New Delhi: Professor K C Iyer, who teaches civil engineering at IIT Delhi, said areas near Yamuna Puhta are at high risk since these colonies are unplanned. "Retro-fitting and strengthening of the reinforcements are urgently required for high-risk structures," Iyer said.

Prof Iyer added that pumping out water may not help. "The sub-soil water will end up going back into the earth in this way," he said.

Many residents blame the seepage to closing of sluice gates before the Commonwealth Games which led a backflow into the area. "All basements in our locality are filled with water. Continuous efforts to pump it out have led to nothing. Water level has risen to 10-12 feet below the ground and seepage is so high that generators are failing to flush them out," said Chander Singh, a resident of R block in Ramesh Park.

The Yamuna riverbed is just across the road from here. Singh said that the foundation of the buildings have weakened and they may collapse any time. People have closed their godowns, shops and even parking space created in the basements.

Along the Yamuna Puhta lie other residential areas including Shastri Colony, Bank enclave, Laxmi Nagar, Ganesh Nagar and Narain Nagar. Most residents here complain that the basements have been witnessing water seepage for over three months now. "A DDA park here has remained submerged under water for over three months now. During nights, water seeps up from the ground," said Sita Singh, a resident of I block in Lalita Park. In Vikas Marg, a commercial hub of East Delhi spread along the metro route in East Delhi, many shopkeepers have closed their godowns due to water seepage and generators have been put across.
New drug cheats cancer cells into dying

DRDO's Therapy Expected To Increase Success Rate Of Treatments Three-Fold

Pushpa Narayan | TNW

Chennai: India will soon launch a new spectrum of cancer drugs that will enhance the effects of radiation therapy by weakening the ability of the cancer cells to fight back. The drugs, developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), will work on all kinds of cancer, including complicated cases such as brain tumours and soft tissue cancer.

The therapy, experts say, will not only increase the success rates of cancer treatment by three times, but could come as a big boost to Indian medical research. Similar attempts in the West are yet to see desired results.

DRDO, after several years of clinical trials, has been able to prove the efficacy of 2-Deoxyglucose (2-DOG), which resembles glucose but has a slightly different chemical formula and structure, can 'confuse' and 'cheat' cancer cells to become weak. (2-DOG is a glucose molecule with the 2-hydroxyl group replaced by hydrogen.)

Cancer cells spend energy in sucking glucose from the body and then derive energy from these cells. When 2-DOG is infused into the body, usually 30 minutes ahead of radiation, the body cells and cancer cells spend energy in sucking glucose. But unlike glucose cells, 2-DOG gives them no energy.

"The cancer cells lose energy and become incapable of gaining any. At this time if we give radiation therapy, the cancer cells will not be able to fight back. So the treatment will be effective. This also brings down the intensity of radiation and minimises the side effects," said Dr. B.S. Dwarkanath, head, Division of Radiation Biology at the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

DRDO is awaiting clearance from the Drugs Controller General of India, after which production will begin. The technology has been transferred to Dr Reddy's Laboratories.

Earlier, former scientific advisor to the defence minister and secretary M Natarajan had said DRDO was also in the process of developing three bio-protectors. These are compounds derived from berries and tulsi, which show signs of protecting normal cells when they are subjected to radiotherapy or chemotherapy in animal trials. Advanced trials will soon begin," he said.

Dwarkanath and Natarajan were talking on the sidelines of the International Conference on Radiation Biology — Nanotechnology, Imaging and Stem Cell Research in Radiation Oncology at the Sri Ramachandra University. The conference is being held in association with the Indian Society for Radiation Biology.

The three-day conference will aim at minimising side-effects of radiation and enhancing the positive effects. Scientists will also discuss ways to prevent the recurrence of cancer through stem cell therapy and better drug delivery through nano technology. The programme will cover all major disciplines of radiation sciences, including physics, chemistry, biology and medicine. More than 100 experts from the US, Germany, Canada, Poland, Japan and other countries are attending the conference.

Classes begin in semester mode in DU

1st-Year Students Show Up In Strength In 31 Colleges Offering Science Courses

Manish Pratim Gohain | TNW

New Delhi: It was altogether a new day at the Delhi University (DU) campus on Tuesday as teachers in 31 DU colleges, offering science courses, started teaching in the semester mode and first-year science students showed up in full strength to attend their classes.

Responding to Delhi University Teachers' Association (DUTA)'s call, DU teachers had so far been resisting the implementation of the semester system at undergraduate level and were not teaching as per the new system since the start of the academic session from July 2010.

Principals, too, across colleges heaved a sigh of relief as the stand-off between the teachers and the university administration, which had held the academic process to ransom, came to an end. S R Garg, president, Principals' Association, and principal, Deen Dayal Upadhyay College, said: "We are relieved that the academic process can now be initiated smoothly. Now we have to compensate the time lost and help the students prepare for their exams."

Meanwhile, the staff council of Kirori Mal College which had earlier decided to keep the semester calendar and routine, prepared by the principal, in abeyance has now decided to teach as per semester mode with immediate effect. KMC principal, Bhim Sen Singh said, "The staff council has given it in writing that they are going to teach in semester mode, which is a positive move for the academic calendar. On the issue of disbursing the salaries of the teachers, I will act as per the directives of the chairman of the College Governing Body. This decision has come as a blessing to the new vice-chancellor and I hope the university will progress at a faster pace under his leadership."

The students also seem to be confident that their teachers would be able to complete the course by January. While Delhi University Students Union (DUSU) has welcomed the high court decision, students said teachers have already started taking stock of the semester syllabi and teaching it. "If the teachers wish they can complete the syllabi by January and exams can be conducted," said Shweta Sethia, a first-year BSc student of Kirori Mal College.

Giving a thumbs up to the semester system, a first-year student of chemistry, Gaurav Dahiya said: "Semester system is best for us."

Meanwhile, following the high court verdict and DUTA's appeal to the teachers on Monday to teach in semester mode, a rift seems to have appeared within the teachers' body. A DUTA member said, "It is unfortunate that DUTA in an ex-ecutive meeting decided to ask the teachers to come back to teach in semester mode. They could have at least asked for a day stating that being a democratic organization they need to go back to the general body. After creating such a fuss and disrupting all academic activities we have brought shame to the teaching community."
Off beaten track:
IIM-B student to intern with Cong

Sruthy Susan Ullas | TNN

Bangalore: Aware that one can't get more off the beaten track of investment banking firms and FMCG giants for summer placements, IIM-Bangalore student Himanshu Meena will spend the summer of 2011 with the grand old party of India — the Congress.

An internship is mandatory in the post-graduate programme at the IIMs and November is the month when companies come calling at campuses for summer placements, as they are popularly known because the internships take place in April-May. However, seven students from IIM-B decided to skip the placements and go for internships by themselves. Himanshu is one of them.

Himanshu plans to establish a political strategy firm which will act as a consultancy for political parties.

“T observed campaign strategies during the American presidential election. A friend's family is in politics here. It's such an unorganised sector in India and a lot of work needs to be done. There is lots of money with little or no organisational skills. I realised there is scope and wanted to get a feel of what's actually happening,” said Himanshu.

Himanshu got in touch with other IIM alumni already in this field about the prospects. He then approached Jitendra Singh, the MP of Alwar, from where he hails.

“I have no political inclinations. I went to AICC because I knew Singh. He responded positively. If they had rejected me, I would have gone to some other party,” he said.

At AICC, Himanshu will be involved with the media cell, campaign management and part of the campaign in the West Bengal polls. “There's something called the media worm in the media cell. It formulates strategies of campaigning and projection of leaders. Branding of leaders is important, especially for a party like the Congress, where the Gandhis are the icons. I'll compare it with other political campaigns,” Himanshu explained.

Though internship is for two months, the process has started. Himanshu is working on a study to be submitted to Jitendra Singh. “I hope to meet Rahul and others in the AICC. It'd be great to meet leaders like Sonia Gandhi and Ahmed Patel,” he said. Himanshu won't be paid a stipend. “I don't mind. All I'm looking for is good exposure,” he said.
Software to help actors regain youth onscreen

London: Actor Jeff Bridges is all set to play a younger version of himself with the help of a new computer technology that will enable the 60-year-old Oscar winner to reverse his age by three decades onscreen.

The new technology has made it possible for makers of the film to record the actor's facial movements in minute detail and then superimpose them onto a digital model of his younger self in TRON: Legacy, a 3D Walt Disney production to be released next month.

Bridges starred in the original film 28 years ago and has now revived the role of video games developer Kevin Flynn, who gets trapped in a cyber universe for 20 years, the Sunday Times reported.

Visual effects supervisor Eric Barba said in a statement that the new technology makes it look like that the younger version of Bridges is on screen.

“He is the first actor in cinematic history to play opposite a younger version of himself. This opens up the way for storytellers to tell more interesting tales — tales that couldn’t have been told before,” he said.

Bridges, who picked up an Academy Award for last year’s Crazy Heart, said the development marked “a new era of film-making.”

“I love going to movies myself and whenever I see a big, epic film where the character has aged from being a boy to an old man, traditionally there are different actors playing him,” he said.

“That’s always a little bump for me when they change from one actor to the next. But now... it’s gratifying to know that I can play the character myself at any age.

It’s really the beginning of a new era of film-making,” Bridges added.

To simulate a younger man’s gait, Bridges’ digital head was planted onto a younger body double that shot the same scenes as the veteran star, repeating his movements.

As well as allowing actors to play younger versions of themselves, the programme will also let them grow old gracefully.

The technology was first used in The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, starring Brad Pitt.

Rewrite history with Star Trek-style cloak

London: Jewellery robbers, magicians, exam cheats and practical jokers everywhere will have an interest in an offbeat idea launched by physicists on Tuesday: to make the passage of time invisible.

The scientists have conceived of a “spacetime cloak” which manipulates light and, in essence, conceals whole events from a viewer.

The theory is based on censoring the flow of events, which we perceive as a stream of light particles, also called photons, that strike the retina. By exploiting a characteristic of fibre optics, the flow of photons can be slowed, events edited out and stitched back together, say the team from Imperial College London and Salford University, northwestern England.

“A safecracker would be able, for a brief time, to enter a scene, open the safe, remove its contents, close the door and exit from the scene, whilst the record of a surveillance camera apparently showed that the safe door was closed all the time,” according to their paper.

Lead scientist Martin McCall said, “If you had some-one moving along the corridor, it would appear to a distant observer as if they had relocated instantaneously, creating the illusion of a Star Trek transporter.”

The theory is expounded in a daunting series of equations and diagrams in the Journal of Optics, published by the Institute of Physics.

In the example of the safe cracker, the “leading” segment (the image of the un molested safe) would be slowed down. The middle segment, of the robber opening the safe and making off with the contents would be edited out, disappearing into a “spatio-temporal void”.

The final segment — of the safe room apparently untouched — would be accelerated so that it catches up with the leading segment and dovetails seamlessly with it. AGENCIES
SHORT CUTS

In a first, Japan spacecraft captures asteroid dust

A Japanese spacecraft that returned to Earth in June successfully captured dust from an asteroid for the first time in history, scientists said. JAXA, the Japanese space agency, said an analysis of samples brought back by the Hayabusa spacecraft showed some came from an asteroid called Itokawa, which could offer insight into the creation and makeup of the solar system. It is only the fourth set of samples to be returned from space in history — including moon matter collected by the Apollo missions, comet material by Stardust, and solar matter from the Genesis mission. The spacecraft's capsule landed successfully in the Australian Outback in June after a seven-year, 4 billion-mile (6 billion-kilometer) journey, despite a series of technical glitches that threatened the mission.

Troposphere is warming too: Not only is Earth's surface warming, but the troposphere — the lowest level of the atmosphere, where weather occurs — is heating up too, US and British meteorologists reported. In a review of four decades of data on troposphere temperatures, experts found warming in this key atmospheric layer was occurring, just as many researchers expected it would as more greenhouse gases built up and trapped heat close to the Earth. This study is one of several published this year pushing back against those who doubt the reality of climate change and the role human activities play in it.

First stroke stem cell trial starts:
Doctors in Scotland working with British biotech company ReNeuron have treated the first patient in a pioneering clinical trial to test whether stem cell therapy can help patients disabled by stroke. The trial is the first in the world to use neural stem cell therapy in stroke patients, its organizers said on Tuesday. Keith Muir of the University of Glasgow's Institute of Neuroscience and Psychology said the first patient had undergone a successful surgical procedure and been discharged from hospital.
Once-in-a-lifetime vaccine can ward off all flu strains

London: Coming soon: A once-in-a-lifetime flu jab which fights off all strains of the disease, according to American scientists.

A team at the National Institute of Health in Maryland is developing the new vaccine which it claims would fight off all strains of the disease — from the winter flu to deadly pandemic viruses. Described as the “holy grail” of flu research, the scientists say that the jab would be available within five years’ time, the Daily Mail reported.

In fact, the new drug uses DNA to trick the body’s immune system into producing antibodies against the protein’s base instead — the “lollipop stick”. And, just one or two shots could provide lifelong protection, say the scientists. Unlike the head, the “stick” changes little from strain to strain, meaning one vaccine should protect against multiple strains of the virus.

Heart attack risk? Blood test to tell

US researchers said they have developed a new blood test that may help predict the risk of heart failure in older adults who appear to be in good health. The test measures level of troponin T, which is a marker for the biological process of cell death that leads to heart failure, said the study. AFP

Gary Nabel, the institute’s director of vaccine research, used the DNA from the protein to trick animals’ immune systems into producing antibodies that seek out and destroy the bug. The team then gave a “booster shot” of a harmless flu or cold virus to ratchet up immune response. This primer-booster approach killed off a flu virus from 2007 and one from 1934, despite the DNA coming from a strain circulated in 1999. PTI
Malaria vaccine in final trials

Rupali Mukherjee | TNN

Mumbai: Traditionally Big Pharma has invested and relied on blockbuster drugs, and has not been too keen on research in neglected diseases. But now the scenario may be changing with some companies like GlaxoSmithKline looking at it as a possible strategy for growth in emerging markets, which are growing at a much faster rate (mostly in double digits) as against the developed regions. GlaxoSmithKline, which has blockbusters like respiratory medicines Advair and Avamys, plans to invest around £12m per year (from 2012) in its albendazole drug programme for treating children with intestinal worms in Africa and India.

In an interview with TOI, GSK chief executive Andrew Witty gives details about the pharma giant's R&D efforts in neglected diseases, including the Nashik facility, and the vaccine for malaria which may soon be a reality.

What percentage of the company's expenditure is allocated for neglected diseases worldwide?

We don't report allocation of expenditure by therapy area. We do have a research centre in Tres Cantos, Spain, that is dedicated solely to the diseases of the developing world. We recently opened this up to allow teams of international scientists to come and work alongside our scientists collaboratively to pursue their own projects—tapping into our expertise, know-how, and facilities. We have set up an independent foundation with a bursary of $3 m to fund up to 60 independent researchers to come to Tres Cantos.

What are the neglected tropical diseases that GSK is working on?

GSK has active research and access programmes for a number of the neglected tropical diseases—our R&D portfolio for diseases of the developing world includes projects for 12 diseases of particular relevance to developing countries: bacterial meningitis, chlamydia, Chagas disease, dengue fever, hepatitis E, HIV/AIDS, malaria, pandemic flu, pneumococcal disease and TB.

When will be vaccine rollout and at what price?

GSK's malaria vaccine is now in late-stage clinical trials across seven countries in Africa and we expect data from these trials next year.

We ran a big Phase II trial which gave us very encouraging signals for efficacy, and we are now in Phase III (final stage) to confirm the safety profile of the vaccine. Roughly, as of today, about 11,000 people have been vaccinated and that number may already be a little out of date. We should have that trial finished very soon and I would expect that we see the final data, or at least pivotal data, from that trial somewhere around the end of 2011 or beginning 2012. I hope that will give us confirmation of the profile of the vaccine and it is appropriate to go forward for registration, and we shall then start registration and accreditation process.

We shall price this medicine at the cost of its manufacture, plus a very small return, by which I mean around 5%, which we commit to redeploying to research.
Asha set to rock IIT

Soon after the conclusion of the Global Indian Music Awards (GIMA), Asha Bhosle has begun preparing for a concert at the Mood Indigo cultural festival. To be held in December, Bhosle's performance at the IIT Mumbai-organised event will see her singing songs from her album, Rahul and I (in which she remixed RD Burman songs), remixed as rock music.

The singer, who has never performed at a college fest before, says, “I want to see what college kids like, how they react to the music. IIT is one of the most prestigious institutes in the country and I’ve been told that people from lots of places come to see the performances. That’s what got me excited.”

Bhosle says she has always been clued into Western music, and idolises Frank Sinatra and Carmen Miranda. “I loved Miranda’s style of singing and I would try to sing in a similar manner. Rock 'n' roll had caught on in those days and it felt nice to be able to experiment with your sound,” Bhosle recalls.
Skills get top priority

UK Minister of State for Universities and Science David Willetts talks to Ayesha Banerjee about encouraging the flow of British students to India, the launch of UKIERI-II, working out ways to ensure the success of India’s ambitious innovative universities plan, and delivering skills training up. He wants them to be organised around themes. We have to talk to India’s ministers who can help with this. This morning, I had a conversation with the minister for higher education in the University of Dundee, which is one of our most successful research-led universities in Scotland, and he says they are the first to reorganise the University around two or three key themes like sustainable development and life sciences. So, as one of Britain’s leading life sciences universities gets reorganised, we can perhaps get a way in which we can link up with some of the innovative universities that has a similar theme.

The second area of cooperation in mobility of students that we have touched upon, of British students coming to India and Indian students going to Britain is a framework for the mutual recognition of qualifications. The third area is leadership networking, for which 800 new universities are being created in India. But we have to look at ways in which Britain can help.

You have said you support innovation and education and are formed to working with new technologists - could you please elaborate on top?

We have 250 new universities in India and 800 new universities are being created. We have to look at ways in which Britain can help.

What is being done to protect the interests of Indian students in the UK?

We have a shared interest in this. Britain welcomes Indian students of high quality to our universities. What we are worried about is the abuse of the system. Some Indian agents charge high fees for access to a British university, which is a very small university.

Where are the two countries cooperate when it comes to research?

There is a very strong and growing research link between our two countries. There is a very small university that can give you this assurance. One example is medical research and good areas of cooperation are type 1 diabetes. My understanding is that people of Indian and Indian origin are in particular risk of developing type 1 diabetes and of course we have many people of Indian and Indian origin in Britain, so we have a shared agenda in treating the ailment. There is a research programme in one of our universities in type 1 diabetes. The second example is social sciences in bringing the urban-rural divide. In India, people are in rural communities where access to services is much harder, but we have to see what extent we can deliver services online, and where we can work out such research positions together.

Where institutes in the UK can offer specialist skills in India?

There are a number of technologies - the biggest is medical research. We have seen some encouraging successes in broader areas such as in the Open University. I think the hope is that in India they can help in teacher training in India.

What about the interest being brought about in the British education system?

We are bringing in some reforms. One in three of these grants, students are left the money to pay for fees. There is no way you can then pay for fees. The regime of overseas students is different and that will be very different. These reforms will strengthen Britain’s universities. We have also been able to produce research and science-based, so this will continue to have world-class research and scientific research going on in Britain’s world-class universities. As I said, I want to encourage these flows both ways. Indian academic has a very high reputation and we have some interesting evidence that research conducted by people from more than one country scores more highly, is more likely to be cited in academic journals than research based in one country. So, research that has British and Indian scores is very valuable.

What’s special about your visit to India this time?

I am going to Bangalore where I will be visiting the Indian Space Research Organisation. It could be another good example of joint cooperation. India has launch capacity which we don’t. We have a launch vehicle and we do. Britain is very strong in satellite technology. We make the world’s best small satellites and the plan is to see if we can get a launch vehicle and we do. Britain is very strong in satellite technology. We make the world’s best small satellites and the plan is to see if we can get a launch vehicle and we do. Britain is very strong in satellite technology. We make the world’s best small satellites and the plan is to see if we can get a launch vehicle and we do. Britain is very strong in satellite technology. We make the world’s best small satellites and the plan is to see if we can get a launch vehicle and we do. Britain is very strong in satellite technology. We make the world’s best small satellites and the plan is to see if we can get a launch vehicle and we do. 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Deregulating education key to quality

HARNESS POTENTIAL. Use technology effectively, urge institutions to share resources, and lure bright Indians back home.

India can most certainly achieve the twin objectives of ensuring access to and quality in education, going ahead. It will be a challenge, but one that can be overcome.

In the report of the National Knowledge Commission, we have specifically talked about how India needs to tackle both increasing access to education and improving the quality of education it provides its students.

To succeed, India needs to use technology more effectively than it is at present. The strategy needs to be for institutions to share resources - their infrastructure, teachers and knowledge.

If we set up new schools or colleges, but face a shortage of quality teachers, technology and innovation can come to our aid.

We can use video-conferencing facilities to ensure that students in the schools do not suffer from the absence of quality teachers.

The best teachers in Chennai can teach thousands of students using technology, instead of just the 50 in her classroom.

What is, however, true is that we in India have not yet recognised adequately the full potential of technology in helping us achieve these twin goals - of not just providing educational opportunities to all, but ensuring that they receive quality education.

Each university vice chancellor will have to study his or her university's needs and infrastructure, and evolve a blueprint to best utilise technology to ensure that students get the most out of teachers, libraries and other infrastructure available.

Universities that have infrastructure that other universities want to share, or teachers they can learn from, must not think in narrow parochial terms about what they will gain in the short term by sharing.

Vice chancellors and universities will have to look not just at their university, but think from the perspective of India and all her students.

India is setting up a number of world-class institutions, particularly the Innovation Universities proposed by the Prime Minister. One of the challenges in establishing world-class institutions will be to attract quality faculty.

To bring back to Indian institutions some of the finest minds from our country who are teaching and pursuing research abroad, we need to pay them well.

Good pay will be the single biggest factor that will help us attract the best teachers and researchers to Indian institutions.

Top quality facilities and good research grants are the other areas we need to focus on and offer to the best brains in the world, if we want them to teach and pursue research at our institutions.

The Foreign Educational Institutions Bill, 2010, which was introduced in Parliament earlier this year, will also play a role in opening up our education sector to globally renowned institutes.

Foreign universities and research centres will be able to partner Indian institutions like never before.

Concerns that foreign universities coming to India - as a consequence of this legislation - will take away students and, most importantly, good teachers from Indian institutions are similar to the concerns voiced two decades ago that foreign companies coming to India would hurt domestic companies.

If India has to achieve its full potential in education, it needs to deregulate the sector. That is a must.

To those who criticise this approach or oppose the Foreign Educational Institutions Bill, I would say - look at the change in the Indian economy because of the reforms introduced over the past two decades.

Our economy was growing at 3 per cent before we liberalised. Today, we are on the cusp of 9 per cent growth. We need to do to education what we did to our economy.

As we work towards reforming our education sector, it is not just advisable but - I would say — mandatory that we look at other countries, including China and in the developed world, and study their success stories.

We must evaluate what they did to achieve the kind of growth they have witnessed in education - in such a short time. It would not make sense to try and reform the education system without studying successful models adopted by other countries.

- As told to Charu Sahana Kasturi (Sam Pitroda is the Prime Minister's adviser on public information, infrastructure and innovations)
Hindustan Times ND 17/11/2010  p-9

‘India is most vulnerable’

CLIMATE CHANGE Impact to be worse than what IPCC projected

NEW DELHI: As the world gets ready for another climate summit later this month in Mexico, a new government report has categorised India as one of the most globally vulnerable nations to climate change.

India’s temperature is predicted to rise by two degrees Celsius by 2030 unlike Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, which projected similar rise in temperature for south Asia by 2050.

In extreme cases, the report says temperature will rise by four degrees if global carbon emissions continue to grow at the existing rate.

Depicting scenarios for 2030 period as compared with 1970, country’s first indigenous climate change report, Climate Change and India, has predicted increase in overall rainfall but lesser number of rainy days.

“The incidence of cloud bursts in Himalayan regions and flash rainfall in other areas...will increase,” the report said.

This variation in rainfall pattern will mean that India’s main agriculture states such as Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, parts of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and Orissa will face more severe droughts, the report prepared by Indian Network for Climate Change Assessment (INCCA), said.

Its probable impact on agriculture could be huge, with the report, predicting fall in rice and maize production between five to 20% and in certain areas such as coast of Andhra Pradesh by up to 60%.

India needs an average rise in agriculture production of about 4% every year to ensure food at reasonable price to all the citizens.

“It (the report) indicates that we are one of the most vulnerable nations to global warming,” environment minister Jayram Ramesh said, while releasing the report with science and technology minister Kapil Sibal.

The INCCA is an attempt of the Indian government to thwart international climate science politics.

REGION-WISE TEMPERATURE VARIATION

Figures depict scenarios for 2030 as compared with projections made in 1970, in a government report titled Climate Change and India.

Impact on human health

Temperature rise (increase by) | Himalayan region | North-East region | Western Ghats & Coastal region
---|---|---|---
1.7°C-2.2°C | 1.5°C-2.1°C | 1.7°C-1.8°C
Rainfall (increase by) | 5-13% | 5-3% | 6-8%
Sea level rise (in mm per year): Cyclones: Number of cyclones will fall but their intensity will rise, especially in Bay of Bengal

Agriculture

Western Ghats: 4% fall in rice, 50% in maize and sorghum and 30% increase in coconut production.

Coastal region: Rice yield to fall by 10 to 20%, maize and sorghum by 15 to 30% and coconut production to increase by 10 to 30%.

North Eastern region: Rice yield may fall by 5 to 10% and maize to reduce by 40%.

Himalayan region: Apple production in Himachal will increase and line of production will shift to higher altitudes.

Hindustan Times ND 17/11/2010  p-13

Vedanta varsity project illegal: HC

ANOTHER BLOW Court tells Orissa to return land acquired for the ₹15,000 cr project to its owners

A recent stalling of the aluminium refinery expansion project and the order which halted the project has led to its suspension in the High Court.

Delivering their order in response to eight public interest petitions, a division bench of the high court comprising chief justice V Gopal Gupta and justice BP Das directed the Orissa government to return the acquired lands to the respective owners.

This is a historic judgment.

Vedanta had acquired fertile land by violating the land acquisition... WA BALLARSH RATHORE, BP

The lawyer for Vedanta University was not available for comment. A Vedanta spokesperson, not wanting to be named, said the group would take appropriate action after going through a copy of the order. Orissa agriculture minister Naveen Patnaik said, “We have not received the copy of the judgment yet. We will receive it, we will examine it and decide what to do.”

When we receive it (copy of verdict), we will examine it and decide what to be done.

Naveen Patnaik, Orissa CM

The foundation had earlier proposed to acquire about 8,000 acres of land in this project. The Odisha government had acquired around 8,000 acres of land for the project. The land was to be used for the construction of a power plant.

Patnaik had filed the highest court in 2007 challenging the acquisition process. The government had also questioned the court’s order. Patnaik had filed a case in the court.”
Govt pushes for online tracking of ragging cases

Charu Sudan Kasturi
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NEW DELHI: An anti-ragging website to track action taken on complaints of ragging may soon finally be ready for launch as the government counters scathing attacks from the father of medical student Aman Kachroo who died after brutal ragging.

The human resource development ministry prodded the University Grants Commission to expedite the launch of the website at a meeting called on Monday to evaluate the government's strategy to counter Raj Kachroo's allegations, government sources said.

The website will for the first time provide updates on action taken in cases of ragging complaints registered through national helpline that was launched last year.

But Raj Kachroo, who has accused the HRD ministry and the UGC of violating norms and the Supreme Court’s directions, effectively compromising the battle against ragging, dubbed the website plan a “gimmick.”

“It (the website) will only push the nation’s efforts against ragging further into a ditch,” Kachroo told HT.

The website plan envisages a facility through which educational institutions can update on the portal the action taken and progress made in each complaint pertaining to that institution. But the current model of the site leaves the updating exercise voluntary, Kachroo argued.

“Just like no one pays their electricity bill unless they face the threat of their connection being cut, colleges are unlikely to update facts of the case on their own voluntarily,” he said.

Instead, technology can be used to automatically make it mandatory for every institution to provide details of each to a central monitoring agency, which can transfer details of non-compliant institutions to regulatory bodies like the UGC for action, Kachroo argued.

The Supreme Court in a May 2009 verdict had laid down a four-pronged plan to counter ragging. The strategy outlined by the SC included the hotline, a monitoring mechanism, maintaining a database of all students and maintaining a database of all institutions.

The HRD ministry argues that the site will serve as a monitoring mechanism. However, the government does not have a database of students or institutions ready yet, sources said.
HC: Land acquisition for Vedanta university illegal

Our Bureau
NEW DELHI BHUBANESHWAR

VEDANTA promoter Anil Agarwal's plans to set up a university in Orissa on the Puri-Konark marine drive suffered a major setback on Tuesday, with the Orissa High Court declaring the state government's land acquisition procedures for the project illegal.

A division bench comprising chief justice V Gopal Gowda and Justice BP Das quashed the Orissa government's land acquisition notification on 17 counts. The bench also directed Vedanta to return the land awarded to the original owners. The Orissa government said it would "examine" the judgement. "We have not yet received a copy of the judgement. We will examine what needs to be done," chief minister Naveen Patnaik said.

At least two PILs and six individual petitions were filed in the high court since 2007, challenging the state government's notification on the land acquisition procedures. The petitions had said Land Acquisition (Company) Rules, 1963 had not been properly followed. The status of the company was also questioned on the ground that it was not properly formed according to the Company Act. Several sections under the Land Acquisition Act 1894 along with Land Acquisition (Amendment) Act, 1984 and Land Acquisition (Company) Rules 1963 and Companies Act 1956 were discussed during the combined adjudications of the petitions.

The petitioners argued that the proposed multi-disciplinary university project would have an extreme debilitating impact on the eco-system, and local bio-diversity. It was argued that the proposed university project site, which was to come up near Puri, about 60 km from state capital Bhubaneswar, was close to Balukhand Konark Black Buck Sanctuary and a river. There were objections to the inclusion of a large section of land belonging to Lord Jagannath temple in the proposed site. Congress leader Umabhav Rath, who filed the first PIL in the high court challenging the varisty project, described the judgement as the "victory of Lord Jagannath." The HC judgement had saved about 500 acres of temple land from being given away for setting up Vedanta University. Mr Rath said.

The high court order is in line with the recommendations of Orissa Lok Pal Justice PK Patra. He had recommended the appointment of a competent authority to thoroughly probe and inquire into the land deal for the proposed institution. The Lok Pal has indicted the Naveen Patnaik government, particularly the chief minister's office, and accused four senior government officials of acting hastily in handing over the land to the foundation. According to the Lok Pal report the state government's acquisition of the land for the university was illegal as the foundation was not a public company under the Companies Act.

The environmental and coastal regulatory zone clearances for the proposed university have been held in abeyance since May. The decision was taken after the environment ministry received information alleging irregularities, illegal and unlawful deeds by the Anil Agarwal Foundation. The project had been given clearance in April. On April 16, the ministry had granted conditional environmental and CRZ clearance to the Anil Agarwal Foundation which is building the university, while setting about 50 conditions. The CRZ area. The ministry had simultaneously invited objections from the public about the clearance. According to the conditions, the foundation has to get necessary permission and a no-objection certificate from the ministry as the project is situated less than 200 metres of Balukhand reserve forest and wildlife sanctuary.

Sterlite Foundation, a private limited company which later changed its name to Vedanta Foundation in 2004, entered into an MoU with Orissa government on July 19, 2006 to set up a university near Puri. The company had proposed to set up the university for undergraduate and post graduate courses in engineering, medicine, management, general science and humanities. It had asked the government to make available vast areas of contiguous land around Nuanal along Puri-Konark Marine Drive. Accordingly the Orissa government confirmed availability of contiguous land of about 8,000 acres and subsequently notifications were issued for acquiring 6,500 acres including about 500 acres of land belonging to the Lord Jagannath temple.
Mecca of IIT-JEE tutorials losing its winning ways

Poor Results, High Cost Of Living Hit Kota

Rituraj Tiwari

STANDING outside the three-storey hostel for students who runs in Kota, 250 km south of Rajasthan’s capital Jaipur, Rakesh Jain looked up to the skies worrying about the future.

Until a few months ago, all his troubles seemed far away. In this hub of institutes that train students for entrance exams to some of the most reputed academic institutions in the country, especially IITs. And there was no reason to lose sleep because since the mid-90s, things only got better for providers of tutorial services or related businesses such as Jain. Till this year, that is.

In the past few years, nearly 30% of those selected to IITs were from Kota institutes. In 2008, six of the top 10 ranks in IIT-JEE were from institutes from Kota; last year the figure fell to three, and this year, to nil.

Jain knows he has to cut down on the hedges because there is a massive slide in students coming to Kota.

Kota tutorials step in to make stay affordable for aspirants

From Page 1

E ARLIER this year, Millennium Reliance Investment Advisors, a joint venture between Millennium Capital and Reliance Enterprises, invested $60 crore in Recosonic, a Kota-based tutorial institute. But competitor Career Point went a step ahead. After raising $50 crore through a private equity investment by Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund in July 2009, it went public, raising $115 crore.

But the overwhelming investor response to Career Point’s IPO doesn’t hint at, in any way, the mood on the ground in Kota, headquaters of the institute and home to as many as 25 other major tutorial services centres.

DREAM RUN NO MORE

Last year, there were 1.25 lakh “out-station” students in Kota — that is the total number of students who come from elsewhere and joined coaching classes and schools here. This year, there was a dip. Until this year, for a few years now, on an average, as high as 30,000 new students landed yearly in Kota, say industry insiders. This year, around 8,000 new students arrived, resulting in a huge decline in the total number of students, which has, in the process, also hurt allied services such as boarding and catering.

It is not just the recent decline in number of students who cracked the entrance exams to IITs or medical colleges that is to blame for Kota’s fall from grace, say tutorial service providers. Most of them also attribute the phenomenon to the steep rise in the cost of living here.

A student now has to pay $3,000 a month for a non-air-conditioned single-room in a hostel close to tutorial institutes. The rates have doubled from a few years ago, say people close to the matter. For air-conditioned rooms, they pay $7,000 now, compared with $3,000 a few years earlier.

“The cost index has gone beyond the affordability limits of most parents. On an average, the living cost of a student in Kota comes out to be $22-34 lakhs per annum which includes $70,000 for IIT coaching, $15,000 for school tuition fees, $1.2 lakhs for boarding and lodging and $50,000 on miscellaneous expenses,” says Pramod Bansal, chief executive of Bansal Classes.

Students typically join these training institutes in May for a two-year schooling and entrance exams training course. Such centres also offer crash courses in the run-up to entrance exams held in May-June.

COUNTING THE COST

Kishore Khandelwal, who rents out one of his houses to students, says one cannot have their desire to the entry of big players — the builders — in the hostel business. “They bought land at exorbitant prices near these institutes, constructed hotels with modern facilities. Now they are left with no other option but to ask high rentals so that they reach the break-even point quickly. This probably has turned off aspirants who can’t afford to stay in the vicinity of institutes,” says he.

Surendra Soni, who runs a hostel in Kota, says the mad rush for the big buck started only in 2007, following the Centre implement the Sixth Pay Commission’s recommendations. “I have been in this business for seven years. The rent had been constant at $800-1500 a month per head. But with the Sixth Pay Commission’s recommendations coming into force and salaries jacking up in the private sector, parents started demanding air-conditioned comfort for their wards,” he notes.

Now, stung by this cost-hug, institutes are changing budget locations for their students. “We are trying to forge tie-ups with hotels for providing boarding facilities for our students at reasonable rates. If we succeed in bringing down the cost, they will be back,” says Munjul Sharma, vice-president (operations and business) at Resonance, adding that the tutorial services business in Kota has taken a hit also because teachers trained there have set up coaching centres elsewhere.

STUDY LOCALLY, CUT EXPENSES

All this means parents are increasingly looking at way to stay closer home, away from Kota, and still avail of study material from its institutes to cut costs.

“Parents are forced to get their children admitted to coaching institutes in their respective cities and subscribe to test papers of any Kota-based institute for practice,” says Mr Bansal. Students can place orders for study material online from any of the major tutorial institutes in Kota.

On their part, people in Kota’s catering business complain of “nurmed business” in recent months. Says Ankit Mathur, a catering centre owner at Dalalbari, Kota: “The entire economy is based on the coaching industry here. Almost every house has been converted to a hostel and every kitchen a dinning centre to serve out-station students. This year is bad for us, as there is a drastic fall in out-station students. If this becomes a trend, it is very bad for us.”

MAGIC ON THE WANE?

Pramod Maheshwari, director of Career Point, argues that “one year alone can’t dictate the face of Kota”. This year, unlike previous ones, the best Kota-trained IIT aspirant could score only the 11th rank in the Joint Entrance Exam.

“Magic of Kota has vanished. There is a downturn in Kota,” he adds. The $600 crore industry in Kota has, in the past few years, seen 20-25% year-on-year growth until it slowed to 5% this year.

Another issue that plagues the tutorial services industry in Kota — the district that has in a brief period become synonymous with the national tutorial services industry itself — is peer pressure, leading to rise in suicide rates among students. This is one reason why many parents refuse to send their children to this highly intensive battleground of the IIT-Joint Entrance Examination. “We can’t take a chance with our son,” says Surendra Singh, a parent in Kota.

Career Point’s Mr Maheshwari, however, blames the parents. “They are well aware of the potential of their wards. Even then, under the influence of their neighbours and relatives, they force their children for IIT and medical preparation,” says he. Maybe he is right. But you could see on Mr Maheshwari’s face what you saw on Rakesh Jain’s worry.
IIMs see buoyant summer placements

BS REPORTER
Ahmedabad, 16 November

The summer placement season has been buoyant at the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs). There were 100 offers even before the formal process for IIM Calcutta (IIM-C) students. Those at IIM Kozhikode saw an 80 per cent rise in stipends. All 414 students at IIM Lucknow (IIM-L) have got internships.

At IIM Ahmedabad, two clusters have successfully concluded the placement process. Quite a few had opted for non-profit organisations even before the start of the process. “A few students had chosen to work with political parties in 2008-09, leading to speculation that this move had more to do with the economic recession, rather than with individual passion. With four students having already opted out of placements to join non-profits before the start of the placement process, even though the job market is significantly buoyant, we are happy to have put such speculation to rest. IIM-A students are increasingly valuing placement services as a means of pursuing their dreams, rather than merely chasing monetary benefits,” said Saral Mukherjee, placement chairperson at IIM-A.

IIM-A began its cohort-based placement process last Friday, which comprised three cohorts including international investment banks, global strategy consulting and private equity, venture capital and investment management firms. Around 25 recruiters visited the campus in Cluster 1, while 30 offered roles during the second cluster.

Regulars included McKinsey & Co, BCG, Bain & Company, Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan, Morgan Stanley, Nomura, Unilever, Procter & Gamble, and Microsoft, apart from first-timers like T Rowe Price and UAE Exchange. The second cluster saw cohorts such as Indian investment banking, global banking and financial services, general management etc.
IIMs call for diversity, change in CAT format

Directors concerned over bias towards quantitative aptitude

THE Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) need to have a more diverse student profile in terms of academic background and genders, directors of several IIMs have said, calling for a change in the Common Admission Test (CAT) format.

The directors of IIM, Calcutta, Bangalore, Indore and Ranchi noted that there had been a greater presence of engineering students in the institutions, while girls accounted for only 10 per cent of the students.

“We feel we need to change the way CAT is conducted. Despite efforts to get students from other backgrounds, the number of engineering students has actually increased. The blame is on our admission process,” IIM-Lucknow director Devi Singh observed.

Singh and directors of other IIMs were speaking at a discussion programme on the occasion of the golden jubilee celebration of IIM-Calcutta (IIM-C) on Monday.

They all expressed concern over the quantitative bias in the CAT.

“We are now going to take the issue seriously but cannot assure whether this could happen from next academic year,” IIM-C director Shekhar Chaudhuri said.

It has been found, he said, that on an average girls account for only 10 per cent of the students studying in IIMs, while in other B-schools, the average number is as high as 40 per cent.

The reason for high entry of engineering students into the IIMs is because the CAT gives emphasis on quantitative aptitude, IIM-Indore director N Ravichandran said.

The minister of state for human resource development D Purandeswari had earlier stressed on inclusiveness of management education.

“Though, the demand for management education has increased by leaps and bounds, the IIMs have not been able to respond adequately,” she had said while addressing the inaugural session of the IIM-C golden jubilee celebration.
Asian giants upstage West in the talent pool of science

By Dinesh C. Sharma in New Delhi

THE POWER equations in the arena of science and knowledge creation are changing rapidly. The dominance of the US, Europe and Japan is eroding with the emergence of China, India and South Korea as formidable players in the global research and development (R&D) pecking order, the Unesco Science Report 2010 has revealed.

In 1990, over 95 per cent of R&D was carried out in the developed world and just seven members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) accounted for more than 92 per cent of world R&D. The share of the US, Japan and European Union in global research and development has dropped to 75 per cent in 2007. In contrast, Asia, led by China, India and South Korea, has increased its share from 27 to 32 per cent between 2002 and 2007.

"We seem to be on the verge of a structural break in the pattern of knowledge contribution to growth at the level of the global economy," the report says. "Achieving knowledge-intensive growth is no longer the sole prerogative of the highly developed nations of the OECD."

While investment in R&D is growing globally in volume, emerging countries are clearly gaining strength in science and technology. This is reflected in the rising gross domestic expenditure on research and development of countries like China. Besides R&D investments, the report also measures other indicators like number of research papers published and patents filed.

India's share of research papers has gone up from 2.6 to 3.7 between 2002 and 2007. China has increased its share of US patents from 3.5 to 4.7 per cent of all patents filed, but India still lags behind with just 0.5 per cent of all US patents.

"The bipolar world in which science and technology were dominated by the triad made up of the European Union, Japan and USA is gradually giving way to a multi-polar world, with an increasing number of public and private research hubs spreading across North and South," points out Unesco director general Irina Bokova in her foreword to the report.
IIT की मेरिट लिस्ट से बाहर हुआ कोटा, हल नहीं हो रहा महंगाई का सवाल

आशुराज तिवारी
कोटा

लाभी नगरी जयपुर से 250 किलोमीटर दक्षिण कोटा में छात्रों के अपने तीन मंजिला होस्टल के बाहर खड़े होकर यात्रा जैन इन दिनों जब आसमान की ओर देखते हैं तो उन्हें बादलों के बीच आने वाला बादल की समस्याओं भी नजर आती हैं।

कुछ महीने पहले तक सब कुछ मस्त चल रहा था। देश के प्रतिष्ठित शैक्षिक संस्थाओं, खासगी से आईआईटी में दर्जशिकला दिलाने के लिए महंगे ट्रेनिंग इंस्टीट्यूट के इस गाड़ी को किसी भी तरह की दिक्कत की भनते तक नहीं लगी थी। 1996 के मध्य में यूरोपियन सेवाएं मुहैया करने वाले या जैन जैसे संबंधित कारोबार में शामिल लोगों के लिए हालात बेहतर होते ही होते जा रहे थे। बीते कुछ साल में आईआईटी के लिए चुने जाने वाले होम में लेते रहने के संस्थाओं से हैं। 2008 में आईआईटी प्रेमकेर पश्चिम के शीर्ष दस रैंक में से छह यहां के थे। लेकिन पेशेवर पर चिता की लकीरें उस वक्त बड़ने लगी, जब पिछली बार इसको तादाद घटकर तीन रह गई। और इस बार यह आकड़ा ही गया जीते।

1996 में कोटा में जे के सिंथेटिक लिमिटेड नामक बड़ा समय कारखाना बंद होने के बाद कई इंजीनियरों ने नौकरी कोई और वे साहज से चले गए। लेकिन डा. वी. के बेंसल जैसे कुछ लोगों ने रुकने का फैसला किया और आईआईटी में दर्जशिकला देने के इच्छुक छात्रों से फौस लेकर उन्हें प्राइवेट कोर्पोरेट देने का फैसला किया। उन्होंने कोर्स मैटेरियल अपडेट किया और विश्वसनीयों को शामिल किया और देखते ही देखते कोटा संगठित उद्योग में बदल गया। एक दशक में फांसे से अर्थ पर पहुंचा यह शहर इस कदम बनाते हुआ कि प्राइवेट इंस्टीट्यूट फंड ने जमकर निवेश करने का फैसला किया। एक मोटे अनुमान के अनुसार, पिछले साल इस इंडस्ट्री ने अपने संबंधित व्यवसायों के साथ मिलकर करीब 600 करोड़ रुपए का कारोबार किया।

> सुविधाएं महीने होने से आकर्षण घटा: पेज 2
आईआईटी की जमीन से हटाए अवैध निर्माण
करवाड़ में जेडीए ने दो दर्जन कच्चे-पक्के निर्माण ध्वस्त किए

पक्षी पत्ता नक्सा - जेडीए

नासिक रोड पर आईआईटी के लिए आवश्यक जमीन पर दूर अवैध निर्माण जेडीए के अतिरिक्त निर्माण करवाड़ ने समझता को ध्वस्त कर दिए। समझता इस बात से स्वीकार कर दी, जो हमें आवश्यक जमीन सही स्थान पर देने का निर्देश दिया। इस कार्य के लिए कुर्गरोज ने अपने रूप में दो दर्जन 15 पक्के निर्माण करवाड़ में जेडीए ने कार्य करवाय़।

कार्य देने के लिए हुई कार्यवाही

आईआईटी भवन के लिए दूर स्थान तक जमीन की तिथि होने के बाद जेडीए ने करवाड़ में सुलभ 2290 बोल्ड जमीन ध्वस्त की। इसमें 5 में जीवित जमीन ली जाती है और वह कार्यक्रम के साथ-साथ है। ध्वस्त करवाड़ हेल्प देने के लिए कुर्गरोज ने अवैध पक्के निर्माण ध्वस्त करवाए।

जेडीए ने कार्य करवाए, वहाँ जमीन के समझता को हटाए। कार्य करवाय़। ध्वस्त करवाए। जेडीए ने कार्य करवाए। ध्वस्त करवाए। जेडीए ने कार्य करवाए। ध्वस्त करवाए।