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It’s safe to remove brain tumours

Aditya Dev | TNN

Surgery: Forty-three-year-old Suzanne (name changed) from United Kingdom was diagnosed with brain tumour in 2007. Doctors had dismissed her first seizure, which occurred when she was pregnant, as a complication arising due to her pregnancy. But when the symptoms persisted even after the delivery, she had to undergo a thorough diagnosis and it emerged that she was suffering from a brain tumour.

Biopsy of the tumour revealed that she was suffering from a Grade IV (highest grade) brain cancer. Doctors said she would not survive beyond a year and asked her to take chemotherapy and radiotherapy sessions. But after undergoing a surgery and subsequent therapies, Suzanne has not only escaped from the jaws of death, but is also able to lead a disease-free life.

Mangal Roy (8) started getting headaches, which were associated with nausea, in February 2010. Over the next few days, his condition began to worsen and he had difficulty in walking. He would complain of his left side being numb and would frequently lose balance while trying to walk.

Doctors found a large tumour in his left cerebellar hemisphere, which is mainly responsible for maintaining the balance and coordination in the body. After surgical excision of the tumour, Mangal can now run and play like any other child of his age.

These patients have not only been given a new lease of life but are perfect examples of how perseverance and a positive approach, coupled with the right treatment, can go a long way in battling any disease. Dr A N Jha, chairman, Institute of neurosciences, Medanta, who treated these patients, said, “Neurosurgery today has become very safe for brain tumours and patients can lead a healthy life after surgeries.”

Speaking at the International Brain Tumour Awareness Week at Medanta on Monday, Dr Jha, said: “The latest technologies help surgeons to remove brain tumours precisely and safely. Timely diagnosis, technologically advanced surgery and precise means of delivering radiotherapy to the brain have enabled patients like Suzanne to survive against all odds and recover from one of the worst forms of brain cancer with minimum side effects.”

Dr Jha is credited with bringing the latest technology of BrainSUITE (Intraoperative MRI) to India.

Dr Naresh Trehan, CMD of Medanta, said, “We intend to dispel the notion that brain tumours are untreatable. There is a lack of awareness about the disease as well as the treatment options available for it. Patients leading a healthy life after treatment proves that treatment has become much more advanced and reliable now.”

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Academics to review top social science bodies

Akshaya Mukul | TNN

New Delhi: Some of country’s leading academics and education administrators have been roped in by the HRD ministry to review the working of four prestigious institutions — Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Indian Council of Social Science Research, Indian Council of Historical Research and Indian Council of Philosophical Research.

TCA Anant, secretary in the statistics and programme implementation, BS Chimni, professor in JNU, and BB Bhattacharya, vice-chancellor of JNU, will review the working of IIAS, Shimla. Historians Satish Chandra and Amiya Bagchi will review ICHR while ICSSR will be reviewed by a panel consisting of Deepak Nayyar, former vice-chancellor of Delhi University, Bakul Dholakia, former director of IIM Ahmedabad, and economist Kirit Parikh. Political scientist Rajiv Bhargava of Delhi University and Mrinal Miri, former VC of North-East Hill University, will review ICPR.
Obama may push India’s case for membership of elite N-clubs

Likely To Back Delhi For Seat At NSG Table

Indranil Bagchi | TNN

New Delhi: The India-US nuclear deal is poised to take another leap with US President Barack Obama expected to endorse India’s membership to the world’s top non-proliferation regimes, like Wassenaar Arrangement and Australia Group. Due to some NPT sensitivity, the US is likely to give “forward-leaning” support for a future Indian membership to the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

A possible Indian membership to these groups will not only open India Inc’s access to advanced and controlled technologies, it will also bring India into a tightly run club, which controls the flow of advanced military, civilian and dual-use technologies to non-members. This would be in sectors like avionics, composite materials, machine intelligence and robotics, sensors, signals processing, simulation, chemicals, pharmaceuticals etc. India now ranks fairly low in competitiveness in advanced infrastructure. This could change dramatically.

Essentially, it means benefits of nuclear deal can extend to not only civilian nuclear sector but cut across many applications, which, if utilised correctly, will open up a whole new universe to the Indian entrepreneurial class. “A strategic partnership with the US without a full-scope technology partnership would restrain India’s potential to build its socio-economic infrastructure,” Ravinder Pal Singh, international security expert, said.

In return, India will have to harmonise its export control regulations and keep a tight lid on who and where it exports to. But it means Indian companies can significantly improve their technological standing with a world of advanced technologies opening up. At present, Indian technologists, or companies, are not even in the running.

In 2005, Israel, another country that has not signed the NPT, signed a classified agreement with the US to adhere partially to the Wassenaar Arrangement and worked out its export control laws by 2007.

The membership to NSG is a little further down the line because some criteria has to be developed that will accept India as an NPT-compliant country rather than as an NPT signatory. Government sources believe 2008 waiver has opened the door for India. India is keen to become a member of NSG, because it wants to get into the commercial civilian nuclear business.

More importantly, India wants to get into the tent before the NSG decides to block enrichment and reprocessing technology for non-members which would seriously hamper the development of India’s civilian nuclear sector.
Killer protein found, to help cancer fight

London: For the first time, scientists have discovered an “assassin” protein which attacks and kills rogue cells to protect the human immune system, a breakthrough that can lead to new treatments for a host of diseases, including cancer, malaria and diabetes.

Using powerful electron microscopes, a team of Australian and British scientists found how the protein, called perforin, adopts a unique mechanism of punching holes in the cells that have become cancerous or infected by viruses. The the ten-year study published in Nature, is the first to show how perforin plays an important role of cleaning wayward cells that could otherwise cause several life-threatening diseases, including cancer.

Helen Saibil, who led the UK team at Birkbeck College, said, “Perforin is a powerful bullet in the arsenal of our immune system — without it we could not deal with the thousands of rogue cells that turn up in our bodies through our lives.”

“Perforin is our body’s weapon of cleansing and death,” said project leader James Whisstock from Monash University, Australia.

Experts say perforin works by punching holes in rogue cells that have been ‘hijacked’ by viruses or turned into cancer cells. The holes then allow toxic enzymes into the cells and destroy them.

According to the team, perforin works by punching holes in rogue cells that have been “hijacked” by viruses or turned into cancer cells. The holes then allow toxic enzymes into the cells and destroy them.

If perforin isn’t working properly the body can’t fight infected cells. And there is evidence from mouse studies that defective perforin leads to an upsurge in malignancy, particularly leukaemia, said Professor Joe Trapani, head of the Cancer Immunology Program at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Melbourne.

The scientists said the protein shared a number of molecular similarities with bacterial toxins like anthrax, listeria and streptococcus.
DU results to be online, VC tells teachers

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Teachers have been protesting against semesters for a variety of reasons. One of their concerns has been the declaration of results in time if exams are to be conducted every six months. According to the new vice-chancellor of Delhi University, professor Dinesh Singh, teachers need not worry about it as the automation process of the entire examination system is already under way.

Speaking to TOI, Singh said he was himself supervising the automation process. Some part of it is expected to be implemented in the postgraduate courses by this December itself. Singh said, “We will take care of the results. Teachers will just have to grade the scripts. I have all faith in them.” He added, “Everything will be available online and the marksheets would be printed automatically.”

Every academic detail of each student will be available in an online database by next year. It’s a part of the ongoing Student Lifecycle Management (SLCM) programme under which students will be given a unique identification number that can be used to access all background information. “Once the process is automated, the assessment will become much faster. Teachers will just have to check the scripts and award marks. Things like writing or typing names, numbers and other information will not be required. The university will just need a day or two to declare results,” a DU official said.
Climate game lets you decide Earth's fate

London: Ever wondered how one person could save the planet from the effects of climate change? A British-made computer game creates different ways of doing just that. 'Fate of the World' puts the Earth's future in players' hands, placing them in charge of an international environmental body which could save the world from the effects of rising greenhouse gas emissions or let it perish by continuing to rely on emissions-heavy fossil fuels.

Through different scenarios, players can explore options such as alternative energy sources to save the planet from rising temperatures, dwindling natural resources and a growing population over the next 200 years. The game departs from more mainstream action games by using data from real climate models and advice from scientists and economists. Reuters

Going full steam: At 33, we’re the busiest

London: Aged 33? Then it's the busiest period of your life, a survey has found.

According to the survey by internet mail provider Hotmail, 33 years is the age when the struggle to balance work, family and social activities takes up more time than at any other point in one's life. There is so much to do that a third of 33-year-olds say they get an average of only five hours sleep a night. Two thirds claim they spend more than 38 hours a week in office, the survey found.

And 60% say they are forced to double book work and social appointments to try to squeeze everything in, the Daily Mail reported. Once work and family commitments are dealt with, the average 33-year-old has only one hour a day left to do something they enjoy. 56% regularly need to take work home to complete it; 90% of 33-year-old women said they thought they were busier than men of the same age. This could be down to women juggling senior level careers, getting married and having a family.

Fiona Fyfe, from Hotmail, said, "The research statistics show we are all struggling to juggle the priorities in life. When we reach our thirties, our careers tend to be high pressured and we've more responsibilities in our lives."
EXPERT PANEL TO STUDY CHINA MODEL TO IMPROVE IITs

Charu Sudan Kasturi
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NEW DELHI: A panel of experts formed by HRD minister Kapil Sibal to draw up a blueprint for improving the quality of teaching and research at the Indian Institutes of Technology will leave for China on Tuesday. The team will take a close look at the success of Chinese institutes in science, engineering and research.

The team, headed by former Atomic Energy Commission chairman Anil Kakodkar, will visit Beijing, Shanghai and Hangzhou — in eastern China. Members will meet academicians, scientists, researchers and administrators, panel sources said. The other members are industrialist Hari Bhartia, IIT Madras professor Ashok Jhunjhunwala and HRD ministry additional secretary Ashok Thakur.

The move to study China to pull up the rankings of the IITs comes after top Chinese institutions have repeatedly outperformed their Indian counterparts in global rankings like the QS annual rankings.

Six Chinese universities figure in the top 200 ranks of the 2010 QS rankings — Peking University (rank 47), Tsingua University (54), Fudan University (105), Shanghai Jiao Tong University (151), University of Science and Technology (154) and Nanjing University (177).

In contrast, among Indian institutions, only IIT Bombay — at rank 187 — figures in the top 200. “There is no shame in accepting that select, top Chinese institutions are perceived as better in many respects than our top institutions like the IITs. Sometimes, you need to learn from those better in order to beat them,” said a panel member.

This represents the first occasion that a government team tasked with proposing education reforms has traveled to China and officially looked for tips there.
9 Indian research institutes get TTI grant

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Think Tank Initiative (TTI), a partnership of major donors, has awarded $21 million in grants to 16 independent policy research institutions in South Asia, nine of them from India. These include the Indian Institute of Dalit Studies; Public Affairs Centre; Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy; Institute of Rural Management; National Council of Applied Economic Research; Centre for Policy Research; Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability; and the Institute of Economic Growth and Centre for the Study of Developing Societies from India.

Long overdue

Speaking at a function here on Saturday where the grants were announced, Minister of State for Science & Technology, Prithviraj Chavan, said this kind of support was long overdue in India.

"While a lot of exciting things are happening with science and technology in India, almost nothing is happening in social science research and the creation of more high quality policy research organisations", the Minister said, according to an International Development Research Centre release here.

Strengthening research

The TTI is a multi-donor programme dedicated to strengthening independent policy research institutions in the developing world.

Correction

The cartoon showing the image of India published alongside the article, From California orange to Nagpur orange (Open Page, October 31, 2010), inadvertently left out certain areas of Jammu and Kashmir as shown in the official map of India. The error is regretted.
What ails education system

We are not using 90 per cent of our gene pool to generate a true knowledge-based society that can produce world-class leadership in various areas.

Pushpa M. Bhargava

Our entire education system—be it school education, higher education, vocational education, or computer education—has been working out for many years. In recent years, a new dimension of education, i.e., education in sciences or social sciences, engineering or medicine—is in a mess, barring a small number of exceptions. Let me state five major problems with our education.

Our state-run school system for Class I to X is a shambles. One just has to look at the report of the National University of Educational Planning and Administration on the state of our government schools to be convinced of that. In most cases, the facilities such as, teachers, buildings, lab equipment, and toilets for girls are virtually non-existent or inadequate. The Central Schools are an exception here and one can see a change in the system where only one in a hundred government schools can be considered to be well-run. This was not the situation till the 1960s, where the children of the rich and the poor all went to government schools or the schools run by bona fide trusts or societies with an altruistic motive. The national government schools started when we allowed setting up of private schools de facto, with a profit motive, and when the rich, the affluent and the powerful started sending their children to such schools, which on account of their high fees excluded over 90 per cent of children of school-going age. The Central Schools excelled the private sector because of the nature of their clientele. Not that private, fee-paying schools imparted first-rate education. Far from it, they provided an opportunity of segregation of the rich from the poor, which did not suit the rich. They realised that if every child in the country had equal opportunity of good education, they would not be able to exploit the remaining 90 per cent of the population. Let us remind ourselves of the late Atal Bihari Vajpayee's analysis of the last census which established that, at that time, 77 per cent of India's children were over 7 years of age, which, in terms of dollar parity, is like living on $2 a day in the US. Today, this amount may have risen to Rs 30, but the gap between the top 10 per cent and the rest has increased.

The Right to Education (RTE) Act is an eyewash. What it promises cannot be delivered as regards government-run schools or as regards those who cannot afford to send their children to private commercial schools, as long as such for-profit schools are encouraged. In fact, the Act is a deliberate ploy to transfer government money to private schools without commensurate benefit to society. The only solution would be (a) deregula-

Punjab Council of India and Nursing Council of India, appointed by the Acts of the Parliament, to accredit only those institutions that come up to the mark, and are widely known. The government has finally woken up to the fact that, in the case of MCI, has replaced the existing structure through an Act of the Parliament, with an interim governing board which does not have any of the present members of MCI on it.

In fact, all the 13 such councils that control professional training in the country should be abrogated and the recommendation of the Yash Pal Committee to set up a National Commission for Higher Education and Research, which would then set up systems for accreditation of professional institutions, should be implemented. In this connection, it will be amusing for readers to learn that as of January 2010, 1071 professionals are likely to be very good, there is no reason why they should not be convert-

of universities. This will also take care of set up a medical, engi-

cer, nursing or pharmacy college that will award degrees, and if you have a concept or a little money that you want to multiply, you rent a building and appoint an event manager whose job will be to get you teachers such as professors, equipment and even students on rent. The ongoing rate for such professors in India is Rs 40,000 per day; they are government money needed only for two-three days. Event managers set up your laboratories and do everything else to ensure that minimum requirements for recognition are satisfied. You then invite, say, the AICTE to send in an inspection team which would then be carefully selected to ensure that the college gets the recognition it has sought as long as it pays the bribe which is shared by all concerned, from top to downwards. When the inspection team arrives, you take good care of its members in ways that you do not need to mention again. The inspection team then gives you recognition. After the team goes away, the show is dismantled but you have the recognition, you can admit stud-

India's requirement of at least 3,000 universities with not more than 10,000 students each. Out of the remaining affiliated colleges, perhaps another couple of councils should be in the process of being upgraded to the level of universities. This should be given four to five years for improving themselves. The rest should be converted into vocational institutions. It should give itself a golden ticket after class-

e VIII, X or XII.

Another problem of higher education is the approval given by some governments to private universities, and also the fact that some of them are running without the required approval, with the government taking no action against them. These universities cover up their deficiencies by extensive advertisement. If our universities are good, they would no doubt be able to attract both talent and resources. Why is it that some colleges can give 50 million dollars as a gift to Harvard but not to any of our universities?

Coming to the problem of education such as in the area of medicine, engineering and nursing, the corruption in bodies such as the Medical Council of India (MCI), All-India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), Pharmacy Council of India and Nursing Council of India, appointed by the Acts of the Parliament, to accredit only those institutions that come up to the mark, is now widely known. The government has finally woken up to the fact that, in the case of MCI, has replaced the existing structure through an Act of the Parliament, with an interim governing board which does not have any of the present members of MCI on it.

In fact, all the 13 such councils that control professional training in the country should be abrogated and the recommendation of the Yash Pal Committee to set up a National Commission for Higher Education and Research, which would then set up systems for accreditation of professional institutions, should be implemented. In this connection, it will be amusing for readers to learn that as of January 2010, 1071 professionals are likely to be very good, there is no reason why they should not be convert-

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Another tragedy of higher education in the country is the utter lack of under-

standing of the requirements of high-

quality higher education at the univer-

sity level, by both, the Centre and state as well as the bureaucracy. Awareness of and respect for academic excellence in this country is distantly low not only in these groups but also amongst the so-called academicians themselves. And the reason for this is not far to seek. Our scientific and technological manpower is not a worry, but the just population of, at most, 100 million and not 1.1 billion; the rest of the over 90 per cent of our people have been excluded and continued to be excluded from the education system. This has led to a situation where, on one hand, we have a large number (over 80 per cent) of those who are recipients of higher education should never have been allowed to continue; on the other hand, we are not using 90 per cent of our gene pool to generate a true knowledge-based society that can produce world-class leadership in various areas, of quality and quantity that is India's right and obligation to provide.

To sum up, regarding education in our country, the diseases have been diagnosed and the cure seems in sight, but the political will to implement the cure is lacking. The reason is that the disease does not affect the rich, the powerful and the influential, i.e., the politicians, the bureaucrats and the leaders of business who use education entirely for personal gain and exploitation of the uneducated; the sheer excitement of knowledge that leads to pushing its frontiers is unknown to them (exceptions granted).

The situation cannot improve unless the increasing chasm between the minority of the privileged 5-10 per cent and the majority of the unprivileged, remaining 90-95 per cent, is bridged. That can only happen when our primary emphasis is on equity, and not on high growth rate or creating more billionaires. It is not surprising, that India has received no Nobel Prize in Science or in Literature after Rabindranath Tagore. Our future Nobel Prize winners will come from the over 90 per cent of India that lives today in less than, say, Rs 30 a day; for them India has untapped access to quality education at all levels.

The writer is a former Vice-Chairman, National Knowledge Commission

ADMISSION DEADLINE

From now, more information on Admission Deadline will be available online. Please visit The Tribune website at: www.tribuneindia.com and click on "Education" in the "Weekly Specials" section to get details.

Pervin Malhotra, Programme Coordinator, Centre for Educational Services, www.careerguidancetoday.com
On Rahul cue, Sibal talks student polls with V-Cs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 1

TWO days after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi took up the issue of student unions in three of UP’s universities with him, HRD Minister Kapil Sibal on Monday pursued the matter with the Vice-Chancellors.

Sibal dialled Banaras Hindu University (BHU) V-C Prof D P Singh while Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) V-C Prof P K Abdul Aziz called on the minister to discuss the matter.

Sibal said he spoke to the three V-Cs to convey to them the concerns raised by the students of Allahabad University, AMU and BHU. The students of these universities had met Sibal on Saturday, accompanied by Rahul, who is also a member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on HRD. Prof Azis told reporters that AMU would notify student union elections and hold them in January next year.

Maintaining that the students’ demand for holding the elections immediately was not feasible as examinations would be held on the campus between November 9 and December 23, the V-C said once the campus re-opened after winter vacation on January 14, the elections would be duly notified and held by January 24.

While the AMU last held student elections in 2007, the BHU saw it in 1997 and the Allahabad University in 2004.
लिप-लिपिस्टिक मामला कोर्ट पहुँचा

रुद्रकी (सं.)। घोषणा की चरित प्रतियोगिता लिप-लिपिस्टिक के आयोजन से उठा त्यूफ़न धमने का नाम नहीं ले रहा है। इस आयोजन के विरोध में एक व्यक्ति, नवाब दहन, हिंदू जागरण मंच जैसे संगठन तो आईआईटी के खिलाफ मोर्चा खोल ही चुके हैं, नहीं एक व्यक्ति ने प्रतियोगिता आयोजकों के खिलाफ मुकदमा दर्ज कराने के लिए न्यायालय का दरवाजा खोल दिया है। संजीव कौशिक नामक व्यक्ति ने रुद्रकी के न्यायिक दंडाधिकारी के न्यायालय में दफ्तर प्रक्रिया संहिता की धारा 156(3) के अनुसार प्रार्थना पत्र देकर इस प्रतियोगिता आयोजन के खिलाफ मुकदमा दर्ज करने के लिए रुद्रकी कोटवाली को आदेश दिए जाने की प्रार्थना की है। न्यायालय ने प्रक्रिया पर कोटवाली रुद्रकी से रिपोर्ट तलब की है। यदि उत्तर मामले में न्यायालय ने संजीव कौशिक की प्रार्थना स्वीकार कर ली तो लिपिस्टिक लगाने के लिए मुंह से लिपिस्टिक पकड़कर होटों पर लगाने का प्रदर्शन किया गया था। जिसे अपत्तिजनक मानने हुए विभिन्न कांग्रेस, संगठनों के लोगों ने विरोध जताया है। इस विरोध के चलते आईआईटी के प्रतियोगिता व गैर संबंध छात्र-छात्राएं सहमे हुए हैं।
आवेदन के लिए
ऑनलाइन प्रक्रिया

नई दिल्ली। आईआईटी जैसे प्रतिष्ठित इंजीनियरिंग संस्थाओं में दाखिले के लिए रजिस्ट्रेशन प्रक्रिया सोमवार से शुरू हो गई। ऑन लाइन आवेदन करने वाले छात्रों के लिए नौ सौ रुपए फीस चुकानी पड़ेगी, जबकि ऑफ लाइन आवेदन की फीस एक हजार रुपए है।

हालांकि हार्ड कॉपी से आवेदन करने वाले छात्रों को बैंक से आवेदन फार्म 12 नवंबर से ही मिलेगा। फार्म जमा करने की आखिरी तारीख 15 दिसंबर है। प्रवेश परीक्षा का आयोजन 10 अप्रैल को होगा। अनुसूचित जाति व अनुसूचित वर्ग के छात्रों को चार सौ रुपए और पांच सौ रुपए शुल्क देने होंगे।

लड़कियों को भी ऑनलाइन और ऑफलाइन आवेदन में क्रमशः चार सौ व पांच सौ रुपए आवेदन शुल्क देना होगा।
तनाव भगाने को योगा केंद्र

आईआईटी संस्थानों ने छात्रों के लिए खोले हैं काउंसलिंग केंद्र

आईआईटी मदरसा में भी गाइडेंस एंड काउंसलिंग सुनित बनी हुई है, जहां विकल्पक पूर्वक तीन बजे से तीसरे पहर तक उपलब्ध रहते हैं। इसके अलावा आईआईटी मुंबई में अस्पताल बना हुआ है, जहां एक डॉक्टर हमेशा छात्रों की सहायता के लिए उपलब्ध रहता है। इसके अलावा कुछ संस्थानों तो छात्रों को इस बात की सुविधा देते हैं कि वह अपना नाम लिखते बिना ऑनलाइन काउंसलिंग के द्वारा अपने समस्या का हल तलाश सकते हैं। आईआईटी मुंबई ऑनलाइन काउंसलिंग की सुविधा मुहैया करता है। वहां के रिजर्वेटेड प्रोग्राम के तहत एक छात्र किसी एक वर्ष या सेमेस्टर में कुछ कम पेपर ले सकता है। आईआईटी कनपुर के काउंसलिंग केंद्र से छात्रों को अपनी राहत मिल रही है। यहां काउंसलिंग लेने वाले ऐसे छात्रों की संख्या अधिक है जो छात्र माता-पिता और साथियों के दबाव के बजाए शैक्षिक दबाव की वजह से तनाव में आते हैं। यहां के द्वारा आईआईटी संस्थानों में जितेले पांच सालों में सात अत्यधिक मामले सामने आए हैं और इसकी सबसे बड़ी वजह मानसिक तनाव है।