Newspaper Clips

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From body shop to hi tech

The tendency of government and its industrial sector to play a significant role when it comes to technological advancements will prove disadvantageous in the long run. If more emphasis is not put on research and development, welfare will be lost.
BTech course in Metro engineering from 2013

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NEW DELHI: The technology to start and run Metro services may soon become a specialised course in Indian universities. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has approved the plan to allow universities to formulate BTech courses in Metro engineering, sources said.

The course will give students a four-year engineering degree and is aimed at training engineers to fuel the development in the transport system across the country.

"The idea actually came from the Delhi Metro administration. It had written to the minister of human resource development, asking him to allow universities to start a course that would provide personnel trained in the field of Metro rail transport systems," said a senior AICTE official who did not want to be named.

Currently, IIT Delhi and Chennai conduct training programmes in Metro engineering. "The Metro rail system has seen huge success in foreign countries as well as in our own. It is the pride of Delhi. Also, it is a field that will see tremendous growth in the coming years as more and more cities are planning their Metro lines. We think it's important that specialised engineers are trained for this," the official added.

While the Delhi Metro rail started in 2002, the first phase of Bengaluru Metro started a month back.

Since the Metro has various specialisations in terms of technical expertise, the course is expected to give students an option of choosing for either electrical, mechanical or civil engineering for Metro in the last year. The course is expected to start in 2013 and the first batch of students will pass out in 2017.

Metro engineering is the 274th BTech course to be approved by the AICTE. The body has been favouring specialised courses such as petro-chemical engineering in the last few years.
TCS big bang: Record $2.2-bn order from UK

NEW DELHI: India's largest technology company, Tata Consultancy Services, has bagged a $2.2-billion (₹11,037 crore) outsourcing contract — the biggest tech deal for an Indian firm — from the UK-based pension provider, Friends Life.

Under the deal, TCS and its UK arm, Diligenta, will provide technology infrastructure solutions to the clients of Friends Life. TCS said on Wednesday the 15-year deal also re-established India's position as a technology hotspot, offering state-of-the-art services.

"India still enjoys the cheaper-better-faster advantage compared to other emerging outsourcing hubs, such as the Philippines. We are cost-competitive, and the quality and speed of our delivery is far better," Kiran Karnik, information technology veteran and former president of National Association of Software and Service Companies (Nasscom), told HT.

TCS, which clocked a Rs 29,275-crore revenue in 2010-11, won a $2.5-billion (about Rs 12,500 crore) contract in 2008 from Citigroup Inc. It was part of TCS' acquisition of Citigroup's India-based back-office division.

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TCS dispels slowdown fears...

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Expectedly, investors, anxious about India's software industry's ability to bag global deals during the slowdown, cheered the move. TCS shares closed 1.8% up at R1,123, on a day when the 30-share benchmark Sensex closed 1.2%, down at 17,362.10.

Signs of a slowdown, at least in the technology sector - one of the factors that drove millions of middle class Indians' aspirations - are not yet visible. "We are by far the most premier technology off-shoring destination, there is no doubt about that and this deal only reinforces this view," said Karnik.
HEAD START ON THE LEARNING CURVE

Universities in India and abroad are reaching out to young talent

M SARASWATHY & KALPANA PATHAK
Mumbai

Indian B-schools and international universities are now traversing the extra mile to catch potential students at a young age.

The Indian Institute of Management Indore, Hyderabad-based Indian School of Business (ISB), Harvard University and University of California, Irvine, are some of the prominent institutes that are approaching prospective students at the undergraduate level through various initiatives.

While ISB connects with young students through its Young Leaders Programme (YLP), Harvard University's Secondary School Programme (SSP), a high school summer programme, allows them to explore subjects which are not available in high school and earn college credit in Harvard courses.

Last week, the University of California (UC), Irvine, launched its International Undergraduate Preparation Program (IUPP) which will prepare qualified students for undergraduate admission and academic success at the university. Within the IUPP, UC has launched two new tracks—engineering and biological sciences track—for Indian students. Each track has a special curriculum of essential freshman courses that is designed and overseen by the respective school of engineering or biological sciences. UC officials believe that this initiative will help prepare participants to score higher in the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and give them an opportunity to take American and academic culture courses to better assimilate with the local culture.

Angelika P Volkman, director of International Programs at the University of California, Irvine, says, "Students are enrolled in three quarters' worth of freshmen courses alongside matriculated students, the credits from which can be applied to UC Irvine or other university undergraduate studies. This means that Indian students still graduate within four years' time."

ISB's YLP on the other hand aims to identify young achievers from across the world. The talent of these undergraduate students may be reflected in their outstanding academic records and/or extra-curricular achievements. YLP provides guaranteed admission to one-year Post Graduate Programme (PGP) at ISB, after one year and nine months of work experience.

Deepak Chandra, dean of Indian School of Business, says, "It is important to get in good students to your school. Plus, developmental efforts should start at an early age. We have tried to identify the right people at an early stage. Our Young Leaders Programme is an initiative in this direction." The response to the programme, he says, is quite good but since ISB is selective, only about 50 students made it this year. The programme also accelerates career growth during the two pro- PGP years through structured learning and mentorship programmes and concludes with admission to post graduate programme in management.

To get selected, apart from having an outstanding record in academics and extra-curricular activities, candidates have to submit GMAT scores and go through an on-campus selection process. Each selected candidate is given a YLP scholarship of Rs 2 lakh, in addition to their existing need, merit and corporate scholarships.

Harvard University's SSP, the university's website says, is open to all high school students who will graduate in 2012, 2013 or 2014, and meet the application and admission criteria. An email sent to Professor Venkatesh N Murthy for Harvard Summer Programme in India remained unanswered.

IIM Indore has also launched a five-year integrated programme in management that will provide both undergraduate and post graduate education. The institute will begin the programme on November 14.
The education wars

In country after country, the consensus over the importance of education is matched by angst over how to reform it. These debates have two dimensions. There is the increasing murkiness of the relationship between education and employment. Unemployment is being attributed not merely to a business cycle downturn, but to a mismatch between education and employment. In advanced countries, college graduates are less likely to be unemployed than their less educated counterparts. The technology revolution and globalisation produced a pointless combination. On the one hand, you must have higher skills to have a shot at a job. On the other hand, there is global competition for those jobs. The answer to both these challenges, so the story goes, is education reform: education that allows you to participate in the economy, and education that allows you to compete. Both propositions seem intuitively obvious. But whether education will continue to be enough to give access to jobs, if the competition becomes genuinely global, is an open question. Education will be central to the arsenal of competition between nations. War metaphors are not alien to education. After all, the famous American Report, “A Nation at Risk”, had as far back as 1983 warned that the nation “has been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament”.

In countries like India, there is another version of the education-economy mismatch. There is a disjunction between the demands of the economy and what education produces. Part of this may be simply a matching problem: there is a supply out there, but individuals cannot be matched with the right kind of jobs. Part of it is a genuine shortage, exacerbated by the fact that schooling is not the same thing as education, just as having a degree is not the same thing as having actual skills. Low (albeit growing) rates of educated female participation in the labour force means some of India’s significant human capital is simply not coming on the job market. India is also going to increase its retention rate in secondary schools and higher education. In the short run, this helps mitigate the employment challenge: it may be that the upward pressure on wages is due in part to the fact that the supply of labour is shrinking because more people are staying longer in school. States with higher education achievement like Kerala tend to have higher unemployment. So while education is intrinsically important, the relationship between education and employment, in the long run is no less uncertain. The framework for calibrating education to the job market remains a leap of faith.

But if the top end of education is marred by uncertainty, so is the what systems work is mixed at best; there are successful and unsuccessful models of all systems, public, private or public-private partnerships. But the focus of debate largely remains the somewhat unanswerable and abstract issue of systems.

The real tricky questions come in the realm of teaching, testing and curriculum; no matter what the system. But these three issues are harder to resolve because they involve difficult choices. They are not the sort of issues that lend themselves to neat legislative or bureaucratic solutions. There is a consensus in most studies that exposure to good teachers is the surest guarantee of improved learning achievement; equally there is a consensus that good teachers are not easy to identify before the fact. The quality variance of teachers, even in India’s so-called top schools, gives one a reason to pause. Some have proposed that teachers be appointed only after long internships and evaluations. But there is no framework in which to think of our recruitment practices.

At one level, testing is a no-brainer: an essential ingredient of accountability is being able to measure. Organisations like Pratham revolutionised our discourse on education by simply measuring what children know. It is a mark of some progress that there is now at least beginning to be a debate over what we should measure: at higher levels, what is the trade-off between “aptitude” — based testing, and content-driven exams? At the lower level, there is a need to at least track basic achievement in mathematics and literacy. But while some measure of testing is essential for accountability, preventing an education system from being distorted by the superficial certainties of testing is a different challenge. An equally deeper challenge will be responding to results of such tests. At one level, these can be a tool for teachers to identify where to begin their teaching: teaching must talk to a child, not talk at them. On the other hand, what we do know from comparative evidence is that given flexibility and a culture that makes students the centre of education, not abstract objectives, teachers can improve outcomes. Yet, it takes enormous resources and the best teachers to compensate for the complex background inequalities that result in unequal educational performance. Testing allows for a perverse kind of sorting: where society stops investing in weaker children. These are not insurmountable challenges. But they will get exacerbated in times to come.

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Our curriculum debates have oscillated between ossified, bureaucratic imaginations, taking perverse pride in an endless amount of material formally covered, and the romantic fantasy of an oxymoron called free, unstructured education. This is now being replaced by equally false dichotomies between skill-based and general education, and near total neglect of the basics like writing, logical reasoning and mathematical skills. That we need the educational arsenal is clear. But post-RTE, the oldest questions need to take centrestage. What should we be teaching? How should we be teaching? Why should we be teaching? And how do we know that we have in fact managed to teach? Or else, to use the other war metaphor, will our education be arming without aim?

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Scope for greater private role in higher education: E&Y

Our Bureau
New Delhi, Nov. 9

There is scope for greater private sector participation in higher education, says a recent Ernst & Young report.

The report, brought out in collaboration with industry chamber, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, presents a case for loosening regulatory framework.

Private educational institutions have been mushrooming in the past few years. The percentage of students enrolled in unaided private institutions has also been growing, according to the report.

Education is a lucrative business currently as India figures at the top of the most-sought after markets in the world with a population of 234 million in the 15 to 24 years age group, says the report.

With the implementation of the Right to Education Act, a surge in enrolment at the primary and middle levels is expected, which would create a huge eligible pool for enrolment in higher education in the long term, it says.

State governments are focussed on capacity creation and a bulk of the expenditure is unplanned, directed towards maintenance and administration of existing institutions, claims the report.

The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of India is rising but is not as yet on par with international GERs. The Government has set a target of achieving 30 per cent GER by 2020, which means about 40 million students enrolments. At present, there are 14.6 million students in higher education sector. The private sector wants to target this additional capacity of 25 million seats over the next decade.

E&Y estimates an investment of Rs 1 million crore, an average of Rs 0.4 million per seat. Of this, the private sector would be required to contribute Rs 50,000 crore (assuming that private sector accounts for 52 per cent of total enrolment).

The report lists the corporate and academic collaborations private players must make and the marketing and brand building initiatives required to keep the business of education going good.
IIIT staff to boycott duties from today for pay hike

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Basar (Adilabad): Teaching and non-teaching staff working in three Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs) at Basar, Nuzvid and Idupulapaya have decided to boycott duties from Wednesday in protest against the state government’s indifferent attitude towards solving their long-pending problems.

Mentors, who have been staging relay hunger strikes in the last 18 days, have decided to boycott duties to bring pressure on the government to solve their problems. There are 524 mentors working in three IIITs. Sources said the students would be hit hard with software and hardware teachers, technicians and home room teachers (HRTs) deciding to stay away from duties from Wednesday.

The agitating mentors accused the government of paying salary only for six hours despite utilizing their services for 18 hours a day. Though it was mandatory to appoint 426 mentors for 12,000 students in three IIITs, the government has appointed only 281 mentors in 2009. In 2010 and only 243 mentors were recruited as against the required staff of 426 for 9,000 students last year, they said.

They wanted the government to enhance their salary from Rs 15,000 to Rs 30,000 and HRTs’ salaries from Rs 10,000 to Rs 20,000. They are also demanding provident fund and eight-hour shift.
UK students protest fee hike

London: Students marched through London on Wednesday to protest cuts to public spending and a big increase in tuition fees. Police said more than 2,000 people were taking part as the march set off with chants of "No ifs, no buts, no education cuts".

Some 4,000 police officers were deployed along the route, which wound from the University of London to the city's financial district. At Trafalgar Square, a group of protesters erected more than 20 tents at the foot of Nelson's Column in the latest spinoff of the Occupy Wall Street protest camp movement.

Annette Webb, an international development student at Portsmouth University, said tripling tuition fees to £9,000 from next year "will price out most students". "It will mean that education is only for the rich and I believe it should be for everyone," she said. AP
रूढ़की आईआईटीक का 11वां वार्षिक दीक्षात्मक समारोह 12 नवंबर से

दर्शकः (83) 12 नवंबर को समारोह का 11वां वार्षिक दीक्षात्मक समारोह आयोजित करें। यह आईआईटीक के रूप में 11वां दीक्षात्मक समारोह है, परंतु ऐसा समारोह के संदर्भ में पुर्वी इंदिराप्रसाद संस्थानों में से एक है और दर्शकी के लिए यह ऊर्जा का भाग है। आईआईटीक इस प्रकार दर्शकी पर मूल्यांकन का एक प्रथा और साथ ही सबसे अधिक महत्वपूर्ण विषयों में से एक है।

इस दिन भारत के अर्थव्यवस्था के उपस्थित महा.भ. मंत्री अहुलीयापरी की ने दीक्षात्मक समारोह के मुख्य अध्यक्ष के रूप में आया और लोकसभा में उनके कार्य के लिए राष्ट्रीय और अंतर्राष्ट्रीय स्तर तक दीक्षन से सम्मानित किया गया।

इस दीक्षात्मक समारोह की अध्यक्षता और अंतःअध्यक्षता के अध्यक्ष श्री अरविंद सन्तान के साथ के समान देश के 125 सम्पूर्ण संस्थानों का अध्यक्ष के रूप में दीक्षित किया गया।

लोकसभा की अध्यक्ष के लिए आईआईटीक विश्वसनीय स्तर पर प्रशिक्षण देने का काम करता है।

यदि आपके जीवन में यह उपयोग है, तो माफ करें कि निचले में लिखा है। आईआईटीक में सम्पदा और प्रशिक्षण का बहुत अविश्वसनीय स्तर पर रहता है।

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