IIT-Kharagpur’s faculty and alumni to sit on hunger strike

GATHERING STORM They will go on a stir on July 17 to protest against absence of a full-time director

ACTION PLAN
- On July 17 and 18, students will wear black in protest.
- The alumni of the institute are organizing simultaneous protests in Delhi, Bangalore and Kolkata on July 20 at India Gate, Freedom Park and Park Street respectively.
- There are also plans to meet the President if nothing works out by the end of this month.

Newspaper Clips
July 16, 2013

HT Kolkata

Filter for village schools

Vanita Sirlavala
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NEW DELHI: A team of researchers of IIT Kharagpur have devised a filter called ‘Kharagpur filter’ for providing clean water to children of village schools, where students mostly rely on well water for drinking.

“This filter is economical in design and requires no maintenance. It does not need any electricity,” says Dr Jayanta Bhattacharya, the lead researcher.

The idea of having such a filter for the villages was mooted four years ago, after seeing flood in West Midnapore where people, particularly children, could be seen standing on water, yet not being able to drink. After several tests this model was devised. The filter is initially being tried in 5 villages where children used to drink water from wells. The filtered water in these villages is also used for cooking midday meals.

The micron level tests on the filtered water has shown that the bacterial level reduces by nearly 90% and the dissolved oxygen level is improved by 3040%, Dr Bhattacharya said.

“One major way this filter differs from the domestic water filter is that while in the latter there is a continuous water column, in this we have broken the column and water rises from well with air and oxygen gets enhanced. This reduces the pathogenic microbes,” Dr Bhattacharya said. He was open to partnering with an agency to market the product.

“Pat more than commercialisation, I would like that it is used in more places where there is no continuous flow of water.”

“The children of our schools drink water from the well which is unhygienic. The filter has been very helpful to us. We would find this very useful on a long-term basis,” said Ralhir Biswas of a primary school.
IIT-Guwahati to host techno management fest

IIT-Guwahati is all set to organise the 15th chapter of its annual techno-management festival Techniche 2013. Techniche, scheduled to be held from August 29 to September 1, hosts lectures, workshops, social works and most importantly competitions. Held in collaboration with the Entrepreneurial Development Cell of IIT-G, the corporate module of Techniche will be organizing various management events. A few events are listed below. For more details, contact +91 8876406180 or +91 8011241189. Mail your queries to management@techniche.org

Varsities eye EU rankings to improve standing

ANUBHUTI VISHNOI
NEW DELHI; JULY 15

They may have fared poorly in most global higher education rankings, but Indian universities are determined to prove their standing in a new ranking platform funded by the European Commission.

And since U-Multirank claims to capture “diversity of institutional profiles” through its “multi-dimensional indicators” better than established rankings such as Quacquarelli Symonds, Times Higher Education Rankings and Shanghai Rankings, it holds the promise of giving Indian universities a more respectable standing than they have so far managed, and thus, help them gain global acclaim.

India’s University Grants Commission, the higher education regulator, and indeed the government have often blamed unfriendly ranking parameters for India’s dismal show in academic rankings.

The UGC, which has been pushing for a new ranking system since 2010, has written to all universities to actively participate in U-Multirank in the hope that this ranking platform would help showcase Indian higher education globally - at a time when it is faced with quality deficit, faculty crunch and employability issues.

The European Union had proposed that Indian institutes take part in U-Multirank at a meeting of the India-EU Policy Dialogue on Education and Multilingualism in April. The first rankings for 500 institutions from Europe and elsewhere will be published in early 2014.

But how is the new ranking platform different? “Existing rankings have created an arms race to become a ‘world class university’, which means world class in research performance. This is a threat to the diversity of higher education and it devalues other institutional profiles. If a ranking includes a wider range of profiles it has to assure that it provides meaningful comparisons. It does not make much sense to compare a small regional undergraduate teaching institution with Oxford University or to compare an arts school with MIT. Based on a number of profile indicators, U-Multirank will compare institutions with similar profiles,” the U-Multirank website explains.

The ranking platform is run by a consortium of partners from nine countries led by the CHE Centre for Higher Education in Göttingen, Germany, and the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies at the University of Twente, the Netherlands.
2 national varsities to come up in Rae Bareli

The cabinet has given a go-ahead for one university exclusively for women and the other for aviation industry

BAHULI SINGH

Two Central Universities, one exclusively for women and another for aviation, are to come up in Rae Bareli in Uttar Pradesh. The Union Cabinet gave the approval for setting up the Indira Gandhi National University for Women (IGNUS) and the Raja G Govind National Aviation University Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said that the IGUS will get Rs 100 crore funding during the 12th plan. A skilled and competent workforce is essential to create a safe and efficient aviation industry. Despite existence of large number of private institutions in India that provide aviation education and training, there is a general consensus among stakeholders that the number of programmes offered, depth of course content and infrastructure facilities available with them are not sufficient to meet the industry requirements. It’s, therefore, necessary to establish National Aviation University in order to meet the needs of educational and training requirements of the civil aviation sector. The National Aviation University will concentrate on aviation studies, teaching, training and research with focus on emerging areas such as aviation management, aviation regulation and policy, aviation security, aviation science and engineering, aviation safety and security, aviation medicine, search and rescue, transportation of dangerous goods, environmental studies and other related fields, and to encourage excellence in these and connected fields in emerging areas and each area to may emerge in future. The University will also be an industry partner to ensure and monitor regulations by providing required academic inputs to help them operate from elsewhere and responsibility better. The Cabinet also approved the proposal to introduce the Raja G Govind National Aviation University Bill, 2013 in the Parliament to create a post of Vice Chancellor by elevation through a Search and Selection Committee headed by Cabinet Secretary.

The cabinet has also approved the proposal to set up an autonomous body under the Ministry of Civil Aviation in Rae Bareli with an estimated Central Government funding of Rs. 20 crore in Phase-I (2013-14 to 2018-19) on the lines available with Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sanidhan (IGRMS), a society set up as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Civil Aviation in Rae Bareli. About Rs 33 crore of total available with IGRMS has been identified for setting up of NAU in its first phase. Per 15% of women in the country and the schemes for women empowerment by giving them an increased access to employment oriented basic courses and high skill courses. Of the total population of the country at 1 billion, there are 33% women of which 9.5% are in Uttar Pradesh.
Centres of excellence

Most of the states in the northern part of India are gradually but steadily becoming centres of quality education

SANJAY GUPTA

The North Indian states like Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttrakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, have established universities and institutions based in these states are busy creating a pool of knowledge-based human capital, bringing in economic prosperity in the country.

After the independence, India has witnessed a sea change in its education system, starting from elementary to secondary to higher and even adult education. Though, vocational and technical education were not prominent in the country in the beginning, today India has one of the largest education sectors in the world even in these areas.

These states have changed the education scenario, especially after the economic liberalization of the 1990s. Centres of excellence in the field of education are evolving in these states and, to an extent, today higher education aspirants of four-year professional degree courses have started seeking admissions in colleges based in North India. Earlier this group of knowledge sectors, numbering thousands, every year used to head for colleges and universities based in the states of South and West India like Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. Only a few students used to get admissions in IIMs and IITs. Indian Civil Services aspirants flock to Delhi, which was and is the home of institutions known for their best teaching methodologies.

Says Sarvesh, Associate Professor, in Uttarakhand, “Even in hilly areas, the colleges are offering many curriculum and options related to higher education, which will lead to creation of a workforce capable of laying a foundation of modern India.” Out of total 570 universities (central, state, deemed, private, technical, agriculture, IITs, IIMs, regional centres, IIT and IIM) 194 are now in these states. These states are home to more than 60 medical colleges and more than 1000 colleges for general studies. In addition to these there are hundreds of ITIs, polytechnics and premier institutes like IIMs, IITs, NITs and others. The list is indeed exhaustive. Not only in studies, some of these institutes like Manav Rachna International University, are doing well in the area of sports also. Olympic medalists Gagan Narang and Vijay Kumar are students of Manav Rachna and have done the country proud. The university also has to its credit 25 filed patents, 2500 published research papers in international and national journals.

Also franchise schools, under-graduate, post-graduate and engineering colleges, B.Ed., M.Ed., MBA, BBA, BCA, MCA, B.Com., fine arts, textile technology, aviation and furthermore, each probable branch of engineering right up to nanotechnology, besides routine courses of mechanical, information technology, computer sciences, environmental studies, etc., are coming up and covering innumerable educational streams, driving the education sector in North Indian states.

Haryana has become the first state in the country to have set up 1 medical college for women in government sector at Khapaur Kalan. The general notion vis-à-vis education is to continue general education and specialisation. Professor Ashwini K. Balse, Dean of Delhi University’s Faculty of Law says, “Education in Indian Constitution is on the concurrent list, which makes it both a central and a state subject. Aim of education providers and seekers shall be more towards service based and knowledge-driven human capital. More and more international providers and multi-national law firms are hiring intellectual young minds for their operations in India.”

Good quality education helps in achieving labour productivity and GDP of the country. Since, North India has attained the high degree of education many hubs followed by spoons are visible. According to Arul P. Gupta, former president as well Country Head, Honeywell, and former president, Reliance Infrastructure, “BPOs have also grown and helped in turning the economy of the country. And it entirely has happened because of quality education, thus not only creating economic wealth but also propelling economic growth and putting the spotlight on human capital as knowledge driven and service based economy, especially in emerging scenario of North India education.”

Cornell of the USA is on the verge of establishing its centre for imparting on-line hotel management course in Delhi. The Delhi government has decided to grant the Nari Shishu Institute of Technology, based in Dwarka, the status of a university now. This institute offers six under-graduate programmes in emerging technologies and three post-graduate programmes. The cabinet has given in-principle approval and a draft bill and operations details are being finalised.

“Due to reasonable quality options available, the exodus of students from North India to South India has nearly stopped. The traditional courses like B.A., B.Sc. and others are still in great demand. But high marks achieved by students of various school education boards conducted examinations will leave many students, who have not scored good percentage, sweating, especially, when they start applying for admission to various government-aided institutions, social universities and technical institutes.”

(NCI may come up with details)