Building Consensus
Centre calls state education ministers to set reform agenda

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The Union government has called a meeting of state education ministers to build consensus around its plans for education reforms before the 12th Five-Year Plan kicks off in a couple of months.

On the agenda for discussion is a proposal to introduce a common entrance exam for all science and engineering colleges and another to start community colleges on the lines of those in the US and Canada.

The meeting called by human resource development (HRD) minister Kapil Sibal on Wednesday will also debate the need to bring textbook education in schools as well as the implementation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act across the country, as per ministry documents.

A copy of the discussion agenda.

An HRD ministry official, who did not want to be named, said that while a number of legislative initiatives on education, including the Foreign University Bill and the Education Malpractice Bill, face opposition in Parliament, some reforms can be rolled out through executive decisions if consensus among ministers comes into confidence would be of paramount importance.

The Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government "has to take reform measures in the next two years before it starts preparation for the general election due in 2014. With education being a subject that touches mass lives, the ministry must not be seen to put in place some visible reforms," the official said.

An HRD ministry official confirmed the meeting of state education ministers, but didn't divulge details.

The Union government has come under attack from many states for not consulting them while formulating policies and initiatives, resulting in reforms initiatives being held up.

In that context, meetings such as the one proposed with the education ministers are seen as an effort to build consensus, said Yamin Aiyar, director, accountability initiative, at the Centre for Policy Research.

"It's critical to have dialogue with states. The Centre should facilitate, build consensus and set the standard rather than impose," Aiyar said, adding if the Union government takes suggestions of states in the right spirit, "implementation will be much better.

Several committees set up by the Union government have suggested a common entrance exam for all science and engineering colleges, according to HRD ministry documents.

A plan is being devised to merge the Indian Institute of Technology's Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) and the All India Council for Technical Education's (AICTE) conducting the Central Board of Secondary Education, for admissions into 15 IITs, 36 National Institutes of Technology and other central science and engineering colleges.

The government will also debate the need to introduce a common entrance exam for all science and engineering colleges as well as the implementation of the Right to Education Act.
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PM’s top adviser in plagiarism row

EMBARRASSING CNR Rao, three others apologise to international journal for lifting lines

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NEW YORK: CNR Rao, the prime minister’s top scientific adviser and one of India’s best known scientists, has apologised to an international journal along with three other scientists for plagiarising the work of others, sending shockwaves through the country’s scientific community.

Rao and scientists Basant Chitara, LS Panchakarla and SB Krupanidhi apologised to Advanced Materials, one of the world’s most prestigious journals in material sciences, for the “reproduction of text from an article” that appeared in another journal, Applied Physics Letters, in 2010.

“The corresponding authors sincerely apologise to the readers, reviewers and editors for this oversight and for any miscommunication,” the scientists wrote in their apology. Their article in Advanced Materials appeared in July 2011 and contained at least four lines that were lifted without attribution.

Rao, chairman of the prime minister’s scientific advisory council, is travelling and could not be reached. He is a Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan and the winner of many national and international awards.

The four scientists belong to the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR).

Senior scientists at these Bangalore-based research institutions pointed to a larger malaise in Indian science. “These things will repeatedly happen as long as top scientists don’t take responsibility for the actual writing of the research paper;” a head of department at IISc said, requesting anonymity.
A PC that thinks like a man, has an IQ of 150

London: Scientists have created a ‘genius’ computer, using a mix of logic and ‘human-like’ thinking, that they claim can score 150 in an IQ test. A team in Sweden says the computer actually works on a programme which uses a mixture of mathematical logic and ‘human-like’ thinking, enabling it to outperform previous software on IQ tests, the Daily Mail reported.

Even advanced maths programmes usually score below 100. “We’re trying to make programmes that can discover the same types of patterns that humans can see,” said team leader Claes Strannegard at University of Gothenburg, who says his aim was to make a programme that “thinks” like a person.

IQ tests are based on seeing visual patterns and guessing number sequences. The average score for people is 100, score of 150 is classified as ‘genius’ intelligence.
IIT-HRD tussle stalls Aakash tablet distribution

FACE-OFF Educational institutions not ready to take tablets without IIT stamp; only 650 students have got them so far

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NEW DELHI: The world's cheapest tablet, Aakash, may have created a buzz but college students — its intended beneficiaries — are yet to receive them, except 650 initial recipients.

Human resource development minister Kapil Sibal had launched the tablet in October, but wrangling between his ministry and the Indian Institute of Technology, Jodhpur, which was to distribute the tablets, has resulted in this situation.

"As per our information, no other student has received a tablet. IIT Jodhpur was supposed to distribute them," said a senior government official.

Confirming the same, a senior IIT Jodhpur official said the ministry has not given them the go-ahead to distribute the faulty tablets. "We have asked the ministry to allow us to distribute the tablets that are flawless," the official said.

The HRD ministry had authorised the IIT to procure one lakh tablets from Montreal-based Datawind.

The company had already supplied around 50,000 tablets to the IIT for testing and distribution.

Around 17% failed the test and the company has not been able to rectify the flaws. But even the remaining 83%, which had no problems, have not been distributed. Educational institutions are not willing to take the tablets without the IIT stamp, an official said.

Around 17% of the 50,000 tablets supplied by Datawind failed the test conducted by IIT and the company has not been able to rectify the flaws. But even the remaining 83% have not been distributed so far.

IITs are research organisations and have no clue about handling logistics, the government official said.

The Indian Telephone Industries, a PSU under the telecom ministry, will handle procurement, testing and distribution of Aakash 2 tablets to be launched in April this year.

For Aakash 2, the ministry has asked three other IITs — Kanpur, Madras and Bombay — apart from Jodhpur, to finalise the specifications to procure the tablet at a price of $35 to $50.
At IIMs, E-Comm Cos Turn Job Santas

Recession-stricken traditional recruiters give elite institutions the go-by

Devika Singhjita and Brahmap Raj Prabhu

In the past, they just sagged as big fish in a small pond, consulting firms and top companies looking for fresh graduates.

Devika Singhjita

In the past, the recession-stricken traditional recruiters such as McKinsey, BCG, and Boston Consulting Group, had been the top choice for IIM graduates. But this year, some of the top companies are revisiting their strategies, focusing on recruiting from IIMs.

Brahmap Raj Prabhu

The recession has affected the job market, and traditional recruiters are now focusing on IIM graduates to fill their vacancies.

Marketing consultants such as Amaan Desai, president of the Marketing Association of IIMs, say that the situation is changing, and more companies are showing interest in IIM graduates.

E-Commerce Alluring

Data for e-commerce companies show that the industry is growing at a rapid pace, with many companies hiring IIM graduates.

One of the biggest recruiters in the e-commerce sector is Amazon, which has been actively hiring IIM graduates.

The company's recent quarter results showed a significant increase in revenue, and the company is expected to continue its growth in the coming quarters.

Amazon's hiring strategy is focused on recruiting graduates from IIMs, and the company has been offering attractive packages to these candidates.

Another major recruiter in the e-commerce sector is Flipkart, which has also been increasing its hiring from IIMs.

Flipkart has been focusing on recruiting graduates from IIMs, and has been offering attractive packages to these candidates.

Overall, the e-commerce sector is expected to continue its growth, and many companies are expected to continue their recruitment drive from IIMs.

Sources: Amazon, Flipkart, and other e-commerce companies.

‘Artificial leaf’ tech to power cars?

Hydrocarbon Produced From ‘Twisted Photosynthesis’ To Work As Fuel

London: British scientists claim to be working on a project to produce an oil substitute, using photosynthesis, which could power the cars, ships and planes of the future. A team at Glasgow University says the oil substitute is being made using “artificial leaf” technology — it’s actually a twisted version of photosynthesis, the method plants use to harness sunlight, but uses electricity to spark the reaction.

Rather than producing organic material from carbon dioxide as plants do, the scientists plan to produce hydrocarbon “fuel” which could be used in petrol engines to power cars and even aeroplanes, the Daily Mail reported.

They hope to prove the technology in the next two years and develop a small-scale demonstration system within five.

Prof Richard Coggell, who is leading the team, believes the greater efficiency this process could make the technology a major energy source in decades to come.

“We have demonstrated that this process is feasible and we believe it has the potential to revolutionize the way we produce fuel,” he said.

Ergol was the name of the product being developed by the team, which uses sunlight and electricity to produce hydrocarbon fuel.

The team has already conducted experiments in a pilot plant and is now looking to scale up the process to produce large quantities of fuel.

The project is being funded by the UK government through the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the UK’s Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

source: The Daily Mail, London

Fueling Our Future

The team is currently working on perfecting the process and aims to have a working prototype within five years.

They believe the technology could have a significant impact on the energy sector, reducing the reliance on fossil fuels and helping to combat climate change.

The scientists envisage power stations containing vats of bacteria churning out large quantities of burnable fuel. in
LEADERSHIP AT IIM

SHILLONG IS BUILT AROUND
THE SPIRIT OF INNOVATION &
SERVICE AND THIS IS THE
SECRET OF ITS SUCCESS

Since its early days, IIM Shillong has always taken into account the role of information and communication technologies and aimed at identifying essential aspects that must be pursued by the stakeholders (entrepreneurs, government, universities, press and others) involved in promoting the institutional incubation time. We have never been afraid to innovate and bring into play new thoughts, which have helped turn disadvantages such as location par se, into strengths. This has been well recognised through the Innovation Leadership Award received recently under the aegis of Asia’s Best B-School Award ceremony at Suntec Singapore.

Innovation is really how we deal with customers, in our case, the students by creating new exposure or adding new characteristics to existing ones: how we design processes or systems, how we deal with people in the organisation, establish the working relationships, etc. The places where the disciplines and practices of innovation and breakthrough can add a competitive advantage to an organisation are endless. IIM Shillong has been the only IIM to not have undergone mentoring by any of the older IIMs.

Shillong was well known as a centre for excellence in education, which over the years has declined. There have been many critiques during the initial phase of setting up the institute. With IIM Shillong coming in, we have been able to bring about public consciousness through our Annual Golf Cup and other activities. I am positively sure that we have managed quite well this far, and IIM Shillong has travelled a great distance and is definitely at par with the other IIMs.

Our mission to bring in the industry academic interface is also a step in the right direction as industry visits can result in business setups and therefore employment and development of the region as a whole.

I have often stated that leadership here is built around the spirit of innovation and service. This core belief is what distinguishes the success of IIM Shillong. We have pioneered and been consistent in our efforts to bring about alleviation of poverty with an inclusive notion of growth and development within the host region.

IIM Shillong has brought to reality the concept of setting up the Centre for Development of the North Eastern Region, which today has become a sought after entity by various stakeholders in the NER because of its committed stance and efforts aimed at responding to the local needs.

Apart from its commitment to education, the institute also aims at trying to find solutions to issues which concern the society.

IIM Shillong welcomes you to explore opportunities of inducing summer interns as well as recruiting our students through our placement process which I am sure you will find integral and committed to your organisation’s cause and objectives.
IIM SHILLONG IS STEADILY GROWING TO MAKE ITS MARK, NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF PROVIDING WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION BUT IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Established in 2008, IIM Shillong was set up to provide excellent management education in Northeast India. In a span of four years, it has scaled heights of success. Its flagship course is the two-year Post-Graduate Diploma in Management Programme (PGDM). In this short span, IIM-S has won a multitude of awards at prestigious platforms.

- CMO Asia Awards: The CMO Asia, award honours the best of business schools, professors from the greatest B-schools of Asia, corporate organisations, chief marketing officers, and HR professionals. The Asian B School Awards are regarded as the most prestigious awards constituted by the industry and the academic world. The jury included eminent personalities like Bhasin Natarajan — secretary to the govt of India, Dept of Public Enterprises, Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises and Saugata Mitra, chief people officer and board head HHI, Mother Dairy Fruit and Vegetable Pvt Ltd among others.

IIM Shillong was awarded two awards at SUNTEX Singapore on July 22, 2011. It was nominated in two categories and won the award in both namely Innovation in Building Academic & Industry Interface and the Innovation Leadership Award.

- Asian Leadership Awards 2011: Prof AK Dutta, director IIM Shillong, was conferred with the Visionary Leader Award at the "Asian Leadership Awards 2011," which took place on September 25, 2011 at Taj Palace Hotel (Dubai). The award recognises the achievements of Prof Dutta as a business leader and his constant encouragement to other entrepreneurs and leaders.

- 18th Business School Alumni & Development Mehta Business School Awards: The 18th Business School Alumni & Development Mehta Business School Awards were announced on November 24, 2010 and IIM Shillong won Business School with Best Academic Input (Syllabus) in Information Technology, Best Teacher in Operations Management to Prof Swapun Kumar Majumdar, the Best Teacher in Logistics to Prof DK Agrawal, Best Placement Results 3rd Place and the Best Student in Management Award-9th Place to Sumit Rana.

- 19th Business School Alumni & Development Mehta Business School Awards: IIM Shillong was awarded the Business School with Best Academic Input Syllabus in Finance and the Best Teacher in Information Technology awarded to Prof Abhishek Tripathi.

IIM-S has tied up with many institutions to participate in collaborative efforts and to address developmental issues. A few of the collaborations that IIM Shillong has established are:

- Sino-Indian Global Reciprocal Advanced Management Programme: IIM Shillong recently conducted the Sino-Indian Global Reciprocal Advanced Management Programme with the state govt of Meghalaya and in collaboration with Ocean University, Qingdao, China on "Understanding China: Business and Culture" held at Qingdao, China, during January 9-15, 2012.

- The Centre for Development of North Eastern Region (CEDNER) at IIM Shillong has been involved in organising various empowerment programmes. A few examples are Effective Judicial Administration for the Judges under the Administrative control of the Guwahati High Court, Certificate Course on Health and Hospital Management, Management Programme for Local Entrepreneurs and Promoters of Entrepreneurial Activities. The institute has worked with the traffic department of Guwahati on traffic management in Shillong and with the MTDC to improve turnover and profitability; and MOU to improve productivity. IIM-S continued the computer literacy programme for all outsourced and contractual staff and their families. Faculty development workshops have been conducted at the Royal Group of Institutions in Guwahati, and at BIBS in Kolkata. CEDNER and HCL Infosystems Limited’s e-learning programme to jointly take some steps to improve the socio-economic conditions of the people in the region by extending the scope of its ICT projects to this part of the country. A round table discussion with the North-east States’ Representatives was organised on September 21, 2011 at Brahmaputra Ashok Hotel, Guwahati. CEDNER also organised the Certificate Distribution Ceremony of the six-month certificate course on “Devolution Managerial Skills for Entrepreneurs” on December 19, 2011. The course was designed in collaboration with the Ministry of Development of North-eastern Region (DoNER), govt of India.

- IIM-S through CEDNER organised a half day stakeholders discussion on "Effective Sports Management: A Catalyst for Performance" on November 4, 2011.

- The 6th monthlong course in Tourism and Hospitality Management, IIM-S with the assistance of NICC sponsorship, performed an event towards developing quality human resource, which will help project the NE as a vibrant tourist destination.

- IIM-S and NUS, West Bengal formally sealed the agreement to start a Post Graduate Executive Diploma in Business Management and Law.

- IIM-S is set to become one of the few elite management institutes in the country to establish a Financial Simulation Laboratory at its campus. This is the outcome of a partnership between IIM-S and National Stock Exchange.

- IIM-S is one of the few IIMs working hard to improve the infrastructure of the country. It has already trained all officers for undertaking PPP model in building green field airport in the NE. IIM-S is working hard to improve the health infrastructure in the NE. IIM-S professors are teaching the doctors in sustainable healthcare project, hospital planning and management, leadership and motivation for doctors, management of finance and accounting for doctors with the support of Harvard cases. They also undertake field visits, healthcare research.

- IIM-S joined hands with North-east Council, Shillong and International Trauma Care (ITC) India to organise the first national International on Disaster Management from August 23 – 25, 2011 in Shillong.

- IIM-S in association with National Health Mission and Dept of Health services, govt of Meghalaya has offered 30-day intensive training to the medical officers in the area.

- IIM-S started a Golf Tournament since its inception as a platform for industry-academia interactions. The first golf tournament organised by any E-B school in India, this unprecedented concept is a student-driven initiative.

- IIM-S also conducted its second annual International Conference on Sustainability, SusCon. The conference covers global perspectives and practices, keeping in view national priorities as well as regional challenges.

- IIM-S is the first institute to implement a comprehensive ERP solution on campus. It is also the first institute to setup its own website. IIM Shillong is also a forerunner in coming up with a special postal cover for the first institute to offer a course on sports management.

IIM-S has forged alliances with various industry stalwarts such as:

- Prof Aswath Damodaran, professor of finance at Stern School of Business at New York University.

- Prof Sudha, currently MD of the India and CEEMEA operations of Franklin Templeton Investments.

- Mrid Vedar, marketing director, Asia Pacific region at Dell Inc.

- Venkat Narayan, MD – corporate finance at Lazard India and Singapore.

- Ayanta Roy, senior VP, ICRA.

Dr K Raghavendra, chairman, Space Commission, secretary, Department of Space and chairman ISRO visited the campus on July 26, 2011. We warmly welcome the distinguished guests on the spirit of rich tradition. Each of our students will receive a coffee for their participation and will also receive a certificate for their valuable insights into the automotive business.

IIM-S is trying to make its mark, not only in terms of providing world class education but in promoting sustainability and inclusive growth.
‘Today, people have to continue learning throughout life’

Howard Gardner created the theory of Multiple Intelligences, showing people have different ways of learning and expressing diverse information and therefore have many kinds of intelligence, not just one sort. Professor of cognitive psychology at Harvard’s Graduate School of Education, Gardner’s research impacted education deeply while influencing aspects of leadership, ethics and creativity. Visiting India, Gardner spoke with Tirna Ray about why people differ at certain skills, how teaching and learning must both change as commerce and industry evolve—and how flexible minds could have serious advantages now.

Q&A

What’s multiple intelligence about?

Many languages denote intelligence as a ‘singular’, as if implying that we have a single computer inside our skull. If the computer works well, we’re good at everything. If it’s average, we’re average. If it works poorly, we’re lousy at everything...this is wrong. In our daily lives, we keep finding people who may be very good with language but can’t find their way around a building. We find people who can’t sing a tune but understand other people perfectly. Intuition suggests people do not necessarily have to be good or bad at everything—but can be good at some things and bad at some things.

How valid are multiple intelligence tests then that decide an individual has an aptitude for something in particular—and is best suited to that?

I would advise people to not waste money on such tests. I don’t believe that people are fixed. People are flexible and the brain keeps changing throughout life. I would never say that just because you’ve turned out a certain way in a certain test at a certain time, you should consider that a life sentence.

Alongside, with the world changing rapidly, does learning have to be more flexible today?

Different times prioritise different sets of skills. The times we’re living in make life relatively easier for people who are flexible and can switch from skill to skill. It makes things more difficult for people who are averse to risks and prefer going deeper and deeper into one particular thing.

You mention diverse skills—what is the difference between inherent and acquired intelligence?

Scientists don’t make such divisions anymore. The only sensible way of thinking has to do with a technical term called ‘heritability’. Every human ability has a certain heritable component—but that’s dependent on the experiences you have, the culture in which you live, resources available and so on. If you have a higher musical heritability than I do, it depends on certain factors. If you live in a culture where people don’t care, there isn’t much money, there isn’t much music around, and I live in a culture conducive to music, then I will be much more musical than you are.

How has the field of learning itself evolved?

Today, people have to continue learning throughout life. No occupation, from the oldest to the most modern, can escape having to change. Now, people have to acknowledge change and pick up skills to cope. The second big shift can be attributed to digital media. Today, not only can people learn at home with their devices but learning has the scope to be much more individualised. Also, earlier when people went to school, they were taught in one particular way—if they didn’t learn, too bad. Now, anyone who says there is only one way to teach is being ridiculous. There are many ways to teach and many ways to learn—that is where multiple intelligences opened things up.

Spotted: A black hole that survived galaxy destruction

Washington: Astronomers have spotted a rare mid-weight black hole some 290 million light-years from Earth which they say offers clues about a now-destroyed galaxy that may once have existed around it.

Researchers at the Sydney Institute for Astronomy in Australia who spotted the black hole using the Hubble Space Telescope think the dwarf galaxy was torn apart by the gravity of a larger host galaxy that it orbited.

The violent encounter they would have stripped away most of the dwarf galaxy’s stars, but it also could have compressed the gas around its central black hole, triggering a new wave of star formation, LiveScience reported. The observations suggest that the young stars must be less than 200 million years old, researchers said. “The fact that there’s a very young cluster of stars indicates the intermediate-mass black hole may have originated as the central black hole in a very low-mass dwarf galaxy. The dwarf galaxy was then swallowed by the more massive galaxy,” lead researcher Sean Farrell said.
आईआईटी छात्रों के हाथ होगी रेलवे की सुरक्षा

ले उलक शर्मा

नई दिल्ली। रेलवे की सुरक्षा का जिम्मा जल्द ही आईआईटी छात्रों के हाथों में होगी। सुरक्षा के लिए जरूरी तकनीकी के विकास के लिए मंत्रालय आईआईटी और दूसरे इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेजों के छात्रों की मदद लेगा।

मंत्रालय के एक शीर्ष अधिकारी के अनुसार रिसर्च डिजाइन एंड स्टूडीज़, आर्गनाइजेशन अर्डर (आरडीएसओ) हालांकि रेल के लिए जरूरी तकनीकी विकसित करता आ रहा है। लेकिन उसके काम को हल्का करने के उद्देश्य से अब आईआईटी छात्रों की सहायता ली जाएगी। रेलवे अधिकारियों की जल्द तैयार होगा इंजीनियरिंग के छात्रों को शामिल करने का रोड मैप।

एक टीम जल्द ही देश के तमाम इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेजों के प्रोफेसरों से विचार-विमर्श कर छात्रों की भागीदारी पर एक रोड मैप तैयार करेगी। इस प्रक्रिया के तहत छात्रों को रेलवे की जरूरतों के बारे में बताया जाएगा। इसके अलावा चर्चा इस मसले पर भी होगी कि मंत्रालय किस प्रकार से इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेजों को आर्थिक सहयोग देगा।