Regulating private education

NDIA witnessed enormous growth in number of professional educational institutions in the past two decades. This happened mainly because the government allowed private players to come in the educational domain within the existing legal framework, without clearly spelling out the responsibilities of private initiators and without creating appropriate checks and balances on the operation of such institutions.

There was demand for engineering, medical and management graduates; the government was more than eager to support private initiatives and there were hawkish education inventors, mostly with links to the right politicians, who sensed the advantage and jumped onto the education bandwagon. They got land at discounted costs and electric power and water was also given to them on a priority basis. The only ones who got a bad deal were students and parents.

Muscle and money power became the dictating force in the system and wrong practices became the accepted norm. Unfair practices usually include demanding huge capitation fee and donations for securing admission, not recording payments made by the students, by not issuing receipts, non-transparent and suspicious mode of admitting students for professional courses, poor quality of education imparted, misleading students and parents by giving advertisements that are not real in terms of the quality of education and in terms of the facilities and infrastructure provided. The Tandon Committee set up by the MHRD to review the working of the deemed-to-be universities and later on the Officers Committee set up to address the aspects raised by the Supreme Court, stick to their earlier recommendations that 42 deemed-to-be universities, which have poor academic and other infrastructure, need to be closed.

The government, a year and a half ago, did create a bill to stop all unfair practices, which was later sent to the parliamentary committee. The parliamentary standing committee on HRD has recently made recommendations on amending the Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Technical Educational Institutions, Medical Educational Institutions and Universities Bill, 2010. The bill directs every college to disclose information about the admission procedure by publishing a prospectus, which is compulsory for all institutes. Such an approach will bring about public accountability of such institutes and will ensure that no unfair practices are being followed. The move to make disclosure mandatory and making the institute accountable for compliance with the bill is an improvement over the conventional inspection-based regulatory process that was in use. The bill will allow students or other stakeholders to challenge any unfair practices being followed by any of the institutes. The stakeholders can approach any tribunal or criminal court, which is competent enough to handle such complaints that arise out of unfair practices, and it will be the responsibility of the institution to present proofs to the contrary. The bill enforces imposition of monetary penalties on those who operate outside its provisions. Institutions performing fraudulently other than those closed in the prospectus and those demanding or receiving capitation fee or donations will be liable to pay an amount extending up to Rs 50 lakh. Institutions will be liable to pay penalty up to an amount of Rs 10 lakh in the case of withholding certificates or documents of students without sufficient and reasonable cause. Institutions that advertise misleading facts and untrue statements will be penalised with an amount extending to Rs 50 lakh. In the case of educational institutes committing offences that are not specified in the bill, the institution will be liable to pay penalty up to Rs 5 lakh.

The bill also specifies that no court shall have the jurisdiction to consider any disputes that arise from the actions taken or penalties imposed on any of the educational institutions by any competent authority entrusted by the bill such as state educational tribunal or national educational tribunal. In case of institutes accused of committing offences, it is the responsibility of the educational institute alone to prove that it has not committed the offence.

There are a few other bills pending before the Parliament. The passage of Educational Tribunals Bill, which seeks to provide for establishment of educational tribunals for effective and expeditious adjudication of disputes involving teachers and other stakeholders, is crucial as several other key legislations such as the Unfair Practices Bill and National Academic Depository Bill are intertwined with it and with each other. The government needs to ensure that if reforms have to be taken on a fast track mode, there is a well-defined mechanism to help those who suffer from unfair practices to get speedy justice.
Industry, academia tie-up looks to aid education in smaller cities

By Prashant K. Nanda
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A group of manufacturing companies and capital goods companies have come together to hand-hold engineering colleges and universities in small cities and towns, seeking to improve the quality of their graduates and their employment prospects.

Industry experts are keen to see the initiatives that help upgrade facilities and teach students, who will also get to work on live corporate projects, as part of the initiative being overseen by K. Venkataramanan, president (operations), Larsen and Toubro Ltd (L&T), India’s biggest construction and engineering firm.

Venkataramanan says the quality of many graduates being turned out by Indian universities tends to be sub-standard because of the lack of sufficient interaction between industry and academic institutions. That means many engineering students graduate without possessing the skills needed by industry, hurting their own job prospects while depriving employers of a sufficiently large talent pool.

"Industries as a group and academic institutions as another group should work together to improve the employability situation," Venkataramanan says. "It will be mutually beneficial."

With manufacturing gaining traction again and the Centre approving a National Manufacturing Policy, these companies say industry needs to contribute its bit to help create an employable workforce with the requisite job skills. The policy approved on 25 October seeks to set up large industrial zones, create 100 million jobs, and double the share of manufacturing from 16% of gross domestic product at present to 25% by 2025.

Companies taking part in the initiative include steel parts maker Bharat Forge Ltd, power equipment manufacturer Thermax Ltd, Hindustan Dorr Oliver Ltd, a unit of the infrastructure firm IVRCL Ltd, and GW Precision Tools India Pvt Ltd, according to Venkataramanan.

According to education services firm Aspire Human Capital Management Pvt Ltd, India has some 320 million students enrolled in schools and colleges but less than 25% are employable. India produces around 700,000 engineers every year, the report says. "If industries get involved in improving the employability, they will boost the human resource supply chain," says Amit Bhata, chief executive of Aspire Human Capital. "The quality of education and human resources has one goal, hence, embedded employable education and its understanding will be good for their business."

M. Anandkriishnan, chairman of the board of governors at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur, who will be co-ordinating the implementation of the initiative on behalf of the institutes, says the industry-academia tie-up will empower colleges and help them address several areas of concern.

"But we will make sure that these colleges and universities don’t take this as a plea to increase course fees," he said. "Anandkriishnan, who is also the head of the higher education committee at industry lobby Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

The initiative will serve as a pilot programme that, depending on its success, will pull in more companies to improve their interaction with education institutions. "The upgrade of curricula and industry experience will be directly taken care of by such a move," he says.

Saxena says new industrial processes, design and latest technology often elude students, and "learning from the shop floor" in industries will help them gain this knowledge.

Most engineering colleges in small cities lack good laboratories, which may cost crores of rupees to set up or upgrade. The upshot is that students lack access to the technology that makes them job-ready. "Our students in Surpur can go to an apparel manufacturer or an engineering company to learn what the new technologies used in producing technical textiles or building a quick road project with prefabricated structures are," Saxena says.

Andanakriishnan says that what industry is looking for is an understanding on the part of students of the design concept, the use of new technology, maintenance and management of the factory floor. They need to understand what makes up what is as a whole, for example, and how things are put together.

Venkataramanan says industry, apart from upgrading coursework in line with the needs of colleges, will also get into training machines and equipment that will enable a better learning environment. In return, the companies will expect colleges to help them file patents.

Vijay Pahlw, director, Anita relations, Behrada-based University of Petroleum and Energy Studies, said leading global goods companies have started looking beyond big cities for hiring personnel, and this initiative will strengthen the trend.

"Smaller towns institute need industry exposure, and we see the benefit here," says S.K. Mahapatra, dean, academics, Thapar University, Patiala, Punjab. "It will also promote research and innovation among companies and share academic best practices and collaborative industry research among each other."
IIM-L first to link research to compensation

Kirtika Suneja
New Delhi, Nov 22

IIM-L first to link research to compensation

IIMs at Ahmedabad and Indore have decided to stick to the current structure though the ministry has amended their MoAs. IIM-Calcutta is yet to submit a proposal while the ministry is yet to make the change for IIM-Lucknow and IIM-Bangalore.

“We plan to evolve a performance management system where academic contribution will be rewarded. This will be achieved by a composite index of performance and benchmark it as there is a constant issue that the compensation is not enough,” said Devi Singh, director, IIM-Lucknow.

The variable component will do external consultancy and those who don’t. The performance-based variable part will be over and above the fixed salary.

“The variable component may be brought in by the end of this financial year. This will motivate the faculty as it will be based on their quality of work and be completely task-based,” Singh added.

“We are amending the MoA and once that happens, the board will be competent to take such decisions. They will have the autonomy of adding variable components to their salaries,” said an HRD ministry official.

A review committee set up by the government under RC Bhargava, chairman, Maruti Suzuki, had suggested that remuneration of all IIM staff be determined by the board, taking into account market conditions so as to attract and retain high quality talent, ability to pay, and the need to provide motivation for performance.

“At the same time, all IIMs should have some degree of uniformity in remuneration packages and adjustments made for local conditions. Research work should be given due weight in determining performance-based compensation and making promotions and this is accessed through an outside peer review system so that quality of research and academic work can be objectively evaluated,” the report noted.
US students in India up 45% this yr

Pratiksha Ramkumar | TNN

Chennai: The number of US students coming to India this year has jumped nearly 45% with more Americans opting for short-term courses — a semester or a subject with a popular professor or college. But their total number is still below 4,000 — a small fraction of the over-lakh Indian students going to the US every year.

“Especially, doctorate and graduate students come to India, just for a semester or a few months of research with a scholar,” said US-Indian Educational Foundation executive director Adam Grotsky, US consulate in Chennai said it’s the performance of Indian students and scholars in the US that may have inspired the trend.
£2,500 scholarship for science, engg students

Queen’s University, Belfast, launches a hundred scholarships for Indian students

Here’s some good news for engineering and science students in India. One of the UK’s top research intensive universities, Queen’s University, Belfast, has launched the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Scholarships for Indian engineering and science students worth up to £2,500.

The first-of-its-kind scheme, open to 100 talented Indian students who wish to enrol in postgraduate engineering and science programmes at Queen’s University in 2012, will entitle each successful recipient to a £2,500 scholarship.

“Anyone who meets the entrance requirements and holds an academic merit is eligible for the scholarships. They have to be qualified to do a postgraduate course,” said Trevor Newson, international advisor to the president and vice chancellor of the university. The scholarships will be given to students for pursuing postgraduate courses in areas such as electrical engineering, computer science, mechanical engineering and chemistry.

All eligible candidates will be considered on the basis of their course application form. The last date to apply is July 31, 2012. More details are available at www.qub.ac.uk.

Becoming a scholar would also mean other advantages for Indian students. “They will also have the benefit of studying at one of the UK’s leading science and engineering universities. This will enhance their soft skills as well as employability skills. They will have the experience of studying in a different culture and working closely with industry. It will be a life-changing experience for Indian students,” added Newson.

Describing why the university chose to offer scholarships to students in India, Newson said: “Indians are great thinkers with good language skills. Indian students are very talented and can make for great professionals. There’s a strong Indian community in northern Ireland and there are few Indian companies that have their presence in Ireland such as Polaris, Tech Mahindra and HCL Technologies.”

With a number of engineering students going for management degrees, the university has also established a Graduate and Executive Education Centre comprising a leading management school, a unique graduate school and a custom-made leadership institute to meet the needs of global and local business.
As per a recent study, young employees are willing to accept a low-paying job that gives them technology access as opposed to the one that does not. Ly n Lobo delves further into this startling revelation

“TECH” it forward

It’s rather astonishing how the new generation today finds itself under the severe clasp of the ‘social monster’. New-age demands such as social media access, device flexibility and work mobility have surfaced in the Indian business scenario as the ‘millennials’ today, as per a recent survey conducted by Cisco, are prioritising such ‘social elasticities’ over salary in accepting a job.

The study not only reveals the gravity of such career demands, but also goes on to divulge that young professionals have no qualms in accepting a low-paying job, provided organisations sanction more flexibility with regard to device choice, social media access, and mobility. Mahesh Gupta, VP, borderless networks, Cisco India & SAARC says, “The proliferation of smartphones, tablets and laptops has resulted in employees wanting to use their own devices to do everything akin to accessing the company email and internet to stay connected. Employees today fancy having a workplace experience from wherever they wish to connect.”

But, is it likely that this social media pull can hamper productivity?

“If employers can depend on their employees to get their job done right, they must consequently be considerate enough to permit their employees with access to social mediums, provided misuse is avoided,” says Vinod Nair, HR head, Mahindra Finance. Providing a factual opinion, Dominic Jose, head-staffing and recruitment, Handipart Services Ltd says, “I have observed that companies that permit the usage of social media during the work hours lose 1.7 per cent of productivity as compared to the companies that prohibit it. With its wealth of applications, games and status updates that distract an employee’s mind, another danger is that the access to social media makes a company vulnerable to potential breaches.”

The advantage of permitting social media usages are myriad, says Ravi Shankar, senior VP-HR, HCL Technologies further adding, “Such networking liberties help employees in collaborating and creative ideation.”

“India Inc is no longer dependent on the traditional way of functioning. Thus, young professionals prioritising their social media needs over salary making it the apparent new workforce currency should come as no surprise,” feels Subhankar Roy Chowdhury, executive director HR, India & MEA, Lenovo India.

Consequently, we are looking at a future where the appetite for social media is bound to get the better of salary and other monetary perk demands, thereby making the adoption of this ‘connected age’ by both employers and employees a restorative function.

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After Big B, RK as IIT teacher?

After Amitabh, it could be Ranbir Kapoor's turn to play the educationist Anand Kumar, who coaches the underprivileged from Patna, in an Anurag Basu film

Shashi Priya

If all goes as planned, Ranbir Kapoor will soon be mounting Bilal's words for Anurag Basu's next project, a biopic on Anand Kumar - founder of Bihar's Super 30, a coaching institute that trains underprivileged children for qualifying for the IIT examinations. There has been a lot of buzz around Basu switching his Khushbu Khan starrer project with one on Anand Kumar. Incidentally, Kumar was also said to be the inspiration behind Abhishek Bachchan's character of Pratikruti, Anand's character in "Aarakshan". What's more, Anurag Basu, who has recently finished shooting for "I'm Obsessed" with Ranbir is reportedly casting him as the lead for this film. Anand Kumar confirms that he has met Basu, once in Patna, and then again in Mumbai last February. Kumar, "Nothing is concrete as of yet. Talks are still on. I don't have any idea what else is happening as far as this film goes. Basu and I talk on the phone and I have the rough draft of the script with me. But I am yet to give my nod."

As for Ranbir Kapoor playing his role, Kumar says, "I've heard that too. But frankly, I have no clue who is Basu going to cast in the film. But yes, if it's Ranbir; I must say I admire him a lot as an actor. I respect Ranbir a lot and whatever he will decide as far as filmmaking is concerned will be correct. Mathematics is my forte, but filmmaking beats it."

Despite reported cutbacks, Anurag Basu did not revert to our queries.

For more Bollywood pictures, go to: www.photos.timesofindia.com
West isn't best

The ‘East’ has been taken for a ride by the myth of western superiority

Jug Suwala

Eleven months ago I had to get a new car and decided on a German brand. I bought my new car in winter and didn’t need to use the A/C the vehicle came with. But come summer and I found that my newly acquired German car’s A/C would not cool. In a north Indian summer - where temperatures remain well above 40 degrees Celsius - a car A/C is not so much a luxury as a necessity, particularly if you have to commute.

I took the car to the company workshop, where the engineers checked it and declared that it was working fine, as shown by a sophisticated instrument they used to prove its efficiency. I pointed out that it was little use for the instrument to declare the A/C’s performance satisfactory when the customer remained dissatisfied, not to mention sweaty.

My argument didn’t impress the engineers who basically said that they’d done what they could and that was that. I subsequently discovered that a number of people who’ve bought this make of car have had similar problems. These days, as car A/C’s are standard equipment, it doesn’t involve rocket science. Yet the Germans - famed for their technological expertise - seem to have got it wrong in this case, leaving dissatisfied customers no choice but to like it or lump it.

There is a much larger point here than that of Indian customers’ unhappiness with a particular make of car. The incident shows how, consciously, we have been programmed to think of what is known collectively as the ‘West’ as being superior in scientific and technological matters to the so-called ‘East’.

The ‘West’, led by the US, includes western Europe (notably Germany), Canada, and, in defiance of geography, Australia and New Zealand. Thanks to the ‘economic miracle’ it witnessed after World War II, Japan is also deemed to belong to the ‘West’. Therest of the world – Asia, Africa, etc. – is all part and parcel of the ‘East’.

Constituents of the ‘East’ – particularly China and India – might boast ancient civilisations, with a long legacy of philosophy, art and culture. But these are all ‘soft power’ attributes. So-called ‘hard power’ – measured in terms of modern scientific and technological prowess and the economic leadership this bestows – supposedly resides in the ‘West’.

This has long been the received wisdom, by and large accepted by both ‘West’ and ‘East’. The so-called ‘Western’ model of progress has polluted the planet, perhaps beyond salvage, and produced weapons of mass destruction capable of annihilating the world many times over. Despite this, the ‘East’ has been conned into believing – or has conned itself into believing – that, in terms of material development, the ‘West’ is a role model that has to be followed.

The global economic meltdown – precipitated by the sub-prime crisis in the US and which has now spread to the eurozone – has shown how dangerously false is the assumption that, in all material matters – scientific, technological and economic – the ‘West’ is best and the ‘East’ is least. In fact, the Indian economy – often compared to a lumbering elephant as a suitably ‘Eastern’ symbol – has done a remarkable job of damage control by protecting itself as much as it could from the fallout of the ‘Western’ crisis.

The ‘East’ is no longer an exotic landscape peopled solely by snake charmers and godmen. In the flat world described by Thomas Friedman the ‘East’ is giving increasing competition to the ‘West’ in terms not only of soft power (Bollywood, yoga, basmati rice) but also of ‘hard power’ (the Agni IV and V rockets, India’s projected 7.8% growth rate).

The ‘East’ still has a long, long way to go. But it’s time the myth of ‘West is best’ was busted. The ‘East’s’ new mantra should be: We’ll beat the ‘West’.

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http://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/juggiebandhi/
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They’re opening up campuses in India

Varsities Leeds Met India and Duke have brought international-level education at your doorsteps

Gauri Kohli

Will the world’s top-rung institutions come to India once the foreign educational institutions law is in place, or will other universities be in a hurry to set up campuses in this country? As of now, institutes like the USA’s Duke, Canada’s York and the UK’s Middlesex are exploring options of opening up branches here.

Ranked 19 in the latest QS World University rankings, Duke University is already offering two executive MBA programmes that include week-long, intensive studies in India: the global executive MBA and the cross continent MBA programme.

“Duke University faculty members, based throughout the year in our home campus in Durham, North Carolina, accompany our students to study in India. Students get exposure to corporate visits and conversations with government officials related to the course of study,” says John Gallagher, associate dean for executive MBA programmes at Duke University’s Fuqua School of Business. Classes for the Duke Corporate Education course are conducted out of IIM-Ahmedabad.

One varsity that already has a campus in India is UK’s Leeds Metropolitan University. The students enrolled in both India and the UK study the same curriculum. Those in Bhopal also have access to all the learning resources available in the UK, including access to the e-library and a rich pool of journal articles, case studies and academic papers.

“Even the examinations in both the UK and India campus are held on the same day and same time and students are assessed in a similar manner,” says Abhishek Mohan Gupta, director - marketing & strategic development, Jagran Social Welfare Society (JSWS), Bhopal.

Leeds Metropolitan University and JSWS had partnered to start offering the former’s courses in India through the Leeds Met India, Bhopal campus.

“The faculty is from both India and the UK. For students, study at Leeds Met has been an extraordinary experience where we got to see the best of both worlds. Interacting with people from different cultures, working and studying with them has given me varied perspectives about things and has made me understand my environment better,” says Hanza Chugtai, a third-year student of BA (honours) in business and management.

Canadian York University, ranked among the top 400 in the QS ranking, also promises to bring in quality international-level education. According to Denise J Horvath, dean, Schulich School of Business, York University, Toronto, they’re opening up campuses in India

“We came up with the Schulich MBA in India programme in 2010 that is offered as part of a twinning arrangement with the SP Jain Institute of Management & Research in Mumbai and has been approved by the All India Council for Technical Education,” officials at Schulich are planning a new campus in Hyderabad beginning 2013 with more international students and faculty and a transnational approach to management learning.

Talking about the fee, Horvath said: “When the institution opens the campus in Hyderabad, the programme will cost approximately C$30,000 per year and Hyderabad students will be eligible for scholarship and bursary support of up to C$10,000 per year,” he added. Middlesex University, UK, is also following suit. “Initially, there will be courses in IT, business and media, which will be of three years duration. The campus will be in partnership with an Indian institution, that will be responsible for all local clearances. The infrastructure will be world class and replicate the learning experience that is available in the UK in terms of quality,” said Joe Victor, regional director, South Asia, Middlesex University.

Scotland’s University of Strathclyde will come up with a campus in Greater Noida soon.

Continued on page 3
Who’s flying in for tie-ups?

Rahat Bano
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IT was the season of collaborations as universities from different corners of the world made a beeline for India this month. Most were here for greater engagement with the country through joint research, scholarships and more while at least one was looking at possibilities of a new outpost here.

Australia’s Macquarie University signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Confederation of Indian Industry for the latter’s India@75 Mission. They have teamed up to “focus on joint development and to invest in the educational and cross-cultural development of Indian students along with joint industry research” under the mission, one of the goals of which is to produce 200 million college graduates. The university will do this under its Ektaal Great Indian Project launched earlier this year in Australia.

“They (CII) will help us identify the right scholars,” says Steven Schwartz, vice chancellor, Macquarie University, which has about 25 MoUs with Indian institutions. Schwartz also announced that the university now offers more than A$11 million in scholarships to Indian students.

Another Australian institution, University of Wollongong, inked an MoU with Indian coal company Gujarat NRE on November 14 to set up a campus in Gujarat. “We’ll offer undergraduate degrees in engineering and technical sciences,” says Gerard Sutton, vice chancellor, UoW. In December, UoW also plans to seal an agreement with the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, for joint research in intelligent materials and water splitting, says Sutton.

On November 12, Britain’s University of Glasgow partnered with the University of Calcutta for museum studies. “We intend to pursue staff and student exchanges, initially in the area of museum studies, but eventually across wide areas in the arts and social sciences,” says Antonio Muscatelli, principal and vice chancellor, University of Glasgow. “We will establish a fellowship for a researcher from Kolkata to visit Glasgow University in the first instance.”

On November 9 in Delhi, the University of Aberdeen joined hands with the University of Petroleum and Energy Studies, Dehradun. The document was signed in front of Scotland’s education secretary Michael Russell, who was leading a ‘Team Scotland’ trip of representatives of Scottish universities to Delhi and Kolkata. The partnership would span teaching as well as research, including the possibility for students to spend two years in each institution and receive an Aberdeen degree, said Dominic Houlihan, vice principal for internationalisation, University of Aberdeen. Similarly on November 8, Ottawa’s Carleton University formalised collaboration with Symbiosis International University and Teri University in the presence of Ed Fast, Canada’s minister of international trade and minister for the Asia-Pacific gateway, who was heading a trade mission to India. Under the MoUs, Carleton is looking at exchanging UG and PG students with Teri and Symbiosis. It will also carry out collaborative “real-world, applied research, not ivory tower research,” says Randy Zadra, director, Carleton International.

The University of New South Wales is negotiating with Delhi University for research and student exchanges, says Frederick G Hilmer, president and vice chancellor, Canada’s Ryerson University has introduced scholarships for Anna University, IIT Delhi and IIT Madras students to study for masters in engineering and architecture. Wendy Cukier, VP - research and innovation, Ryerson, says, “We are looking for relationships at a number of levels - student exchanges, faculty exchanges, long-term collaborative programmes.”

Jamia should make information public: Court

REMINDING Jamia Millia Islamia that it is a public institution and hence open to public scrutiny under the RTI Act, the Delhi High Court on Tuesday upheld an order directing the central university to make public information about a land deal in Ghaffar Manzil in Okhla.

Justice Vipin Sanghi upheld a directive of the Central Information Commission (CIC) in June, whereby the transparency panel had asked the university to provide to applicant Mohammad Ikramuddin, “copies of the agreement or settlement between Jamia and Abdul Satar in Ghaffar Manzil land.”

Jamia had filed an appeal against the CIC verdict contending that disclosure of the title documents was exempted from disclosure under the immunity clause of the RTI Act and further that the information sought was an invasion of the privacy of the institution.

Jamia’s counsel also argued that the documents if landed in wrong hands could be highly prejudicial to the cause of the institution and misused.

The court however held that no public authority could call any information available with it “personal” information.
The Washington Post

Nasa plans new mission to Mars

Marc Kaufman

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WASHINGTON: Nasa officials were asked some years ago to catalogue the number of technical actions and successful communications necessary to fly a spacecraft safely from Earth to Mars. The number: about 10,000.

And that was for an orbiter, as opposed to a lander such as the Mars Science Laboratory. No wonder the track record for successful missions to Mars is not great. About 43 flyby, orbiting and landing missions have been sent to Mars by Nasa and other nations in the past 40 years, and only 12 have been fully successful.

“It’s an extremely unforgiving mission where everything has to go right,” said Scott Hubbard, the former head of Nasa’s Mars space program. “It’s basically one strike and you’re out.”

This is a sobering reality as the $2.4 billion Mars Science Laboratory and its rover Curiosity wait atop an Atlas V rocket at the Kennedy Space Center for its launch window to open on Friday.

“Two out of three Mars missions have failed.”

But at least Nasa has by far the best track record — with its last six missions to Mars complete successes.

The Russian (formerly Soviet) space program is believed to be zero for about 20 in its Mars missions.

Nasa had a bad patch in the late 1990s when several Mars missions failed, and Hubbard was one of the people brought in to fix the program. He made sure all parts of the mission — launch, orbit, deep-space protection and landing — work together. It is this painstaking integration of many systems that has been Russia’s downfall, space experts believe.

Electronic engineers can find jobs in consumer electronics, semi-conductor manufacturing, communication, mobile communication, chip designing and many more.

For an electric future

Today, survival without electronics & communication gadgets has become impossible. Be it in education, work, travel or medical assistance sector, a flourishing career in this field is gaining ground, says PRADEEK KUMAR GUPTA

In today’s space age that heavily relies upon computer usage, electronics has crept into every sphere of different human activities. Every field and industry feels the need of computer specialists and experts who belong to the field of electronics and communication. The 21st century is very much advancing for and by the Electronics & Communication Engineers.

Today for engineering students pursuing this stream the limit is the limit. Countries like the US, the UK, countries of the European Union and Australia already recognize the worth of this branch of engineering so much that for them an Electronic Engineer is considered ‘indispensable’ in each and every sector of their respective economies.

At home also, the stream is picking up. Seeing the way out country is progressing at the IT/ITES, industrial fronts and with the amazing number of innovations and developments made by Indian engineers, it is not incorrect to say that growth in this technology in the coming years, will create a parallel growth in the jobs in this stream.

There is bound to be a demand for engineers in the electronics industry to cope with the growing technological demands. These engineers would be involved in creating and sustaining cutting edge technology to stay ahead in competition.

An electronic engineer can find job in organisations and sectors like manufacturers of Consumer Electronics, Chip Designing Industries, Semiconductor manufacturing firms (Siemens, Motorola, Samsung, Pinnacle, Philips, HP), Telecommunication industry, Mobile communication, Power Electronics, Healthcare equipment manufacturing industry, Internet technologies and industries like steel and petrochemical industries.

Many firms in the public, as well as private sector take in students from Electrons and Communication. For example, the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), Civil Aviation Department, Indian Railways, Indian Engineering Service (IES), Indian Oil Corporation Ltd, MTNL & BSNL are some of the public sector organisations that hire graduate engineers from this field.

In our country, IT industry is rapidly becoming the largest employer of B Tech Electronics graduates. These graduates start their career as software engineers. They are also absorbed into the Defence, entertainment and transmission industry.

To cater to this huge demand, country’s leading education providers, like Sharda University, are laying ample emphasis on raising competent and dynamic electronic engineers. Since for the latter, the job market is already hot and is bound to be better in the coming years, the competition is immense. Only the finest will survive this race! Hence, those with lesser skills would be at disadvantage.

Graduates in this stream can also pursue further studies to enhance their skills and knowledge and ensure an even better job prospect. They can pick up a post graduate course in Electronics and Communications and other advanced options like VLSI Technology, Communication Systems, Electronic Design and Technology, Power Electronics, Microwave Technology and Computer Science (Information System, IT, Networks and Mobile Computing).

At Sharda University’s School of Engineering & Technology, the emphasis is always to provide the best and the latest skills to the students, of Electronics and Communication engineering, that will enable them to not only gain a swift entry into the industry tomorrow but also carve a niche for themselves.

The work of electronic engineers is varied and depends upon the industry they are working in. The students of Electronic and Communication engineering usually get handsome salaries after some experience in related fields. Fresh graduates can get anywhere between Rs. 6,000 and Rs. 10,000 (per month) depending upon their skills and the size of their employers. Skilled engineers, those armed with the vast knowledge and experience, provide a masters course (M Tech), will find abundant greater pastures both at home and abroad.

(The author is chancellor, Sharda University)
Bunk college, lose seat: DU cracks the whip

Shaswati Das
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NEW DELHI: Bunking classes in Delhi University now comes with the worst possible punishment: it can cost students their seat in college.

With the first semester coming to an end, all students with less than 40% attendance will not just be stopped from taking exam, they will be removed from the rolls. "They must apply for admissions again in 2012-13 and start afresh in the first semester," said JM Khurana, dean of students' welfare, DU.

Cut-offs in the best DU colleges touched almost 100% this year.

Before the semester system was introduced for the science courses in 2010 and for all other courses this year, students were given a second chance to make up for low attendance. Now, no second chances.

Some colleges have already given students the bad news.

"We have detained about 10-15% of the total students," said IS Bakshi, principal, Dyal Singh College. Up to eight students of Lady Sri Ram (LSR) college will lose their seats, a college official said. In other colleges, the process is on.

Students who fall short of attendance in the third or fifth semesters — second or third years — will have to repeat them, but won't lose seats. They will end up adding an extra year to their otherwise three-year course, explained dean Khurana.

Officials say though "due consideration" will be given to students who re-apply, they still have to meet the cut-off criterion.

"If a detained student is allowed to retain the seat, then it is unfair on a student who is entitled to the seat through merit. But these students will not be discriminated against, despite their gap year," said SK Garg, convenor of the DU admissions committee, and principal of Deen Dayal Upadhyaaya College.

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» CATCH UP NEXT SEMESTER, P2
Hindu Kolkata 22.11.2011 p-11

IT spending to reach $80 billion in 2012

Special Correspondent

MUMBAI: Despite global economic challenges, enterprises will continue to invest in information technology (IT) and IT spending in India is projected to total $79.8 billion in 2012, a 9.1 per cent increase from 2011 spending of $73.1 billion, according to Gartner, a leading IT research and advisory company.

India like other emerging markets continues to exercise strong momentum despite inflationary pressures and appreciation of local currencies, which are expected in rising economies. Gartner’s forecast shows that worldwide IT spending will reach nearly $3.7 trillion in 2011. Out of this, emerging economies will account for $1.013 trillion.

Peter Sondergaard, Senior Vice-President at Gartner and global head of research, provided the latest outlook for the IT industry on Monday at Gartner Symposium / ITxpo.

“Businesses are increasingly looking to IT to help support the challenges of enhancing customer support, supply chain management, optimising business processes or helping drive innovation in the business,” Mr. Sondergaard said. “These demands are being placed on IT in an environment in which the infrastructure (hardware and software) foundation of IT within many enterprises may not be entirely in place. It is also in transition from being viewed as a back-office support function to a frontline business-focused function.”

The telecommunications market is the largest IT segment in India with IT spending forecast to reach $65.7 billion in 2012, followed by the IT services market with a spending of $11.1 billion. The computing hardware market in India is projected to reach $10.7 billion, and software spending will total $3.2 billion.

“To thrive in this environment, IT leaders must lead from the front and re-imagine IT,” said Partha Iyengar, Vice-President and analyst at Gartner and head of research in India. “IT leaders must embrace the post-modern business, a business driven by customer relationships, fuelled by the explosion in information, collaboration, and mobility.” This new era brings with it urgent and compelling forces. They include the cloud, social, mobility, and an explosion in information.

“These forces are innovative and disruptive just taken on their own, but brought together, they are revolutionising business and society,” Mr. Sondergaard said. “This nexus defines the next age of computing. Where data centres will give way to data clouds, mobile devices become windows into personal clouds. Personal computing will become massive collaborative computing, and information technologies will be overshadowed by information ecologies.”

Economic Times Kolkata 22.11.2011 p-4

IT Spend Will Grow Only 3.8% in 2012: Gartner

Global head of research Peter Sondergaard says 2011 will show up to be a pretty good year; Indian IT to zip much faster

SHRUTI SABHARWAL & INDU NANDAKUMAR
BANGALORE

Research firm Gartner expects growth in global IT spend to slow down in 2012 as companies grapple with slower growth and economic uncertainties in developed markets. According to Peter Sondergaard, senior vice-president and global head of research at Gartner, IT spend will increase by a modest 3.8% in 2012 compared to 5.6% this year.

“Essentially, 2011 will show up to be a pretty good year, but next year, due to curtailing of costs there will be a negative impact,” Sondergaard said. While most Indian IT companies have reported strong numbers in the first two quarters of this financial year, they have been warning that the current slowdown could impact the IT budgets of their clients for 2012.

“We remain very, very cautious because if you look at Europe, you have the Eurozone turbulence. It is unpredictable. Our clients remain very cautious. They are scrutinising their investments, while they are taking short-term decisions; they are hesitating to take long term decisions,” Infosys CEO SD Shibuja said while announcing the company’s Q4 results last month.

Gartner expects Indian IT services firms will take a hit on either revenues or margins in the coming year if they have to increase market share. The research firm said that the maximum decline will be in Japan and Europe. Indian IT firms get anywhere between 20 to 30% of their revenues from the European countries while Japan is a relatively smaller market. In local currency terms, IT spend is expected to decline by 0.4% and 0.8% in Europe and Japan respectively.

“The US is the largest market for the Indian IT industry from where it gets over 50% of its revenue. While this market is expected to grow overall, growth rate will be moderate with lower spend from the public sector. In terms of sectors, Gartner expects the banking and financial services sector, the largest contributor for Indian IT firms, to spend moderately. Sectors like energy and utilities, retail and consumer packaged goods are likely to grow well. ‘The growth will be driven by North America in terms of size but the real growth markets are likely to be India, China and Brazil’, Sondergaard said.

Gartner expects IT spending in India to grow by 9.1% in 2012. The research firm says worldwide IT spend will reach nearly $3.7 trillion by 2013, of which the emerging economies will account for $1.013 trillion.

Sondergaard, however, believes that this time clients would respond differently to the slowdown compared to 2008. “This time, any slowdown in spending will be more specific to certain industries and countries. Indian providers who have developed strong vertical focus and have been able to differentiate will do well. That is what you see in companies like Cognizant,” he said.
IT firms expect growth in 2012

AGE CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, NOV. 21

Despite the global economic challenges, the IT spending by Indian companies is projected to grow by 9.1 per cent to $79.8 billion in 2012 from $73.1 billion in 2011, according to Gartner Inc, a global information technology research and advisory firm.

Gartner’s forecast shows that worldwide IT spending will reach nearly $3.7 trillion in 2011. Out of which, the emerging economies will account for $1.013 trillion.

Mr Peter Sondergaard, senior vice-president at Gartner and global head of research, said that two-thirds of CEOs believe that IT will make a greater contribution to their industry in the next 10 years than any prior decades. “IT expenditure is getting decoupled from the overall economy. IT will be a major driver of growth,” he said.

The telecommunications market in India is the largest IT segment in India where IT spending is forecast to reach $54.7 billion in 2012 followed by the IT services market with spending of $11.1 billion.

According to Gartner, the emergence of the mobile PC like smartphone and media tablets along with mobility of data will render the IT architecture of the last 20 years obsolete. Observing that in 2010, the installed base of mobile PCs and smart phones exceeded that of desktop PCs, he said that by 2016, 900 million media tablets will be purchased that is, one for every eight people on earth. “By 2014, the installed base of devices based on lightweight mobile operating systems, such as iOS, Android and Windows 8 will exceed the total installed base of all PC based systems,” added Mr Sondergaard.
Now, contact lens to display emails

London: Imagine reading emails and text messages on your contact lenses which are linked to internet. It may sound a bit utopian, but scientists claim that your imagination could soon turn into a reality.

In fact, the futuristic technology has taken a step nearer, thanks to an international team which claims to have developed a prototype lens that could potentially provide the wearer with hands-free information updates.

The scientists from Washington University in the US and Aalto University in Finland have constructed a computerized contact lens and demonstrated its safety by testing it on live eyes, and there were no signs of adverse side effects.

At the moment, the contact lens device contains only a single pixel, but the team sees this as a “proof-of-concept” for producing lenses with multiple pixels which, in their hundreds, could be used to display short emails and text messages right before one’s eyes.

The scientists said the device could overlay computer-generated visual information on to the real world and be of use in gaming devices and navigation systems.

It could also be linked to the user’s body to provide up-to-date information on glucose levels, which could prove medically important.

One major problem to overcome was the fact that the human eye, with its minimum focal distance of several centimetres, cannot resolve objects on a contact lens.

Any information projected on to the lens would probably appear blurry.

To combat this, the scientists incorporated a set of Fresnel lenses into the device; these are much thinner and flatter than conventional bulky lenses, and were used to focus the projected image on to the retina.
वर्ष 2013 से मैनेजमेंट संस्थानों में एक टेस्ट

पंकज कुमार पादेव | गई हिंदी

मानव संसाधन भंडार कपिल सिंहल के शिक्षा सुधार अभियान के तहत आगमन के कदम उठाते हुए, अखिल भारतीय तकनीकी शिखर परिषद, एआईआईटी ने आईआईटी को बढ़ाकर सभी मैजिनेषंट संस्थानों के लिए वर्ष 2013 से एक साझा प्रवेश परीक्षा कराए जाने पर मुहर लगा दी है। पिछले दिनों इस प्रस्ताव पर सहमति बनी थी। एआईआईटी ने कुछ दिन पहले ही परीक्षा की बैठक में तय किया कि वर्ष 2013 में सभी भारतीय प्रयोग संस्थान, आईआईटी के लिए एक टेस्ट कैट, और देश भर के बाकी सभी प्रबन्ध संस्थानों के लिए एक साझा परीक्षा कंबाईन मैनेजमेंट एतल्यान्ड टेस्ट सी-मैट, होगी। इस फैसले से करीब 2500 प्रबन्ध संस्थानों को एक ही परीक्षा के जरिए छात्रों का दाखिला करने का मौका मिलेगा।

हालांकि वर्ष 2012 के लिए कैट के अलावा संस्थानों को दाखिला परीक्षा के लिए जो मैट, आईआईटी सहित पांच विकल्प दिए गए थे। प्रबन्ध संस्थान इसमें से किसी विकल्प के तहत दाखिला प्रक्रिया में हिस्सा लेने का फैसला कर सकते हैं। कई उच्च पदों पर अधिकारी के मुताबिक साझा प्रवेश परीक्षा का फैसला क्रिकेट सुधार का हिस्सा है।

राजेन्द्र पाढ़े 4

वर्ष 2013...

संस्थानों को पूरा करने का समय दिया जा रहा है कि हम इसे अपने अपने में ला सकें। तकनीकी संस्थानों, प्रबन्ध संस्थानों अलावा बिश्वविद्यालयों के अन्य उच्च शिक्षण संस्थानों में मानविकी, व्यापार और साइंस के लिए ऐसी क्रियात्मक चुनौतियाँ हैं। कपिल सिंहल पहले ही कह चुके हैं कि वे छात्रों को प्रवेश परीक्षाओं के बाद से मुर्गियों का दिलाना चाहते हैं। जिससे छात्रों को मानव भर प्रवेश परीक्षाओं की है. ट्यूंच में वोल्का को जाने के लिए एआईआईटी की बैठक में भी इस मसले पर काफी विचार किए गए थे। यह संस्थानों में आमतौर पर इस बात पर सहमति बनी थी कि प्रवेश परीक्षाओं के मौजूदा रूप में सुधार किया जाए।
आईआईटी और कैस्को चलेंगे साथ-साथ

कानपुर, नगर प्रतिनिधि: भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान (आईआईटी) एवं कैस्को साथ-साथ चलेंगे। जल्द ही दोनों के कीप एजेंशी भी साड़ा होगा। यह बताया जा सकता है कि उन्होंने जारी किया कि अगले साल वर्ष की शुरुआत में ए健्ड प्रोफेसर ओफ़ पायर सिस्टेम के क्षेत्र में काम करने वाले एभेट संस्थान के अध्यक्ष होंगे। उन्होंने बताया कि हमे सुपर कार्यक्रम में सरकार काम करने की मौजूदा है। एक्स्ट्रा उद्धरण समारोह में उन्होंने बिजली और अन्य वातां समस्याओं की जानकारी दी। उन्होंने कहा कि इसके साथ-साथ वे बिजली और अन्य वातां समस्याओं की जानकारी दी। उन्होंने कहा कि इसके साथ-साथ वे बिजली और अन्य वातां समस्याओं की जानकारी दी। इसके साथ-साथ वे बिजली और अन्य वातां समस्याओं की जानकारी दी।