New Delhi: Delhi University's sizzling examination system seems to be showing signs of improvement. Though teachers decried the use of the computerized marking system in colleges this year, last year's system has been criticized for being unfair and the new system was met with much more enthusiasm. The new system was introduced to help students get results faster and to reduce the chances of human error. The new system also allows students to check their results online, which is considered a major improvement.

In the past few years, the university had been criticized for taking too long to release results. This year, the results were released within a week of the exams, which is considered a major improvement. Though some students were critical of the new system, they appreciated the speed and efficiency it brought to the system.

The new system has also brought some changes in the way students are assessed. Instead of sending their answer sheets to the central office, students now send them to their respective departments, which is considered a major improvement. The new system has also reduced the chances of cheating, as students cannot just mail in a completed answer sheet and expect to get full marks. This has brought some relief to the teachers, who have been critical of the previous system.

Overall, the new system has been met with much more enthusiasm than the previous system. Students are happy with the speed and efficiency it brings to the system, and teachers are happy with the reduction in human error. The new system seems to be a step in the right direction, and it is expected that it will continue to improve in the future.
Anthony James Leggett, professor of physics at the University of Illinois, Champagne-Urbana, US, won the Nobel prize for physics in 2003 for his earlier work on superfluidity. Of late, he has been pioneering work in the exciting new field of quantum computing and cryptography exploring the boundary between the strange, counter-intuitive world of elementary particles and the classical world that we perceive with our senses. He spoke to Soiboth Varma recently in Kolkata where he was attending a conference on quantum entanglement organised by the SN Bose Institute for Basic Sciences.

What is your family background?

Well, on my father's side, my forebears were soldiers in a village in Hampshire, UK, but my paternal grandfather opted to become a greengrocer. My maternal grandmother; she was Irish, worked as a domestic servant since a young age. Both my father and my mother were the first in their families to get a university education. In fact they met at university. They became school teachers in London. I was interested in elementary particles but not in science. I took my first degree in arts from Bailiol College, and then later a second degree in physics at Merton College. I then went to Sussex for some research and then shifted to the US semi-permanently in 1963. I have been at California University since then.

What is the connection between superfluidity — for which you got the Nobel and quantum entanglement?

It's a rather marginal connection in some superconductors and in Fermi superfluids like Helium-3. For instance, in Bose-Einstein condensates is related to entanglement of particles of light. I developed an interest in quantum mechanics, especially entanglement in parallel. I'm trying to understand low temperature superconductivity as well as quantum computing and topological invariants, although I haven't contributed much to that field. There's another project of mine with an Indian collaborator from IIT, Kharagpur, that's concerned with low-temperature properties of glass, which is also important.

Q&A

Is it correct that a new quantum age is beginning?

Certainly, there are a number of models that were earlier unfeasible to perform using classical means but are possible now using quantum entanglement. Certain kinds of quantum cryptography are an example. Completely secure cryptography is now possible using quantum entanglement. Admittedly, there are other quantum mechanical schemes that don't involve entanglement but use it in a particularly elegant way. Ideas like 'quantum teleportation' are now beginning to work. I'm not in the business of that, but it's a sense in which people have done experiments and shown that these ideas work. And certainly quantum cryptography works in real life. People have used it to send election results and I would guess that it is being used quite seriously in the military.

What is your impression of India's role in this field?

There are individuals in India who have made substantial contributions to quantum mechanics in general and quantum entanglement in particular. Many Indians are working in the field, some on theoretical work, like Prof. Amit Kumar of the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Mohali, and others on experimental work, like Prof. Anil Kumar of the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru. It is not the kind of field that requires huge resources for equipment. My impression is that the Indian educational system is not that bad in selecting good people and giving them appropriate training. So, we can look forward to more contributions in the future. The right people are there, now it's a matter of time.
This car won’t allow drunk driving

Boston: Future technology may put the brakes on drunk drivers and save many lives as researchers in Massachusetts are developing a system that will prevent a car from starting if the driver’s blood alcohol level is higher than the legal limit.

The new technology, known as the Driver Alcohol Detection Systems for Safety, would use sensors that would measure blood alcohol content of the driver in two possible ways – by analysing a driver’s breath or through the skin, using sophisticated touch-based sensors situated in places like steering wheels and door locks. If the system detects the blood alcohol content in a person to be above the legal limit of .08, the vehicle would not start.

The technology, being developed by research and development facility QinetiQ North America Inc in conjunction with companies in Sweden and New Mexico, would be optional for car manufacturers.

QinetiQ engineers said that unlike court-ordered breath-analysers and ignition locks, which require a driver to blow into a tube and wait a few seconds for the result, their new systems will analyse a driver’s blood-alcohol content in less than one second. PTI

Cellphone offers clue to your personality

Melbourne: Believe it or not, mobile phones say quite a lot about their owners, says a new study.

Social analyst David Chalke said a person’s mobile phone could give outsiders insight into their attitudes towards work, rest and play.

“Twenty years ago when you said ‘your phone’, you meant the white Telecom commander on the wall in the kitchen, but it doesn’t mean that at all now it means your social accessory. In fact, a research by Roy Morgan revealed most attributes differed between owners of mobile phone brands.

The iPhone users thinks computers give them control over their lives. “iPhone is the Alfa Romeo,” Chalke said. Sony Ericsson users like a full social life. LG users are women aged 14 to 24. Samsung users tend to be conservative dressers over 55. “Samsung is Daihatsu.” BlackBerry users are high-earners aged 35 to 49. Nokia users are unlikely to be aged 14 to 24 and less likely to have played arcade video games in the past three months, according to him.

“Nokia is the security blanket.” PTI
Man's arm is short cut to his heart

London: Ladies, forget fluttering your eyelashes or flicking your hair. The quickest way for a woman to gain a man's interest is by gently touching his arm, say psychologists. As part of their study, researchers recruited a 20-year-old woman to approach 64 young, single males chosen at random in a bar.

She asked each of them to help her get a key into a key ring. During half the encounters, the woman then touched the man for one or two seconds on his forearm before thanking him and returning to her table.

Researchers found a third of the men who had been touched struck up a conversation with the woman, but that only 16% tried to talk to her if they had no physical contact.

"Numerous researchers have found that such brief non-verbal contact significantly increases compliance," Dr Nicolas Gueguen from the University of South Brittany, who led the study, said. ANI
A kiosk that scans faces to recommend snacks

A new kiosk developed by Kraft scans your face and according to your gender and age, recommends snack or dinner options. Using anonymous video analytics (AVA), the kiosk categorizes the customer into gender and demographic groups in order to make suggestion, reports Discover News. So a hungry 16-year-old boy might be suggested a McDonald's burger while a family would be suggested to get a family pasta dinner. And according to Kraft, the kiosk’s dinner suggestions are absolutely healthy.

Times of India ND 31-Jan-11 p-15

With changing lifestyles, the darkness is disappearing from our lives. Roughly half of the 22.3 lakh BPO workers in India work the night shift and 10.5 lakh internet users are online between 9 am and midnight. TOI-Crest comes to terms with the mutant creatures of the new, interminable day.

Shridev Dhar | photos

Day says light. Night says dark. Days are white. Nights are black. We thought that was clear. In light we worked. In the dark, we went from food to food. So we enacted a living — most of us, anyway — during the day and rested at night.

Not anymore. Because the darkness has gone out of our lives. In the new urban India, the work culture has changed and the idea of rest has become obsolete. We now live in a permanent condition of anxiety. That much exerted constant overload can come anytime. Or there could be a new flat transferred online into your account. And when your job is done, it’s time to go home. The moment you enter the door, you know you need to put in those extra hours just to stay where you are. Or, simply, there is a new pressure on TV you don’t want to miss. For whatever reason, your night is suddenly white.

Lata Sharma is a call centre executive based in Gurgaon. And she misses the dark, albeit brief, of her childhood like a lover. “When I learnt for home at 3 am, the roads were filled with hilarious light from halogen lamps, offices, construction sites, trams, the headlamps of headlights. Sometimes, when I was lucky, I got a few stars. And more than once, I have confided the yellow ‘Pehli Baar’ publicity balloons with the moon,” says Sharma. She believes the city has killed the quiet romance of the night when, as Francez said, stars alter- erotici in the distance.

Numbers, too, point to an increasingly hyperactive night time. There are more people who work at night than there were a few years ago. The number of late night consumers and larger viewership of mid-night television.

In the past five years, the power consumption in Gurgaon — a BPO belt in Faridabad near Delhi — has increased 30 per cent annually as compared to just seven to nine per cent in the rest of Haryana. In Gurgaon, this increase in consumption has increased by 40 per cent annually.

BREAKED BODILY CYCLE

The night has become the stage for rapid urbanisation. The increasing flow of traffic, road danders, drilling machines and ironed sounds of electric saws shatter the quiet of the night. And the light and dust from construction sites, whose work starts only post midnight, cloud the air with a migratory and restless

After an hour-long conversation, Sharma goes back to sleep, only to wake up at 1 am again.

Surya Arsiwadkar, a social anthropologist with the National Institute of Technology, Trichy, says, “The technology of life has been changed in the last 10-15 years. We are everywhere. We are connected. And when there is a connectedness, there is a loss of privacy.”

On a report on internet usage, carried out in 2008, revealed that out of 15 million regular net users in India, 32 per cent used it between 9 pm and 12 midnight, and 3 per cent, or 10,000,000, after midnight.

A 24-HOUR WORLD

And then there’s the Internet which makes no distinction between day and night. “The net never sleeps, and you are in that world,” says the author of the book, “The World Wide Web.” In fact, the question is whether the net is now a time to do distance work as downloads are free and fast. Most broadband providers offer unlimited downloads at night.

Along with the Internet, mid-night television, especially live European soccer matches that start after midnight, is doing its bit to keep people awake.

A GOOD NIGHT’S WORK

Night becomes essentialism in the new rhythm of life. And while Mumbai-based scriptwriter Indira Maroof would rather pick a 90-minute life in the late hours, why “Night gives me a sense of space and freedom. I am always free to have my own space.”

This year’s top feet pages of the Times of India Crest, available every Sunday at 9.30 am, feature a story of a Mumbai-based scriptwriter Indira Maroof who would rather pick a 90-minute life in the late hours. Why “Night gives me a sense of space and freedom. I am always free to have my own space.”

A NEW SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The ‘disappearing night’ is also breaking old bonds and creating new social equations. “With people spending more and more time in offices, the workplace is slowly taking the place of the family life,” says Rajpal Singh, on the other hand, feels more optimistic. He believes the example of Scandinavian countries, whose people have adopted the six-month and six-months of the year, to escape the light. The choice of the future now rests on people and their choices. He wants, if you want, you can make artificial light and but you can’t make a real light and saying ‘good night’.

(With reports from Shyam Bala, Starline, Jyotsna Dutta, Shreya Bhaduri & Aniruddha Dutt)

Mumbai: According to Mumbai firms, co-brands such as Dunlop, Michelin and Michelin in Mumbai that stays open from midnight and remains almost full house over the weekend.

"We get both professionals and party groups looking for a time before calling it a night as customers," Hotel Marine Plaza, a five-star property on Marine Drive, Mumbai, offers midnight services for those who need to fly back or find friends nearby.

SLEEPLESS ZOMBIE

Did we do a decade back, or are we surrounded by people that don’t need sleep and thrive on less and less of sleep? A recent survey carried out by Philip Morris in India showed that a whopping 35 per cent Indians were sleep-deprived — they were not getting the recommended eight hours of sleep. In natural sleep, we are only supposed to need eight hours but when you shift your body clock to the on-demand mode, you need less sleep. The researchers are also investigating the effect of artificial light on sleep.

The body gets confused believing it is still daytime and day and night. Human beings are bi-annual clocks that are active during the day and passive at night. Our bodies are governed by an internal clock — a circadian rhythm — which is linked with the light-dark cycle. Extreme northern latitudes and the four-months of the year, to escape the light. The choice of the future now rests on people and their choices. He wants, if you want, you can make artificial light and but you can’t make a real light and saying ‘good night’.

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(With reports from Shyam Bala, Starline, Jyotsna Dutta, Shreya Bhaduri & Aniruddha Dutt)
IIT don pays for harassment

ht EXCLUSIVE

Charu Sudan Kasturi
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NEW DELHI: The central government has set to sack a senior professor at the Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay after an institute panel found him guilty of sexually harassing a female student.

Human resource development minister Kapil Sibal is expected to soon approve compulsory retirement for environmental engineering professor SK Gupta, who has claimed innocence, sources privy to the case told HT.

Sibal is chairman of the IIT Council — the highest decision-making body of the 15 IITs. Gupta had appealed to the HRD ministry and to President Pratibha Patil but both were against any deviation from the IIT recommendation, the sources said. Once sacked, Gupta will earn the dubious distinction of becoming the first IIT professor to be removed from his job for sexual harassment, IIT administrators said.

Documents related to the case, accessed by HT, indicate that a shocked IIT-Bombay conducted an enquiry promptly after the student complained to the institute's women's cell.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

IIT PROFESSOR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The victim, who was allegedly harassed by Gupta for several months, told an IIT counselor, whom she subsequently nominated to represent her before the enquiry panel. “She (the student) did not want to appear before the panel herself,” a source said.

The panel concluded that Gupta had sexually harassed the girl, and the IIT-Bombay board of governors recommended compulsory retirement. “We have zero tolerance for such things,” said a senior administrator.

Gupta, however, said norms were violated during the probe. “I was not even given a chargesheet,” he said. The IIT-Bombay administrator said the probe was conducted according to procedures laid down by the institute.
Sibal’s foreign education dreams face test today

Charu Sudan Kasturi  
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NEW DELHI: Kapil Sibal’s human resource development ministry faces a tough test on Monday when MPs opposed to a landmark proposed legislation to allow and regulate foreign institutions in India plan to grill the Centre on the Bill.

Interviews with MPs from different political parties represented on the Parliamentary Standing Committee on HRD suggest that not only the Left, but even other parties like the AIADMK, the BSP and the JD(U) may oppose the legislation.

MPs from other parties on the House panel — which on Monday has summoned human resource development ministry officials for discussions on the foreign educational institutions (entry and operations) Bill — told HT that they too may raise concerns.

“We are totally opposed to this legislation. It will lead to the commercialisation of education. We will oppose the Bill,” said PK Biju, CPM MP and member of the House panel on HRD. Prasanta Kumar Majumdar of the RSP — a part of the Left Front — is also on the panel.

What worry the government most though, sources said, are concerns that MPs from the Congress itself may criticise the Bill. Congress MP and general secretary Keshava Rao had launched a scathing criticism of Sibal in the Rajya Sabha, forcing a stalemate on the Educational Tribunals Bill aimed at setting up dedicated tribunals for higher education disputes.

“It is not only us, there are Congress MPs too who are concerned about the Bill,” Biju claimed. The AIADMK, BSP and JD(U) — each of which have two MPs on the standing committee — are also uncomfortable with the Bill.

Former cricketer and BJP MP Kirti Azad has said his party had not finalised its stand on the Bill so far. BJP sources said the party would not oppose the entry of foreign universities in India but would raise concerns about the specific parts of the Bill.

“The manner in which the government is bringing legislation after legislation in education, is strange,” argued Azad. “What is the point of legislations that may have great intent, if they cannot be implemented,” he said.
Hindustan Times
ND 31/01/2011 P15
Tech hangover
refuses to go away

Science and technology may no longer come under him, but HRD minister Kapil Sibal remains as keen as ever to utilise technology in education. On Tuesday, he is scheduled to unveil a set of Right to Education kiosks at public offices. The touchscreen kiosks will allow access to all information on the RTE Act.

Hindustan Times
ND 31/01/2011 P15
The press meet that was, wasn't ... was?

Kapil Sibal is usually far from indecisive, but a rap from the Supreme Court may have temporarily unsettled the HRD and telecom minister last week. Sibal’s schedule on January 21, the day of a crucial IIT Council meet, initially included a press briefing after the meet, which was called off after the SC rapped him for his dismissal of the CAG report on the 2G spectrum allocation. Within hours, Sibal called a press meet, not on the IIT meet but to clarify his stance on the SC’s comments.
New Mexico geologist says a few dinosaurs survived extinction

Brian Vastag
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WASHINGTON: And now, another episode of "Dinosaur Survivor." In this show, the question isn't which dinosaur to throw off the island.

Instead, scientists ask whether any of the ancient reptiles survived the cataclysmic strike of a space rock in the Gulf of Mexico some 65 million years ago.

Representing the no team: Pretty much every dinosaur hunter in the world. Representing the yes team: A retired federal geologist from New Mexico, James Fassett.

For 25 years, Fassett has been touting a fossilized femur he found as proof that a pocket of long-necked herbivores called sauropods survived for hundreds of thousands of years after all the other dinosaurs.

"I'm not totally a Lone Ranger," Fassett said of his theory. "But I guess I am still in the minority."

In the latest installment of this long-running series, Fassett and two colleagues report in the journal Geology that a new technique dates the femur to 700,000 years after the extinction event.

But few experts are buying it. One of Fassett's critics offered a sarcastic response. "Anything is possible," said Spencer Lucas, a paleontologist at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science in Albuquerque. "There could also be a Bigfoot in my back yard."

With the new dating technique, Larry Heaman and Antonio Simonetti from the University of Alberta in Edmonton vaporized tiny bits of Fassett's fossil with a laser. They then measured the amount of uranium and lead in the resulting dust. Because uranium radioactively decays into lead over millions of years, the process acts as an atomic clock.

If proved, the laser technique could revolutionize fossil dating, said Paul Renne, director of the nonprofit Berkeley Geochronology Center in California. Currently, paleontologists date fossils indirectly, by determining the age of the rocks in which they're found or by hunting for specks of fossilized pollen nearby, which also offer strong age clues. In contrast, the laser blasting method attempts to date fossils directly. However, Renne and several other fossil-dating experts said the technique is too new to be reliable.

"Uranium-lead dating is tricky business," said Alan Koenig, a rock-dating expert with the U.S. Geological Survey in Denver.

A primary concern: It is impossible to know when, exactly, uranium leached into the bone. After the sauropod died in what is now northern New Mexico, the calcium in its bones was eventually replaced by harder, longer-lasting minerals, including uranium.

That's the fossilization process. But paleontologists say there is no way to know how long this might take. "It could be 10 years; it could be a million," Renne said.
India slams US officials for radio-tagging fake univ victims

DON'T TAG OUR STUDENTS LIKE CRIMINALS!

by Arpabhanda Dasgupta in Washington and
A. Arivhuwan Rana in Honolulu

APPEALED to the GPS radio-tagging of Indian students' spotters by a sham university in California, India conveyed a stern message to the US authorities on Sunday. The Union government deemed the action 'inhuman' and demanded the immediate removal of the radio collars against those responsible.

"The developments were unpalatable and added insult to injury. The way some of our students have been treated is a matter of concern," said HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar.

In a letter to the US ambassador, he said, "We want the radio collars should be immediately removed and those responsible should be brought to justice."

Javadekar also noted that the Indian embassy was monitoring the situation and would take appropriate action to ensure the safety and security of all Indian students.

Meanwhile, the Indian embassy in Washington DC issued a statement, saying, "We are concerned about the well-being of the students and their right to pursue higher education in a dignified manner."

The embassy further added, "We will continue to monitor the situation and take all necessary steps to ensure the safety and security of our students."

Meanwhile, the students and their families expressed their dissatisfaction and demanded an apology from the US authorities.

"This is unacceptable. We are being treated like criminals," said one of the students.

"We are being monitored and our movements are being tracked. This is a violation of our privacy and rights," said another.

The embassy assured the students that steps would be taken to ensure their safety and security.

"We are working closely with the US authorities to resolve the issue and ensure the safety and security of our students. We will continue to monitor the situation and take all necessary steps to ensure their well-being," the statement added.

The US authorities have yet to comment on the matter.

Krisna calls tags 'inhuman'

"If the radio collars are not criminal, then there should be immediate action to remove them," said Krisna, an Indian national studying in the US.

"This is inhuman. The US authorities should immediately remove the radio collars and ensure the safety and security of our students," he added.

The students and their families have been demanding the removal of the radio collars for the past few days.

Meanwhile, the Indian embassy has assured the students that steps would be taken to ensure their safety and security.

"We are working closely with the US authorities to resolve the issue and ensure the safety and security of our students. We will continue to monitor the situation and take all necessary steps to ensure their well-being," the statement added.

The US authorities have yet to comment on the matter.

Scam sours US dreams of many Indian students

The US' billion-dollar investment in India's higher education sector has been marred by a recent scam involving fake universities.

The scam, which came to light last week, has raised questions about the credibility of the US' investment in India's higher education sector.

According to reports, several Indian students have been lured into enrolling in fake universities that were actually scams.

"The scam is a major blow to the US' investment in India's higher education sector," said a US official.

"The US government is committed to ensuring that investments made in India's higher education sector are value for money and deliver on the expected outcomes," the official added.

The US government has assured the students and their families that steps would be taken to ensure their well-being.

"We are working closely with the Indian authorities to resolve the issue and ensure the safety and security of our students. We will continue to monitor the situation and take all necessary steps to ensure their well-being," the statement added.

The Indian authorities have assured the students that steps would be taken to ensure their safety and security.

"We are working closely with the US authorities to resolve the issue and ensure the safety and security of our students. We will continue to monitor the situation and take all necessary steps to ensure their well-being," the statement added.

The US authorities have yet to comment on the matter.

Many student fatalities offer easy visa

The recent tragic events have once again highlighted the need for better visa regulations.

The US authorities have assured the students and their families that steps would be taken to ensure their safety and security.

"We are working closely with the Indian authorities to resolve the issue and ensure the safety and security of our students. We will continue to monitor the situation and take all necessary steps to ensure their well-being," the statement added.

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The US authorities have yet to comment on the matter.

A US education professional said the US authorities were aware of the scam and were working to ensure the safety and security of the students.

"We are aware of the scam and are working closely with the Indian authorities to resolve the issue and ensure the safety and security of our students," the official said.

The Indian authorities have assured the students that steps would be taken to ensure their safety and security.

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PLACEMENT REPORTING NORMS COMING SOON

Ten B-schools join hands with IIM Ahmedabad in the move

VINAY UMAREJ
Ahmedabad

By 2012, Indian B-schools may report both their final and cumulative placement data in an organised manner like their counterparts in western countries.

The move, called ‘Indian Placement Reporting Standards’, is being spearheaded by the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM-A) with ten major B-schools in the country joining the process to make reporting of placement data more meticulous and transparent.

B-schools like the Ghaziabad-based Institute of Management and Technology (IMT), Mumbai-based SP Jain Institute of Management and Research (SPJIMR) and other IIMs including IIM Calcutta, IIM Indore and IIM Lucknow have shown interest to be part of the move.

“We need to standardise what we report, when we report and how we report on placements. While this will be a draft proposal which is being prepared by our team of students and faculty, the same will be open for others to suggest modifications. After a specific time-line, we intend to put out the final reporting standards soon,” said Saral Mukherjee, placement chairperson at IIM-A.

IIM-A first mooted the idea at a recruiters’ conclave held in Mumbai in October 2010. Recruiters who attended the conference include GE, McKinsey and company, Hindustan Unilever, Procter and Gamble, Wipro, Standard Chartered, Bank of India, and MNCs like BMW among others. Among B-schools, IIM Calcutta, IIM Indore, IIM Lucknow, IIM Shillong, ISB, and SP Jain Institute of Management Research and Institute of Management Technology (IMT), Ghaziabad were present at the conclave.

“In the US, there is a placement reporting standard wherein B-schools stick to the norms while declaring placement data. There is a need for such standards in India as a lot of ambiguous data gets reported. We are positively inclined towards this idea as it will bring everyone on the same plain,” said Abbas Ali Gabula, faculty in-charge for placements at SPJIMR. Though ISB was a part of the meeting held in Mumbai, it did not voice its views regarding the standards. An email sent to ISB remained un-answered. Post the conclave IIM-A has been working on a draft proposal which it intends to put out soon for recruiters, B-schools, students and other stakeholders.

Some of the proposals include the placement data being audited by a third party auditor and reporting of placement data three months after the placement season is over. According to Mukherjee, along with transparency, it will ensure the privacy of students and recruiters alike.

According to Samir Barua, director, IIM-A, the norms may include salary structure, amount of CTC (cost to company), bonuses, relocation expenses, other cash expenses and even the non-cash part of the salary offered to the students. “We welcome the idea of a unanimous B-schools placement reporting standard. However, we are in touch with IIM-A regarding the norms, as it is difficult to comment on this a draft is put out by IIM-A,” said Prakash Pathak, chairman, corporate relations at IMT Ghaziabad.

Moreover, as part of the standards, recruiters will have to give out information about the offer in a certain format. Hence, IIM-A has already discussed this with recruiters. “The recruiters have agreed to support us. Once the draft proposal of the norms will be made public, it will be up to the recruiters to look at the fine print and come back to us with their suggestions,” adds Mukherjee.

The norms will work in two phases. First, when the recruiters are communicating the offers to the institute or the students secondly, when the institutes are communicating it to the media. Recruiters will have to give information about the offer in a certain format including breaking down the salary components.
NID to revive Northeast textile industry

LAKSHMI AJAY
Ahmedabad

Year 1961: The Indian government realised the need for development and growth of small industries in the country and joined hands with Ford Foundation, to sponsor a three month visit of renowned American designers—Charles and Ray Eames.

The visit resulted in setting up of the National Institute of Design (NID) on the lines of industrial design education being imparted in Bauhaus and Ulm in Germany.

Cut to 2011: The Ahmedabad-based institute—which functions as an autonomous body under the department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India—delivers undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in 17 diverse disciplines in design.

NID was ranked 32nd by Business Week in its list of top 60 European and Asian design programmes in the world. The institute has, over its 50 years of existence, established two more campuses at—Gandhinagar (Post Graduate campus) and Bangalore (R&D campus). Director of the institute Pradyumna Vyas says there's more. "We will be starting a full-fledged two year photography PG diploma course from this year. Also, we are looking at expanding the universal design programme and establishing several research chairs based on this. We plan to develop modules for design for craft so that one can create visual, learning materials in schools and colleges," says Vyas.

Taking advantage of its autonomous status, the institute is thinking of further expanding within the country with four new campuses. "We will be setting up campuses in Hyderabad and Jorhat. Whereas, plans of setting up campuses in Madhya Pradesh and Haryana are on the anvil. We will train faculty and create the curriculum development for all the four centres.

While the institute has had enquiries from Middle East countries to set up a campus, at present, it is more focused on having international exchange programmes and pedagogic relationships. "Going overseas is not an option right now. We are looking at consulting opportunities so that we can add to our corpus of funds for the institute," adds Vyas.

NID has international exchange programmes with around 35 overseas institutions. It has signed 60 memorandum of understanding for knowledge sharing with design institutes across the world out of which 24 MOU's are with European institutions alone.

The talent pool housed in NID is actively involved in live projects and research chairs that promote the cause of traditional design by marrying it to sustainable entrepreneurial ideas. "Our students are working on several projects with Ford Foundation and our incubatee cell Nidus is also supporting interesting innovations started by students and developing their entrepreneurial ideas," adds Vyas.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry invested 110 crore in the incubate cell for venture funds which is called ‘design-entrepreneurship’.

NID has now taken up the task of reviving and restoring languishing textiles of traditional craftsmen and artisans through several multi-crore live projects in the North east.
Finding the right MBA

Taking an MBA is likely to be one of the biggest investments of time and money that you ever make.

The programme fee alone at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania—one of the world’s highest profile business schools—is currently $107,500 over two years. And that’s not the end of the financial commitment. If you decide on a full-time programme in Europe you will typically be out of the workplace for at least a year. Opt for a school in North America and this could stretch to two years. Students at Wharton forgo an average basic salary of $78,193 a year while attending lectures. Making the right choice of school and programme is thus a matter of selecting the right house, perhaps even spouse.

Indeed, to be successful professionally it is not even given that you need an MBA at all, as many executives and entrepreneurs will testify. Although demand for the qualification has reached unprecedented levels in countries such as India, mostly satisfied by the hundreds of local business schools that now crowd the market, current uncertainty in the job market and an entrepreneurial preference to just roll up your sleeves leaves many in the western world uncertain.

In The Economist’s ranking of MBA programmes insist that they can help students’ career opportunities and open new areas of expertise and mobility. Indeed, surely the degree is worth pursuing only if it brings with it a sufficient level of professional advancement and personal development. But can an MBA still be considered a gateway to the top table? Do programmes really produce confident, self-aware graduates who can build exciting careers? What is more, if as is often claimed, what is taught varies little between schools—if an MBA has become nothing more than a commodity—does it matter where you end up?

The answer is yes: it still matters. The market is tougher, the degree is under scrutiny, but for many professions, getting an MBA from the right school is a way of landing a better job and of accelerating a career.

Getting a degree from the wrong school, however, is not. Finding the right school is not just about looking at rankings, or choosing one considered as prestigious. The key to making the right choice is understanding why you want to take an MBA, and what you expect it to do for you. So let’s look at some of the key reasons for going to business school and what direction each might point you in.

“I want to change career direction.”

The great majority of MBA graduates, and certainly the bulk of the most successful ones, use the qualification to build on skills and experience they already have. “Very few employers will recruit you to do something you have never done before, simply because you have three new letters after your name,” says Graeme Read of Antal, an executive-recruitment firm. If you are really set on a complete change of direction you will need to aim for one of the very top schools, where organisations are often buying future potential rather than current abilities. However, remember that wherever you study, an MBA will always be just part of a process, not a guaranteed ticket to the boardroom table.

“I want to set up my own business.”

No serious business school will tell you that they can create entrepreneurs out of people who lack the skills and capabilities you need in the long run, not just the day after the graduation ceremony. A school’s location also matters, so give some serious thought to where you want to be based in the long term. Many schools have strong regional ties with a particular industry or recruiter, but only a handful enjoy a global reputation and influence.

“I want to build a network of contacts.”

Many veteran MBA graduates will tell you that the most useful thing they got out of business school was an address book. Consider what sort of network will benefit you most. Many of the highly ranked schools have invested heavily in creating diverse classes that will generate contacts around the globe. Great if you are planning an international business career; less useful, however, if you are going to focus on the public sector in your own country.

Other considerations

It might sound obvious, but a school’s location should be a key evaluation, and not just because you might want a job in a particular region. It is no surprise that the business schools at Chicago, New York and London all have excellent reputations in the field of finance. They are right next to the financial markets and can more easily attract guest speakers from financial institutions, or offer a strong network for summer internships and post-MBA careers. Schools on America’s west coast can similarly benefit from ties to Silicon Valley, while other regions offer a gateway to areas of expertise, such as aerospace, luxury brand management or biotech.

You might also evaluate a school based on specialisation. Beyond the generalist nature of the MBA qualification, schools have carved reputations in certain areas such as entrepreneurship, finance, marketing, nonprofit, real estate, management or health care. The schools not only work hand in hand with the related industry, but also have faculty who have developed an area of expertise. They might have an incubator to attract venture capital for entrepreneurial business plans, or offer work-study programmes that give students hands-on experience of working with NGOs.

So beyond The Economist’s ranking, think of the criteria that matter to you before drawing up a list of potential MBA programmes. You then may also find that you are not just limited to a handful of schools that dominate the top of the school rankings. Research the characteristics of the schools, find out more about the student experience, and how students are achieving their personal and professional goals. Ultimately it is in both schools and candidates’ best interests to find the right fit.