In a first, two Indian univs make it to Times’ top 40

IIsc BANGALORE RANKS 25TH

INDIA IN TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION BRICS AND EMERGING ECONOMIES RANKINGS 2015

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<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
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15 universities – from Chile, China, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Russia and Turkey – have entered the tables for the first time.

India increases its representation with 11 of the top-100 places, up from 10 last year and it has a new national leader.

Barring the two new entrants and IIT-Madras, rest of the eight Indian institutions have fallen in the ranks.

London: There is great news for India’s universities. For the first time, two new Indian entrants have jumped straight into the top 40 of the second annual Times Higher Education Brics and Emerging Economies’ rankings.

Moreover, 11 other Indian universities have made it to the top 100 rankings. Around 18 countries featured in the 2015 rankings, which was released on Wednesday.

Around 15 universities – from Chile, China, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Russia and Turkey – have entered the tables for the first time.

China has cemented its dominance among the emerging global economies, retaining the top two places and increasing its representation among the top 100 institutions to 27, up from 23 last year.

India has increased its representation with 11 of the top-100 places, up from 10 last year and it has a new national leader - Indian Institute of Science in 25th place and the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay in 37th place.

Phil Baty, editor of the Times Higher Education Rankings, said, "India is starting to show its potential in these rankings, increasing its overall representation in this new top-100 list to 11, from 10 last year. Only China and Taiwan have more top-100 institutions than India, which remains ahead of Russia and Brazil among the giant developing economies. But this improved showing is partly due to the fact that more Indian institutions have recognized the benefits of being part of the rankings process, and more are sharing their data with Times Higher Education."

"Several Indian institutions have actually lost ground compared to last year. So there is clearly no room for any complacency. The good news is that by engaging with the global rankings and sharing performance data to benchmark themselves against the tough global standards set by Times Higher Education, India's leading institutions have shown a hunger for further development and for sharing the best practice. If this is backed by a government-led commitment to support India's top universities to compete on the global stage, with sufficient funding and reforms, there would be plenty of room for optimism."

The rankings were given after accessing all aspects of the modern university’s core missions (teaching, research, knowledge transfer and international outlook).

China retains the top two positions (Peking University followed by Tsinghua University) in the rankings.

Fudan University follows Peking and Tsinghua, taking the ninth place, while University of Science and Technology of China lost its top-10 position, moving into joint 11th place.

Russia has seen a dramatic improvement in its standing – increasing its representatives in the top 100 from just two last year to seven this year, and seeing its number one university, Moscow State University, climbing up from 10th to 5th.
Eleven Indian institutions have found a place in the latest Times Higher Education (THE) rankings of the best universities in emerging economies, but the country's performance paled in comparison with that of China—a likely spur for government measures to develop an indigenous system to measure their standards.

Peking University of China leads the top 100 list of universities from BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and emerging nations compiled by the education research firm. China cemented its dominance of the rankings with 27 of its institutions finding a place in the list, followed by Taiwan with 19.

Not one Indian institution found a place in the top 20, the highest ranking Indian university being the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, which came in at 25.

India's poor performance in global rankings of educational institutions has been a sore point with policy makers. Just four institutions from the country made it to the top 400 and none to the top 200 in the THE World University Ranking released earlier this year.

"India is starting to show its potential in these rankings, increasing its overall representation in this new top 100 list to 11, from 10 last year. Only China and Taiwan have more top 100 institutions than India, which remains ahead of Russia and Brazil among the giant developing economies," said Phil Baty, editor of THE.

That's poor consolation for the country, which is making efforts to put in place its own system to measure the performance of Indian institutions modelled on the world university rankings of London-based THE. Although Indian universities have been improving their rankings relative to earlier years, the sense in the government is that the process followed in compiling the lists is flawed.

"We have initiated the process for setting up our own mechanism for developing a credible international ranking for our own institutions and of other countries," said an official at the human resource development (HRD) ministry, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The official said a committee had been set up by the ministry with representation from the elite Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and industry experts to develop a globally competitive methodology and identify an agency to compile the rankings.

"Yes, it's on its way. IITs and other experts are deliberating on this for last few months as per the direction of the HRD ministry," confirmed Sidh Nath Singh, deputy director at IIT-Delhi.

To be sure, there were some silver linings for India in the latest list of rankings of emerging nation universities. IISc-Bangalore and IIT-Bombay made it to the top 40 in the first year they entered the list.

IIT-Bombay was ranked 37, IIT-Roorkee 38 and Panjab University 39 (dropping from 13 last year). IIT-Madras and IIT-Delhi were ranked 44 and 46, respectively, lower than in the previous year. Jadavpur University, which was joint 47 last year, dropped out of the top 100.

"Several Indian institutions have actually lost ground compared with last year. So there is clearly no room for any complacency," Baty said. "The good news is that by engaging with the global rankings and sharing performance data to benchmark themselves against the tough global standards...India's leading institutions have shown a hunger for further development and for sharing best practices."

"If this is backed by a government-led commitment to support India's top universities to compete on the global stage, with sufficient funding and reforms, there would be plenty of room for optimism," he added.

The IIT-Director's office declined to comment. IIT-Delhi said the drop in its ranking was not a major issue.

"Ranking does play a role but its not the only critical factor," said Singh, its deputy director. "Every agency has its own way of doing some ranking, which may not be suitable to an Indian context like internationalization in campus. We have a national responsibility."

This makes it important to have an Indian agency with a global outlook to measure the performance of local institutions of higher learning, he said.

Gautam Barua, a former director of IIT-Guwahati, said India should consult international ranking agencies like THE and QS, but forming an indigenous agency to measure the performance of Indian institutions is an imperative.

"Benchmarking is good as it puts pressure to perform. But we have to be cautious that some may have their own agenda and may have some commercial motivation," said Barua. "These days, to improve ranking you need to do marketing, which is not a good situation," he added.
IISc Bangalore replaces PU as India’s top university

ADITI TANDON
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 3
Among 22 emerging economies ranked for the quality of their higher educational institutions, India has finished not only behind China but also Taiwan.

Times Higher Education’s BRICS and Emerging Economies rankings 2015 published on Wednesday reveal that while China has 27 institutions of higher learning among the top 100 list in the grouping, India has just 11. Taiwan has 19.

The rankings used 13 rigorous performance indicators used for the World University Rankings covering all aspects like teaching, research, knowledge transfer and international outlook.

China, Taiwan way ahead in Times varsity rankings

- Times Higher Education’s BRICS and Emerging Economies rankings 2015 published on Wednesday reveal that while China has 27 institutions of higher learning among the top 100 list in the grouping, India has just 11. Taiwan has 19.

The independent ratings, which are among the world’s most trusted, analysed the higher education strength of Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS) and 17 emerging economies such as Pakistan, Chile, Colombia, Czech Republic, Egypt and Hungary.

The Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, has emerged the new number one for India, topping the ranking charts for the country and scoring the 25th slot in the overall tables. IISc has replaced the 2014 India number one Panjab University (PU), Chandigarh, which was 13th in the last year's top 100 BRICS rankings table.

PU has this year slipped 26 notches to finish at rank 39. PU sources said the reason was a change of rules used for ratings of institutions.

Times Higher Education Group, however, said the rankings used the same range of 13 rigorous performance indicators used for the World University Rankings covering all aspects of modern university’s core missions like teaching, research, knowledge transfer and international outlook.
Autonomy of central varsities to be history soon

By K S Seshan

The reported decision of the Human Resource Development Ministry to set up a working group of nice do-gooders to get the guidelines framed for introducing common admissions and curriculum, student and faculty mobility, and also to allow credit transfer facility to students in the existing central universities, appears, on the face of it, a very progressive step. The very purpose with which the central universities were envisioned in the 1950s gets lost with the kind of changes which the HRD ministry is now contemplating. The Central government in its wisdom then, left that few quality universities at some select places will serve as bench mark and as examples in the already existing state universities which can emulate them in matters of academic excellence. Large amounts of funds were liberally granted to the central universities to make them as islands of excellence in matters of infrastructure, for having distinguished faculty and for selecting quality students by holding rigorous admission norms at the national level.

The early central universities like the Jawaharlal Nehru University, the University of Hyderabad, the North Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong etc had establishes the facilities in the early decades of their establishment. Many of those central universities, with their reasonably good infrastructure and academic performance, attracted many a young distinguished faculty, who otherwise might have left for greener pastures abroad. Though by 1990s, the phase of funds cutback set in, there was a steady growth of the number of the central universities. It was felt that there should be at least one central university in each State. In Assam, for example, there was a dearth of such centres from the people in both Brahmaputra Valley in the north and the Brahmaputra valley in the south, two central universities, one at Tezpur and another at Silchar were inaugurated on a single day. With the establishment of 14 new universities in one go in 2000, there is now practically no State where there is no central university. Even the residual State of Andhra Pradesh, after the recent formation of Telangana, is promised a central university that is to come up in Anantapur and that will take the total number of each University to 10.

The central universities, over these decades, have come to be known for their academic excellence, for the quality of research and publications, for their high profile faculty, for the linkages they have with industry and for their outreach. Most of them have been making significant contributions in matters of academic output.

There were instances when young Indian scholars working with reputed Nobel laureates at several western universities were attracted to central universities as they were equipped with top quality laboratories and well-developed libraries.

Some central universities as well as the University of Delhi have added external hostel facilities, providing accommodation for each student. Administration has also been completely residential in nature. Another positive aspect of all the central universities has been the favorable ratio between the teacher and the taught. The intake of the students was always kept as optimum and therefore a healthy student-teacher ratio was maintained. Some universities accredited by the UGC were able to provide, with the funds they garnered, fellowships to every student admitted. It is also a fact that comparatively a larger number of UC and CSSL sponsored JRF and SRF fellowship holders are from the central universities.

The general trend in most of the central universities has been that the ratio of students from the native of the state concerned and from other states exist at 80:20. This reasonably fair ratio will be hit if common admissions are held. There is every likelihood that students from rural India, graduated with another tongue as medium will naturally be kept out of the portals of the central universities.

Mobility of faculty

The provision for mobility of faculty is sorely needed. The constant turnover of the faculty concerned at one university becomes imperative for the kind of research work that one is undertaking and developing. This is also the most crucial in the laboratory related research work. When a professor retires, to another university or on his own or as a consequence of another person taking his place, we cannot imagine the consequent results.

There will be certainly the faculty cannot make it new for better universities increasing the academic atmosphere. Also allowing the students to freely shift from one university to another along with the credit transfer system will only open up the Pandora box making confusion more con- founded. It is sure to lose every understandable element in the pleasant academic vistas of the universities.

The individual departments in most of the central universities have the freedom to frame the courses they decide to teach and have the autonomy to conduct exams and assess the students’ performance. Such academic freedom that the central universities today enjoy and the positive atmosphere they possess in the far reaches of teaching and research, is sure to be under-mined by the decisions of the HRD to introduce common curriculum and inter-university mobility of students as well as faculty, besides the proposed national system of credit transfer.

These central universities which have been doing commendable work as centers of excellence, should be allowed to continue their work unhindered with the kind of academic freedom they now enjoy. Let them not be reduced to dumpy uniformity and be- come their hard won identity in matters of teaching and research.

(The writer is retired professor, University of Hyderabad)
आईआईटी परिसर में लगे सोलर प्लांट

कानपुर। आईआईटी कानपुर परिसर अब सोलर पावर प्लांट से जगमाएगा और इसके लिए संस्थान में पहले चरण में 344 प्वाइट 53 किलोवाट के चार सोलर पावर प्लांट लगाए गए हैं। आईआईटी द्वारा जारी आज एक बयान में बताया गया कि संस्थान में चार फूटपरच के सॉलर पोटेंशियलिक प्लांट लगाए गए हैं।

नियम बदले

आईआईटी में दाखिले के लिए होने वाली जेईई एडवांस की परीक्षा के नियमों में बदलाव हुआ है। यदि छात्र ने 2014 में 12वीं की परीक्षा दी है और विषय के अंकों से संतुष्ट न होने के कारण 2015 में इंटरव्युट प्रदा चाहता है तो उसे किसी एक या दो नहीं बिल्कुल सभी विषयों के इंटरव्युट प्रदा दिए गए होंगे। ऐसा करने पर ही छात्र जेईई एडवांस की परीक्षा में नैदान ले पाएगा।

जेईई एडवांस आयोजन कमेटी के एक वरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने बताया कि एडवांस की परीक्षा की क्रिया का सुदूर निष्पात में दिया गया है। यह नियम इंटरव्युट और कंपाउंटेंट बालों के लिए है। अन्य वर्ष 2013-14 की 12वीं की परीक्षा वर्ष 2014 में देने वालों के लिए है। किसी एक विषय में भी कंपाउंटेंट होता है तो उस सारे विषयों की परीक्षा देना होगा। इसमें प्राप्त होने वाले अंकों के आधार पर ही जेईई एडवांस में बेचने के लिए बीपे माना जाएगा। ऐसे हालात के अन्य बोर्ड में सभी विषयों के लिए आवेदन करना होगा। उसके बाद जेईई एडवांस में पंजीकरण करना होगा। यदि छात्र जेईई एडवांस में बेचने के लिए दो परीक्षा होती है। यहाँ, जेईई में और दूसरी जेईई एडवांस जेईई में की परीक्षा में सफल होने वाले परीक्षा के पास लांच आईआईटी में दाखिले के लिए जेईई एडवांस करें जेईई एडवांस में बेचने के लिए सभी दो मौके पता है। वहाँ, जेईई में की परीक्षा तीन बार दी जा सकती है।

शीर्ष 20 पर्सेंटेज छात्रों में जवाब देना जरूरी

जेईई एडवांस के बाद आईआईटी में दाखिले के लिए दो में से एक शर्त पूरी करनी होगी। पहली शर्त के मुताबिक, छात्र को अपने राज्य के बोर्ड के शीर्ष 20 परसेंटेज बालों में जगह बनाने में कामयाब होना चाहिए। यदि छात्र ऐसा नहीं कर पाता है तो उसके 12वीं कक्षा में न्यूरल 75 फीसदी अंक नहीं होना चाहिए।
BIG PAY PACKAGE LURES ENGINEERS

Several core engineering students are taking up non-engineering careers due to hefty salary packages

By Neetu Kaur in New Delhi

Not everyone at IIT-Delhi is very excited about the recent placement drive this year. However, most of the interns who have placed-offer the job at a reputable firm and are happy with the package.

A few students are happy with the non-engineering offers too. These students say that the core engineering students are facing very high competition in the job market.

High pay packages:

ITI-Kharagpur takes ‘Make in India’ road

IIT-Kharagpur is the top package offerer with the highest-ever placement offer of $75,000 per annum. The institute also offered the highest-ever package of $75,000 to a student from the electronics and communication engineering department.

IIT-Delhi officials say very few students are opting for core engineering jobs for the pay packages they get.

RISING WITH THE YEARS

2012

- Three students of IIT-Delhi bagged a salary of 1.80 lakh per annum from a reputed software company.

2013

- Two IIT-Delhi students were offered a salary of 2.30 lakh per annum.

2014

- Two IIT-Delhi students were offered a salary of 2.50 lakh per annum.

- IIT-Delhi officials claimed that the placements were higher than ever before.

Offers galore but no apt roles

It is a different story for the job market. The job market is not very promising for engineers these days. The placement offers are not as high as they used to be.

The students are being offered jobs in various fields like IT, finance, and consulting.

The students are being offered opportunities in various fields like IT, finance, and consulting.

Earnings from placements:

- Earnings from placements have increased by 20% in the last year.

- The highest placement offered so far in this year was to a student from IIT-Delhi, who was offered a package of 2.50 lakh.

- The highest placement offered to a student from IIT-Delhi was 2.50 lakh, while the average package offered was 1.20 lakh.

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Bagful of Dollars International recruiters roll out more than 40 crore-plus salary offers in just two days

A Monsoon of Crores Arrives at IITs Just Ahead of Winter

Sreeradha D Basu & Devina Sen Gupta

Mumbai: Top international recruiters Facebook, Oracle and Google have rolled out at least 40 offers with total compensation packages higher than ₹1 crore at the end of only the second day of IIT campus placements, according to campus sources. Such a large number of crore-plus offers — including cash and stocks — are being offered for the first time.

Oracle is leading the charge, offering up to ₹4,000 stock units worth ₹200,000 (₹1.24 crore), besides a ₹125,000 (₹7.5 lakh) cash component. Sources from IIT-BHU (Varanasi) confirmed these figures.

Sources from IIT-Delhi, IIT-Roorkee and IIT-Kanpur said some 4,000 stock options had been indicated as part of the overall package by the American multinational computer technology corporation. Google, for Mountain View postings, rolled out a salary of ₹130,000 (₹8.1 lakh) and 250 stock units worth approximately ₹134,500 (₹83 lakh), IIT-BHU officials said.

The institute added that one student has been selected by Oracle US, and another for Google US.

Average domestic salaries at IIT campus placements this year have been in the range of ₹10-12 lakh.

Placement cell officials said Google would have a stock component in its package and Microsoft is also likely to have it.

The New Crorepati

Oracle leads charge, offers up to 4,800 stock units worth ₹200,000 (₹1.24 crore), besides a ₹125,000 (₹7.5 lakh) cash component.

Google, for Mountain View postings, rolled out a salary of ₹130,000 (₹8.1 lakh) and 250 stock units worth nearly ₹134,500 (₹83 lakh).

AVERAGE DOMESTIC salaries at IIT campus placements this year have been in the range of ₹10-12 lakh.

IIT-BHU has Info on Google ESOPs

From Page 1

A student at one of the IITs who bagged an offer from Oracle said it was communicated to him that he would get a ₹100,000 base pay, ₹15,000 joining bonus and ₹10,000 relocation allowance. “I was intimated that over and above this, there was also a stock component which I would get to know in the offer letter,” he said.

While IIT-BHU has information on the stock options offered by Google, other placement cells said the search engine giant has not yet communicated the relevant numbers to them. However, they said Google would have a stock component in its package and Microsoft was also likely to have the same. ET could not independently reach out to Google at the time of going to print.
टॉप ऑफर्स देने की रेस में ओरिकल अभी सबसे आगे

IIT प्लेसमेंट में करोड़ से अधिक के 40 ऑफर

श्रीराधा डी बसु एंड देविना सेनगुप्ता | मुंबई |
आईआईटी कैंपस प्लेसमेंट के दूसरे दिन फेसबुक, ओरिकल और गूगल जैसे टॉप इंटरनेशनल रिकूर्सर्स ने 1 करोड़ से अधिक के कम से कम 40 ऑफर्स दिए हैं। यह जानकारी कैपस सूट्स ने दी है। इन ऑफर्स में कैश और स्टॉक्स दोनों शामिल हैं। पहली बार इतनी बड़ी संख्या में आईआईटी प्लेसमेंट में एक करोड़ से अधिक के सैलरी पैकेज ऑफर किए जा रहे हैं।

इसमें ओरिकल आगे चल रही है। उसने 1.24 करोड़ रुपये की स्टॉक बुनियाद के साथ 77.5 लाख सलारी कैश का ऑफर दिया है। आईआईटी-बीएचयू के सूट्स ने इसकी पुष्टि की है। गूगल ने अमेरिका में माउंटेन व्यू में पोस्टिंग के लिए 80.4 लाख सैलरी और 250 स्टॉक ऑफर किया है। इसकी पुष्टि भी आईआईटी-बीएचयू के सूट्स ने की। इन्स्ट्रेटूर्एट ने बताया कि एक स्टूडेंट को ओरिकल यूप्स और दूसरे को गूगल माउंटेन व्यू के लिए चुना गया है।

वहीं आईआईटी कैंपस प्लेसमेंट्स में एवरज डोमेस्टिक सैलरी 10 से 12 लाख रुपये की रेंज में है। कंपनियों एंडलॉज ने बनाए रखने के लिए स्टॉक ऑफर्स देती है। कंपनी में तय समय गुजारने के बाद ही इसने भुनाने की इजाजत होती है। इक्जनमिक टाइम्स ने पहले खबर दी थी कि फेसबुक 1.55 करोड़ का ऑफर आईआईटी बनाया, आईआईटी खंडगपुर और आईआईटी दिल्ली में दे चुकी है। इसमें से एक आईआईटी में ओरिकल से ऑफर पाने वाले स्टूडेंट ने बताया कि उन्हें 1,00,000 डॉलर बेसिक सैलरी, 15,000 डॉलर ज्वाइनिंग बोनस और 10,000 डॉलर रिलोकेशन अलाउंड देना का आदेश किया गया है। स्टूडेंट ने बताया, ‘मुझसे कहा गया है कि इसके बाद स्टॉक ऑफर्स भी दिए जाएंगे, जिसकी जानकारी ऑफर लेटर में होगी।’
Changing trend: Over 10% of IIT graduates likely to join new-generation companies this year

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2014-12-03/news/56684881_1_mohak-mehta-many-iits-campus-placement

MUMBAI: At least one in every 9 students graduating from the 2015 batch across IITs is likely to join an ecomm firm/startup.

Data collated on Tuesday (day 2 of placement season) from prominent recruiters as well as campus placement cells at many IITs suggests that ecommerce firms/startups will roll out a minimum of 1,000-1,200 offers during the next 3-4 months of placements.

About 9,000 students will graduate out of 16 IITs this year.

Four big players — Flipkart (200-220), Ola-Cabs (200), Snapdeal (100-plus) and Housing.com (100-150) — alone will make around 670 offers at IIT campuses. These four companies hired only 213 grads last year — a 215% increase this year. A combination of the hectic startup activity — an estimated 800 ventures launched every year — and billions of dollars pumped into consumer Internet ventures from big names like Tiger Global and SoftBank have contributed to this huge surge in hiring.

"Our growth plans are so aggressive that we need top talent to drive growth. Our hiring plans are a function of the pace at which we are growing," said Saurabh Nigam, VP-HR, Snapdeal.

Snapdeal has quadrupled its hiring targets from the IITs this year.

Ola is visiting the IITs at Delhi, Kanpur, Madras and Bombay and plans a 10-fold hiring increase from year last.

"We are expanding aggressively into newer cities and going deeper in cities we are already present.

Continuous influx of great talent can help us grow faster and smarter," Anand Subramanian, director - marketing communication, said.

Several other startups, including CodeNation, TaxiForSure, Indus Insights, LimeRoad, Knowlarity Communications, Fuzzy Logix, Vizury and BrowserStack among others, are planning to hire anywhere between 10 and 50 students each across IITs. "Students are excited by these companies, for their work culture, the independence and even the compensation structure," says Parth Vaswani, overall placement coordinator, IITKanpur.

"For many, they probably rank right behind the software sector in terms of the pecking order," he says.

Several of these companies also recruit for IT-software roles.

Vaswani expects at least 150 such offers this year compared to 60-odd last year.

At IIT-Bombay, around 60-70 companies -- almost 20% of the total that have signed up so far -- fall in the ecommerce/startup bracket.

Students rate these companies highly, which is why several of them get slotted in the first few days of campus placement, Mohak Mehta, BTech student representative for IIT-Bombay said.
Across IITs, these ecommerce/startup companies are hiring across a variety of roles for salaries that range between Rs 10-18 lakh, going up to a maximum of Rs 24 lakh from the likes of Code-Nation.

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**NON-VEG FOOD IN IIT STOPPED DURING UPA RULE, SAYS IRANI**

New Delhi, Dec. 3: HRD minister Smriti Irani on Wednesday rejected allegations that she was promoting vegetarian food in IITs, contending that it such meals were stopped during UPA rule, much before she assumed charge following complaints about high price.

“...We have turned IITs into a vegetarian complex? I would like to tell my learned friend that IIT students in Delhi explained and in fact expressed their anguish at the high cost of non-veg food and it was stopped in April 2014 much before I took office,” she said while replying to debate on a bill in the Lok Sabha.

“In fact, the IITs are exploring through three organisations or individuals the possibility of providing non-veg food to its students. These are decisions I do not interfere with,” she said while counter the charges of some MPs in Lok Sabha.

Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi had said that there has been move against non-veg food and added the government should be concerned about promoting IITs and not promoting veg food in IITs.

— PTI
LS clears SPA bill, enables institutes to give degrees

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 3.

In a move to enable the School of Planning and Architecture (SPA) to award degrees, the Lok Sabha passed “The School of Planning and Architecture Bill, 2014”. The move will enable these institutes to award degrees to students who are still awaiting the much coveted certificates. The SPA Bhopal and Vijayawada will now be able to award degrees to their students. The third SPA is in Delhi.

After discussion, the Lok Sabha passed “The School of Planning and Architecture Bill, 2014”. Planning and Architecture also.

Replying to the discussion on the legislative proposal, Union minister for human resources Smriti Irani said that the finances of the SPAs would be audited and the annual reports would be tabled in the Parliament. The institutes in Bhopal and Vijayawada were set up in 2008-09. To confer degree to graduates, the institute has to be so authorised under an act of the Parliament or declared a “deemed to be university” by UGC.
IISc: novel way to reduce cell damage found

Amit A. Vernekar (foreground), Shubhi Srivastava and Devanjan Sinha studied the ability of vanadia nanowires to scavenge hydrogen peroxide, a reactive oxygen species.

Vanadia nanowires mimic an antioxidant enzyme produced by the body

http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/iisc-novel-way-to-reduce-cell-damage-found/article6658872.ece

Preliminary studies have shown a way to reduce cell damage and blunt the effect of one of the factors responsible for the onset of several diseases such as cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and ageing.

Reactive oxygen species, which are produced continuously in the body during cellular metabolism and responsible for cellular damage, are removed by naturally occurring antioxidants. However, the scavenging system fails when the amount of ROS produced is elevated. The most prevalent reactive oxygen species is hydrogen peroxide; excess amount of hydrogen peroxide can damage the cells the most.

By using vanadia nanowires, a team of researchers at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore was able to successfully remove any excess reactive oxygen species produced. The vanadia nanowires functionally mimic an antioxidant enzyme (glutathione peroxidase) produced by the body to scavenge hydrogen peroxide. Glutathione peroxidase is one of the two enzymes that control the level of hydrogen peroxide inside a cell.

The results of the study were published recently in the journal *Nature Communications*.
Unlike the nano form, the bulk, foam and complex forms of vanadium do the exact opposite. They produce more reactive oxygen species thereby negatively affecting the viability of cells.

In a nano form, vanadium is able to reduce hydrogen peroxide without changing the oxidation state of the metal, which is unusual for a metal ion.

“If the metal changes its oxidation state then vanadium can produce reactive oxygen species, which is what happens when vanadium is in a bulk and foam form,” said Prof. Govindasamy Mugesh from the Department of Inorganic and Physical Chemistry, IISc. He is one of the corresponding authors of the paper.

The nanowires proved successful as an ROS scavenger as they reacted with hydrogen peroxide to produce water. “Hydrogen peroxide reacts with vanadia on the surface of the nanowires, and once water is produced, the next molecule of hydrogen peroxide binds to the nanowire surface. So vanadia is able to continuously scavenge hydrogen peroxide without getting deactivated,” Prof. Mugesh said.

The efficiency of the nanowires as a scavenger was tested using hydrogen peroxide in a test tube and inside cells; cell lines were used for in vitro studies. “The scavenging is 100 per cent when hydrogen peroxide is used. But inside a cell, vanadia maintains optimum levels of reactive oxygen species,” Prof. Mugesh said.

The scavenging capacity inside a cell was significant even after 24 hours.

Apparently, the inability to completely remove hydrogen peroxide turns out to be beneficial.

“Optimum removal ensures that other biological functions remain unaffected by vanadia. If it scavenges all the hydrogen peroxide then it may block certain functions of the cell,” he explained.

According to Prof. Patrick D’Silva, Department of Biochemistry, IISc, the vanadia nanowires work in parallel to and in conjunction with the normal cellular antioxidant system. Prof. D’Silva is the other corresponding author of the paper.

Though the number of nanowires that get into a cell cannot be controlled, the amount of vanadia nanowires used is very small — in parts per million.

As vanadium is found in trace quantity in human body, its antioxidant potential inside cells was investigated. Since its harmful effects when in bulk and foam form were already known, the researchers studied its properties at nanoscale. “We tested a few other metal oxide nanoparticles but they did not show such antioxidant effect,” Prof. Mugesh said.

They have not studied how the nanowires get into a cell but know that they cannot stay inside a cell for over a day or two.

Its potential as an antioxidant will be known only when animal and human clinical trials are carried out.
COST EFFECTIVE MEANS TO DISTILL SALT WATER

SOLAR POWER
Innovation that would produce safe drinking water

Press Trust of India

A crowdfunding campaign has been launched to end world water crisis with sustainable technology. The new "ground-breaking" prototype system turns seawater into drinking water using just the power of the Sun, has been successfully tested in India, its makers claim.

The UK-based firm Desolenator uses patented technology to transform salt water and other dirty waters, from inland sources, into pure distilled water.

Capable of producing up to 15 litres a day, the system requires no power supply, other than the Sun, and has no moving parts or filters, making it incredibly easy to maintain.

"The unit uses no consumables and a one-off payment will provide water for households for up to 20 years, providing a vital source of water independence to those who need it most," the company said in a statement.

While the team has assembled a fully working prototype, the company has launched an Indiegogo crowdfunding campaign to take it from prototype to production. This might be a landmark development.

"We have already developed the Desolenator in the UK and tested it in India through five prototype iterations. It works! And our water tastes great!" reads the company's Indiegogo page.

"We want to start user testing in South India, and then production of the Desolenator. We want to have a final product ready to ship by October 2015!" the company added on the page.

"Climate change and population growth are setting the stage for a global water crisis. A massive 97 per cent of the world's water is salt water and our plan to tap into this valuable and available resource to disrupt the global water crisis in an unprecedented way," William Janssen, CEO, said.

The process is called desalination and today while 0.7 per cent of the world's water comes from desalination, existing technology is expensive, inefficient and disproportionately drains 0.5 per cent of the world's global energy supply, according to the company.

"Desolenator" is different from existing desalination and home water technologies - it harnesses solar power in an elegant new way, maximising the amount of solar radiation that hits the technologies surface area through a combination of thermal, electrical and heat exchange, creating pure clean drinking water through the power of the sun, said Janssen. The campaign has so far garnered $38,891 dollars.
A UNIFORM CREDIT SYSTEM

UGC’S CHANGE
Proposal to transfer credits between universities

Moving from one city or institution to another while pursuing a degree or resuming a programme after a break with earned credits could become a smoother process, according to the latest guidelines by the University Grants Commission (UGC). A UGC notification for all universities, issued on November 12, stated that a new credit transfer system would be in place from the next academic year. This would ensure seamless mobility of students from one higher education institution to the other.

WHAT THE GUIDELINES PROPOSE
The credits earned by the student would be easily transferred from one institution to the other. Currently, students are evaluated using the conventional system of marks or grades, but the UGC guidelines propose the use of semester grade point average (SGPA) and cumulative grade point average (CGPA). The new system would ensure that students can take courses of their own choice and still maintain uniform standards of teaching and research, he says.

Another challenge, adds Ansari, is that UGC directions are not binding on most of the institutions, which are under private management and do not receive any financial support. “The UGC has no legal authority to de-recognise the institutions, which do not follow UGC regulations. Third, the Central and state governments have not evolved a policy framework for students’ and teachers’ mobility by removing major irritants in the education system such as infrastructure for quality education and accreditation of institutions. For these reasons, the idea of CBCS, which was conceived years ago, has not been actualised,” says Ansari.

Sudhanshu Bhushan, professor and head, higher education, at the National University of Educational Planning and Administration, has welcomed the regulations. “The decision was taken during the 11th Plan to adopt a choice-based credit system in higher education, it should have been immediately followed by the regulation. At present, universities are following diverse practices through the respective ordinances on credit system. At this stage, following UGC guidelines would amount to changes in ordinance and would take quite some time. In fact, in some cases such as Jawaharlal Nehru University, the different grading pattern existed for long and also worked satisfactorily. Will it not be difficult for JNU to give up its long-held credit pattern and follow the UGC guidelines?” asks Bhushan.

Also, choice of subjects in the proposed credit system is limited in colleges or universities. No such option can be made possible because no two academic institutes are similar and while one might have one department for a specific subject, with one or two faculty members, another might have more.

According to Bhushan, the advantage of mobility in diverse quality higher education will be limited. There is also the likelihood of the universities’ rigid rules obstructing the mobility in spite of introduction of the credit system. Under the fairness in assessment guidelines, internal assessment has not been considered. What about the present practices where internal assessment has worked? Will they replace internal by external assessment?” he asks.
NIT director Das joins again

Hindustan Times (Chandigarh)

UNDER CLOUD SK Das was asked by the board of governors to go on a long leave

IF THERE IS ANY PROBLEM IN ANY FIELD OVER ANY ISSUE, THIS WOULD BE SOLVED JOINTLY BY ALL THE DEANS UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE DIRECTOR SK DAS, director, NIT

JALANDHAR: Dr SK Das has once again joined as the director of Dr BR Ambedkar National Institute of Technology (NIT) even as the board of governors (BoG) had asked him to go on a long leave due to alleged charges of discrepancies against him.

After asking Dr Das to go on leave, the BoG had appointed Prof AS Ghosh as the acting director of the institute.

Having joined again, Dr Das even issued certain orders to the NIT employees after holding a meeting with the deans on Wednesday.

Dr Das informed that he held a meeting with all the deans of the institute to “take some actions and pass orders”.

Ashok Kumar Chand, nodal officer (legal), said that the director had passed two major orders, including MK Jha (chemistry professor) being restored on the post of dean, academics.

Chand said that as per NIT statute, the tenure of dean is two years and Jha has so far completed around a year.

During the Wednesday’s meeting, some decisions were taken unanimously by all the deans under the chairmanship of the director.

As per a decision taken in the meeting, if any faculty member wants to go abroad to attend a workshop or a conference, he can utilise non-planned grant in this connection in case it is available.

Earlier, a team of the union human resource development (HRD) ministry had visited the institute as it was found that various rules were not followed there in true spirit. The discrepancies found against Das included going on foreign visits without HRD ministry’s approval and making MK Jha, dean of academics and a member of the BoG without the consent of other members.

As per another decision taken by Dr Das on Wednesday, if there is any problem in any field over any issue, this would be solved jointly by all the deans under the chairmanship of the director.

“If the problem is complicated, it would be referred to the standing committee”, Das said.

He added that steps would be taken by the institute’s administration for speedy purchase of required equipments