NEWSMAKER SOUMITRA DUTTA

Future thinker

During the course of an interview with CNN last weekend, Professor Soumita Dutta said he was "intrigued" by the prospect of head-
ing up a business school.

Dutta will take over as Dean of the Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management at Cornell University on July 1, 2012. Cornell's Johnson Business School has a 49-member faculty along with 40 adjunct and visiting members, an annual budget of $70 million and an endowment of over $160 million. Cornell President David Skorton said in an announcement, "Professor Dutta's appointment is a natural fit with Johnson's increasingly global outlook." Currently, Dutta is the Roland Berger Professor of Business and Technology and Founder and Academic Director of I-Lab at INSEAD, which has campuses in France, Singapore and Abu Dhabi.

Of course, that wasn't his first try at the number one spot. In school, his mother told a newspaper recently, Dutta was a topper throughout. Yes, he has never held the position of dean, but he has held several deputy dean-level management responsibilities at INSEAD, including handling global executive education with total annual revenues of $110 million. He is also on the advisory boards of several international B-schools while teaching as a visiting professor on several campuses, including Oxford and Cambridge. He also sits on the board of many technology startups.

Dutta went on to receive a BTech in electrical engineering and computer science from the Indian Institute of Technology and an MS in business administration, an MS in computer science and a PhD in computer science from the University of California at Berkeley. He has lived and worked in Asia, the US and Europe and has been an engineer with General Electric in the US and Schlumberger, the world's largest oilfield services company, in Japan.

A prolific writer, Dutta has written several books and has been featured in all the major management journals. One of the leading 'future thinkers' of his profession, he has a keen understanding of the importance of both innovation as well as good leadership.

He is the co-editor and author of two influential reports on technology and innovation, the Global Information Technology Report, produced by the World Economic Forum, and the Global Innovation Index (co-published with the World Intellectual Property Organisation).

Indeed, innovation and inclusive growth and how one can lead to the other is an issue that has featured regularly in his recent articles. This is what he had to say in a write-up in an Indian business magazine directed at future leaders: "The winners in inclusive innovation will reap big benefits in a changing world where the fastest growth in consumer spending is coming from the bottom of the pyramid in emerging markets. However, winning in this new area will not be easy and cannot be taken for granted by incumbents. Are you ready for this challenge?"

Again, at the Nasscom India Leadership Summit in 2011 he had said that while India is admired by the outside world, the stress should be on equitable distribution of wealth. "Our priority should be to bring people out of poverty, to bridge the gap between the haves and the have-nots," he had said. But he is hopeful. In another interview he had commented about how innovation was being democratized in India: "What you see right now is a phenomenon of micro innovation. Every single individual is innovating...The classical definition involved PhD and patents, which was very narrow. Now, you do not need a PhD for innovation."

Dutta also says that the notion of role models is changing in India. Talking to a journalist he said: "Traditionally, role models in India were limited to film and cricket stars. Thanks to people like Narayana Murthy and Azim Premji, people now have new role models to emulate."

We can go ahead and add one more name to that list now. ALOKANANDA CHAKRABORTY
Politics mars race for UGC boss’ post

Candidates Openly Canvass Political Support

Akshaya Mukul | TNN

New Delhi: The HRD ministry’s avowed claim that politics should be out of academics has little impact on the ongoing selection process for chairperson’s post of the University Grants Commission (UGC).

Candidates are openly canvassing political support and the ministry is also pitching for its own candidate in acting chairperson Ved Prakash.

The ministry’s argument being that he would maintain continuity in the UGC till the organization is subsumed by the proposed National Commission for Higher Education and Research.

While former Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee wrote to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in favour of Prakash, two other serious candidates from UP claim support of top Congress leaders. Congress leaders from Punjab are rallying around another candidate from the state.

With many competing interests, the two-day meeting of the UGC’s search-cum-selection committee headed by scientist Govardhan Mehta and consisting of jurist N S Madhava Menon and K Srinanth Reddy of Public Health Foundation of India, failed to evolve consensus because of deep divisions within the panel. Out of more than 80 applications for the prestigious job, the committee has decided to call 20 candidates for interaction.

Twenty academicians called for interaction consist of Prakash; former DU VC Deepak Pental; B Hanumalaih, VC, Ambedkar University; V N Rajasekharan Pillai, former VC, IGNOU; Surbhi Banerjee, VC, Central University of Orissa; R C Sobti, VC, Panjab University; NS Gajbhaiye, VC, Hari Singh Gour Central University; Sagar; Seyed E Hasnain, IIT-Delhi and former VC of Hyderabad University; Sanjay Dhande, director, IIT-Kanpur; N Prabhu Dev, VC, Bangalore University; Arvind Kumar, VC, Magadh University; DP Singh, former VC, BHU; A D Sawant of Rajasthan University; A D N Bajpai, VC, Himachal University; Furqan Qamar, VC, Central University, Himachal Pradesh.

This decision to interact is also not unanimous. “The committee is as divided as the search-cum-selection panel for selecting NCERT director was in 2010. There is a view that such interaction is often not objective,” a source said.
IIMs meet to consider ways of raising funds

BOOMING FINANCES

By Prashant K. Nanda
prashant.n@livemint.com

NEW DELHI

Directors of the 13 Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) will meet on Friday to devise a plan to raise funds from philanthropists, industrialists and their alumni in India and abroad to boost their finances, following the example of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and foreign business schools.

Directors and the chairmen of the board of governors of IIMs are holding a workshop in New Delhi that will also be attended by the human resource development (HRD) minister Kapil Sibal, the higher education secretary and other officials of the HRD ministry to devise a strategy to raise funds.

Initially, the IIMs plan to raise ₹400-500 crore. This may also be one of the items on the agenda for the IIMs when they go to Europe and America later this year to promote their brand and attract foreign students to bring in more diversity to campuses.

The workshop, which some successful IIM alumni may attend, will discuss an HRD ministry report prepared by a team led by Hari S. Bhartia, co-chairman and managing director of Jubilant Life Sciences Ltd. Many foreign B-schools are raising funds successfully, IIMs would do well to raise funds too. It will give them a financial edge while planning their expansion inside or outside the country in future," said a senior HRD ministry official, who did not want to be named. "They are a growing brand and more funds will serve them well."

The Bhartia committee report has suggested that IIMs follow a model that identifies prospective fund givers, solicits money from them and keeps them informed about how it is being used. IIM Raipur is leading the initiative to hold the workshop, according to the HRD ministry.

The IITs have leveraged their network well and got a good response from corporates and philanthropic funds, said P. Ramashan, director of IIM-Rohtak. The IIMs jointly represent one brand and even if the new IIMs don’t have an alumni network, progress in raising funds will help all 13, he said.

For a leading business school, managing everything including infrastructure from student fees is very difficult, said Pramath Sinha, the founding dean of Hyderabad-based Indian School of Business (ISB). IIMs have some government backing, but funds are always needed for expansion.

"You need it to improve infrastructure, give scholarships to students, create chair professors and improve research," Sinha said.

Sinha, who has mentioned about the role of donations and endowment in his new book on ISB, said that this has been a trend among well-known foreign business schools and universities. "In India, IITs are doing it and IIMs trying to do so seems to be a good step."

For a decade and half, IITs have made significant progress in collecting funds for expansion. In 2000, the Bharti Foundation donated ₹20 crore to IIT-Delhi to start the Bharti School of Telecommunication Technology and Management. IIT Kharagpur aims to accumulate a $200 million endowment fund by 2020.

Industrialist Arjun Malhotra, an alumnus of IIT-Kharagpur, donated ₹5 crore last year and has promised to give more. IIT-Bombay has got funds from its alumni network, mainly in the US.

The Kanwal Rekhi School of Information Technology, the Shailesh J. Mehta School of Management, the Gaitonde Lecture Hall Complex, the D.S. Foundation Gymkhana and the Victor Menezes Convention Centre have come up with support from alumni, according to its website.

The Vinod Gupta School of Management at IIT Kharagpur was initiated by its alumnus Vinod Gupta and named after him.

The promoters of Jubilant and HT Media Ltd, which publishes Mint, are closely related. There are no promoter cross-holdings.
IIMs look to alumni for raising funds

Chetan Chauhan  
chetan@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The country’s premier educational institute, the Indian Institutes of Managements (IIMs), will be seeking funds from its alumni and other stakeholders to expand and create world-class infrastructure.

The top management of the IIMs will discuss on Friday, a blueprint on ways to get funds from corporate world and alumni in the next few years.

“The IIM directors will be discussing on how to raise funds for the new and old IIMs and engage the alumni,” said Hari S Bhartia, chairperson of IIM, Raipur and head of a HRD ministry committee on raising funds for the IIMs.

The HRD ministry had constituted the committee to help IIMs in building a corpus, so that they can be financially independent and fund proposal for foreign campuses. Bhartia had already recommended setting up of a development office and campaign committees in each IIM for raising fund.

Fund raising campaign by some foreign universities like Yale and Harvard have resulted in generation of over US $3 billion. Harvard had received US $50 million donation from the Tata Group in 2010 and earlier Anand Mahindra had donated US $10 million.

The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) have also generated money in similar ways.

Bhartia said the IITs have raised good money and IIMs, especially the older ones, would like to revisit strategy and engage alumni to raise funds. According to IIM officials, the reasons for poor response would also be discussed.

To help the IIMs and IITs in their mission, the HRD ministry has already sought Income Tax exemption on donation of funds or option of non-cash endowments. The ministry had also given full authority to individual IIMs to raise money to pay for its expansion plans.
Sibal’s low cost Aakash tablet may be shelved

By Sanjay Singh in New Delhi

THE Union human resource development (HRD) ministry may refuse to extend the letter of credit (LC) to Montreal-based DataWind, the makers of the world’s cheapest computer tablet, Aakash, priced at Rs 2,250 after a series of faults were detected, owing to which buyers have largely dumped it.

Aakash tablets were created specifically for students with the aim of bridging the ‘digital divide’ between the rich and the poor. The government now plans to dump these problematic tabs to rural villages.

Worse still is the fact that the entire project launched with much fanfare by HRD minister Kapil Sibal in October last year could be shelved.

Sources said the idea conceptualised by Sibal for an affordable tablet has been hijacked by corporate giant, Mukesh Ambani’s Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), which plans to launch its fourth-generation (4G) services later this year and sell tablets at cheap price of around Rs 3,500.

Industry observers said Mukesh’s RIL could probably team up with DataWind or with any other entity to launch 4G services in India. RIL is the only company to have pan-India spectrum to offer wireless broadband services on the 4G technology platform, having paid Rs13,000 crore for these airwaves.

The 4G, also called long-term evolution (LTE), will have much higher speed than 3G and many telecom companies are gearing up for its worldwide launch early this year.

The HRD ministry had initially placed an order for one lakh units with DataWind. It received 30,000 Aakash tabs as part of the pilot run. But it proved a disaster after poor the feedback received concerning these tabs. The tablets distributed among students under the pilot run had an Android 2.2 operating system, a seven-inch touchscreen, a 360 MHz processor, two USB ports, a multimedia player and 180 minutes of battery power. Instead of the 366 MHz processor, the improved Aakash will have a 766 MHz processor and a battery with a better life.

Sources said DataWind had reportedly refused to upgrade the second tranche of 70,000 Aakash tablets with improved specifications, for which it sought more funds. However, it will supply the second tranche of improved Aakash tablets at the original price of Rs 2,250.

But JTP-Rajasthan, which is a tendering authority for the Aakash project has not come out with the new testing standards so far. The HRD ministry is looking for new vendors to sell the second tranche of 70,000 improved tablets from DataWind.

Authorities said this is a clear indication that DataWind’s LC will not be extended, which lapses this month-end. It will now be supplied by other agency and not DataWind.

But the promoter of DataWind, Sunet S. Tull, has successfully managed to get over 20 lakh bookings for the improved and upgraded version of the Aakash tablet in the open market where it costs Rs 40 more at Rs 2,999.

Tull was not available for comments. However, company official claimed that their LC would be extended beyond January 30. "We have not been paid for 30,000 tablets which we have supplied so far," the official complained.
HIC warns of a China-like ban on ‘rogue’ sites

By Nazliya Alv
in New Delhi

IS INDIA going the China way when it comes to controlling electronic information? Not really. But going by the mood in the government and the judiciary, it just might.

That’s what the Delhi High Court threatened Facebook (India) and Google (India) with during a hearing seeking a stay on the ongoing proceedings against social networking sites.

“Like China, we will block all such websites,” Justice Suresh Kait warned on Thursday while asking the counsel for Facebook and Google to develop a mechanism to keep a check and remove offensive and objectionable material from their web pages.

Will take steps if sites don’t filter content

Justice Kait also refused to stay the proceedings against the websites before the magistrate’s court, scheduled on Friday, and fixed Monday as the next date of hearing.

The Delhi High Court’s stance comes in the wake of HRD minister Kapil Sibal asking social networking sites to filter content before posting it on their web pages.

Defending Google (India), former additional solicitor general Mukul Rohatgi said on Thursday that it was not possible for website owners to filter or monitor the content being posted on their sites.

“No human interference is possible, and moreover, it is not feasible to check such incidents. Billions of people across the globe post their articles on the website. Yes, they may be defamatory, obscene, but cannot be checked,” Rohatgi told the court.

He also tried to shift the blame on the US-based Google Inc, saying it was different from Google India. He added that the former was the service provider, and not the latter.

Rohatgi cited provisions under the Information Technology Act and said websites enjoyed the protection of law where such objectionable material was concerned, as long as they were not the authors.

“The websites may lose the legal protection if they either modify or monitor the article or comments or fail to deal with the complaints of an affected person or the government on such issues,” Rohatgi claimed.

Senior advocate Siddharth Luthra, appearing for Facebook (India), questioned the authenticity of the documents submitted by the complainant, Vinay Reddy, who had accused the websites of conniving with each other and various unknown persons to publicly sell, exhibit and circulate obscene and lascivious content.

“We do not know as to when, how and from where the documents came into being. They are not the documents as per the provisions of the Evidence Act. Moreover, a social networking site cannot be held accountable for the acts of third parties,” Luthra said.

VIGILANTE Justice got a new meaning when hackers cracked into the website fatwaonline.org on January 3 to protest against the owner Muffi Jaaz Kasmi’s petition against social networking sites in a Delhi court.

Their message was clear: “This site has been hacked. This has been brought on by the people who declared war on the social networking sites as well as any site that posts anything against religion. When you attack social networking sites then expect people to come back at you tenfold. We will not tolerate your stupidity any longer. The non-religious are starting to notice how extremist the religious are becoming and we have had enough. GdG” Kasmi will be filing a criminal complaint against the hackers.

HACKERS’ AVENGING SUIT

Facebook

Google
Hindustan Times
Title: PITRODA TO LEAD INNOVATORS MEET IN NEW DELHI
Author:
Location: WASHINGTON:
Article Date: 01/13/2012

PITRODA TO LEAD INNOVATORS MEET IN NEW DELHI

WASHINGTON: Leading US-based entrepreneur and policymaker Sam Pitroda will soon lead nearly 100 young social innovators to India to discuss how technology can make social enterprises more effective. The event, organised by non-profit body ‘Action for India, will see innovators taking part in a day-long discussions in New Delhi on January 21. “To unleash the innovation potential in the country we need to tap into the creative energy of our young entrepreneurs,” said Pitroda.

PTI
MIXED RESULTS

Law education: islands of excellence

There exists a vast gulf between the top 20 law schools in India and the remainder in terms of quality of education

By Nikhil Kanakad
nikhil.lightview.com

The dismal record is a measure of the institutional disarray in the National Law Schools (NLSUs) in India. Since their inception, NLSUs have been the only attempt to develop a culture of law across the country and to train underprivileged and marginalised communities in the field of law. The first batch of students at NLSIU, the Bangalore National Law School, was admitted in 1987, and since then, the number of students has grown to over 10,000. However, the quality of education remains a concern.

The NLSIU was established in 1987 with the intention of providing a world-class legal education to students from underprivileged backgrounds. The school has produced many notable alumni, including judges and lawmakers. However, the school has been criticized for its elitist approach and for failing to address the needs of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The NLSIU has faced several challenges over the years, including funding issues, faculty shortages, and a lack of resources. These challenges have made it difficult for the school to provide a quality education to its students.

Despite these challenges, the NLSIU has continued to produce graduates who are well-prepared for their careers in law. The school has also been able to attract students from across the country, including students from remote and rural areas.

In conclusion, the NLSIU has made significant contributions to the legal education in India. However, the school needs to continue to address the challenges it faces and to ensure that it remains accessible to students from all backgrounds.

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Students surprised, teachers angry at DU

Sugandha Pathak

NEW DELHI: Following the unprecedentedly good results in the Delhi University semester exams held in November-December, teachers of the University have claimed that they were asked to set easy question papers and be lenient in their markings of the answer sheets.

The teachers say that the university wanted them to be generous in awarding marks as that would make the semester system popular.

“We were told by the authorities to make easy question papers so that all the students pass. I objected and also gave it in writing to the Vice Chancellor (VC) that this is not possible. We have to maintain some standards of higher education,” said Navneet Gaur, professor of Physics, Dyal Singh College.

Students were astonished to find out that they have got perfect 75 marks in all four theory papers of Physics in Miranda House College. “A girl from BSc Physics (Hons) got around 99 per cent,” Gaur said.

A professor from Department of Germanic and Romance studies on conditions of anonymity said that the teachers were forced to give more marks. “I have told students not to be happy about their high scores as the majority of the students haven’t really worked hard. The marks were not given according to their merit,” she said.

Implementation of the semester system drew heavy criticism from teachers and students. Many were surprised to see the first set of results declared in the last week of December, just three weeks after the exams were over.

Three students of BA Economics (Hons) scored 99 per cent in the first semester. Around 300 answer scripts in Economics theory papers were awarded perfect 75. The trend of over 90 per cent marks continued in subjects like BA (Hons) Urdu, Philosophy and Hindi.

Gaur said in Satyawati College, 37 students got first class in Political Science. “The University’s records in the past years show that never did so many students from one college get first class in one subject. That number of first class students used to be total reported in the entire University in one subject,” the teacher added.

More shocking for the teachers was the free flow of marks in social science subjects, usually hard to score.

“In Hindi College, the highest marks in political science is over 80 per cent. Similar trends are seen in History (H),” said Ishita Mishra, professor of political science in Hindi College. According to Abha Dev Habib, Delhi University Teachers’ Association (DUTA) member and physics teacher at Miranda House college, students who could not even write a letter in correct English were given over 90 per cent. “My own students are laughing. Many students who did not do well got such inflated marks,” Habib said.

To pass all the students, more than 10 marks were increased after the evaluated mark sheets went to the controller of examination.

“Though the University has a right to moderate marks to pass the student after the examiner has marked the papers, the varsity went overboard. I did not give such high marks, but when the result came out there was a huge disparity in the marks given by teachers and the marks out,” said Ujjaini Ray, Professor of History in Lady Sriram College (LSR).

Teachers angry over DU generosity

University, from Page 1

She said many are unable to believe the teachers did not give such high marks and suggested filing RTI to get the OMR sheets where it is impossible to change the marks given by the teachers.

“The second and third year students are unhappy because the employer will not ask them why they got 60 or 60 per cent marks when their juniors are scoring in 90s,” Ray added.

Teachers say stricter evaluation is to make students decide if they would like to continue in a subject.

“This is the death of a university. A degree from DU won’t be of any value if marks are awarded like this. People will stop taking us seriously,” Habib said.

The office of Controller of Examinations, D S Jaggi refused to comment when contacted.

DH News Service
Needed: an IITian sperm donor, pl.

A Chennai couple’s ad has become a talking point on IIT campuses across India. We listen in.

Renu Singh

‘My wife and I are looking for a suitable sperm donor for fresh In Vitro procedure very soon! Ideal candidate should be a student, healthy, no bad habits, tall and fair if possible but will consider the right donor regardless of looks etc. Time is of the essence, so please call/whatsapp. Compensation twenty thousand rupees cash. Call or email us. Authentic ad, we need donor within two weeks most likely. Please help us start a family filled with love and prosperity. References will be required and checked (sic).’

The above is the text from an advertisement on a website that has created a stir nationally within the student community. While doctors admit that childless couples unofficially express the desire to have high IQ guys as sperm donors, this is the first time that they’ve come across such an advertisement. As for students’ reactions, they range from ‘bizarre!’ to being okay with this desire of the parents-to-be.

Says Dr Prateek Tambe from a Mumbai-based fertility and IVF clinic, “I’ve come across cases where people have specially mentioned that they want sperm donors with IIT or IIM background. Generally, people feel that doing so will ensure an intelligent baby. Demands are high for foreign donors as well. But till now, such requests were made within a doctor’s chamber. Placing an ad is something new.”

Sunny Puruswami, a third-year B.Tech student from IIT Chennai, feels the couple from Chennai has been misguided by a fraud doctor. Says Rohit Khatkar, a third-year B.Tech student from IIT Bhilai, “There is nothing wrong if a person can be of help to a couple. Surrogacy or IVF is neither a new concept, nor is it legally unacceptable. What’s the harm if an IITian is approached for this? But if someone comes to me with such an offer, I’d say that just being an IITian doesn’t guarantee anything about a person’s ability or aptitude. It requires a lot more to be a perfect human being.”

Sandeep Kishore, a second-year student of IIT Kharagpur, feels it’s futile to debate this issue. “I’d say it makes no sense to talk about this issue at all. To each his own. A person from an arts background might have a higher IQ compared to any IITian,” Prateek insists.

Vivek Agarwal, a final-year B.Tech student from IIT Kanpur, wouldn’t oblige if such a request came his way. “That’s because this is all about donating a part of my body. There is an emotional connect involved in it. I don’t think this will be acceptable to society. Nobody is born a genius. A person’s dedication and hard work decide his fate. Success is not hereditary,” Vivek explains.

Meanwhile, Monish Sipani, a third-year B.Tech student, IIT Bombay, says, “I too have come across this classified ad circulating on social networking sites. Everybody is criticizing the whole purpose of trying to rope in an IITian. Personally, I don’t support this. I don’t understand the mindset of people who have come up with such an ad. It is impossible to expect a child to have all traits of his parents.”

Ujjwal Kalra, a third-year student from IIT Guwahati, finds this a funny situation. “I don’t know how this couple came up with this brilliant idea of a child inheriting the IQ of the parents. A child can never be expected to be the carbon copy of his parents. It’s ultimately his hard work that’ll decide his success.”