DOLLAR DREAMS GO BUST

TRI-VALLEY

Many students went to this university to pursue their dreams. Now they find themselves hit by a scam

Yashwant Raj

February 6, 2011

Newspaper Clips

Hindustan Times ND 06/02/2011 P-15

A protest in the Capital against the detention of Indian students of the Tri-Valley University. The future of more than 1,500 students hang in the balance

A photo from the Tri-Valley University website

Past imperfect, future tense

The University office in San Francisco, California

Individually, they were a part of the wave that swept across the nation. Collectively, they were part of a movement that changed the course of history. And yet, as they stood there, in the heart of the city, they could not help but feel a sense of loss. The dreams they had once held so dear were now just memories, a testament to the harsh reality of the world.

They didn't trust strangers. They didn't trust their own government. They trusted each other, and that was enough. They were a family, and they would stick together through thick and thin.

Dozens of students and their families had gathered outside the university building, calling for their release. They held signs and chanted slogans, their voices rising in unison as they demanded justice for their loved ones.

The protest was peaceful, but the message was clear. The students weren't just fighting for themselves; they were fighting for all immigrants who were facing similar challenges. They were fighting for a better future for their children, and they weren't going to give up until they had it.

The atmosphere was electric, and the energy was contagious. It was a moment of unity, and the students knew that they weren't alone. They were fighting for a cause, and they were going to win.

But as the sun began to set, they knew that the fight wasn't over. They had to keep fighting, keep protesting, keep reminding the world that their rights were just as important as anyone else's. And they would do it, no matter what.

They were the future, and they were ready to take on the world.
Alcohol too is injurious to health!

Dr. Philip Umran

"I had come across a news item in the international press which said the Indian man who had been drinking for over 20 years and had been addicted to alcohol was also suffering from liver cirrhosis. It was a very sad story. I decided to write an article on this topic because alcoholism is a serious problem in our country and there are many people suffering from its effects."

Kerala, a sinking State

In another form, No not that Bhubaneswar

Dr. Philip Umran

IT-Kgp pushing pricey laptops

Hindustan Times ND 06/02/2011  P-10

ht EXCLUSIVE

Hindustan Times ND 06/02/2011  P-14

Alcohol too is injurious to health!

Kerala, a sinking State

Dr. Philip Umran

IT-Kgp pushing pricey laptops

Hindustan Times ND 06/02/2011  P-10

ht EXCLUSIVE

Hindustan Times ND 06/02/2011  P-14

Alcohol too is injurious to health!

Kerala, a sinking State

Dr. Philip Umran
B-schools moot alternatives to AICTE policy

BS REPORTER
New Delhi, 5 February

Irritated by the recent guidelines issued by All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), the directors of various B-schools in the country have come out with a white paper on possible alternatives to AICTE’s notifications.

A group of directors, headed by Director General JD Singh of Jaipuria Institute of Management, will put up the paper for discussion at a national convention of B-schools on Monday. The Association of Indian Management Schools (AIMS) and Education Promotion Society of India (EPSI) will hold the convention in which over 200 B-schools will decide the next course of action. The agenda includes moving court to seek an interim injunction or reversal of AICTE guidelines.

The white paper on PGDM programmes will also highlight the contribution and achievements of PGDM institutions in meeting industry requirements and facilitating employability.

Dr H Chaturvedi, alternate president, EPSI, and director, BIMTECH, said, “We have already prepared a white paper wherein we have discussed the issues and given some suggestions to address the problem.”
New Delhi: The Central Information Commission on Saturday severely indicted IIT-Kharagpur and its former public information officer T K Ghosal, for giving false information under the RTI Act about the Joint Entrance Examination 2006.

"It appears to the Commission that false information has been given knowingly by the then PIO T K Ghosal," CIC said. It also said, "The commission is surprised, pained and horrified at this complete falsehood to which the PIO of one of India's leading education institutes has resorted to." Ghosal is now the officiating registrar.

CIC has asked the chairman of the board of governors of IIT-Kharagpur to inquire into the allegations made by appellant Rajeev Kumar, a professor of computer science in the same institute. CIC has also asked the additional superintendent of police, Kharagpur, to provide security to Kumar after making an assessment of the threats to him. "If any physical harm comes to Rajeev Kumar the police will be held responsible for not having performed their duty," the order said.

The commission took strong note of the fact that instead of appearing personally, Ghosal asked law firm Fox Mandal & Associates to represent it in this case. CIC said three people appearing on behalf of Ghosal — A Patra, public information officer, IIT-Kharagpur, Brigadier A R Joshi and Rajan K Sarkar, law officer — "are close as to why false information has been provided... Public money and interest could have been better served if Ghosal, who is officiating registrar, had appeared before the commission in this matter."

CIC has issued show-cause notice to Ghosal and asked him to be present in the commission on March 17 with a written submission as to why penalty should not be imposed on him and disciplinary action should not be recommended.
Indian Institute of Management (Ahmd) pips ISB to the post in Financial Times global ranking

Rajat Gupta's Indian School of Business, may have slipped a few notches in the last couple of years if the FT ranking for B-schools is correct. Pallavee Dhaundiyal Panthry looks at the world where the IIM-A ranks higher than the globally celebrated ISB, Hyderabad and its yet to fructify cousin, the ISB, Mohali.

Indian B Schools are now bringing laurels to the country. Unlike earlier, they are being recognized across the globe. This year, for the first time, India has got three institutions in the Financial Times, London, B School rankings 2011, namely IIM Ahmedabad, Indian School of Business Hyderabad and S P Jain Centre of Management, Dubai/Singapore.

The Post Graduate Programme in Management (PGP) of the Indian School of Business (ISB) has been ranked number 13 in the Global Top MBA rankings 2011. It also recorded the highest “Salary percentage increase” among all the top 100 schools.

Marking a new development, two programmes from Indian institutions have entered the rankings for the first time this year – PGPX of IIM Ahmedabad (at 11) and GIMBA of SP Jain Center of Management, Dubai/Singapore (at 68). The increase in the number of Indian, and other Asian B schools in the rankings over the past few years, reflects the rise in prominence of the region.

Many business and management educators feel that this is a positive development and it could help spawn a cluster of high quality management institutions in the region that will attract the best talent from across the world, and create an environment conducive to path breaking research. Here, ISB takes pride in being a vital catalyst in this trend.

This is the fourth successive year that the ISB has featured in the top 20, reinforcing its reputation as a world class institution. During this four year period, the ISB's PGP class size grew by over 55 per cent to a current size of 570 students reflecting the institution's commitment to world-class quality and scale.

Announcing the ranking, Ajit Ranamukhaar, dean, ISB said: “The ISB entered the global rankings in 2008, and with each passing year, has cemented its position among the top 20 schools globally while simultaneously growing significantly. Our commitment to providing a world-class experience to all our stakeholders remains unwaiving, and is reflected in our consistent showing at the rankings. I take this opportunity to thank the entire ISB community, and extended community of stakeholders across the world, for being part of this success.”

Expressing happiness on this development, Rajat Gupta, chairman, ISB said, “The ISB is committed to its vision of grooming leadership for emerging world, and has established new paradigms for management education in India. The ISB’s accomplishments in the short span of its existence pales in comparison to only one aspect - its potential.”

Within 10 years of its inception, ISB boasts to have established itself as a global business school of repute, with a demonstrated record of growth and accomplishment. The school is in the process of setting up its second campus in Mohali, Punjab, which will also have specialist institutes for promoting research and education in areas critical to India’s development. The Mohali campus is slated to be operational from April 2012 onwards this way.
We should be ready to pay a price for going green: Montek

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Planning Commission deputy chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia on Saturday urged power companies in India to divert a part of their profits for research on alternative energy sources and called for government guidelines to make this mandatory. In the bargain, if there is a tariff hike, it would have to be lived with, he said.

"Public sector power companies are doing abysmally in this respect. Companies may say to do that we will need to increase tariff, to which my reply is that there is a lot of room in our country for energy pricing because they are way below global rates," Ahluwalia said while addressing the 11th Delhi Sustainable Development Summit organised by The Earth Research Institute. He said this is the practice of energy companies in developed countries but is yet to be adopted here.

Referring to the inflated consumption patterns of developed countries, he said he was "disappointed at what is happening globally" on the climate change front. But sustainable development is not just a policy jargon because 90% of what we need to do for it is anyway things that need to be done for energy security," Ahluwalia said.
India pulls the plug on yoga as business

Kounteya Sinha | TOI

New Delhi: India is all set to give hot yoga the cold shoulder.

In order to stop self-styled yoga gurus from claiming copyright on ancient “asanas”, like Bikram Choudhury’s “Hot Yoga” — a set of 26 sequences practised in a heated room — India has completed documenting 1,300 “asanas”, which will soon be uploaded on the country’s Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL), making them public knowledge.

Around 250 of these “asanas” have also been made into video clips featuring an expert.

According to the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Union health ministry’s department of Ayush, “Once the database is up online, patent offices across the world will have a reference point to check on everytime a yoga guru claims patent on an ‘asana’.”

CSIR’s V P Gupta, who created TKDL, told TOI: “All the 26 sequences, part of ‘Hot Yoga’, have been mentioned in Indian yoga books written thousands of years ago. However, we will not legally challenge Choudhury.”

At present, anybody teaching “Hot Yoga” has to pay Choudhury franchisee fee because he holds copyright on them.

Nine well-known yoga institutions in India have helped with the documentation. TKDL will have photos and explanation of the postures. Gupta says, “A voice-over will also point out which text mentions the posture.”
Wake-up call for India

The plight of US students at Tri-Valley University is one more reason why we need to open up higher education to overseas investment.

It took Juliet Wurr's tasteless comment on radio-tagging of Indian students to turn the heat on the Indian government and make it lodge a strong protest with the US authorities. Her subsequent apology is unlikely to mollify most of us. Nonetheless the furore over her remark might just have a salutary effect. At the very least it will put Indian students more on guard against unscrupulous foreign varsities. And, equally important, it might reduce opposition in the country to opening up higher education to Foreign Direct Investment.

For the 1500 students of Tri-Valley University, California caught unaware (7) by tricksters in the US education sector it will be too late. But it might save countless other gullible students from a similar plight.

In some ways last week's incidents bring to mind what happened in Australia two years ago. There the spate of attacks on Indian students revealed the dirty underbelly of higher education Down Under. Where sham universities offering degrees were actually acting as conduits for residency permits and eventual immigration.

The controversy saw a massive clean up act on the part of the Australian government. Rules regarding student visas and permanent residency were modified to stop shady private institutes from offering cheap courses to students with the aim of securing permanent residency. It also resulted in increased awareness among the student community in India as evidenced by the sharp fall in enrollment by Indian students in Australian universities in subsequent years.

But clearly we have not learnt our lesson yet. Why else would so many students face the prospect of deportation, not to mention the ignominy of being tagged like common criminals after the University was shut down by US Federal authorities following investigations that it was a front to help foreign nationals acquire residential status illegally?

Scores of students have been detained. A few have been released on bond, though the high bond amount means many are unable to rustle up the required sum. Many have been fitted with radio-frequency tags to track their movements. Predictably the US action had aroused a great deal of anger in India even before the US officials' ham-fisted remarks. External affairs minister SM Krishna called it 'unacceptable' even as US authorities defended it as a legitimate means to track potential illegal immigration and an alternative to confinement during a pending investigation.

But the bottom line is the students are in a soup. They will have to join some other university, and quickly, if they are to maintain their visa status and complete their studies. But fresh admissions to any other university are out of question as the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), the web-based programme to track foreign students in the US is presently not accepting any applications.

Until it is reactivated no university and academic institution can admit any foreign students to their campus. All of which raises the same questions that were raised earlier in the Australian context. Why are Indian students sitting ducks for unscrupulous operators overseas? Part of the reason, undeniably, is the lure of settling in these countries and, let us be honest, there is a section that is using this route only to that end. But there are some genuine students too for whom the only incentive is the lack of access to quality education in India and whose only folly is their gullibility.

All the more reason then to expedite passage of the Foreign Educational Institutions Bill 2010. The Bill allows overseas universities to open campuses in India should go far in filling the yawning gap between demand and supply of higher education. Many believe this Bill will help save an outflow of foreign exchange. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) estimates that annually about 160,000 students from India study abroad, spending about $4 billion.

But that is the least of it. More importantly, it will reduce the absurdly intense competition for seats in higher education institutions—30,000 students compete for 9,600 IIT seats—that often compels students to go abroad for education; at times without doing proper due diligence, in the process falling prey to unscrupulous elements overseas. Unfortunately the Bill does seem not seem high on the government's agenda. However Congress general secretary, Rahul Gandhi, supported it strongly at the meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee last week. In the present scheme of things that is the highest possible endorsement! So hopefully, it will get the much-needed traction.

mythili.bhusnurmath@timesgroup.com