IIT researchers in MIT's list of young Indian innovators

BS REPORTER
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Four researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Mumbai, feature in a list of 20 young Indian innovators, announced by the India edition of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Technology Review. Three of them are from IIT Mumbai, while the fourth is from IIT Kanpur.

The list includes innovators from biomedicine, communications, computing, energy, materials, transportation and the web. While VSK Murthy Balijepalli of IIT Mumbai was chosen to be part of the list for developing a novel method to forecast electricity price, grid frequency and load which can assist in making power grids smarter, Nitin Joshi (also of IIT Mumbai) made it to the list for developing dual compartment nanostructures which can encapsulate two anticancer drugs, paclitaxel and curcumin, and deliver them in combination to lung cancer patients. Conventional chemotherapy is limited due to its non-specificity, poor pharmacokinetics and multi-drug resistance.

The Innovator of the Year Aniruddha Sharma from Ducere Technologies, Bangalore, created a haptic shoe for the visually impaired. The haptic feedback guides the user to the destination by vibrating in front, back, or on either side of the shoe, indicating the user needs to turn.

The only woman innovator in this year’s list is Priyanka Sharma, 28, from CSIR-run Institute of Microbial Technology in Chandigarh. She developed a plastic chip which uses simple assay techniques to detect toxic materials in the environment quickly and cost effectively. Social Innovator of the year Venkatesan Oosur Vinayagam, 28, developed a multilingual speech recognition technology enabled mobile music service that is based on the classic Indian musical game of antakshari. The Innovation in Mobile Antakshari lies in adding the right usability and technology elements.

These 20 technologists would present their innovations at the Emerging Technologies conference EmTech India 2012 at Bangalore later this month. The conference will be addressed by a team of eminent scientists from Cambridge, USA based Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The India TR 35 program started in 2010 and in the last two years, Technology Review India has identified 37 young innovators. India lists have so far been dominated by innovators from small and medium size private research institutions.

"It is heartening to see IITs solving unique Indian problems. This culture of innovation in public institutions will enthuse thousands of bright students pursuing technical programmes,” said Pradeep Gupta, Publisher of Technology Review India and a distinguished alumnus of IIT Delhi.

This year Technology Review India received over 250 nominations from all over India. Over a period of three months, a panel of 23 expert judges identified 20 individuals who have developed technologies that are likely to benefit the society at large.
Sibal works hard on pending bills

NITIN MAHAJAN
NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

Union HRD minister Kapil Sibal is likely to push for further reform in higher education in the forthcoming Budget Session by hoping to evolve a consensus on almost a dozen bills still pending before Parliament.

The UPA government’s ambitious plan for reform higher education in the country has been delayed with important bills stuck at various stages in the Parliament. Over the past few months, Mr Sibal is understood to have engaged in several rounds of consultation with MPs to ensure that these bills are passed in the Budget Session of Parliament, which begins on Monday.

Several important bills, like the Educational Tribunals Bill, Foreign Education Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill 2010, the Education Malpractices Bill, the Accreditation Bill, the high profile National Academic Depository (Amendment) Bill, 2011, and National Council for Higher Education and Research 2011 are still pending before the Parliament.

Despite a serious attempt, the Union human resource development ministry was unable to get even a single bill passed during the last Winter Session of the Parliament, putting additional pressure on Mr Sibal for pushing the UPA's education reform agenda.

These important legislation have been pending, in some cases for over two years, despite the fact that Mr Sibal had worked overtime to placate Congress MPs and Opposition members. Sources pointed out that Mr Sibal has held several rounds of meetings with MPs, cutting across party lines, to ensure that their queries regarding various pending bills were resolved properly. Several of these bills have come under repeated attacks from the Opposition and ruling party members, ever since Mr Sibal initiated the reform process. It is understood that currently there are about 12 bills at various stages of legislative and consultation process in the Parliament and the delay in their clearance has pushed the educational reform agenda back by several years.

Some of these bills, like the NCHER Bill, which aims at creating an overarching body for higher education regulation in the country, have been facing multi-pronged opposition. The NCHER Bill has faced stiff opposition from Union health ministry, forcing the ministry to drop Health education from its ambit. The bill is currently also facing stiff resistance from the Bar Council of India, the legal education regulator in the country.
अब आईआईटी और आईआईएम भी तैयार करेंगे रेल के लिए टेलेट्रॉन

अलेक बर्ग

नई दिल्ली. तकनीक और प्रौद्योगिकी के क्षेत्र में सिवाय भर मे अपने व्यावसायिक पात्रता का लोकतान्त्रिक मानना, वहीं रेल का था की जो सार्वजनिक विकास संसाधन का दोहरी रोल नहीं है जब उसे कर जाता है। रेल बाइक के लिए अभिकारी आईआईटी और आईआईएम रेल से संबंधित पात्रता का पुरुष करने के लिए मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय से इस कार्य का सम्मान मांगते हैं।

रेल भारतों के लिए आईआईटी और आईआईएम रेल से संबंधित पात्रता का पुरुष करने के लिए मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय से इस कार्य का सम्मान मांगते हैं।

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ने भी इस बात सिफारिश की थी।

कारकोडर ने अपनी हिस्सी में सामने लाए कि कारकोडर के अभिकारी को बेहतर सहायता और कार्य करने का स्वयं नहीं मान मानना है जो इसलिए रेल को भी सहायता नहीं मानना है। उन्होंने कहा कि इस अभिकारी को बेहतर सहायता और कार्य करने का स्वयं नहीं मानना है जो इसलिए रेल को भी सहायता नहीं मानना है।
Hindu Chennai 10.03.2012 P-16

IISERs to pick toppers in engineering entrance test

Aarti Dhar

NEW DELHI: The Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISERs) have agreed to pick up a percentage of their students from toppers in the national common entrance test for engineering, to be held from the next academic session.

Currently, IISERs take students who qualify in the IIT-JEE or Kishore Vaigyanic Prottsahan Yojana, or those applicants who have high aggregate scores in Class XII examination of CBSE or State Boards.

With the Human Resource Development Ministry deciding to conduct a national common test for central engineering institutions, instead of the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) conducted by the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), the All India Engineering Entrance Examination (AIEEE), and the Indian Institutes of Information Technology, the best ranking students would be picked up by the five IISERs across the country. The finer details are being worked out.

The common entrance test will cover admissions to 15 IITs, 30 National Institutes of Technology and four Indian Institutes of Information Technology. Weightage will also be given to State Education Board results. The State governments and private institutions can, however, decide whether or not to join the common entrance test regime.

HRD Minister Kapil Sibal told IISER Directors that to help facilitate awarding degrees to the students, the government was leaving no stone unturned in getting the NIT Amendment Bill, 2007 passed in the budget session of Parliament. The IISERs are yet to be governed by any law that would entitle them to grant a degree to the students, though the first batch has already passed out after completing a five-year integrated course.
IIM-Raipur makes rural stint must

Bangalore: IIM-Raipur has made a rural stint mandatory for its students. Students of the Postgraduate Programme, the flagship course at Indian Institutes of Management, will have to spend one week in rural India ‘to understand the spirit of true India’.

“Rural marketing is the buzzword. Many marketing managers are disconnected from the real world. When they plan to enter the rural market, they devise strategies sitting in corporate offices for a market they have seen only in ‘Swades’,” said BS Sahay, director, IIM-Raipur.

The course will be done in partnership with Padma Shri awardee from Chhattisgarh Pholbasan Yadav, who has been working with over 10,000 women on self-help groups.

In this course, students are expected to take up a project of their choice and prepare a report on what new ideas can be implemented in the village. The programme will be formally launched in the next academic session and students will spend one week in Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh. TNN

93% aspirants fail teacher’s eligibility test

New Delhi: With a staggering 93% of aspiring school teachers failing to clear the Central Teacher Eligibility Test (CTET) 2012, the quality of teacher training in the country has come under the scanner.

The results of the competency test conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education, declared on Tuesday, show that just around 7% of the 7.85 lakh managing to clear the exam.

Of the 8,61,231 aspirants registered of which 78,004 could not appear in the test due to the assembly elections in five states. Of the 7,85,227 aspirants who appeared only 55,422 managed to clear either paper I or paper II or both.

What’s even more worrying that this year’s performance is worse than the CTET in 2011, which recorded around 9% pass percentage. Meanwhile, after the dismal show last year, the Ministry of Human Resource Development has already asked the CBSE to analyse the results institution wise and has decided to provide feedbacks to teacher education institutions so that they can improve on their teaching and training.

The CTET was introduced in 2011 by the ministry to improve the quality of teaching in schools after the enactment of the Right to Education Act.

The CTET certification has been made mandatory to become a teacher for classes I to VIII in any central government school, while the CBSE affiliated schools can either recruit teachers based on the CTET or the respective test conducted by the states.

In fact, the Delhi government too decided to adopt the CTET for recruitment of teachers for government and aided schools.

The CTET comprised two papers, paper I for teachers for classes I to V and paper II for classes VI to VIII. Aspirants who wish to get certified for classes I to VIII need to clear both the papers.

The objective is to test their knowledge on the syllabi — English, mathematics and environmental science.
2 Ganga Authority members quit over ex-IIT professor’s fast
NEW DELHI: Two non-official members of National Ganga
River Basin Authority (NGBRA) headed by Prime Minister
Manmohan Singh on Saturday resigned after the Centre
failed to intervene to end fast up to death of former IIT pro-
fessor GD Aggarwal. Aggarwal had started his protest in
Haridwar — amid assembly polls — accusing the Centre for
failing to act on its promise to save Ganga from exploitation
and maintain minimum flow to save the river.

Solar storm causes power grid upsets

Washington, March 16: A
strong space weather
storm packed a late punch
overnight and ended up
being the most significant
geomagnetic event since
2004, US experts said,
warning more disruption
was coming this weekend.
The fusillade of radiation
from the sun caused limit-
ed power grid upsets,
forced airlines to reroute
around the poles and
sparked vivid displays of
the Northern Lights in
some parts of the world.
The event began late
Tuesday with a series of
explosions on the sun that
sent charged particles
hurting toward earth, but
the storm appeared to fiz-
ze on arrival Thursday,
causings no power outages
or problems with GPS nav-
igation systems as expect-
ed.
Conditions changed late
Thursday that boosted the
ferocity of the storm, rais-
ing it to the initially fore-
cast G3 level of “strong” on
a scale of one to five, said
Bob Rutledge who heads
the space weather forecast
office at the National
Oceanic and Atmospheric
Administration (NOAA).
“We ended up getting
some of the strong storm-
ing that was expected,” he
said explaining that
change was due to a flip in
the magnetic field inside
the coronal mass ejection
that burst off from the sun.
“When you look at the
storm overall for length
and strength, it is arguably
the strongest storm since
November 2004,” he said.
People across the north-
ern US states of Wisconsin,
Michigan and Washington
reported seeing the night-
time light show caused by
the aurora borealis when
highly charged particles
interact with the earth’s
magnetic field, creating a
colourful glow.
And although power
industry operators have
“certainly seen these dis-
turbances on their sys-
tems... It should all be well
within what they are capa-
ble of handling,” Mr
Rutledge added.
As the current storm
wound down Friday, Mr
Rutledge warned there
was a potential for more
disruptions by Sunday due
to a flare overnight from
the same region on the
sun, known as 1429, that
has been acting up since
early in the week. — AFP
Venkatramanan to take over as MD & CEO of L&T on April 1

Naik will continue as Executive Chairman of the group

Special Correspondent

MUMBAI: K. Venkatramanan will take over as the Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of engineering conglomerate Larsen & Toubro (L&T) from April 1, 2012. He will succeed A. M. Naik who will step down as Managing Director, but continue as Executive Chairman of the group.

The decision by the board of directors of L&T to bifurcate the position of Chairman & Managing Director brings to an end weeks of speculation regarding a successor to take over from Mr. Naik, 70, who has been at the helm as CEO and Managing director since 1999 and as Chairman and Managing Director since 2000.

Mr. Venkatramanan, 67, at present, President, Hydrocarbons and whole-time director on the company’s board, is a chemical engineer from IIT (Delhi). He joined L&T as a graduate engineer trainee. He was elevated to the board as a whole-time director in 1995. According to Mr. Venkatramanan, “the appointment has come in at a time when there are opportunities in the long-term and volatility in the short-term. It is going to be a challenging period but we have a capable team.”

L&T undertook project ‘Lakshya’ to simplify its portfolio and created 10 independent companies (ICs) and seven subsidiaries to bring focus, autonomy and accountability in functioning. While the project is still on, changes in the economic environment have necessitated L&T to undertake a mid-term review of the strategic plan which is now under finalisation. The Lakshya project will be completed by 2015.

The search for a suitable MD & CEO started more than a year ago and was overseen by a high-powered non-executive directors committee which has one member on the board of each IC. The chairman did not participate in the selection process.

The board also decided to continue with Mr. Naik as Executive Chairman of the group for five years till he reaches the age of 75. The company’s policy is that the chairman, executive or non-executive, will retire at the age of 75.

Mr. Venkatramanan will be responsible for the businesses of the company. Mr. Naik will focus on completing the portfolio restructuring, institutionalising the IC structure, mentoring and developing the leadership team.

L&T Infotech

On plans for L&T Infotech, the group’s IT venture, Mr. Naik said the aim was to grow it to about a $2 billion business. “Over the last two years, the IT industry went through some stagnation. We will close this year at around $850 million and cross $1 billion next year.”

Asked whether L&T Infotech was looking to acquire Hexaware Technologies, Mr. Naik said, “There is news in the market that they have appointed bankers for a potential sale. We have not appointed any bankers. We look at every opportunity as an integration possibility.”

Roy elevated

As a part of its succession plan, the board approved the elevation of Shailendra Roy as a whole-time director, with immediate effect. Mr. Roy is now Senior Vice-President-Power Development Business, Corporate Affairs & Corporate Initiatives. He is also a member of the Executive Management Committee of L&T. Before joining L&T, he was Managing Director & CEO of Bharat Heavy Plates & Vessels Ltd. (BHPV) from 2002 to 2004.