Newspaper Clips

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US Colleges Learn Business Mantra from Indian Gurus

Business As Usual for IITians

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Though they have made their mark as undergrad engineering colleges, the IIT experience is also about high standards in teaching and research, as many former IITians have found out. "You want to put emphasis on academic excellence, you take pride in getting a high bar for teaching and research, you want students to have atransferable and career path-changing experience—that is what IIT did for me," said Pramod Sinha, an IIT-Kharagpur alumnus and the first Indian to head MIT’s global office.

IIT alumni are also setting examples in other countries.

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The IIT system is about the best people. While the professors and faculty members, who helped in creating the foundation for research, innovation and entrepreneurship, remain an important part of my life, the competition with peers always motivated me to do better.

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IITians are finally breaking through in global management education. The success of IITians as educators is due to a number of factors. Of all the B-schools in India, IIT has always been one of the top-ranked institutions in engineering and management education.

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India is a country of 1,200 million people, and it has a large pool of talent. IITians have always been able to find and develop the best minds in the country. The success of IITians in the business world is due to the excellent education and training they receive at IIT, as well as their ability to adapt to the changing business environment. IITians are also able to find and develop the best minds in the country. The success of IITians in the business world is due to the excellent education and training they receive at IIT, as well as their ability to adapt to the changing business environment.
Mint ND 23-Jan-12

Prepare plans for grants, varsities told

New Delhi: In a step towards granting more autonomy to universities, the UGC has asked them to prepare their own proposals for seeking funds from it for development purpose.

So far, expert panels deputed by the University Grants Commission (UGC) would visit the varsities to assess their financial needs, based on which funds were allocated to them. "The past experience shows us that this procedure invariably resulted in delayed communication of financial allocations to the universities by UGC due to a variety of factors," UGC chairman Ved Prakash said in a letter to the vice chancellors.

— PTI

DATAWIND TO PUSH FOR ‘MADE IN INDIA’ AAKASH

New Delhi, Jan. 22: Datawind, the maker of the lowest priced tablet ‘Aakash’, on Sunday said it will request the human resource development ministry to include ‘Made in India’ clause in the proposed tender for the low-priced device.

“Datawind successfully made the $49.48 tablet Aakash in India despite various pressures. We will make a request to the ministry (MHRD) that they should consider ‘Made in India clause’ and encourage indigenous production,” Datawind CEO, Mr Sunit Singh Tuli said.

He said that the most critical components, chips and software are being designed in India and the tablet has been manufactured in India and hence there is no reason why the tablet should be made outside India. The government plans to procure large numbers of low-cost computing devices to leverage benefits of broadband connectivity in universities and colleges in a phased manner. — PTI
Plasma cloud heading towards Earth: Nasa

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WASHINGTON: A huge sunspot unleashed a blob of charged plasma Thursday that space weather watchers predict will blast past the Earth on Sunday.

Satellite operators and power companies are keeping a close eye on the incoming cloud, which could distort the Earth’s magnetic field and disrupt radio communications, especially at higher latitudes.

“Our simulations show potential to pack a good punch to Earth’s near-space environment,” said Antti Pulkkinen of the Space Weather Laboratory at NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center in suburban Greenbelt, Md. But “we’re not looking at an extreme event here.”

The front edge of the burst should arrive Sunday morning, said Joseph Kuncheva, a spokesman for the Space Weather Prediction Center, part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Boulder, Colo.

“At first glance, it was, ‘Oh my God, it’s at the center of the sun’s disk, it ought to go right to the Earth,’” Kuncheva said.

“The simulations show potential for ‘head-scratching’ Thursday,” Kuncheva said.

“We have further analysis that shows this could be a very interesting event,” Kuncheva said.

Pulkkinen said that most of the plasma blob should pass harmlessly over the top of our planet.

“It’s more of a glancing blow,” Pulkkinen said.

At their most intense, solar discharges, known as “coronal mass ejections,” can disrupt communications and the power grid, and force airlines to re-route transcontinental flights that pass near the North Pole. Solar activity can also generate dancing auroras, the northern and southern lights.

Solar activity ramps up and down on a roughly 11-year cycle. Over the past year, the number of solar flares has jumped up as the sun approaches its predicted maximum activity in 2013.

While the Earth appears to have dodged this particular solar bullet, the rolling sunspot could generate more activity over the coming weeks before it rotates out of the view of the Earth.

“We are keeping a close eye on the event,” Pulkkinen said.

Bursts of charged particles from the sun can cause problems for space startups and satellites, which are dark areas on the sun’s surface where tangled magnetic fields sometimes discharge massive sprays of energy.

Besides sparking pretty auroras, heightened solar activity has a more tangible benefit: It cleans up space junk.

As the sun sets up, the Earth’s atmosphere expands, increasing friction on dead satellites, rocket parts and other trash in low Earth orbit, pulling them down.

The amount of debris in Earth orbit “actually decreased during 2011 as solar activity increased toward an anticipated maximum,” NASA’s chief space junk watcher, Nicholas Johnson, wrote in the January issue of the agency’s Orbital Debris Quarterly Newsletter.
Schooling not Enough
Higher spending on education is not improving dismal outcomes

India came 72nd of 73 nations in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) competition, despite fielding students from its best states, Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The dismal quality of Indian education is confirmed by the latest Annual Status of Education Report (ASER). Throwing money (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan) and legislation (Right to Education Act) at education has produced no quality gains at all. Abhiyan spending is up from ₹7,166 crore in 2005-06 to ₹21,000 crore last year, yet parents are shifting wholesale from free government schools to private options (schools and tuition). In the last five years, private school enrolment has gone from 18.7% to 25.6% of the total, with Kerala already at 54%. The shift has not, however, improved dismal learning outcomes. Half the Class V children cannot read Class II texts, and 40% of Class V children cannot solve a two-digit subtraction. This represents a fall in outcomes, especially in government schools in the Hindi belt. Higher spending by the government and parents has not yielded better outcomes. Many studies suggest that private schools have better outcomes, but the shift to private education has not achieved that at a macro-level. In 13,000 schools visited by surveyors, student absenteeism was 50% and teacher absenteeism 45%: neither seem motivated.

RTE mandates much higher spending on playgrounds, infrastructure, teacher recruitment and training. Yet, this does not improve outcomes. At best, RTE attempts only access to schooling, not to education. Worse, RTE expects all private schools to attain impossible norms (playgrounds in areas with sky-high land prices, salaries on par with government teachers) by 2013. Will the government dare close down defaulting schools? Not a chance: defaulting schools serve half the country. Instead, we will once again have a stupid law that is then violated widely, with netas and babus collecting kickbacks for overlooking violations. There is no accountability to students by state governments that fail to provide facilities or of teachers who fail to teach. Such a country will not overtake China any time soon.