दिल्ली में इंजीनियर है नक्सल नेता का बेटा

फरवरी 3

पहले दिल्ली/राज्य | अरविंद शर्मा
एमसीएसआई का पोलिट न्यूज सर्वेक्षण अरविंद सिंह उर्फ अरविंद जी का बेटा बेटा प्रिंस सिंह दिल्ली में केमिकल इंजीनियर है। मोदी क्रम में उसे एक कंपनी ने नौकरी दी है। प्रिंस ने आईआईटी दिल्ली से केमिकल इंजीनियरिंग की पढ़ाई की है। प्रिंस का पिता देश के टॉप टैन नक्सलियों में एक है।

तत्कालीन ही में लातखाल में नक्सलियों की जिस तेली के साथ पुलिस को मुठभेड़ हुई थी उसका नेतृत्व अरविंद जी ही कर रहा था। फिर दिन के 70 वर्ष के करीब है। मल रूप से बिहार के जटाक्ष र का रहने वाला अरविंद नक्सलियों को ती जैक शामिल होता है। गठन में हुई बड़ी बैठक में शामिल होने के बाद 400 की संख्या में नक्सली सामर्थ्य पड़ चुका है। इसी तेली के साथ लातखाल में पांच जनवरी को मुठभेड़ हो गया था। इस बार तेली गुमला मिला के चैन्नी इलाके में पुलिस से घर चुकी है।

खुफिया रिपोर्ट में खुलासा
• दिल्ली आईआईटी से की है केमिकल इंजीनियरिंग की पढ़ाई, नक्सलियों को सिखाता है विस्तार करने के पुरुष
• तत्कालीन मुठभेड़ में जादव के गेट में बम मिट करने की तकनीक भी प्रिंस ने ही सिखाई थी, पिता देश के टॉप टैन नक्सलियों में एक

प्रत्यक्षा में है डॉक्टर धार्मिक एक नक्सली की पत्नी पद्मा के कंकालवाल इलाके में डॉक्टर धार्मिक चला रही है। इस दिन पुलिस के दोपहर बाद यहां जा गया जब वह जाकर धार्मिक की जानकारी मिला दिया है। पुलिस को एक बड़े नक्सली की पत्नी के संबंध में पूरी जानकारी मिली है।

मेमोरियल 70 के परिवार
• अरविंद की उम्र और उसे एमसीएसआई का पोलिट न्यूज सर्वेक्षण है।

मेमोरियल 70 के परिवार
• अरविंद की उम्र और उसे एमसीएसआई का पोलिट न्यूज सर्वेक्षण है।
आईआईटी बीएचयू के नए निदेशक के लिए खुद इंटरव्यू लेंगे पल्लम राजू

नई दिल्ली (ब्यूरो)। आईआईटी बीएचयू में नए निदेशक की नियुक्ति के लिए मानव संसाधन मंत्री पल्लम राजू 19 फरवरी को, छह प्रत्यक्षियों का इंटरव्यू लेंगे।

उल्लेखनीय है कि कुछ महीने पहले ही आईआईटी कॉलेज बीएचयू को आईआईटी का दस्ता दिया गया था। शुरुआत में इस संस्थान के निदेशक का पद बीएचयू के कुलपति को ही सौंपा गया था।

अब यहां पर नए निदेशक की नियुक्ति की प्रक्रिया चल रही है। निदेशक पद के लिए देश पर से लगभग 40 लोगों ने आवेदन किये थे। विभिन्न आवेदनों के पहले चरण में प्रेमिक ब्रांड स्क्रीनिङ के बाद अंतिम रूप से छह लोगों को सूची तैयार की गई है।

इन्हीं छह उम्मीदवारों को इंटरव्यू के लिए 19 फरवरी को मानव संसाधन मंत्रालय में बुलाया गया है। आईआईटी बीएचयू के नए निदेशक की नियुक्ति पूरे स्क्रीनिंग कमेटी के अध्यक्ष भी मानव संसाधन मंत्री पल्लम राजू ही हैं। मंत्रालय से मिली जानकारी के अनुसार जिन छह लोगों को स्क्रीनिंग के बाद साधारणकार के लिए बुलाए जाने का फैसला लिया गया है, उनमें आईआईटी बीएचयू के दो प्रोफेसर भी शामिल हैं।
An Alternative to IITs and IIMs

India trails China in its ability to provide quality higher education to the masses. That gap can be narrowed if the newer model of online teaching can be scaled up.

William H Avery

There is a battle taking place between India and China — not for today's economic growth, but for economic growth a decade from now. The field of battle is higher education, and India is losing big time.

World Bank statistics show that higher education enrollment is a leading indicator of economic growth. When a country substantially increases the number of university students it educates, that country tends to enjoy a spike in economic growth in the decade that follows. It happened with Japan and Korea in the early and late 1980s respectively.

China will soon reap the rewards of its annual $250 billion investments in higher education. Since the turn of the millennium, China has doubled the number of institutes of higher education and increased enrollment five-fold. It has been the greatest expansion in university education in the history of mankind. As a result, 26% of China's university-age population is enrolled in an institution of higher education, versus 8% in India.

It was not always so. In 1990 and 2000, India beat China in university enrollment rates. Until China decided to make higher education a policy priority.

A New Medium

Do not let India's outliers — the IITs and IIMs — fool you. The key battlefield is in higher education for the masses. And on this China wins hands down, on both quality and quantity. Sure, India's IITs and IIMs offer top-notch education. But they reach a scandalously small proportion of Indian students. The annual intake of the IITs currently amounts to about 10,000 students, a fraction of India's 12-crore-strong university-age population.

So what is India doing to catch up? Not much. The University Grants Commission's 12th Five Year Plan (covering 2012-2017) is short on ambition and long on vague lamentations "considerable challenges remain" it says. While China has ambitious plans that it executes, India has unambitious plans that it fails to execute.

In 1995 the Indian government introduced in parliament a bill to allow foreign universities to operate in the country. The Foreign Education Providers Bill, a successor to the 1995 bill, is still languishing in parliament nearly two decades later.

With India incapable of rapidly building higher-education infrastructure, and stubbornly refusing to let foreign universities in to help, the situation would be hopeless but for one fact: technology is coming to India. American universities, led by Harvard and MIT, have decided to put their courses online for free. Any Indian with access to a computer and an Internet connection (whether at home or in the next village) can take a class taught by a Nobel laureate in Boston or Princeton or Berkeley. Some 200 American universities are interested in joining the Harvard/MIT not-for-profit venture.

As a Click Away

The implications of free online content for Indian higher education and for India's future economic growth cannot be overstated. This revolution knocks down in a single blow the historical barrier to Indian higher education: uneven quality, overall lack of supply, and the high cost of sending a child overseas for study.

The availability of free online content will lead to an entirely new model for higher education in India. Forget the sprawling university campuses with faculty developing their own course content. Now is the time for India to invest in a new higher-education model built around content sourced from top American institutions.

No one can pretend that free online content is a panacea for India's education woes. There are countless other shortcomings in the Indian system, including insufficient preparation for universal education beginning at primary school and through to secondary. Vocational training (for those better suited to learning a trade than attending university) is a huge gap. And outside the urban elite of Tier 1 cities, English-language skills among university-age Indians are limited, as is access to the Internet.

Despite these complex challenges, the new reality of this revolution is quite simple: The demand in India is there. So is the brainpower. And the content is now available for free. The only thing required is a system to connect the content with the students. Can real-time translation technologies be used to convert Harvard's classes into Hindi, Telugu or Malayalam? Will the new model be solely distance learning, or will students come together to discuss the materials? Can existing village school facilities be leveraged after school hours?

Joining Hands

India's entrepreneurs will find the answers to these questions and others. As the revolution in free content takes hold, Indians should ask only one thing of their government: stay out of the way. The government had its chance. It did not deliver. Now technology is calling NGOs and the private sector to do what the government could not: offer high-quality higher education to the masses.

Ultimately there is a role for the government in setting standards for this new type of education, and for certifying institutions. But that is all for later. The need of the hour is to get new university students learning by the lakhs and then by the crores.

India's investment in higher education, while impressively executed, may have been poorly timed. For China invested in an old and costly model of higher education. There is a new model out there, one uniquely well-suited to India. By investing in this model, India could yet win the higher education battle today, and the battle for economic growth tomorrow.
Anubhuti Vishnoi
New Delhi | February 2

Putting to rest their differences over a much publicised collaboration that has been in the works since 2008-09, IIT-Jodhpur and France will next month seal a memorandum of understanding when the French President visits India.

French President Francois Hollande is expected to visit India in mid-February when the MoU will be announced for the joint collaboration with the IIT.

IIT-Jodhpur has already signed its letter of intent, sources said.

While the proposed collaboration was announced in 2010 when the then French President Nicholas Sarkozy came to India, it’s yet to take shape due to a rather unusual situation — mutual dissatisfaction. While the French side had termed the IIT-Jodhpur academic environment and faculty rather unimpressive, the IIT complained that what the French are offering them is far too little for an institute of its stature.

France had conveyed to India in writing that it was “not impressed” by the leadership, faculty or infrastructure at IIT-Jodhpur, one of the six new IITs set up in 2009.

The IIT claimed that there was little worth in the collaboration being offered. France was then offering about 2 million Francs and assistance for setting up three centres instead of six proposed initially.

The IIT said that while it was keen to extend the collaboration in other areas, France refused to commit to anything further.

A French delegation that visited IIT-Jodhpur in January last year to explore the possibilities of a wider collaboration had reportedly returned disappointed, shooting off a letter to the External Affairs ministry.

“While the French were quite enthusiastic in 2008, when talks first began, the leadership at IIT-Jodhpur then showed little interest. The HRD Ministry had to intervene and take up the matter with the Board of Governors as this is also a diplomatic issue. When the IIT finally did evince interest in the collaboration, recession — acute in Europe — came in the way. Finally, the two sides have now agreed to seal the deal,” said a senior official.

In November 2010, France and India finalised a draft MoU regarding IIT-Rajasthan, which provided for a French consortium to academically and scientifically assist the institute.

The areas of collaboration included technologies for health, renewable energy, aerospace, quantum computing, conservation of art and heritage, among others.
Even a Macintosh Pro often finds it difficult to catch up with Vidhi Desai, 30, its owner and user. An archetypal south-Mumbaite, she is rich, aggressive, super-confident, loud and questioning. An alumna of JB Petit School and HR College, Vidhi went on to do a double major in international politics and philosophy from Penn State University. The poor little rich kid never had to wait for anything she fancied; her father, a diamond businessman, gave her the liberty to soak in the sights and sounds of the material world. Defying conformity was the elixir of her life, till her guru made her realize that what she saw as freedom was merely slavery to her own moods and conditioning. Heeding to the highest calling of her heart, Vidhi signed up at his school to train to be a nun.

- The change, for him, was dramatic: the neon clothes that he proudly wore gave way to colourless white robes. Neelmi Avlani, who slept only after four every morning after a good night of partying, now wakes up at that hour to meditate. An unassuming life in the ashram, simple food and satsangs, he realized, were a bigger high than avant-garde music and bright lights under the disco ball. He decided to renovate his life and renounce the world and all its comforts, familial and material.

Under the mentorship of 48-year-old Rakeshbhai Jhaveri, or Bapaji as he is called, bright young Indian men and women across the world are signing up—to live a minimalistic life, to give up the comforts they earlier soaked themselves in, to take the vow of celibacy, to shed the excesses they lived in and worked for. To become atmarps. He has derived the term from atma (soul) and arpit (surrender). Men and women give up all colour as they are admitted to his training school, which though not conventional, does follow tradition, says Rakeshbhai, who is himself not a monk. Of late, the school has been opening to not just followers in India, but across the world. “Two years into the atmarpit deeksha (renunciation), I feel my life has changed,” says Vidhi, who like other atmarpis dons a white kurta-pyjama, a jodhpuri jacket and a bead necklace. “It has given me an immediate sense of simplicity, a strong sense of focus. I understand the power of silence, the strength of introspection and I enjoy understanding and studying religious texts.”

Under convention, initiation into monkhood comes after immense training. The Initiates (not atmarpis) live with monks in temples and the preparatory phase can last anywhere from six months to 10 years, says Babulal Jain, a veritable fount of information on Jainism. What is dramatically different in the case of atmarpis is the profile of the 72 who have renounced worldly pleasures: most are postgraduates, including medical doctors, engineers and MBAs; many never went to a derasar (Jain temple) or attended samsaras by monks. They are getting drawn back into the fold of Jainism after meeting Bapaji. His satsangs end in a revelry of dance; at times, the audience leaves in tears: it’s as if he has pulled them out of chaos, out of turmoil, out of a storm called life.

For the full report, log on to www.timesofindia.com
New IIMs find little favour with top consulting firms

KAUSHAL PATEL
Mumbai, February

Ask senior HR professionals and they will tell you that recruiting from the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), whether IIMs or AIMEs, is becoming a challenging task for consulting firms. A placement executive from one of the top-tier firms in Mumbai said, "We are finding it increasingly difficult to attract top candidates from IIMs. Our candidates are looking for more experiential learning, and they want to work with big clients."

This sentiment is echoed by several other firms, which say that the IIMs' lack of focus on practical experience and the emphasis on theoretical knowledge is making it difficult for them to attract top talent. "The IIMs are graduating students who are not ready for the real world," a placement executive from another consulting firm said. "They lack the necessary practical skills and exposure."
Faculty questions Delhi University’s 4-year UG plan

Raises doubts over need for such a course, varsity’s state of preparedness to roll out the four-year undergraduate programme, besides infrastructural bottlenecks

Kirtika Suneja
New Delhi, Feb 2

THE UNIVERSITY OF DELHI (DU) may claim it is ready to roll out its four-year undergraduate programme from July this year, but various segments of the varsity’s faculty are raising doubts on the state of preparedness and even the need for such a course.

With hardly five months left for the new programme to begin, DU teachers allege that the course curriculum has not been designed so far, nor have they been briefed about it. Others claim that lack of infrastructure would be a deterrent in implementing the four-year course.

This is a dilution of the Honours system as it only adds one year in the students’ study life and does not offer anything new. Moreover, it does not go with the 10+2+3 system of education. The new system also looks at removing tutorials, which have been the backbone of our academic system,” says Dr Vinita Chandra of the department of English, Ramjas College.

The four-year UG programme offers a multiple degree option with 42 papers that the students have to clear with a 40% in aggregate to get an Honours degree. It is not necessary for the students to pass each paper individually.

In fact, DU teachers claim that the 61-member task force, which was set up over a year ago to devise the new system, has met only a few times and has no representation from the post-graduate departments of history, economics, political science and English, among others.

“We are not being informed about the developments related to the revisions and how the new curriculum is to be designed and that too in such a short period of time. They are yet to decide if there are enough courses to be included in it,” adds Dr Rina Ramdev, associate professor of English at Venkateswara College.

In the first year, students will have to study a foundation course comprising elements from governance and citizenship, language, literature and creativity, geographical and socio-economic diversity, among others. In the next two semesters, students would have to opt for a discipline of their choice, called discipline course I, and can continue with the same in the third year, which is called discipline course II. In the fourth year, students have to take up the traditional scheme of papers related to their respective disciplines.

At the end of the second year, students can opt out of the course with an associate degree, whereas if they opt to exit at the end of third year, they would be awarded a Bachelor’s degree. An Honours degree would be given at the end of four years. Sources say the additional one year in the UG course will reduce the first year, or Previous, of the post-graduate (MA) courses.

“There are many courses related to value-based education and integrating mind, body and heart that are to be taught in schools and not in higher education. In a way, it is a waste of time for students,” Chandra adds.

However, Prof Dinush Singh, DU vice-chancellor, states that infrastructural bottlenecks are not worrying him. Instead, his concerns pertain to the way the foundation course would be taught.

“We have to orient the teachers to learn to handle more practical work linked to the real world with a greater exposure to research. We are also working on having an interface with the industry to make our students job-ready,” Singh adds.

As per senior university officials, there would be no infrastructural issues till the third year and by then, the existing infrastructure in colleges would be used to teach fourth year students, as classes in most DU colleges are held only till afternoon.

Prof Umesh Rai, professor of zoology and director of DU’s south campus, claims that the new programme seeks to provide hands-on training through the project mode. “We have more than three months to design course content. Moreover, we don’t plan to detain any student,” he says.

Interestingly, the Delhi University Teachers’ Association (DUTA) has not opposed the radical change in the system. Says Aditya Narayan Mishra, DUTA president: “We will not oppose anything in the university ordinances that maximises students’ interest and improves their employment avenues. The new course will impart more knowledge due to many papers that students have to take. It will also create employment for teachers and fill in vacancies.”
Apps, farmers’ solutions a hit at IIT’s B-plan summit

Bhavya Dore
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MUMBAI: Apps to navigate a city’s transport facilities and end-to-end solutions for farmers: these are among the prize winners at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay’s (IITB) entrepreneurship summit which ended on Sunday.

The “Eureka!” competition – an initiative of the institute’s Entrepreneurship Cell – claims to be Asia’s largest business plan competition and features four categories.

Tilzmatic Tech, founded by management students from Delhi, won in the "business" category while Green AgrevoTech by former engineering students won in the “social” category.

The tech company has designed apps to help users understand the fares, routes and local train facilities in Mumbai and also has similar apps for the metro systems of Delhi, Bangalore and Kolkata. They plan to scale up by adding the London and Seoul metros. “The beauty of the app is that it is completely free for end users,” said Vikash Kumar, 27, a team member and student of International Management Institute in Delhi. The competition saw more than 5,000 entries this year, with 25 selected for the final shortlist. Of these, four teams will get to go to Stanford University for a week-long workshop. The social category winner is a start-up which provides end-to-end solutions for farmers. More than Rs40 lakh worth of prize money was up for grabs at the competition this year.
City girl bags President’s Gold Medal at IIT Ropar convocation

HT Live Correspondent
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RUPNAGAR: Divya Mahajan of Chandigarh was awarded the President’s Gold Medal at the annual convocation of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Ropar.

She was given the gold medal, in absentia, for obtaining the highest cumulative grade point average (CGPA) among the graduating students of the bachelor of technology (BTech) course.

Divya, who had completed her BTech in electrical engineering in 2012, is presently pursuing higher studies in the US.

Shashank Sharma of the computer science and engineering stream was awarded the director’s gold medal for the best all round performance; the institute silver medal was awarded to Bhargava Mangilpudi of the computer science and engineering department and Raghav Paul of the mechanical engineering department for obtaining highest cumulative grade point average.
FIRST IIT ROPAR CONVOCATION

Work on Mission Mars going on in full swing: Kasturirangan

Students of IIT, Ropar, tossing scarves in the air after receiving degrees during the convocation on Saturday and (inset) former ISRO chairman K Kasturirangan addressing the students. HT PHOTO

Bahadurjeet Singh
letters@hindustantimes.com

RUPNAGAR: Planning Commission member (science) and former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chairman K Kasturirangan on Saturday said that work on Mars Orbiter Mission, to be undertaken by ISRO to explore the red planet, is going on in full swing. "ISRO is working to get it ready by the year-end. The definition is more or less complete. They will now work on hardware, software and mission definition," Kasturirangan said, while talking to mediapersons on the sidelines of first convocation of Indian Institute of Technology, Ropar.

Earlier, addressing the convocation, Kasturirangan said that Mission Mars would be realised by October this year. "After the successful unmanned mission to moon (Chandrayan-I), it is a giant leap wherein scientists will study Mars atmosphere, surface, mineralogical character and signatures of the possible precursors to life," he said.

"Technologically, it will be a quantum leap for India in terms of conducting a deep space mission. These in turn could provide us with right credentials to become a partner in major international futuristic planetary explorations," he said.

In reply to a question on the status of manned mission to the moon, Kasturirangan said that many things would have to be looked into before finalising the mission. "Right now the priorities of ISRO are to strengthen the applications which are relevant to the grassroots part of the society with emphasis on socio-economic component of the technology to improve life and quality of living," he said.

After this there are scientific subjects like building technological capabilities." "Scientists are not leaving the manned mission, but they are looking at various aspects of how to do it, what kind of resources are needed, whether it can be done with international collaboration. So, there are many things to be looked into. They will do the homework before taking the final call," he said.

He exhorted the students, who received degrees during the convocation, to pursue the profession which is close to their hearts, adding that only then they could make a mark.

Addressing the convocation, IIT, Ropar's, board of governors chairman T Ramasami congratulated the students and wished them success in life. Institute director MK Sunappa presented the report of the activities undertaken by the institute.

A total of 96 students of 2008-12 batch were conferred with
INDIAN INSTITUTES AMONG TOP GLOBAL THINK-TANKS

Six Indian research institutes, including Centre for Civil Society, are among top 150 global think-tanks in the list released by the University of Pennsylvania.

- Brookings is the topper

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<td>Chatham House (UK)</td>
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<td>Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (US)</td>
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Indian institutes on the list

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<td>51</td>
<td>Centre for Civil Society</td>
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<td>105</td>
<td>Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis</td>
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<td>Observer Research Foundation</td>
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<td>Development Alternatives</td>
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Source: PTI
60 Harvard students suspended for mass cheating

Boston: More than 60 students of Harvard University have been suspended and several others disciplined after being implicated in one of the largest cheating scandals that shook the Ivy League institution last year.

The school implicated as many as 125 students when officials first addressed the issue last year. Half of the 279 students enrolled in an "Introduction to Congress" course were suspected of "academic dishonesty" ranging from "inappropriate collaboration to outright plagiarism" on a take-home final exam. The class was widely seen on campus as an easy way to get a good grade.

In a campus-wide email on Friday, faculty of arts and sciences dean Michael D. Smith said the school’s academic integrity board had resolved all the cases related to the cheating probe. He said "somewhat more than half" the cases involved students who had to withdraw from the college for a period of time. Of the cases left, about half the students got disciplinary probation. The rest weren't disciplined.

Forced withdrawals usually last two to four semesters, after which a student may return.

President of the Harvard Undergraduate Council Tara Raghuvir said questions were raised about whether the take-home exam's instructions were clear enough on group work. AGENCIES
LASER WORK

US President honours Indian-origin scientist

Press Trust of India
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WASHINGTON: US President Barack Obama presented the prestigious National Medal of Technology and Innovation to eminent Indian American Rangaswamy Srinivasan for his groundbreaking work with laser.

Rangaswamy received the award along with Samuel Blum and James Wynne, for the pioneering discovery of excimer laser ablative photodecomposition of human and animal tissue, laying the foundation for PRK and LASIK laser refractive surgical techniques, that have revolutionised vision enhancement.

At a glittering function held Friday at the White House, Obama presented National Medal of Science to 12 eminent scientists while 10 extraordinary inventors received 2011 National Medal of Technology and Innovation, the highest honors bestowed by the United States Government upon scientists, engineers, and inventors.

Established by statute in 1980, the National Medal of Technology and Innovation was first awarded in 1985 and is administered for the White House by the US Department of Commerce’s Patent and Trademark Office.

“Success depends on the ideas that you can dream up,” Obama said.
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रुडकी आईआईटी में तकनीकी महोत्सव

dehradun। भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान यानि आईआईटी रुडकी के ग्यारहवें वार्षिक तकनीकी महोत्सव के स्थान में कॉगनिजेंस 2013 का आयोजन 22 मार्च से किया जाएगा। इस तकनीकी महोत्सव में देश-विदेश के तकनीकी विशेषज्ञ, वैज्ञानिक, इंजीनियर और तकनीकी शिक्षा से जुड़े करीब 6 हजार छात्र-छात्राएं 180 कार्यक्रम आयोजित करेंगे। तीन दिनों तक चलने वाले इस महोत्सव को तकनीकी शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में देश का सबसे बड़ा तकनीकी महोत्सव मेला माना जा रहा है। आयोजन से जुड़े अंशुमान त्रिपाठी ने बताया कि गत वर्ष के तकनीकी महोत्सव में देश विदेश के 90 तकनीकी और प्रबन्धन संस्थानों के 6 हजार से अधिक छात्र छात्राओं ने भाग लिया था साथ ही आईआईटी रुडकी के पांच हजार विद्यार्थियों ने भी इस महोत्सव में भाग ली। उन्होंने जानकारी दी कि इस तकनीकी महोत्सव स्पी कॉगनिजेंस 2013 में तीन दिनों तक तकनीकी प्रतियोगिताएं, अतिथि व्याख्यान, कार्यशाला, प्रदर्शनी व अन्य कई कार्यक्रम आयोजित किए जायेंगे। इस महोत्सव का उद्देश्य आम भारतीयों के जीवन कोशिश पर्यवहार व चिंतन तरीकों से बेहतर करना है।
Shackling IIMs

Proposed Bill to bring them under HRD council will degrade premier management institutes

The proposals set out in the first draft of the IIM Bill, currently being hammered out by the government, are ominous for the premier management institutes. While the final contours of the Bill are under discussion, the contentious proposal to form an apex council – headed by the HRD ministry – to manage the 13 IIMs has understandably raised hackles among faculty and alumni. Such a move would deal a death blow to the IIMs’ autonomy – a key reason for their success and reputation. Meanwhile, the government’s quid pro quo – reconstituting the IIMs into national institutions empowered to award degrees – is farcical. The current practice of awarding diplomas has never hurt the IIMs. However, curbing their autonomy and throwing a government straitjacket over them certainly will.

If the apex council is constituted as proposed, there is a serious possibility of the IIMs heading the way of the IITs. The latter, envisioned as premier institutes for technical learning, have undergone a decline in standards today. Thanks to excessive government regulation – for everything from hiring faculty to structuring curriculae – the IITs have fallen far short of their true potential. As a result, none of the IITs figure in the top 100 of world university rankings. The lesson here is that autonomy is critical to the success of any institution of higher learning. Quality can only be maintained through competition, not government control. This is precisely why American universities are rated so highly and continue to produce path-breaking research. For the IIMs to remain at the top, their character must be preserved rather than killed through government interference. Besides, given the state of primary education in the country, the government should focus here rather than tinker with the few institutions that work and mess them up.
Managing management

IIMs right to fear more government control

Given how the older IIMs appear to be functioning reasonably well and enjoy a good reputation among global business schools—in 2011, IIM Ahmedabad was 11th in the Financial Times list of top business schools—it’s not quite clear what the government hopes to achieve by imposing a super-structure on top on the existing governing system of the IIMs. If the aim is to lift the new IIMs among the list of 13 that now exist, this cannot be at the cost of the reputation and excellence of the older IIMs. What’s interesting is that the proposal for setting up a Council of Institutes that the government is now proposing was rejected by the IIMs four years ago.

Under the proposal, a Council of Institutes will be set up with the HRD minister as the ex-officio chairperson, the education minister of the state in which the IIM is located as a member, the secretary in charge of technical education will be an ex-officio member as will be the heads of the UGC and the AICTE, there will be 4 government nominees, apart from the chairperson and directors of each of the IIMs ... these people will, in turn, appoint more members. This Council is to coordinate the activities of the IIMs, whatever that might mean, and also be allowed to take up other issues that may be referred to it by the government. If this isn’t enough for the older IIMs to feel threatened—they make their own courses right now, but this flexibility looks under threat—the proposal to have an IIM Senate as the principal academic body of each IIM adds to this threat. While the sweetener the government is offering is that the IIMs will now be able to offer ‘degrees’ instead of diplomas and their PhDs will be able to call themselves ‘doctor’ as opposed to being ‘fellows’, it’s worth keeping in mind that the older IIMs have enough of a reputation for industry to lap up their ‘diplomas’.
Interview VED PRAKASH

Excellence possible through autonomy

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Prof Ved Prakash was formally appointed as the chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC) recently. He is a well-known name in the field of education. He also affiliated as the acting Chairman of UGC for nearly two years. He answers some questions on higher education in an interview with Pankaj Vohra. Some excerpts:

What steps can be conceived for enhancement of inclusive and qualitative higher education?

The three challenges of expansion, equity and excellence have to be addressed in an integrated perspective. Institutions need to be incentivised to increase their student intake capacity. Creation of new institutions on a large scale and allowing for a significant role for communities and private sectors can meet this deficit. It is vital that this expansion is inclusive and in areas where institutional density is lower than the national average. There is also a need to evolve suitable modules of collaboration where public resources can be synergised with private philanthropy.

A key measure of inclusive expansion will require significant increase in vocational education through new polytechnics, community colleges. Diffusion of boundaries and distance learning can additionally provide better opportunities for expansion, equity and excellence.

What structural reforms in higher education can mitigate our model of governance?

There is a need to introduce more efficient and productive models of improving the governance system. Reducing the burden of affiliation system through amendment of Acts by the state universities is an important concern. Developing an overarching regulatory framework for effective coordination of regulatory agencies is also the need of the hour. Exploring and setting up of meta-university concept can provide learners a flex mode of education.

How do we enhance excellence to improve our ranking among the top universities of the world?

Excellence in higher education is possible through greater autonomy coupled with higher performance linked funding for universities that sustain excellence. It can also happen through enhancing skills and pedagogic awareness of teachers for improving instructional dynamics besides expanding and reforming faculty development initiatives and incentivising faculty and student mobility across institutions for cross fertilisation of ideas. There is also a possibility of enhancing technology-mediated teaching and expanding e-resource availability to students and teachers. Also, instituting awards to faculty for reflecting their achievements on global platforms.

How can the research and innovation sector be strengthened?

It is an accepted fact that an essential mandate of the university system is to teach and train high-quality personnel who can face the challenging assignments of a dynamic society. Instituting curricular, pedagogical, assessment, research and organisational innovations can be an important intervention. Establishment of special incubation centres and research parks can provide a fillip to research and innovation. It will be relevant to provide special funding to research-intensive universities.

How can internationalisation of higher education help to expand the frontiers of knowledge?

There is a need for clearer articulation of the concept of internationalisation of higher education. Providing greater autonomy to institutions to enter into collaborative partnerships with the best universities abroad can be an important initiative besides working out areas of collaboration and exchange programs. It would be relevant to design policy measures to attract foreign scholars to enroll in Indian universities. Augmenting the faculty with intellectual resources available outside the system in the form of professors can go a long way in meeting the need.

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Huge asteroid to fly closest ever to Earth

Half The Size Of A Football Field, It Will Whiz Past Our Planet On Feb 15

Washington: In a close shave, an asteroid about half the size of a football field will miss Earth by 27,600 kilometres on February 15, the closest asteroid in recorded history to buzz past our planet, NASA scientists say. "This is a record-setting close approach," said Don Yeomans of NASA’s near earth object programme at jet propulsion laboratory.

"Since regular sky surveys began in the 1990s, we’ve never seen an object this big get so close to Earth," Yeomans said. The asteroid dubbed 2012 DA14 is a fairly typical near-Earth asteroid. It measures some 50 metres wide, neither very large nor very small, and is probably made of stones, as opposed to metal or ice. Yeomans estimated that an asteroid like 2012 DA14 flies past Earth, on average, every 45 years, yet actually strikes our planet only every 1,200 years or so. The impact of a 50m asteroid is not catastrophic unless you happen to be underneath it, he said. He pointed out that a similar-sized object formed the mile wide Meteor Crater in Arizona when it struck about 50,000 years ago.

"That asteroid was made of iron, which made it an especially potent impactor," he said. Also, in 1908, something about the size of 2012 DA14 exploded in the atmosphere above Siberia, leveling hundreds of square miles of forest. "2012 DA14 will definitely not hit Earth. The orbit of the asteroid is known well enough to rule out an impact," he said.

NASA radar will be monitoring the space rock as it approaches Earth closer than many man-made satellites. Yeomans said the asteroid will thread the gap between low Earth orbit, where the ISS is located, and the "space rocks led to dino extinction".

The space rock that slammed into Earth and wiped it clean of dinosaurs, around 65.5 million years ago, may have been a binary — two asteroids orbiting each other, according to a new study. The dino-killing asteroid is usually thought of as a single rock with a diameter of 7 to 10 kilometres, but it may really have been two widely separated rocks with that combined diameter, researchers said. The conclusion comes from a re-evaluation of the proportion of asteroid craters on Earth that were formed by binary impacts, New Scientist reported.

Too Close For Comfort
Four years after the government revamped its central university system by bringing in several such new centres of higher learning to provide access with quality, there is little to show in outcomes and a concerned government is set to review its growth strategy.

President Pranab Mukherjee and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were scheduled to review the bottle-necks in infrastructure, research, curricula and teachers on Monday, according to officials in the human resource development ministry and central universities.

"Both the hunger of Indian students to get the kind of education in India that can cater to the quality of the best universities in the world and the declining number of seats in universities is a challenge. As a result, we are not attracting sufficient number of students. Most of the new universities don't have 1,000 students each and the faculty per se is as high as 30-50 per cent, which is not a sustainable situation," said Abdul Wahid, vice-chancellor of the Central University of Jammu.

As per the Times Higher Education Rankings 2013-14, published from the UK, the top ranked Indian institutions are IIT Kharagpur (234), IIT Bombay (258) and IIT Roorkee (267). The top ranked institutions are also listed by the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) and the Times Higher Education (THE) as well.

"Apart from the fact that none of the Indian universities are in the top 200 list of best universities in the world and this is a worrying point. The universities need to change their approach and become more student-oriented from just learning to research and be industry-ready," said Abdul Wahid, vice-chancellor of the Central University of Jammu.

Because people can be identified by genetic data posted online, the privacy offered by the appliance, and its ability to discretely analyze data directly in a laptop or phone, may be an advantage. Lee Watkins Jr., director of bioinformatics at the Center for Inherited Disease Research at Johns Hopkins University, is considering buying one, in part for that reason. "You have control over it physically within your walls and logically within your network," he said. "Everyone's DNA is a very personal thing."

Dr. John Nagy, a director of the personalized genomic medicine laboratory at Columbia University, is considering ordering a genome machine for use in a clinical setting. Such machines may broaden the reach of genomic medicine, particularly in smaller labs. "Normally you need a slew of people to maintain a center to process this data," said Dr. Nagy, who is also an assistant professor of pathology and cell biology. "Basiclly this machine removes the need for an expensive computational facility and a group of people who make sure the operating system is working and keep the reference data up to date."

Dr. Nagy also said he would go carefully through this list. "We have to validate the items, confirming or rejecting the interpretations," he said. He would use the machine for cancer genomics, looking for specific disruptions that are driving a tumor, and in evaluating diseases that run in families.

The machine tackles a tedious, intensive task, searching for points of difference between a person's genome and the standard, or "reference," genome. There may be hundreds of thousands of variations -- far more than we find in the person that are different from the reference genome.