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IIT GRADUATES giving life to their dreams abroad

Young techies prefer ‘Make in Singapore’

Venture capital and the spirit of enterprise prove strong attraction

Appaji Reddem

SINGAPORE: Prime Minister Narendra Modi may have triggered a trend by calling on global Indians to “come and make in India.” But, believing his expectations, the cream of domestic talent prefers the favourable environment of countries such as Singapore to nurture their start-ups and sustain business growth.

Sudhanshu Ahuja, an IIT-Delhi graduate, was clear even a couple of years ago that he would leave the iconic institution to chase his start-up dream in Singapore. The reason is the discouraging financial, business, industrial and regulatory environment in India. “My Nanyang Technological University (NTU) scholarship was confirmed during my initial days in the IIT. It was not the bounty of the scholarship but the environment that could germinate my start-up in the conceptual stage, I moved to Singapore without an iota of doubt. The country did not disappoint me,” Mr. Ahuja said adding that he could start and incubate his talent search firm, Ideaory Pte Ltd, along expected lines in Singapore.

Mr. Ahuja was the beneficiary of a venture capital fund of the Singapore International Foundation (SIF), an annual grant given after stringent scrutiny of contestants from across the world. Innovative ideas and efforts are not reduced to trash in the corporate world in Singapore, he said.

Today, Mr. Ahuja’s client list includes global corporates, including the banking giant DBS. He belongs to the crop of top talent in India which is looking at Singapore to pursue their dreams and the number of such innovative talent is growing day by day, says a top human resource firm in Singapore.

Singapore has a bunch of IITians like Aparna Mittal who left India and took to social entrepreneurship.

SIF, on Saturday, awarded seed fund to four winning teams of social entrepreneurs, who could find innovative ways to do business. Among them was “Jugnu,” the Indian team that worked on a mobile application to enhance language skills for school students in non-urban areas.

Team members — Ankita Gupta, Priya A and Pramodh Rai — from Delhi completed their graduate education from NTU to chase the social entrepreneurship dream.

Indian team gets Singapore funding for language-learning app

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Among them was ‘Jugnu’, the Indian team that worked on a mobile application to enhance language skills for school students in non-urban areas.

Team members — Ankita Gupta, Priya A and Pramodh Rai — from Delhi, completed their graduate education from NTU to chase the social entrepreneurship dream.

Such students belong to the cream of talent in India and they believe in their dreams. Singapore is probably one of the best breeding grounds for the authors of start-ups. The league of young millionaires and CEOs is going up, and Indians are taking the lead here,” said the senior manager of the HR firm.

While addressing the award ceremony before disseminating the seed fund grant, the Chairman of SIF, Euleen Goh, said the winners focused on environment, organic, mobile apps and thought of reaching the unreachable is commendable.
आईआईटी छात्र बने ‘मेक इन इंडिया’ की मिसाल

उद्धव पेठकलियान में रेत पर आकृति

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World's third Science Gallery to come up in Bengaluru


Bengaluru: Want to know the science behind love and attraction? Or, what makes you groove to a certain kind of music?

The country’s Information Technology (IT) capital has managed to attract one of Ireland’s renowned universities to venture into setting up the world’s third Science Gallery—the first in Asia. Set to marvel visitors with scientific theatre, it will join the other two in Dublin (Ireland) and London (UK).

Bengaluru managed to beat Melbourne in Australia to the third Science Gallery. The State’s Department of Science and Technology sealed the deal through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Science Gallery International (SGI), Dublin, Ireland, on Thursday. It is likely to come up in the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) campus by the beginning of 2018 at a cost of Rs. 25 crore, S.R. Patil Minister for Planning and Statistics, IT, BT, Science and Technology said.

Chris Horn, Chairman, SGI said the gallery would be different from a regular science museum as nothing would be permanent, with different exhibitions being held regularly. Live experiments on visitors and interaction with scientists, engineers and researchers will be among the attractions.

Mr. Horn also said the areas of expertise of certain cities are kept in mind while organising programmes. -Trinity College Dublin is known for physics, King’s College London for medical sciences. Bengaluru is known for IT and aerospace, and we will be focussing on these areas,- he said.

SGI intends to have eight galleries in all eventually. The others are expected to come up in Singapore, New York, Chicago and Venice.
BHU students gherao Smriti Irani in Varanasi

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LUCKNOW: Union human resource development (HRD) minister Smriti Irani faced the ire of students at the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in Varanasi on Saturday. In the city, also the parliamentary constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the union minister was booed and gheraoed by angry students who blamed her for the delay in inauguration of a trauma center.

Construction of the multi-crore rupee trauma center was completed almost a year ago but it is yet to be inaugurated, apparently because the HRD minister has not been able to find time for it.

While Irani had so far maintained that she did not get the invitation, when confronted with a letter by the BHU authorities to this effect, the minister said that the inauguration was getting delayed since there was no vice-chancellor in the varsity.

She assured the angry students that very soon the impasse will be sorted out and the trauma center inaugurated. Irani, a close aide of Narendra Modi was in the city to attend a function.

122 students receive degrees at IIT Ropar convocation

Hindustan Times (Chandigarh)

LILA POONAWALLA URGED THE STUDENTS TO CHALLENGE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM AND REFRAIN FROM COMPROMISING ON FUNDAMENTAL VALUES

RUPNAGAR: The third convocation of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Rupnagar, was held on the institute campus on Saturday.

As many as 122 students of 2010-14 batch, including 121 BTech students and one PhD student, were conferred degrees.

Outstanding students were also honoured with gold and silver medals on the occasion.

National research professor at University of Hyderabad and former director of Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, Goverdhan Mehta, was the chief guest on the occasion.

The board of governors of Indian Institute of Technology, Rupnagar, and chairperson of the institute Lila Poonawalla presided over the function.

In his convocation address, Goverdhan Mehta exhorted the students to excel by putting their full potential to good use.
He urged the graduates to set new scholastic benchmarks and shoulder social responsibilities.

He also emphasised on the need for giving an impetus to research in educational institutions.

In her address, Lila Poonawalla urged the students to challenge conventional wisdom and refrain from compromising on fundamental values.

She also exhorted students to be committed to have a vision for the nation. Director of the institute professor MK Surappa presented the annual report and highlighted the achievements of the institute.

He said work on the construction of the new Indian Institute of Technology campus would begin soon and the first phase of the project would be completed within two years.
Irani vetoes experts; ISM closer to becoming IIT


In keeping with Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s electoral promise to turn Indian School of Mines (ISM) Dhanbad into an Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Smriti Irani-led HRD ministry overruled an expert panel’s recommendations that had trashed the idea.

A letter from the ministry, sources said, was sent to the panel on September 26 saying it was “desired” by Irani that the panel should further examine the issue and see what could be done to enable the institute to become a good IIT.

Prior to general elections, Modi, as BJP’s prime ministerial candidate, at an election rally in Dhanbad had slammed the UPA government for not turning ISM into an IIT. “ISM has a name in all of Asia, it should be upgraded to an IIT,” Modi had said.

A panel formed to look into this demand said in its report that ISM didn’t merit an entry into brand IIT on the basis of its educational and research inadequacy. Comparing it with IIT Madras, the panel had said that while at ISM, 40 out of 250 of its faculty members were without PhDs, IIT Madras had only one faculty member without a PhD.

Recommending a status quo, the panel headed by Professor Ashok Mishra, former director of IIT Bombay said ISM is a “niche” institute and should be allowed to continue as such. The report was to be discussed at the IIT council (the highest decision making body of the IITs) meeting on September 22 but it was not presented.

While panel chairperson Mishra refused to comment on the development, ISM registrar MK Singh welcomed the move saying it had been a long pending demand.
IITians call the shots

IITians now call the shots in the Defence Ministry. For, both the newly appointed Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar and Defence Secretary RK Mathur are alumni of IIT. While Parrikar majored in metallurgy from IIT-Mumbai, Mathur passed out as a mechanical engineer from Kanpur branch of the institute before both of them found their true calling in politics and civil services respectively.
जोधपुर, 16 नवंबर (भाषा)। उद्यमों के अभिनव विचारों को साकार करने में छात्रों की मदद करने के मकरसद से आईआईटी जोधपुर में ‘इनोवेशन एंड इन्क्यूबेशन सेंटर’ (आईआइसी) की शुरुआत। धूमधाम से की गई थी लेकिन एक साल से अधिक समय धूमधाम से की गई थी लेकिन एक साल से अधिक समय में उन्हें प्रतिभायाओं के लिए यह केंद्र कुछ खास नहीं कर पा रहा।

आईआईटी जोधपुर ने ‘स्वच्छता, स्वास्थ्य और सफाई का प्रबंधन’ थीम पर एक राष्ट्रीय प्रतियोगिता के माध्यम से कारोबार की 11 योजनाओं का चुनाव किया था। इन्हें 10 लाख रुपए, दो लाख रुपए और 40-40 हजार रुपए की आर्थिक राशि के साथ तीन श्रेणियों में बांटा गया था। छात्रों का कहना है कि आईआईटी जोधपुर को जुलाई 2013 से जुलाई 2014 तक एक कार्यक्रम के लिए ऐसे नए उद्यमियों की मदद करनी थी और परियोजनाओं के लिए बुनियादी ढंग से मान्यता प्राप्त करने के साथ-साथ इनमें काम कर रहे लोगों को प्रशंसा उन्हें आदर का बंधन करना था।

इस केंद्र को शुरु हुए एक साल से अधिक समय हो गया लेकिन कई छात्रों का दावा है कि उन्हें जिस धनराशि का वादा किया गया था, वह भी मिली नहीं। इनमें से कुछ ने किसी तरह अपनी जेब से परियोजनाओं को जारी रखा। आईआईटी जोधपुर के पूर्व छात्र अंकित सासस्वत ने अपनी कारोबारी योजना ‘फ्रीड’ (फ्रीडम ऑफ पोज़के शन) के लिए सहयोगी छात्र विनोद कुमार मीणा के साथ 10 लाख रुपए की आर्थिक राशि का इनाम जीता था। सासस्वत के मुताबिक हमें शुरुआती राशि में से मुरादल से ही कुछ मिला होगा। जब हमने पूँजी तो कोई वजह नहीं बताई गई। अच्छे सारे वेतन वाली बैंक की नौकरी के बजाय उद्यम को चुनने वाले अंकित सासस्वत ने कहा कि राज्य सरकार ने इसके लिए 1.5 करोड़ रुपए मंजूर किए, उस सबके बावजूद ऐसा हो रहा है। मैं को अपनी नौरु और से करीब 3-4 लाख रुपए और अपने संसाधन खर्च करने के बाद इसे छोड़ दिया।

इसी तरह ‘आतं स्क्षम’ योजना के लिए दो लाख रुपए की राशि जीतने वाले निर्देश भारद्वाज ने कहा कि हमने आईआइटी जैसे संस्थान से इस तरह की अपेक्षा नहीं की थी। हमने दावा किया कि हमें जिन सुविधाओं और सहयोग का वादा किया गया था, उनके संबंध में हमने शुरुआत से इनोवेशन और इन्क्यूबेशन सेंटर में नियमों की गैरमौजूदगी के नाम पर अनिष्ट और उदासीनता देखी।

इसी बारे में आईआइटी जोधपुर के बोर्ड ऑफ गवर्नर्स के अध्यक्ष गोवर्धन मेहता ने कहा कि आईआइसी के लिए उचित दिशानिर्देश या नियम नहीं तय होने की वजह से यह सब हुआ। हमने कहा कि यह हमारे लिए नई अध्याय था। हमने एक समीक्षा बैठक में आगे आईआइसी को जारी रखने में कुछ कठिनाइयों की ओर इशारा किया है।
Don’t rewrite the rules for education

The classroom must be left to professionals and, most certainly, facts cannot be doctored

The lifeline of the India growth story is education and by that we mean quality education. So, it is disheartening to learn that among the many who wish to leave their imprint on education, not all are necessarily qualified professionals. In recent times, we have seen the disquieting phenomenon of those with strong links to the RSS and other right-wing cultural organisations taking an unhealthy interest in school curricula, the latest being Dinamath Batra, who has been roped in as an adviser on education reforms by the Haryana government. Mr Batra is the man who famously got Wendy Doniger’s seminal work on Hinduism pulped on the grounds that it went against the grain of our culture. The first and foremost quality of an educationist is an openness to ideas and thoughts.

There is an excessive emphasis on moral values, ancient scriptures and philosophy most of which cannot be substantiated historically. Of course, all curricula is subject to review. But those doing so must be mindful of the fact that our children will have to emerge armed with the knowledge that will enable them to fit into a competitive education system and then a competitive marketplace. Mr Batra’s books have been dismissed by most historians and prima facie he does not seem qualified to preside over curriculum changes. This is something that the HRD minister needs to look at very seriously.

Young minds are shaped in the classrooms and under no circumstance should they be imparted any knowledge which is ideologically weighted or just plain and simple wrong. Mr Batra’s advocacy of redrawing boundaries to reflect territories of a bygone time does not inspire much confidence in his ability to create child-friendly and relevant curricula. This is the first rung of academia, but the problem seems to have reached even the upper echelons.

In a recent lecture organised by the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR), a professor went so far as to say that one did not require history at all, much to the chagrin of the other luminaries present. His argument that texts like the Mahabharata were enough to understand the past met with stiff resistance from other scholars. That the head of the ICHR concurred with these views is alarming, to say the least. Earlier we saw Subramanian Swamy of the BJP saying that books by great historians like Romila Thapar and Bipan Chandra should be burned. This is not the inclusive society that Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants to foster. Education must be left to professionals and most certainly, facts cannot be doctored. Our children deserve the best that schools and colleges can offer and that can only happen if this is built on a firm and objective foundation.

UGC writes to varsities for uniform grading system

EG Thewari
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 16

THE UGC has shot off letters to all universities, directing them to implement a choice-based credit scheme to allow ‘seamless mobility’ of students across higher education institutions and bring in a uniform grading system. The recent move came after Union HRD Minister Smriti Irani said implementation of the scheme would begin from the next academic session.

In a letter to the Vice-Chancellors, the UGC has said the scheme should be adopted by the varsities from the 2015-16 session.

The letter said that owing to diversity in the evaluation system followed by different varsities, students face problems in pursuing higher studies or applying for jobs.

It added that the credit scheme would ensure “seamless mobility of students across the higher education institutions in the country as well as abroad”. “The credit earned by the student can be transferred and would be of great value to the students in the event of their seeking migration from one institution to the other,” it said.

Claiming it is “desirable to introduce (a) uniform grading system”, the UGC has formulated guidelines for the adoption of the scheme. These norms would be applicable to all undergraduate and postgraduate level degree courses, diploma and certificate programmes awarded by Central, state and deemed universities.

The commission has recommended a 10-point grading system.
Graduating from elite colleges likely to impact salary

A new study has revealed that no matter where you earn your graduate degree, the prestige of your undergraduate institution continues to affect earnings—both high and low. Good institutions add more than just repute.

The researchers said that college graduates who earn their undergraduate degree from a less prestigious university and a graduate degree from an elite university earn much less than those who attend both an elite undergraduate and graduate school. And it is unlikely their salary will ever catch up. However exceptions are always there.

Joni Hersch, professor of law and economics at Vanderbilt Law School, said that status of the graduate degree-granting institution should have a more important relation to earnings than status of the undergraduate institution.

Hersch said that even high ability students who attend nonselective institutions for their bachelor's degrees are, on average, unable to overcome their initial placement by moving up to an elite graduate or professional school for an advanced degree.

The researchers divided the colleges into three categories, Tier 1 schools are top private research institutions. Tier 2 schools are selective private liberal arts colleges. Tier 3 are top public research universities and Tier 4 are remaining four-year universities and colleges. Because ability influences whether a student is accepted to a selective institution, Hersch accounted for ability in her study by examining graduates of similarly selective graduate programs.

It was found that graduates of Tier 1 schools earn a lot more than everyone else, but even when looking at those with graduate degrees from elite schools, the students who went to a lower tier undergraduate school earn considerably less.

Among those who earned a graduate degree from Tier 1, 3 institutions, men from Tier 1 undergraduate schools earn 39 percent more than men with undergraduate degrees from Tier 4 schools. Among women with top graduate degrees, those from Tier 1 undergraduate schools earn 44 percent more than women with undergraduate degrees from Tier 4 schools.
Don’t Junk German
Smriti Irani’s fiat asking Kendriya Vidyalayas to replace it with Sanskrit harms students

At the Brisbane G20 summit, a prime objective for Prime Minister Narendra Modi was to drum up investor interest in India. Yet this objective was undermined at home thanks to an ill-advised fiat from the HRD ministry, replacing the teaching of German with Sanskrit in government-run Kendriya Vidyalaya schools. The issue clouded Modi’s bilateral meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel on the sidelines of G20.

HRD minister Smriti Irani has clarified that Sanskrit isn’t the only third language option, students can choose a modern Indian language as well. But the point is why foreign languages shouldn’t be taught as well in Indian schools when they provide a window of opportunity in a globalising world and there is enormous demand for them from students and their parents. Teaching foreign languages has gained momentum in Indian schools, with 80,000 students opting for German alone and the German government spending a million euros on the programme. It’s absurd to seek to shut all this down.

What adds to disquiet about the HRD ministry’s competence is the peremptory manner in which this was done, with schools ordered to change course in the middle of the academic year. Such lack of due process and an orderly transition plan is hugely disruptive for both teachers and students. The minister is only supposed to lay down broad parameters of educational policy, leaving it to educationists to determine details of implementation and how policy can be translated into specific courses or syllabi. If education is to empower India’s youth, it needs to focus relentlessly on jobs and skills. But the education system has been crippled by politics, ideology and the whimsicality of successive HRD ministers, and Irani appears intent on dishing out more of the same.