, which has been limited in the last four decades and outpaced by the rise of drug-resistant bacterial strains, said researchers at the University of Pittsburgh Center for Vaccine Research (CVR).

On the tail end of HIV surface protein, there is a sequence of amino acids that the virus uses to “punch into” and infect cells.

Senior author Ronald C Montelaro, professor and co-director of Pitt’s CVR and his colleagues developed a synthetic and more efficient version of this sequence — called engineered cationic antimicrobial peptides, or “eCAPs” — that can be chemically synthesised in a laboratory setting.

The scientists tested the two leading eCAPs against a natural antimicrobial peptide (LL37) and a standard antibiotic (colistin), the latter being used as a last-resort antibiotic against multi-drug resistant bacterial infections. The natural human antimicrobial peptide LL37 and the colistin drug each inhibited growth of about 50% of the clinical isolates, indicating a high level of bacterial resistance to these drugs. In marked contrast, the two eCAPs inhibited growth in about 90% of the test bacterial strains.

“We were very impressed with the performance of the eCAPs when compared with some of the best existing drugs, including a natural antimicrobial peptide made by Mother Nature and an antibiotic of last resort,” said Montelaro. The eCAPs worked just as effectively at killing Pseudomonas aeruginosa after it became resistant to the traditional drugs.

“We plan to continue developing the eCAPs, with the intention of creating the least-toxic and most effective version possible so we can move them to clinical trials and help patients who have exhausted existing antibiotic options,” said Montelaro.
IIT expert suggests new pre-stressing pattern, to file report to Railways

Hindustan Times (Indore)

INDORE: After casting a long, hard look at the site, IIT Mumbai professor Alok Goyal on Wednesday recommended a new pattern for pre-stressing the girder of the under-construction railway over bridge (ROB) at the super corridor

He advised Indore Development Authority (IDA) to continuously monitor the girder for seven days and said he would revisit the site in a fortnight to personally check the progress.

Goyal said he would also submit a report based on his inspection to the Western Railways.

Professor RK Ingle, a structural engineer from the National Institute of Technology, Nagpur, representatives of the ROB contractor Kalyan Toll IDA engineer Anoop Dhaketa and other officials were present during the inspection.

A girder on the railway span (the portion above the railway tracks) broke during pre-stressing in October.

Western Railways officials called for bringing in technical experts from IIT-Mumbai to probe the reasons for the collapse at a multi-agency meet attended by officials from IDA, Western Railway consultant RITES, the supervision consultant Technogem and contractor Kalyan Toll.

The eight-lane ROB, proposed along an approximate length of 900 metres and carrying a price tag of Rs 43.43 crore, will be the first facility of its kind in the state.

It is expected to play a key role in ferrying pilgrims to Ujjain for the Simhastha 2016.