Green rocket plane to zip from Paris to Tokyo in 2.5hrs

Paris: European aerospace giant EADS on Sunday unveiled its “Zero Emission Hypersonic Transportation” (Zehst) rocket plane it hopes will be able to fly from Paris to Tokyo in 2.5 hours by around 2050.

The low-pollution plane to carry between 50 and 100 passengers will take off using normal engines powered by biofuel made from seaweed before switching on its rocket engines. The rocket engines, powered by hydrogen and oxygen whose only exhaust is water vapour, propel the plane to a cruising altitude of 32km, compared to today’s passenger jets which fly at around 10,000 metres.

To land, the pilot cuts the engines and glides down to Earth before reigniting the regular engines before landing.

EADS hopes to have a prototype built by 2020 and for the plane to eventually enter service around 2050. The project is being developed in collaboration with Japan. AFP
Education woes

THE federation of Indian commerce and industry (FICCI) has written a letter to Oscar Fernandes, chairman, parliamentary standing committee on HRD on the recent case of 100% as cut-off marks for undergraduate admissions for the commerce stream in Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC), Delhi. The letter states that the 100% cut-off is an indication of the desperate situation of children and parents today due to the dearth of quality higher education institutions. Dismal show of quality higher education is further substantiated by the recent QS rating of universities across Asia, in which only IIT Mumbai features in the top 200, it stated.

FICCI urged the government to take up higher education reforms on priority. It stressed that the impending national commission for higher education and research (NCHER) bill, 2010, should be tabled in the parliament. It also stated that foreign education providers cannot provide a degree in India, deter them from starting operations in India. It asked the government to encourage a culture of transparency and self-regulation amongst higher education providers and to expeditiously pass the prohibition of unfair practices in technical educational institutions, medical educational institutions and universities bill, 2010.