Hasnain tops list of five tipped for UGC chair

New Delhi: The search-and-selection committee for the chairman of the University Grants Commission has shortlisted five names. While the two candidates, who were already being named in the earlier list, namely Seyed R. Hasnain, former vice-chancellor of Hyderabad University, and Pramod Chandra, director of the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, remained in the fray, the new names included in the list are director of Prof. S Parasuraman of Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, chief statistician of India TCA Amnat and the officiating chairman of UGC, Ved Prakash.

According to sources from the ministry of human resource development, the committee expanded the list to five candidates instead of two. While Hasnain remained the first choice of the committee, closely followed by Chandra, the others in ascending order are Parasuraman, Amnat and Prakash.

While the choice of the rest of the candidates was easy, there was dissent among members on the selection of Prakash as he had faced allegations of fraud and intimidation which had later been junked by the NCRB. The search committee’s list will now be forwarded to the HRD and then to the PMO for the final approval.

In September, the Delhi high court issued notice to the central government to respond to a petition seeking direction to fill the seat of UGC chairman that has been lying vacant since February 2011 after Prof. Sukhdeo Thorat completed his term as chairman.

Earlier, the search committee in February 2012 shortlisted Hasnain as top choice for the post followed by Chandra but the HRD ministry selected Chandra and forwarded it to the PMO for approval. The PMO questioned why the first choice has been ignored and referred it back to the HRD. The committee had to start the process all over again and this time came up with five options for the post.
It's raining jobs at IIT-B this year, average salary may rise

MORE EMPLOYERS Around 300 companies have registered for placements compared to 262, last year

Bhavya Dore

Mumbai: Salary packages are set to rise by between 10% and 20% compared to last year at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay where placements begin on December 1.

The categorisation of salary slots has also moved upwards. For instance, the top slab has been revised from Rs9.5 lakh and above to Rs10 lakh and above and similarly for other slots this time.

"It is not very significant but it is an upward trend," said Avijit Chatterjee, professor in charge of placements at IIT-B.

"Companies are looking for good manpower and are prepared to go the extra mile."

Around 300 companies have already registered for the placements, higher than the 262 who had visited last year.

Placements will begin on December 1, and mark the beginning of the placement season, which will continue in institutes until March.

A mix of foreign and Indian companies will be visiting, including a few more new foreign companies. Jobs on offer will include the usual mix of core engineering as well as managerial positions.

Unconfirmed reports claimed that the highest offer made to a graduating student at IITB last year was Rs60 lakh per year.

There were 822 offers in the Rs9.5 lakh and above annual salary bracket. In the second highest bracket too, for 2011-12 there were more offers compared to the previous year. The placement report for the last year was released in July.

Pre-placement offers and interviews to students this year ahead of the full-fledged recruitment season have also signalled a promising season ahead, despite the uncertain economic conditions.

At IITB, there were more of both this time, though exact figures were not available. Chatterjee had earlier said that it was possible because more people were doing internships and these had fructified into more offers.
Skewed sex ratio takes its toll on IIT-B boys

DNA Correspondent

Nivedan S, a student of IIT-Bombay (IIT-B), admits that life on the campus can get socially stifling. “We lack a social life... The rule of allowing students of the opposite sex in hostels only between 10am and 7pm is not practical,” says the 19-year-old computer science student, who agrees the institute should have its reasons for the rule.

With a skewed male-female student ratio on campus, IIT-B students have rued the lack of social life on campus, according to a survey conducted by IIT-B students’ online publication, Insight. Presently, of 8,000-odd IIT-B students, 30 per cent are girls. Of the 8,000 students, 400 were interviewed for the survey.

The survey has thrown up that only 1 in 5 students is in a relationship. And more than half the respondents to the survey have said the 10am-to-7pm rule is inconvenient; half of them want such restrictions done away with.

A member of the Insight editorial team, Saideep Sudi, said that the survey had been conducted to get a view of students’ social life on the campus. “There was no hypothesis where we could say social life is observed to be unsatisfactory. In fact, we wanted to get the real picture,” said Sudi.

Only 4 of 10 students said they step out of the campus about twice a week for a bit or a drink. Despite several hangout options, most students chose to hang out at hostels.

The skewed sex ratio on the campus gave only 20% of the respondents an opportunity to be involved in a relationship. Of the small number of girl students, only 1 of 20 felt they were being objectified by male students.

Dean of student affairs at IIT-B, professor Urjit Yagnik, laughed off the survey findings. “The skewed sex ratio on campuses not something the institute can do much about,” said Yagnik, adding that they are not rigid about the 10-to-7 rule. He added: “Recently, we decided that girls can be allowed at boys’ hostels till reasonably late in the night, but only in common areas not on residential premises.”
DELHI-NCR'S B-SCHOOL LEADERS

MDI Gurgaon has topped the fourth Mail Today-Ideas Learning B-School Survey, the only one of its kind to focus on Delhi-NCR. The survey re-emphasises the high quality of management education in and around Delhi.

TOP 15 B-SCHOOLS OF DELHI-NCR

Here's the fourth Mail Today-Ideas Learning B-School Survey's Top 15 B-Schools (listed in the right-hand column of the table) and based on a common methodology used by the institutions and an independent survey. The B-Schools in Delhi-NCR have the academic resources, the intellectual atmosphere, and the kind of skills their prospective employers will be looking for in every young management graduate.

1. Management Development Institute (MDI), Gurgaon
2. Indian Institute of Management (IIMT), Ghaziabad
3. Institute of Management & Technology (IMT), Noida
4. Department of Management, Delhi University
5. Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), New Delhi
6. Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi
7. Xavier Institute of Management & Entrepreneurship (XIME), Chennai
8. Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Lucknow
9. Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad
10. Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Calcutta
11. Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Kozhikode
12. National School of Business (NSB), Bangalore
13. Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Bhopal
14. Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Indore
15. Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Pondicherry

Rankings based on fact files and market survey

We follow a 360-degree approach by looking at both hard facts and market perceptions. The perception of the market is never far away from an institute's performance.

By Education Mail Bureau

One of the most used methods among students is survey. A survey was conducted among 100 recruiters in Delhi-NCR. The survey was followed by interviews with the management. The survey was followed by interviews with the management.

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Delivering Aakash
A promising new model

It began with a dream of equipping students all over the nation with tablets that would cater to their basic computer needs. These tablets would have to be affordable, and to get these within the reach of lakhs of students, the government would subsidise them. The dream soured a bit when the first Aakash tablets were delivered; the company got bogged down in a dispute and the device got a negative reception. Yet, it did not die. Even the lack of success of Aakash, in its first incarnation, showed that it was possible to deliver the tablet at a price that left the world wondering. The basic decisions regarding software and hardware were fine but it needed a boost. With the help of IIT Mumbai, the company behind it delivered Aakash 2 that was launched by President Pranab Mukherjee on National Education Day.

The new device, with the latest (almost) Android operating system, a good screen, a capacity to expand its memory and four hours of battery life, is what was expected of the original Aakash and more. Soon it would be in the hands of some college students and, as production ramps up, lakhs of them. The device is not cutting edge, but then it is inexpensive, largely because the HRD Ministry buys it from the manufacturer at Rs 2,263 per tablet, and sells it to students at Rs 1,130. The not-for-students commercial version of the tablet comes at Rs 3,500.

India stands very low internationally in internet penetration figures, even as recent numbers have shown an increase in the rural sector. For Indian students to be truly a part of the global village, both cheap Internet devices like the Aakash tablets as well as good Wi-Fi connectivity are imperative. Former HRD Minister Kapil Sibal took the plunge, his successor must take it forward so that young Indians who lack the means to buy computers and laptops are not only acquainted with the cyber world, but also use it for improving their future prospects.
Quickfire Summer Placements at IIMs Raise Hopes

Rise in stipends, global postings as recruiters, ranging from Barclays and Rothschild to the rural development ministry, jostle for space; World Bank hires for the first time

DEEPA SENGUPTA

**ECONOMIC TIMES**

**NEW DELHI, TIMES OF INDIA, ET**

Recruiters are seeking to add more global postings to the list of opportunities for the students of the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) this summer. This is being seen as a significant increase in international postings, with firms like Barclays and Rothschild, among others, increasing their international presence.

The rise in stipends has also been noticed, with firms like Barclays and Rothschild offering higher stipends compared to last year. This trend is expected to continue in the coming months.

In a first, the World Bank has also hired for the summer internship program, opening up a new avenue for students. This is significant as it marks the first time a global institution has hired for summer internships in India.

The rise in stipends and the increase in international postings is expected to attract more students to the IIMs this summer.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the IIMs have continued to attract top-notch students from across the country.

The placement scenario at the IIMs has been robust, with firms like Barclays, Rothschild, and the World Bank offering opportunities for the students.

Students have been actively preparing for the placement season, with many attending mock interviews and workshops to improve their chances of securing placements.

In conclusion, the placement season at the IIMs has been promising, with firms and organizations offering a wide range of opportunities for the students. ThePlacement scenario at the IIMs has been robust, with firms like Barclays, Rothschild, and the World Bank offering opportunities for the students.

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In conclusion, the placement season at the IIMs has been promising, with firms and organizations offering a wide range of opportunities for the students.
Studying in US: Indians lose the race to Chinese

OPEN DOORS IN US

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total number of foreign students</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>China</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>100,270</td>
<td>194,029</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>103,895</td>
<td>157,558</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>104,897</td>
<td>127,628</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Washington: Fewer Indian students are studying in the US these days. The number of students from India in the US dropped by the second successive year even as there was a surge of Chinese students amid an overall increase of foreign students coming to America.

The annual “Open Doors” survey of international students in US released this weekend showed 100,270 Indian students in the US in 2011-12, a 3.5% drop from previous year, after the number peaked at around 135,000 in 2008. Meanwhile, the number of students from China shot up from 157,558 in 2010-11 to 194,029 in 2011-12, a 50% increase.

The survey by factors behind the decline in the numbers from countries such as India and Japan may include global and home country economic issues, growing higher education opportunities at home and stronger employment opportunities at home after graduation.

Overall, the number of foreign students in the US in 2011-12 was 1.06 million, up from 1.03 million the previous year, a 2.7% increase, as US universities strive to attract more international students in what has now said to be a $100 billion business.

The top five countries from where the US is hosting international students are China, India, South Korea, the UK and Canada.

This 2011/12 data marks the sixth consecutive year that Open Doors reported expansion in the total number of foreign students in US schools.

Chidambaram Raghuratnam
Hostels their favourite place, IIT-B students want no curbs on visitors

MIHKA BASU
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 13

Six out of 10 IIT Bombay students have given the thumbs down to the restriction on entry of members of the opposite sex in hostels. They say it makes "hanging out with friends" inconvenient.

Most (75 percent) are otherwise happy with their social lives, reveals a separate online survey conducted by Insight, the student media body of the institute.

The results will be published in the next edition of the Insight online magazine.

Over 800 students responded to the surveys — 'Social life at IIT' and 'Restriction on entry of opposite sex'.

A CAMPUS LIFE

75% of survey respondents said they were happy with their social life.
34% said there was little scope for boyfriends/girlfriends.
40% eat/drink out once/twice a month.
55% discuss placement/future.
8% fashion/shopping.
75% do not give much thought to clothes.
80% like hanging out in hostels.
60% found the 10 am-7 pm rule in hostels for entry of opposite sex inconvenient.

Around 70 percent who were part of closely-knit groups said striking conversations with people outside was not difficult, but they were "too lazy to make the effort". The remaining 30 percent found talking to new people awkward.

While 20 percent said they were in relationships, 34 percent wondered where the scope for relationships at IIT was.

Hanging out in hostels was the choice of 80 percent, while 72 percent counted wing mates/hostmates as their closest friends.

"Not surprisingly, the results reveal that almost all groups have zero girls in their closest group," said a student.

Despite a skewed sex ratio in IITs, "girls/guys" were not a priority in discussions.

DNA Indore 14-11-2012 P-1

IIT-B mulls ivory towers for freshers to prevent ragging

Pallavi Smart MUMBAI

Isolation, according to the Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay (IIT-B), is the best way to nip ragging in the bud. It is mulling over accommodating all first-year students exclusively at a 15-storey hostel.

While two such will be ready for occupation by the end of this academic year, the plan for another is still in the pipeline.

Prof Ujjit Yagnik, dean of students affairs at IIT-B, says most freshers are likely to be put up in a single hostel to avoid any incident of ragging. "But a final call has not been taken on whether the new hostels will be set aside only for them."

The new hostels will be the largest on campus, each capable of accommodating over 1,000 students — equivalent to the combined strength of three hostels at present. With the addition of the three, the number of hostels at IIT-B will go up to 17.

One of the two new hostels which are almost ready will temporarily house girls from another hostel that will be replaced by the third tower, says Yagnik.

But not everyone on campus is seeing the authorities' reasoning behind such a move.

Indicating that the arrangement will fall flat on its face, a third-year mechanical engineering student argues, "It will keep apart the freshers from the seniors, who can give first-year students much insight of campus life given the substantial amount of time they have spent on the premises."

A first-year student from the computer science department says much ado has been made over nothing. "There isn't much ragging on the campus. There are generally icebreakers between freshers and seniors. Mostly, freshers and seniors living in the same hostel develop healthy relationships in terms of friendship and mentoring."

pallavi.smart@hindustantimes.com
IIT-MADRAS STUDY

Smaller city start-ups need capital support

BS REPORTER
Chennai, 14 November

Though a majority of incubators in the country are located in non-metro regions, start-ups based in metros account for almost 80 per cent of angel investments, according to a study by Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M).

Measures have to be taken to ensure risk capital is available and accessible to the vast majority of entrepreneurs in smaller cities, said the India Venture Capital and Private Equity Report 2012, released by the institute.

Business Incubation is a business support process that accelerates entrepreneurs with an array of targeted resources and services. Companies that get such support are called incubatees. An investor who provides financial backing for small start-ups or entrepreneurs is an angel investor. While around 83 per cent, or 874 of the total 1,058 incubatees selected for the study, were from non-metro regions, 149 angel investments of the total 185 selected happened in metros.

"There is a gap in location, where a majority of incubators and incubatees are in non-metros, while a majority of the companies that received support from angel investors were from metros," said Thillai Rajan A, associate professor, Department of Management Studies, IIT-M, who coordinated the study. It was seen that 70 per cent of the incubation facilities are located in non-metro regions. Entrepreneurs located in non-metro regions face several additional challenges, in terms of access to capital, human resources, top class facilities, to name a few.

Bangalore has the largest proportion of angel investments, accounting for more than one-third of the investments in metro cities. Of the 149 companies that got angel investments in the six metro cities, 50 were in Bangalore, while Mumbai saw 42 companies bagging investments. Chennai 22, Delhi 21, Hyderabad 13 and one in Kolkata.

The study says one in South India accounted for around 86.47 per cent of the angel investment distribution.
IIM-Calcutta ties up with CEMS for global expansion

In a bid to expand its global footprint, Indian Institute of Management-Calcutta (IIM-C) has become the first institute in India to tie up with CEMS, an international alliance of management institutes across 28 countries in the world.

"This is part of the internationalisation strategy of IIM-C. We will become the only school in India to be a part of this alliance. We are going to sign a memorandum of understanding with CEMS, through which students will have the opportunity to get masters in management (MIM) degree from CEMS," said Ashok Banerjee, dean, new initiatives and external relations, IIM-C.

CEMS currently includes 28 academic institutions from Europe, North and South America, Asia and Australia. It also has about 70 companies and some non-governmental organisations as its partners.

"Based on the agreement, we will have a three-year exclusivity with CEMS in India. Our students will be able to study in the best global institutes and in exchange, the institutes will have the opportunity to get students of IIM-C. This will also help us in getting rated among the best management institutes in the world," said Banerjee.

"The CEMS MIM is a post-graduate degree open to a selective group of students enrolled on a master’s programme in one of the 28 listed institutions. The course will be available for IIM-C students from 2013-14. CEMS, formerly known as the Community of European Management Schools and International Companies, has gone on a globalisation strategy opening up to institutes in Asia, Australasia, and North and South America since the middle of the last decade. The last country to be a member of CEMS was China in 2011. Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Business School and IIM-C are becoming the 25th and 26th destinations of CEMS, according to its website.

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Man becoming less intelligent?

Brain Power Diminishing As It is Not Needed For Survival Anymore

London: Humans are losing intellectual and emotional capabilities because we no longer need intelligence to survive, a new study has claimed. Researchers from Stanford University claim the intricate web of genes which endows us with our brain power is particularly vulnerable to mutations — and these mutations are not being selected against our modern society because we no longer need intelligence to survive.

However, we shouldn’t lose any sleep over our diminishing brain power — as by the time it becomes a real problem; — technology will have found a solution making natural selection obsolete, the ‘Daily mail’ reported.

"The development of our intellectual abilities and the optimisation of thousands of intelligence genes probably occurred in relatively non-verbal, dispersed groups of peoples before our ancestors emerged from Africa," said Gerald Crabtree, lead author.

In this environment, intelligence was critical for survival, and there was likely to be immense selective pressure acting on the genes required for intellectual development, leading to a peak in human intelligence.

It was downhill from there on in as, from that point, it’s likely that we began to slowly lose ground, researchers claim. According to researchers, with the development of agriculture, came urbanisation, which may have weakened the power of selection to weed out mutations leading to intellectual disabilities.

Based on calculations of the frequency with which deleterious mutations appear in the human genome and the assumption that 2,000 to 5,000 genes are required for intellectual ability, Crabtree estimates that within 3,000 years — about 120 generations — we have all sustained two or more mutations harmful to our intellectual or emotional stability.

Recent findings from neuroscience suggest that genes involved in brain function are uniquely susceptible to mutations, the report said. Crabtree argues that the combination of less selective pressure and the large number of easily affected genes is eroding our intellectual and emotional capabilities.
Aakash’s Cost Advantage Sees Rivals Crying Foul

Clever design, in-house manufacturing, right sourcing help tablet sell ₹1,500 cheaper, says co

SHELLEY SINGH
NEW DELHI

It’s a ₹1,500 divide that will shape how a ₹1,500-crore government order for low-cost tablets pans out. DataWind is supplying 1,00,000 Aakash II tablets, launched on November 11, to the government at a price of ₹2,263 per piece, about ₹1,500 cheaper than the base manufacturing cost of low-cost rivals like Micromax, Pantel and Wish Tel.

In the months to come, the government will decide on whether Aakash II makes the cut, after its first version, launched about a year ago, fizzled out and sent DataWind back to the drawing board. With that assessment being crucial in deciding the modalities of the government’s follow-on order of 5.88 million tablets, expected in early 2013, this ₹1,500 divide is where the debate — pivoting on the tradeoff between price and performance — will run.

The first salvos are being fired. “It is not possible to give a tablet below ₹50 (about ₹2,700),” says Vlender Singh, managing director of Micromax, manufacturer. “I’m not bothered what rivals say,” retorts Suneet Singh Tull, chief executive of DataWind. He said his company is not only giving a tablet at ₹40, but is also making a “gross margin of 10%” on it.

Tull, 44, attributes his cost advantage, in virtually every component of the tablet, to clever design, in-house manufacturing of the LCD screen and right sourcing of components.

“I have a perfectly functioning tablet, at a lower cost than what the competitors sell with the same specs,” says Tull, who last week was named by Forbes magazine as one of the “15 education innovators” using disruptive technologies to reinvent education for students and teachers globally.

According to Tull, the main savings come from the Aakash II design, which aims to integrate several components, thus saving on the cost of connectors used to stitch the parts. He cites the example of the printed circuit board, which comes embedded with a chip, RAM, flash memory, power circuits and the WiFi module. So, while his peers pay ₹50 for all this, Tull says his cost works out to ₹18.50.

Admitting that design can influence cost, Milind Shah, managing director of Wish Tel, points out it also determines performance, especially in supporting multiple applications. “Two tablets with the same chip can perform differently, and this gap is due to design. The system will hang if not designed well,” says Shah, whose company was the second-lowest bidder in the government’s low-cost computer project and lost out to DataWind.

Despite the cheaper price, Aakash II is not made for a lower end buyer, says Tull.

“People in this market are looking for the best possible price for their money,” says Tull.

Tull’s boast is that Aakash II has 4GB flash memory, full touch screen and 3G functionality.

“How Aakash-II Undercuts the Market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Aakash-II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LCD + touch screen</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCB with chip</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WiFi module</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power circuits</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAM (512 MB)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casing</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battery</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camera</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other components</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Combined price for PCB with chip, WiFi module & power circuits as Aakash integrates them on a single board; **Includes 4 GB flash memory

Source: DataWind (for Aakash-II & industry (for market))

“I am not bothered what rivals say… I have a perfectly functioning tablet, at a lower cost than what the competitors sell with the same specs

SUNEET SINGH TULL, Chief Executive, DataWind

With rising demand, component prices have been falling in the past year — chips by about 75%, LCD screens by 40% and touch panels by 85%. “Vendors are importing and assembling very low-cost tabs,” says Vishal Tripathi, research analyst, Gartner. “They’re able to strike deals through high-volume purchases of components, keeping overall costs low.”

Besides design, taxes and marketing, Tull says his cost of components is lower than the competition. This is partly because of making the LCD screen in-house — DataWind has a 90,000 units per month facility at Amritsar, and this, adds Tull, halves its cost of procurement to ₹3. This is also partly because of product choices. For example, Tull says the Aakash II casing costs ₹1, while both Wish Tel and Pantel pay ₹4.

“Quality, make, finish and performance will be compromised if you cut costs too much,” cautions Shah of Wish Tel. He cites the example of plastic casing, which can cause a device to heat up, reducing its ability to withstand a fall. The norm, he says, is rubberised and ergonomically designed.

“It has to house very sensitive parts, and should be capable of absorbing heat and shock.”

In the days to come, Aakash II will be scrutinised on all those counts, and more. “After the first one lakh tablets are delivered by DataWind, the government should look at new specifications (with upgrades) and have multiple vendors,” says DB Phatak, professor, IIT Bombay, which is DataWind’s technology partner. For Aakash II, how Aakash-3 scores will determine how that ₹562-million tablet order is carved out.

The Typical Operating Model of Low-Cost Tablet Makers Is to have it Designed in China or a Southeast Asian Country, Import Components in a Semi-Knocked Down Form and Assemble It and Brand It in India. For example, Zync, which has Tablets in the Range of ₹4,000 to ₹11,000, Says it Has a Joint Venture with Hong Kong-Based GoldWise and Has a 20-Member R&D Team in China.
Vocational education and training

A
t present, a majority of European countries are passing through low economic growth. Their industries and businesses are facing global competition and their major worry is acute shortage of skilled human power. Increasing Europe's competitiveness, while preserving the European social model, coping with population aging, reducing unemployment, tackling labour-market skill needs and shortages and improving enterprises' economic performance is enormous pressure on vocational education and training (VET), pushing for its modernisation. The search for models of good governance in VET is an effective policy response to the increasing degree of uncertainty for economies and individual's that characterise our times. It allows VET to become more responsive to the changing labour market and individual needs along with being flexible enough to address skills imbalances and shortages.

VET should be an attractive option for young people and adults to foster the acquisition of professional qualifications and updating it throughout their working life. Professional competences and skills delivered through VET should be a model of excellence, while being transparent to relevant parties at individual, company and State levels.

The recent and the fourth report by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), which is an agency of the European Union, focuses on VET research in Europe and analyses the pressures for VET modernisation. Research also underlines the key role of VET itself in addressing these socioeconomic challenges. VET, therefore, not only reacts to change, but is also a driver of success and competitiveness for European economies and societies. Throughout this publication, Cedefop has gathered evidence of the role VET plays in sustaining economic development, promoting active ageing, ensuring adequate skill supply, supporting corporate innovation capacity, growth and productivity, combating social exclusion and improving social cohesion. Synchronised and modern VET is not only an aim, but also a means of addressing the challenges that lie ahead. The report is of importance to India as it has talked on two key aspects for policy action to modernise VET at institutional and professional levels. One relates diversification of VET offer, opening of routes for lower-ability students, modularisation, options to return to general education at secondary and tertiary level, making the choice for VET reversible and the modernisation of VET system governance (quality assurance, qualification frameworks, partnerships). The other echoes teacher and trainer competences and its effectiveness, which requires not only up-to-date teaching and training professionals, but also education systems and governance experts, who are aware of and understand the implications of new institutional arrangements (quality assurance, qualifications frameworks, recognition of competences and prior learning, among others) as well as dialogue with industry and the local community for their practice.

We, in India, have a lot to learn from these observations. Only in recent time, the government is seriously pushing the vocational education & training programme (VET) through creation of National Skill Development Council (NSDC). NSDC is a not-for-profit company set up by the ministry of finance, under Section 25 of the Companies Act. It has an equity base of its 10 crore of which, the private sector holds 51 per cent, while the government controls 49 per cent. NSDC supports skill development efforts, especially in the unorganised sector by funding skill training and development programmes. It also engages in advocacy and training programmes, in-depth research to discover skill gaps in the Indian workforce and developing accreditation norms. All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), the apex body for making and maintaining the norms of technical education in the country has framed a National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF) for the polytechnics and engineering colleges. The government introduced NVEQF in order to formally integrate vocational education across school and higher education space, along with their current conventional educational streams, for providing incentives to students to explore a large universe of opportunities.

It is important that a vocational education qualification framework is in place that allows cross-mobility of standards and their absorption in industry with certain skills gained by workers over a fixed period of time, or their seamless integration into higher learning that enables them to acquire a formal degree and higher skill, so that they perform higher level jobs in the industry. One has to realise that the fundamental education is the foundation for knowledge and its integration with vocational skills should be done in a very clever and innovative way. We should adopt credit-based modular structures with a very flexible academic structure. This would allow students to move freely from one qualification to another. We should allow such a structure that allows even ITI students to first consolidate their core education and then move towards advanced level diploma, which should allow one to get an associated degree. Eventually a good worker after getting experience in the industry should be able to expand the degree base and be able to work for doctorate degree. Today in India we have very few universities with such flexibilities. The government needs to welcome and support such initiatives and we hope that such flexibly structured universities come in picture.

(The writer is former chairman of University of Pune and founder director of NAAC)
SUCCESS FORMULA
ROBERT S. KAPLAN, PROFESSOR, HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL

Leaders should walk the talk

Deborah Shaan
@garmanreviewer

Management guru Robert S. Kaplan, credited with innovative practices ranging from Balanced Scorecard to time-driven Activity-Based Costing — says the most challenging time for a leader is when things go bad. The Marvin Bower Professor of Leadership Development — Emeritus, Harvard Business School (USA) speaks to HT on leadership development. Excerpt:

Your Balanced Scorecard is a success. Do you think it's still relevant in 2012 and will be in the future as well? It has the permanent approval of managers and management. Without Balance Scorecard (BSC), companies have no financial reporting system. It was first for 20th century enterprises, where values came from physical aspects such as inventories, retail etc. But companies today use intangible assets such as customers' loyalty, innovation etc. for which we need to see beyond the financial system. There is a huge gap between the vision and strategy. They planned how the gap is going to be bridged between the vision and strategy. The vision for the business was to be bridged in 2012.

Often, the most innovative ideas arise first in business schools and not in business schools. How can this gap be bridged? There doesn't exist a gap. The challenge before business schools is to identify innovative practices and capture them. However, business schools and academic services are more into academics. The need is to break through the academic barriers.

How important is the role of communication in leadership? Any leader has to be an effective communicator. If a leader wants to take an organization ahead, or in the case of a leadership change where it is not natural for people to accept the change — effective communication plays a crucial role.

Often, leaders or front line managers fail to develop a second line of leadership in an organization. Why? Probably insecurity and fear are a part of human characteristics. A leader who fails to develop a second line of leadership is not a good leader. The most important role is to develop a successor in an organization. Leaders have to allow themselves to be vulnerable, but not weak. They should allow others to challenge them and should not take punitive action against those who challenge, because it helps in generating ideas.

What basic qualifications should a corporate executive have to be a future leader? Effective communication, accepting challenges, risk-taking ability, encouraging others to develop and authenticity. Leaders should be able to walk the talk — follow the principles he talks about and reinforce the message he gives to people.

It is said, "great leaders are born and not made." Your take? Not true. Leadership qualities can be nurtured through training, through specific career assignments, new challenges, new businesses and new regions and culture. We have to reinforce the tracks within people, teach them through cases, and influence their thinking.

Can business schools groom leaders? A strong commitment is needed for that and depends on faculty members. For example, former chief executive officer (CEO) of Medtronic, William George, who passed the exam for leadership joined Harvard Business School faculty after retirement. Within five years, the effective course he was teaching became the most popular one, with 70% students opting for it.

How important is the role of a corporate leader during slowdown or crisis? The most challenging time for a leader is when things go bad. A great leader gives hope. If people find the leader discouraged, they stop working. A leader should be the one who is able to inspire others in adversity.

What has been your best leadership decision? During one of my first assignments at Carnegie Mellon University, I was asked to teach accounts, which I didn't study. But, I could do it well and realized that I had the natural gift for accounts and I was amazed at it. I used it quantitatively, skills in research and teaching. After 15 years when I switched over to HBS, the same was used to develop new practices in business research.

And the worst? May be the decision to become dean at Carnegie Mellon for six years. My functioning was more administrative than academic. But, that exposed me to business practices, which otherwise wouldn't have been possible.

And your leadership mantra? I've a simple message. Measurement plays an important role in the management system and I devised it. Often frontline employees or mid-level managers don't understand what leaders communicate with them on high-level strategy and vision. A leader has to ensure that his employees understand the strategy better through measurable objectives, so that it can be translated into local action. And, take a position and do the work you love and don't regret it.
In tiebreaker, IITs to pick girls over boys?

Charu Sudan Kasturi
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NEW DELHI: The male-dominated IITs are looking at a controversial new proposal that picks girl candidates over boys if scores are tied in the entrance exam.

The HRD ministry has asked the IIT Joint Admission Board — the institutes’ highest admissions-related body — to consider this plan for the 2013 two-tiered entrance test, top government officials have confirmed to HT.

The proposal — made by a panel set up by the ministry under former atomic energy chief Anil Kakodkar to create a reforms blueprint for the IITs — aims to correct a severe gender imbalance at the premier engineering schools. Each year, girls form only about 10% of those admitted to the undergraduate programmes.

But the bold move — the first affirmative action attempt at the IITs not involving reservations — is also potentially controversial. Mumbai’s Rahul Gokhale termed it “grossly unfair” and said, “Girls need a leg up, but this is no way. Will I be denied an opportunity to live my dream only because I’m a boy?”

The girls are all for it. For Aditi Mulherjee, a class 12 student in Delhi, it would mean a better chance to follow in the footsteps of her father and three male cousins, who all went to IIT. No woman in her family has managed this feat so far.

Though the IITs have already released the prospectus for 2013, the board can issue a correction detailing the new policy. The first stage of the exam will be held on April 7 and the final test on June 2.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Girls over boys in tiebreaker?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Currently, the IITs decide tiebreakers by comparing the subject scores of the students. Physics, chemistry and math are tested in the entrance exam. Scores in the hardest subject that year — reflected in the worst average performance among the three subjects — are compared first. If that doesn’t break the tie, the next toughest subject is looked at.

Under the new proposal, in a group of students with the same total score, girls will automatically be ranked higher. The current formula will only be used to separate between girls, and independently, between boys.
IIT ropar bags top stop in Infosys Hashers contest

BANGALORE, NOV 14: Infosys has announced the winners of the first edition of its Hashers Challenge, a programming contest to foster innovation and create a platform for collaboration with the future talent pool of the IT industry.

The inaugural edition of “Infosys Hashers” drew participation from 540 students from the IITs, IIITs and BITS Pilani.

The teams were put through two rigorous rounds to judge their programming skills and were judged on various parameters including accuracy, performance and flexibility of the solution, a company release said.

The finale held recently at the Infosys campus here witnessed 13 two-member teams competing for the top spot. They built a website to find the best mobile service plan using the algorithm they created in Round One.

Abhishekh Kumar Arora and Abhisar Sharma, from the IIT Ropar, were declared the winners with a cash prize of Rs one lakh.

A Guru Prakash and Devesh Yamparala from IIT-Chennai were the runners up and Venkata Sai Sriram Mahavadi and Bisen Vikrant Singh Mohansingh from the IIT Bangalore took the third spot.

S Gopalakrishnan, Executive Co-Chairman of the company felicitated the winners. UNI
BLASPHEMOUS ACT

IIT-Mandi students apologise over Mahabharatama episode

HT Correspondent
letterschd@hindustantimes.com

MANDI: As many as 43 students of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kamand, tendered unconditional apology in writing for their indiscreet performance and mocking at characters from the Mahabharata during a freshers’ party in a local hotel at Mandi recently.

The students apologised in front of representatives of various religious organisations at a gathering organised in the conference hall of the deputy commissioner’s office at Mandi on Thursday.

It is pertinent to mention here that as scenes from the party had gone viral on online video portal YouTube, it had led to public outrage. In the six-minute clipping, 12 IIT students are speaking in a filthy language over loudspeaker in their enacting of the holy-book chapter “Dropadi Cheerhan” in which Lord Krishna saves Draupadi from being humiliated in the palace of king Dhritashtra.

Many girls were also present at the party when the incident occurred.

Later on, a number of social and volunteer organisations, under the banner of Hindu Sanskriti Raksha Manch, had condemned the incident, organised a protest march, and submitted a memorandum to the President, Prime Minister, chief minister, and ministry of human resource development through the deputy commissioner to seek action against the students.

Meanwhile, the IIT management fined Rs 2,500 to each of the student and tried to hush up the matter, but acting upon the complaint of lawyer Sanjay Mandal, the police started ‘half-hearted’ investigation into the matter and neither the police nor the IIT management tried to find out the possibility of it being a case of ragging.

From the day one, when the ‘shameful’ incident aired on the network, the local administration and police showed ‘soft’ corner for the students of the IIT.

“Does it mean that anyone can disrespect our gods and goddesses and submit apology later on? How the students of IIT would learn that they have committed heinous crime against the faith of crores of people? Had the students disrespected holy characters of other religion then the Hindu religion, the situation would have been turned to worst,” said Shrikant Sharma, a resident of the town, while ruing over the attitude of the representatives of religious organisations who first objected the indiscreet action of the religious organisations who first objected the indiscreet action of the IIT students and now accepted their apology.

Sanjay Mandal, a lawyer at district courts in Mandi, who lodged the FIR against the IIT students, also showed soft corner and said, “A few sections of the law under which the FIR has been lodged are non-compoundable and the police have to submit investigating report in the court and it has to see later on that who actually taped the incident and aired the same on YouTube for public view.”
Aakash tablets for disbursement of subsidised grain, LPG

Gadget to ensure that person seeking subsidised goods is indeed eligible for benefits using UIDAI’s biometric data

Kirika Sunil
New Delhi, Nov 15

The government plans to use the newly launched Aakash tablets for disbursement of subsidised food grain and cooking gas to the intended beneficiaries. The tablets will be used to ensure that a person who seeks to buy goods at subsidised rates is indeed eligible for the benefit. This would be done by verifying the biometric data of the person with the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).

This is a facility similar to the micro ATMs being rolled out for cash payments under various welfare and pension schemes. The Aadhaar-enabled unified payment infrastructure is already in place for payments under the rural employment guarantee scheme.

This is how Aakash 2 tablets will be useful for sale of subsidised commodities. There will be a biometric device—say, a fingerprint scanner—with every vendor connected to the tablet. The buyer will be asked to have his fingers scanned and also punch in his Aadhaar number on the tablet. If the two data sets match, he or she will be identified as eligible for the subsidy entitlement.

“Wallets can no longer be used for cash payments under various welfare and pension schemes,” said Sunil. The Aadhaar-enabled unified payment infrastructure is already in place for payments under the rural employment guarantee scheme.

This means that Aakash is the second device after micro ATMs that will run Aadhaar-related applications. “The Aadhaar-enabled Aakash tablet will be further integrated with other applications related to FID and other schemes. This is when the Aakash will be used for authentication and transactions done on the Aadhaar platform. The tablet can double up for micro ATMs also but not replace them,” said BS Sharma, director general, UIDAI.

Micro ATMs, which are operated by business correspondents, cost Rs 50,000 each while the Aakash tablet is Rs 2,000. The government expects close to 1 lakh transactions per month through such ATMs and for the device to not have any monetary, unlike regular bank ATMs, and the business correspondents would get the withdrawn amount from the bank correspondent on the spot. As per estimates, the government will have to bear a burden of Rs 1,000 to cover the cost of micro ATMs across the country.

“The government has already rolled out Aadhaar-enabled service delivery initiatives in 21 districts across the country for making pension payments, rural employment scheme payments, PDS distribution and scholarship payments among others,” said Sunil. During the first phase of enrolment in the last two years, the UIDAI with the help of its registrars and other stakeholders managed to enroll 25 crore recipients, which made Aadhaar the world’s largest biometric-based identity database. The UIDAI was given the mandate to enrol all citizens by 2016.

However, the Aadhaar server will not be used to enrol people in the Aadhaar system. “We need a full-fledged computer for enrolments. Moreover, there are not so many ISRO sites in the Aakash,” Sharma said.

Trib added that the new tablet for the second version of the Aakash floated by the ministry of human resource development had specifications for Aadhaar applications, which was not the case with the original contract.

“An additional work and not an additional specification. The Aadhaar-related applications are being tested in the field,” Trib said.
छात्रों में आत्महत्या रोकने को होंगे कारगर उपाय

जागरण ब्यूरो, नई दिल्ली : हाल के सालों में आईआईटी संयुक्त दूसरे इंजीनियरिंग शिक्षण संस्थानों के छात्रों में बढ़ी आत्महत्या की प्रक्रिया को रोकने के लिए सरकार नए कदम उठा सकती है। संकेत है कि आने वाले समय में छात्रों की प्रभावी काउंसिलिंग पर सबसे अधिक जोर दिया जाएगा।

इतना ही नहीं, टास्क फोर्स की सिफारिशों पर अभिलाषा है तो आत्महत्या की घटनाओं की प्रचुरता की निगरानी के लिए नया तंत्र भी बनाया जा सकता है। भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान (आईआईटी) में बीते वर्षों में छात्रों की आत्महत्या की बढ़ती प्रवृत्ति की मूल वजहों का पता लगाने और उसके निदान का उपाय सुझाने के लिए लगभग नौ महीने पहले प्रो. आनंद कुमार की अध्यक्षता में गठित टास्क फोर्स ने गुरुवार को यहां अपनी रिपोर्ट केंद्रीय मानव संसाधन विकास (एचआरडी) मंत्री डा. एमएम पल्लव राजू को सौंप दी। सूत्रों के मुताबिक, टास्क फोर्स ने पुलिस आईआईटी संयुक्त दूसरे इंजीनियरिंग शिक्षण संस्थानों

• प्रभावी काउंसिलिंग पर होगा सबसे अधिक जोर

में बीते दो साल में दर्जनबर छात्रों की आत्महत्या का विश्लेषण किया है। साथ ही उसदाद विदेश में भी छात्रों में आत्महत्या की स्थिति पर नजर नजर ढालते हुए इस प्रवृत्ति को रोकने के लिए सरकार से कई जरूरी सिफारिशें की है। इनमें सबसे ज्यादा जोर इंजीनियरिंग छात्रों की काउंसिलिंग पर है।

इस मामले में उसने कानपुर, मद्रास और खड़गपुर रिश्तेदार आईआईटी और एटा इंसटीट्यूट ऑफ सोशल साइंसेज, मुंबई में होने वाली काउंसिलिंग के मॉडल को बेहतर बनाया है। उसी क्रम में उसने पोग्य कॉलेज के छात्रों के साथ उनके व्यक्तिगत भूमिका पर भी ध्यान दिया है। साथ ही उसने एचआरडी मंत्रालय में एक प्रकोष्ठ (सेल) भी गठित करने की सिफारिश की है। यह सेल आत्महत्या की घटनाओं का विश्लेषण करेगा।
IIT-Delhi Alumni body seeks Raju’s intervention on 2-tier exam system

PNS • NEW DELHI

The IIT-Delhi Alumni Association on Friday met HRD Minister MM Pallam Raju and discussed the ‘controversial’ two-tier entrance format for the IITs.

According to the statement by the association, Raju promised the delegation to give a fresh visit to the issues concerning IITs including changes inducted in JEE by his predecessor Kapil Sibal.

“He showed inclination to take actions which are in the interest of all the stakeholders of IIT system. Without commenting, either way, on rolling back of the misdirected changes brought in JEE, he promised to give a patient hearing on the issues concerning IIT autonomy including JEE,” said the statement.

Raju further accepted their request to speak in the upcoming PanIIT conference in Kolkata from December 7-9.

The delegation was led by Somnath Bharti, president, IIT-Delhi Alumni Association Somnath Bharti.
IIT-Delhi wants ‘fresh’ look into entrance test issue

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The IIT-Delhi alumni association, which is opposing the new format of the IIT-JEE entrance test, met HRD minister M M Pallam Raju on Friday and said he has promised to look into the issue ‘afresh’.

‘The honourable minister after hearing the delegation promised to visit afresh the issues concerning IIT including the controversial changes inducted in the JEE by his predecessor,’ said the alumni association in a statement.

The association claimed that the minister showed inclination to take actions which are in the interest of all the stakeholders of the IIT system.

It said they will be meeting Raju once again in the coming week to discuss the issue.

Aspirants to the IITs and other technical institutes like NITs would be appearing the IIT-JEE next year under a new two-tier format which also gives weightage to the class XII marks.

Despite initial objections, most of the IITs have given their nod to the format.shares from the sale proceeds,’ the judge said.
महिला उत्थान के लिए आईआईटी दिल्ली का सफल प्रयास

भीर आर्जुन संवाददाता
वह दिल्ली। महिलाओं के उत्थान
हेतु आईआईटी दिल्ली ने नारी को
वीण ने महिला सशक्तिकरण का
इस्तेमाल किया। ब्रह्म के सहयोग से
हिल ने ऐसी बाबु गुजराती गैरों की
की शर्मा जिसमें सक्रिय, पूर्णता,
व संबंध तस्वीर से वही
करने हुए एक कात्यायनी प्रदर्शण
इस रहे का भी आयोजन किया
गया।

राजस्थान विभाग के प्रोफेसर डॉ.
एवर जावाल ने पृष्ठ 22 प्रोफेसर के
वाट में बनाए हुए महिलाओं को उनकी
रोशनी की तालाब के बारे में भी बताया,
यह असल में आईआईटी फाउंडेशन
हिल ने बारे में वही पढ़ाई में
प्रवर्तित कर महिलाओं व दूसरे
आसपास को इस तरह प्रायोगिक के बारे
में बताया कि किस प्रकार फल व
एसी धड़े व गुणसे से बना रखता है
यह एक स्वतंत्रता जीवन भी हो
इसका है। नारी की इस पाठ ने
आईआईटी दिल्ली के प्रमुख विकास
गैरों के केंद्र के डॉ. जावाल ने,
वई. एवर नायक व उनके
सामाजिक व अभियान को अंतरजाल ने
जनता के बादे बनाने के लिए
को पात्रता प्रशिक्षण व इन्जीनियरिंग व
आईआईटी दिल्ली के प्रोफेसर नारी चौपाल में नारी उत्थान हेतु महिलाओं को पायोजन वाली है।

महिलाओं के लिए एक अछे रोजगार
के बारे में भी बताया जाएगी इससे
शुभ में कई तरह के उपयोग बनाना
भी जाना गया। फुलवारा प्रदर्शण के बाद
उपस्थित होगे में फुलवारा तस्वीर प्रदर्शण
के मुद्द के विवाह भी किया गया।
हिल ने अपने एवर दंभ ने स्वतंत्रता की
में देखा कार्यक्रम ने किया जो उपस्थित
होता है उसके बाद जा चलता है।
डॉ. कमलेश राय ने राजस्थान की साहित्यकारयों का सात सामाजिक विधान की प्रकरण ने भी
महिलाओं को सात सामाजिक को सुधार
करने के उपायों पर वचन की कारोबारी
में ध्यान निम्नकर्म ने किया जो उपस्थित
होता है कार्यक्रम के बाद भी अगे
फुलवारा तस्वीर प्रदर्शण के आयोजन की
सारांग की।
IIT alumni discuss changes to JEE with new HRD minister

HT Correspondent

Mumbai: The alumni of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) met with the new human resources development minister M Pallam Raju in Delhi on Friday, in what was described as a “positive meeting”, to point out contentious issues in the entrance exam reforms.

The alumni had sought an appointment to raise the issue of the controversial changes to the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE) for entry into the IITs from next year. The alumni had contended that the changes went against previous court orders and that there were inherent flaws in the system.

The delegation that met the minister released a note after Friday’s meeting saying they would follow up in a week, adding that the minister had heard them out and promised to look into the issues.

“He promised to give a fresh visit to the issues concerning the IITs, including controversial changes inducted in JEE by his predecessor,” said the note from the alumni.

“He showed inclination to take actions which are in the interest of all the stakeholders of the IIT system. Without commenting, either way, on rolling back of the misdirected changes brought in JEE, he promised to give a patient hearing on the issues concerning IIT autonomy, including JEE.”

In July, the IITs had agreed to a two-part exam and the use of board exam marks as an eligibility and not admission criterion. It was decided that from next year students would have to clear both exams and be within the top 20 percentile of successful candidates in their Class 12 board to get admission.

The alumni had vehemently opposed the ministry’s attempts at changing the JEE. Finally, a compromise formula had been reached, with the IITs agreeing to a two-part exam with board marks as an eligibility, not an admission criteria.
Bid to check IIT suicides

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Nov. 15: A committee has suggested mandatory counselling in central educational institutions to check suicides after it found that failed relationships, poor academic performance, inferiority complex and drug habits were some of the reasons why students ended their lives.

The committee suggested that every institute must be mandated to have a well-structured system to counsel students. Parents, students and faculty should be part of the counselling process.

The panel today submitted its report on Suicides in Centrally Funded Technical Institutions (CFTIs) to HRD minister M.M. Pallam Raju. The committee had studied the counselling practices in the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, IIT Kanpur, IIT Kharagpur and IIT Madras before preparing a model for the nearly hundred CFTIs and suggested that it should be extended to central universities as well.

“We identified several factors that prompted students to take the extreme step. The main factors are (failed) relationships, personality problems leading to inferiority complex, being unable to cope with the academic pressure and drug habits,” IIT Kanpur chairman M. Anandakrishnan, who heads the committee, said.

He said there should be an empowered committee to act as an apex forum, which will monitor the implementation of the counselling system in the institutes.

The committee had studied cases of suicide in 26 institutes. In the past two years, 12 students from these institutes had ended their lives. According to IIT Guwahati director Gautam Barua, all the IITs have in place their own counselling systems. But identification of students suffering from depression is a challenge. “Those students do not express their problems on their own,” he said.

The counselling cells monitor the attendance of students and their performance in examinations to find out if they are in trouble. “But this approach is not enough,” he said.

Anandakrishnan said the minister appeared positive about the recommendations.

“Now the ministry will take the recommendations to the IIT Council and NIT Council for approval for implementation,” he said.
IIT-M hosts astrologer, sparks row

Chennai: IIT-Madras, recently in the news for its alleged move to restrict the on-campus movements of girl students, is again in the spotlight: This time for inviting an astrologer to give a lecture on vedic science.

After Amanchi Balasudhakara Sastry, a ‘naadi jyothisham’ (a form of astrology) expert, delivered a lecture on Wednesday, professors said there was not a single peer-reviewed article by him. “And he delivers a lecture on nadi jyothisham and developing ‘nano copper’ using vedic knowledge claiming it is science,” said a professor. The lecture triggered a debate between professors and the management on maintaining academic standards in science education. TNN
Will improve diversity on campus | Where will affirmative action stop?

Many institutions have initiated affirmative action policies to promote diversity, but these policies often come under criticism for being biased and not addressing the root causes of gender inequality. Times View: In fact, this principle could equally apply to favour men in those fields of study that see an overwhelming majority of women—let’s say Montessori teachers’ training programs. Other things being equal, diversity is a value that institutions and workplaces should aim at.

Times View: The latter amounts to continuation of patriarchy. By instituting the affirmative policy, the IITs could incentivize more girl students to take up engineering. This in turn will enlarge the overall talent pool.

Meghana Roy, a Times View columnist, argues that affirmative action policies do not address the underlying issues of gender inequality and instead perpetuate a patriarchal system. She suggests that institutions should aim for diversity rather than using affirmative action policies.

Counter View: This will turn out to be yet another case of jumbled gender reform that ghettoises women. Nobody can deny the need to recruit more women in IITs. Therefore, the intention here may be noble. But what’s in question is the judiciousness of such gender-based affirmative action and the long-term implications it might have for other institutions and sectors.

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By Girdhar Jha in Patna

AFTER winning accolades for her pictorial portrayal of young Saudi Arabian girls in her book, Jeddah Diary, celebrated British photographer Olivia Arthur on Thursday turned her lens on Super 30, a pioneering coaching institute for underprivileged students in Bihar, to showcase change through real empowerment with an international exhibition of her photographs.

A recipient of several awards, including the Royal Photographic Society's Vic Odden Award and the Laureate Photographer of the Year, Olivia spent a day in Patna capturing the essence of the institute founded by young mathematician Anand Kumar that has helped 263 poor students crack the difficult IIT entrance exam over the last 10 years.

Photos to showcase real empowerment

The 32-year-old Olivia also went to shoot at the homes of two of the successful students—Anand Kishore and Satish Kumar, who made it despite the odds of extreme poverty stacked against them.

Kishore, who studies in the Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad, and Satish, who got into IIT-Guwahati, belong to very poor families. While Kishore's father is a vegetable vendor, Satish's mother is a widow. Both had two things in common—poverty and the ability to fight back against life's adversities.

"It was very positive to see how Super 30 helped these two students get into top-notch institutes. I have captured the poverty of their families with my camera. Their parents are very poor but they still have the richness of hope, as their sons are studying in IIT. Even in poverty, they don't show pessimism," Olivia said.

Describing Super 30 as a unique and uncomplicated initiative, Olivia, who has a degree in mathematics from Oxford University and diploma in photojournalism from London College of Printing, said it was a sort of movement that needed to be applauded and talked about across the globe.

"I came here expecting something big and different. But the simplicity struck me straightaway. I wanted to capture the change Super 30 could make to the lives of poor students and their families, and it was really rewarding," she stated.

Olivia said she aimed at showcasing the change in society that 'real empowerment' could usher in through her photographs.

Anand's Institute continues to attract widespread global attention even a decade after it was launched. However, for him, entering the success of his students is his only mission. "This is what keeps me going. I am happy that my efforts are being recognised by the people and the media. But the real credit goes to my students," he said.
After a month, Curiosity set to hit the road again

To Trek Across Mars In Search Of A Rock To Drill Into

Los Angeles: After playing in the sand, the Curiosity rover is poised to trek across the Martian landscape in search of a rock to drill into, scientists reported.

The six-wheel rover has been parked for more than a month at a sand dune where it has been busy scooping up soil, sniffing the atmosphere and measuring radiation levels on the surface. Its next task is to zero in on a rock and that requires driving to a new location.

Mission deputy scientist Ashwin Vasavada expected Curiosity to be on the move in the "next few days". "It's the bedrock which really gives you the story of ancient Mars," said Vasavada of the Nasa Jet Propulsion Laboratory, which manages the $2.5 billion mission. "The soil is a little harder to interpret because we don't know how old it is or where it came from."

The car-size rover touched down in Gale Crater, an ancient depression near the Martian equator, in August on a two-year mission to probe whether the landing site once had conditions capable of supporting microbial life. Armed with a high-tech suite of instruments, it's the most sophisticated spacecraft to ever land on the red planet.

During the first three months, a weather station aboard Curiosity detected brief drops in air pressure, a sign of whirlwinds in the region. "These events are starting to occur more and more often," said Manuel de la Torre Juarez of Nasa JPL. "We expect to see more in the future."

Previous rovers have spotted and even recorded dust devils dancing across the Martian terrain, but scientists said Curiosity has not yet seen evidence that the swirling winds have lifted dust.

Curiosity's ultimate destination is a 5km-high mountain rising from the center of the crater floor that's rich in mineral deposits. Scientists had hoped to drive to the base before the end of the year, but that doesn't look likely after the extended stay at its current spot.

Google has updated its coverage of Mars with high resolution images from a Nasa satellite orbiting the planet, as part of their freely downloadable Google Earth app. The Google Earth app has showed Mars since 2009, but up until now most areas of the red planet could only be seen in low-resolution.

Google's Mars updated large amounts of the planet's surface with images from the Context Camera (CTX) on Nasa's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, with a resolution of around 20ft per pixel, the Daily Mail reported.
Scientists decode why Einstein was a genius

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WASHINGTON: Physicist Albert Einstein's brain had an "extraordinary" prefrontal cortex — unlike those of most people — which may have contributed to his remarkable genius, a new study has claimed.

According to the study led by Florida State University evolutionary anthropologist Dean Falk, portions of Einstein's brain have been found to be unlike those of most people and could be related to his extraordinary cognitive abilities.

Falk and his colleagues describe for the first time the entire cerebral cortex of Einstein's brain from an examination of 14 recently discovered photographs.

The researchers compared Einstein's brain to 85 "normal" human brains and, in light of current functional imaging studies, interpreted its unusual features.

"Although the overall size and asymmetrical shape of Einstein's brain were normal, the prefrontal, somatosensory, primary motor, parietal, temporal and occipital cortices were extraordinary.

"These may have provided the neurological underpinnings for some of his visuospatial and mathematical abilities, for instance," said Falk.

The study was published in the journal Brain.

On Einstein's death in 1955, his brain was removed and photographed from multiple angles with the permission of his family. It was sectioned into 240 blocks from which histological slides were prepared.

The study also published the "roadmap" to Einstein's brain prepared in 1955 by Dr Thomas Harvey to illustrate the locations within his previously whole brain of 240 dissected blocks of tissue, which provides a key to locating the origins within the brain of the newly emerged histological slides.
Brain photos reveal why Einstein was a genius

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A great majority of the photographs, blocks and slides were lost from public sight for more than 55 years. The 14 photographs used by the researchers now are held by the National Museum of Health and Medicine.

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