Newspaper Clips
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12-Sep-10  p-8

DIGVIJAYA NOW TAKES A DIG AT KAPIL SIBAL

Press Trust of India
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JABALPUR: After his potshots at Home Minister P. Chidambaram, Congress leader Digvijaya Singh on Saturday appeared to snipe at HRD Minister Kapil Sibal seeking his attention on school education rather than higher education.

"The need at the moment is that the HRD ministry should pay more attention to the development of school education and skill development centres rather than higher education and I have full faith that they will look into the matter," Singh said.

Sibal has become the fresh target of Singh after he took on Chidambaram, attacking his strategy to tackle Maoists.

He had even called Chidambaram "intellectually arrogant". Earlier this week, Sibal had hit back at his detractors, who had accused him of rushing an education bill, by invoking Rajiv Gandhi and said the former PM had wanted that the task of imparting quality education should be achieved in a few months.

"If people say that we are in a hurry, then I would like to state that Rajivji had said it in 1985 that this should be achieved in a few months," Sibal had said.

Sibal's remarks were seen as an apparent rebuff to detractors like K. Keshav Rao, who attacked his ministry's policies in a Rajya Sabha debate that forced the government to defer the Education Tribunal Bill.
IIT body slams pay ‘betrayal’

MEMORANDUM
Faculty federation accuses ministry of not implementing key promises

Charu Sudan Kasturi

NEW DELHI: The apex body of the Indian Institutes of Technology has accused the government of not implementing key pay-related promises made almost a year back to convince them to end an unprecedented stand-off.

In a memorandum submitted to the human resource development ministry, the All India IIT Faculty Federation has argued that many of the concerns that brought them to the streets last year remain unresolved, sources told HT.

The federation represents the 4,000 teachers across the IITs and last year led an unprecedented protest over pay concerns that crippled the institutes for days, with teachers skipping classes for the first time.

The memorandum, sent on Thursday, requested that the Federation be allowed to present its concerns at the IIT Council meeting on Friday. But federation sources claim they received no response. “We had even asked the directors to bear that we said they did not have time,” professor M. Thennaghy, president of the Federation said.

HRD Minister Kapil Sibal said he was unaware of the memorandum and that his officials would handle these concerns. He also said that any concerns on present issue last year should be addressed.

The federation, which met here on Wednesday, plans to consult each faculty of IIT to prepare a strategy to take forward their opposition to what a senior professor dubbed a “betrayal”.

Sibal had last October called a meeting with the federation at his residence to defuse a two-month-long stand-off as some of India’s most qualified teachers fought a battle that they argued was about “respect”.

“You assured us that all issues in the 6th pay commission implementation at the IITs would be resolved as soon as possible,” the memorandum said.

Bio-datas get new networking skills

CURRICULUM VITAL Job seekers are adding website links and even video clips to their CVs

Here was a time when “human readable” was the best sort of output and anyone would kiss a person with a specific skill set if they were looking for one. But it is not the case anymore. The world has moved on, and so have the recruiters.

“People used to want someone who could do a specific job,” says Pradeep Kumar, a varsity professor at IIT-Delhi. “But now they want someone who can do multiple things.”

This is where LinkedIn comes in.

The company’s internal survey shows that 90% of users who have more than 500 connections are more likely to get hired. “The problem with conventional CVs is that they lack networking skills and other skills,” says Pradeep. “LinkedIn is a great platform to showcase yourself.”

This trend has also pushed recruiters to switch from traditional CVs to LinkedIn profiles. “We are now looking for someone who can network,” says Pradeep.

Monster, the world’s largest online employment firm, has also taken note of this trend. Its neuroscience-based tool, called “HireRanger”, uses data from resumes and online profiles to match candidates with jobs.

The tool also includes a set of questions about the candidate’s personality, and suggests the best job fit for them.

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IS COLLEGE WORTH IT?
MONEY FOR NOTHING Some high achievers don’t think a university degree is a good investment. They should know

Sarah Larson • sarahl@hlcuntimes.com

Across the region and around the country parents are sending their college-bound kids to $30,000, $40,000, $50,000 or more in tuition, room and board, and fees. Especially in well-educated areas, the majesty of the reality can’t be overstated: The prospect of a university degree is frequently viewed as the surest, fastest route toward success.

But is it really worth it? It may not be as clear-cut as you think. Here are some things to consider before making the investment.

The Washington Post

Sarah Larson • sarahl@hlcuntimes.com

The university system is a $21 billion business, but it’s not clear how much it’s worth to society. Some say it’s worth more than its cost, but others say it’s not.

But what about the lessons learned by the students who have benefited from this system? To find out, we asked a group of students who have graduated from a range of universities across the country to share their stories.

Their stories are diverse, but they all have one thing in common: They learned something valuable from their experience.

One student, a 22-year-old from New York, said she learned that persistence is key. She was admitted to a university in New York City, but she didn’t have enough money to attend. She applied to a community college and was accepted. She worked hard and saved enough money to attend the university.

Another student, a 23-year-old from California, said she learned that it’s important to have a strong support system. She had a close-knit group of friends who helped her through the tough times.

But not all students had positive experiences. One student, a 24-year-old from Texas, said she learned that she was not prepared for college. She was admitted to a university in Texas, but she didn’t have enough money to attend. She applied to a community college and was accepted. She worked hard and saved enough money to attend the university.

But she was not prepared for the work. She struggled to keep up with the coursework and eventually dropped out.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, about 3 million students drop out of college each year. Many of them are from low-income families, and many of them are not prepared for college.

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Times of India ND 12/09/2010
P-18

‘Punjab’s farmers could grow crops on the moon, if needed’

Ratan S Prasad

The reader that you are interested in looking for a

P-1

Times of India Mumbai 11.09.10

IITs clear decks to roll out doctors

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Recognizing the long-standing demand by many IITs and the recommendations of various committees, the IIT council on Friday gave its consent to the institutes to start courses in medicine. Also, of the total faculty strength in any IIT, foreign nationals can be hired to fill up to 10% of teaching positions.

The IITs have to undertake a slew of procedures before they can start medicine courses. To begin with, they will have to seek the approval of the Medical Council of India (MCI). The HRD ministry will also have to amend the Institutes of Technology Act to allow them to offer the medicine course.

A proposal by IIT Kharagpur to open a medical college and hospital has been in the pipeline for the last few years. However, the health ministry is not in favour of IITs starting medical courses. Instead, it has suggested that they should consider launching PhD programmes involving collaborations between engineering and medical science.

Sweeping Changes

- IIT council to amend institutes of Technology Act to enable IITs to offer medicine courses
- MCI approval will be sought
- Health ministry against IITs' plan to start medical courses
- IITs to allow foreign nationals as faculty in 10% of posts. Also, postgraduate students could be admitted from abroad

Security nod a must, P 15
IITs' in-house shrinks, P 16
IITs get nod to start medicine course

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But the IITs have to follow a slew of procedures before they can start medicine course. To begin with, they will have to seek approval of the Medical Council of India. The HRD ministry will also have to amend the Institutes of Technology Act to allow them offer medicine course. A proposal by IIT, Kharagpur, to open a medical college and hospital has been in the pipeline for the last few years. However, the health ministry is not in favour of IITs starting medical courses. Instead, it has suggested that they should consider starting PhD programmes, involving collaboration between engineering and medical science.

IIT's can now undertake inter-disciplinary research in the field of medicine, bio-engineering, biotechnology and related subjects.

In another major decision, of the total faculty strength in an IIT, up to 10% of the teaching staff can be foreign nationals. The move comes in the wake of the fact that IIT's have been facing a severe faculty crunch for a while. Though there are 4,367 vacancies, only 2,983 have been filled. However, security clearance is required ahead of hiring of a foreign national at a salary that is on a par with his Indian counterpart.

Financial Express ND 12-Sep-10  p-12

Are scanners worth the risk?

Susan Stellin

The next time you go through security at the airport, you might be told to empty your pockets, put your hands above your head and stand still while an X-ray machine looks for anything hidden under your clothing. If this body scanning option sounds unpromising, you have another choice—an "enhanced patdown" conducted by a US Transportation Security Administration employee, which some travelers have described as "quite intimate."

The new screening measures have been highly debated, but mostly in theory. If you somehow missed the hoopla, there are two types of machines being installed, which have raised concerns about privacy, health risks and even their effectiveness at detecting terrorists. The more controversial "backscatter" devices project an X-ray beam onto the body, creating an image displayed on a monitor viewed in another room. The "millimeter wave" machines, which are considered doubtful because they do not use X-rays, bounce electromagnetic waves off the body to produce a similar image.

Unlike metal detectors, these machines can detect objects made of other materials, like plastic and ceramic. But they can't see anything hidden inside your body or detect certain explosives.

So why bother? "This is all done to keep the traveling public safe," says John Demmik, a TSA spokesperson. Maybe so, but there are still questions about how effective these machines are at achieving that goal.

What these images reveal is also unclear. Another concern is whether the images can be saved or transmitted. The main concerns are how much radiation the scanners give off (the manufacturers say the amount is very low), whether the scanners might malfunction and emit more radiation than they are supposed to, and what the health effects may be for travelers. Since there is no precedent for routinely screening so many people with X-rays, there are a lot of unknowns. Other medical experts are worried that the government has not adequately evaluated the health risks of such extensive X-ray screening, particularly for children, pregnant women, cancer patients and people sensitive to radiation.
Google’s Android to be world No 2 in 2010: Report

Google Inc’s Android software will become the world’s second most popular operating system for cell phones this year, in a big leapfrogging of rival offerings from Microsoft Corp, Research in Motion and Apple Inc, according to a new report.

By 2014, Android will account for nearly 50 per cent of all cell phone operating system sales, according to the research firm Gartner, putting it in position to challenge Nokia Corp’s Symbian software, which has reigned as the top mobile operating system for years.

Symbian will have a 32.2 per cent share of the global market in 2014, according to Gartner, compared to Android’s 28.6 per cent.

Gartner said it expects a variety of less-expensive Android devices shipping in the second half of 2010, to boost Android’s growth, allowing Android to grab the No 2 worldwide rank, nearly two years sooner than the firm had initially expected.

The market for mobile phone software has become a prime battleground for technology companies, as consumers increasingly use their phones to access the Internet, listen to digital music and play video games.

Apple jump-started the market for high-end smartphones with the launch of its iPhone in 2007. For Google, the world’s No 1 Internet search engine, making the transition to mobile phones is key as it seeks to maintain and expand its nearly $24 billion online advertising business.

Google’s Android software, which it offers free to cell phone vendors, has experienced dramatic growth since coming to market two years ago. More than 200,000 Android phones, from companies including Motorola Inc, HTC Corp and Samsung Electronics, are sold every day, Google CEO Eric Schmidt said recently.

Android became the No 1 operating system for US smartphones in the second quarter, according to a report last month by industry tracker NPD. Nokia’s Symbian operating system has maintained the No 1 spot worldwide, thanks to the company’s broad distribution of its handsets. But Nokia has struggled to deliver a high-end smartphone to compete with the likes of the Apple iPhone or devices based on Google’s Android.

On Friday, Nokia announced that Microsoft’s Stephen Elop would replace Olli-Pekka Kallasvuo as chief executive in a bid to revive the Finnish handset company’s fortunes.

Gartner projected that Apple’s iOS software, which is only available on Apple’s iPhone, will add nearly 9 percentage points of market share to achieve a 17.1 per cent slice of the global market by 2011, but will slip back to 14.9 per cent share in 2014.

Blackberry-maker Research in Motion will see its share fall from 19.3 per cent in 2009 to 11.7 per cent in 2014, Gartner said, while Microsoft’s Windows Phone software will decline to 3.9 per cent in 2014 from 8.7 per cent in 2009.

US hopes to work with India on H1B, L1 visa fee rise issue

US hopes to work with India to address its concerns over the recent increase in H-1B and L1 visa fees in order to find an "acceptable alternative solution" to the critical issue that threatens to hurt the bilateral economic ties, a top Obama administration official has said.

"It is an issue the administration is hoping to work with (India) to see if we can come up with an acceptable alternative solution," US Trade Representative Ron Kirk told the popular "Mercury News" of the Silicon Valley. "We'd like to see if we can find a way so that it is not as offensive to some of our important partners like India as it is perceived to be," Kirk said.

His remarks came in response to a question on the recent fee hike for H-1B and L-1 visas for foreign companies, particularly outsourcing giants from India, which has created an uproar in India.

The fee for H-1B visas — which soared from $320 to $2,320 — will help pay for a $650 million effort to increase security along the US-Mexico border. India’s IT industry says the move will cost them $200 million a year.

"It (the visa fee hike) has not been well received in India," Kirk said.

"We have heard from a lot of our colleagues (in India). It will hopefully be a subject of our (US-India) Trade Policy Forum (sponsored by Kirk's office and India's Minister of Commerce and Industry, Anand Sharma) in a couple of weeks," said the US Trade Representative.

Kirk also appeared to be dissatisfied with the steps taken by the US Congress with regard to H-1B visas, said to be the life line of the Silicon Valley.

He argued that while this was an economic issue, the Congress took this as an immigration matter.

"The reality is the Congress is zealous about its right to determine immigration policy. We see this as an economic issue but the Congress feels it should be seen as a part of our overall immigration policy," he said.
Now, Sibal on Digvijay radar

PFS in New Delhi

After Home Minister P Chidambaram, it's Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Kapil Sibal who seems to be the latest target of attack by leaders from within his own party, the Congress. First, it was Congress MP K. S. Rao who spearheaded the attack against Sibal's Educational Tribunal Bill during the Monsoon Session of the Rajya Sabha. On Saturday, it was Congress general secretary Digvijay Singh's turn to snipe at the HRD Minister.

After openly criticizing Chidambaram on his policy to handle the Maoists and his remark on "saffron terror", Singh found faults with Sibal's policies. He asked the Minister to focus more on development of school education and skill development centres rather than higher education. "The need at the moment is that the HRD Ministry should pay more attention to the development of school education and skill development centres rather than higher education and I have full faith that they will look into the matter," Singh said in Jhabpur on Saturday.

Digvijay's remark came a day after the HRD Minister announced IIT reforms plan. Singh had earlier differed with Home Minister on the counter-Maoist strategy and said. "He (Chidambaram) is extremely intelligent, articulate, committed and a sincere politician — but extremely rigid once he makes up his mind. I have been a victim of his intellectual arrogance many times, but we still are good friends."

Following Chidambaram's remark about "saffron terror", Congress' chief spokesperson Manish Tewari too ticked him off saying terrorism can have only one colour and that is black. He was joined by Digvijay, who said saffron stood for courage and valour and cannot denote terror. On his part, Sibal was forced to defend the Educational Tribunal Bill after K. S. Rao led the Opposition attack against the Educational Tribunal Bill. Rao had said, "This kind of hasty legislation for a subject like education does not augur well and his (Sibal's) thought run faster than the deeds of his Ministry".

"Sibal suffered a major embarrassment after the other members of the House joined Rao in finding faults with the Bill, finally forcing the Minister to defer the Bill. Subsequently, the Minister met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and gave a vent to his feelings. Sibal had hit back at his detractors, who had accused him of rushing the Bill by invoking Rajiv Gandhi and saying the former Prime Minister had desired that the task of imparting quality education should be achieved in a few months."
Pioneer Lucknow
09.09.2010 p-5

IIT faces faculty crunch, moots full-time foreign teachers

**New Delhi:** Facing a massive shortage of well-qualified teachers, the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) have mooted a proposal for hiring foreign nationals as permanent faculty members.

With one-third teaching positions lying vacant, the proposal as a solution to meet the unprecedented staff crunch is expected to be deliberated at the next IIT council meeting here on Friday, IIT officials said on Wednesday.

The move, if accepted, would enable the premier engineering and technology institutes to appoint foreign teachers on permanent positions, up to 10 per cent of the faculty strength.

In 2007, the IITs had been granted permission to hire foreign nationals as faculty members, but only for a maximum period of five years on contract basis.

IIT-Kharagpur leads the pack with 299 vacancies followed by IIT-Bombay with 222, IIT-Roorkee with 194, IIT-Madras with 138 and IIT-Delhi with 78. Others are not far behind either.

There are 69 vacancies in IIT-Kanpur, 65 in IIT-Guwahati and 48 in IIT-Ropar. In fact, the situation is the same in all the 15 IITs in the country.

IITs have contended that the presence of foreign faculty on their campuses would expose graduating students to globally distinguished professors, besides lending a true international flavour in the campuses and reducing brain drain.

Appointment of foreign faculty could also give a boost to IITs’ plan to enrol foreign students for the post-graduate programme. IITs have already requested the Human Resources Development (HRD) Ministry to enrol foreign students to the extent of 25 per cent of the total student strength.
IIT medicine foray sparks debate

‘Should IITs teach medicine when students’ interest in sciences is declining?’

Aditi Tandon/TNS

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 11

The IITs’ decision to teach medicine has baffled many at a time when students’ interest in pure sciences is declining. National Council for Applied Economic Research recently reported that barely 3.4 per cent of class XI and XII graders wanted to pursue science in higher education.

The question then is why IITs, top technical institutes which must develop core science competencies to strengthen India’s knowledge society, should teach medicine which is not their strength.

HRD Minister Kapil Sibal explains the shift in terms of the need of new knowledge in areas of medicine and science and the fact that medical technologists would be needed in future. That’s also the thought of Prof Yashpal, author of the report on higher education reforms in India, who said he was delighted at the IIT decision.

Asked why Health Ministry was opposed to the idea (it said IITs’ foray into conventional medicine was not advisable), they should focus on PhDs in medical engineering, biotechnology, bio-statistics and e-health, Prof Yashpal said, “Health Ministry doesn’t understand technology. You can’t teach medicine without technology. All growth in medicine in the past 40 years has been in technology. Dr A. Seth, chief cardiologist, Escorts Heart Institute, said the IITs could teach medicine provided they offered uniform curriculum, hospital and faculty standards set by the MCI.

That apart, Health Ministry is uneasy with the move and says it won’t serve India’s interests.

If top technical schools start teaching medicine, who will AIIMS collaborate with for research? Seven new AIIMS-like institutes with focus on biotechnology are coming up. Who will they work with? Medical experts, too, are wary. “It’s a ploy to get money from alumni and divert focus from JEE reforms,” IIT faculty sources said. IIT Kharagpur has a School of Medical Science functioning for six years with about 15 seats. Barely five are filled annually.

An empty hall in a mosque in Nigen, a neighbourhood in Sinagar, has turned into a school, one of the several such schools that have come up in the troubled Valley.

SREERAMA SINGH

O n the banks of Nigen lake in charming, sun-blessed Nigen assembly every afternoon as an empty hall on the second floor of a mosque. Colorful saris cover the floor, children, seated in a film that children’s fasting in the hall. In each of the few corners of the room, students sit on mats daily. They are a group of boys and girls from around the area. Occasionally, they drift to the forehead.

At the daily cycle of silence and shadow, are kept children out of schools, community schools such as this one in Nigen on probably the only way the Valley’s children can make up for their school days.

The community school in Nigen, a beacon in Ligang, was set up a month ago. Children are destroyed by the continuing violence in the area.

It is an informal set-up. Students or attendees, no punishment for coming late, and the children are never taken to school to the informal arrangement.

Shahid, 13, a class X student, says, “Here we come every day, even Sharks. In the past, it was difficult to understand new mates. But now, it feels good to see them. Time passes quickly. We are in our school.”

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While Shahid sat in a new room, in another classroom, another student, Mushtaq, who teaches English and management at Kashmir University’s Business School, has made inroads into the minds of children.

An empty hall in a mosque in Nigen, a neighbourhood in Sinagar, has turned into a school, one of the several such schools that have come up in the past two months.

Making up for LOST DAYS

A class in progress at a community school in Shangpoo. In Shangpoo town and adjacent areas, five such schools have come up in the last two months.

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A new skill

Mumbai's dabbawallas, known for their precision, are now trying their hand at computers

GARIMA MISHRA
PUNE

ONE LOOK at the thousands of steel dabbas and Raghunath Megde can tell you where each one will go and at what precise time. But ask Megde to undertake the relatively easier task of keying in his name on the computer and he's likely to groan at you. But today, Megde smiles broadly and says he is getting there. Megde, president of Mumbai Dabbawala Association, is one of the 25 members of the association who have recently joined a six-month course in English and computers.

Most of the dabbawalas came into the profession with little or no education. "They have their own problems. When the delivery address is given to them in English, they have difficulty finding it," says Krishna Kumar, vice chancellor of Yashwantrao Chavan Open University, which is offering the course free of cost to the dabbawalas.

The class began on September 5 and Megde is confident that after six months, he will be able to speak a smattering of English. Even for a system that is known for its clockwork precision, Megde says basic sentences—like, 'Sorry, I am late today' or 'I won't be able to come tomorrow'—will help the dabbawalas build a rapport with their customers.

The bunch of 25 students includes the nine directors of the Mumbai Dabbawala Association, the president and also the secretary. "I have promised myself that the day I finish this course, I will give a presentation in English to my classmates," says 65-year-old Gangaram Talekar, secretary, who now knows how to write his name, address and cellphone number in English.

It was Pawan Agarwal, CEO of Mumbai Dabbawala Association, who came up with the idea. "Since Mumbai local trains are an inseparable part of their job profile, we have designed their computers in such a way that they look like train compartments," says Agarwal. The classes are held at Vikhroli, a Mumbai suburb, on two days of the week. And on the weekends, they are held for four hours.

"There are around 5,000 dabbawalas working for the association. We plan to open more centres in other parts of the city so that more dabbawalas can join the course," says Agarwal.
IITs stall single aptitude test idea

Vineeta Pandey  NEW DELHI

The idea of a single entrance/aptitude test replacing multiple entry-level examinations, as mooted by Union HRD minister Kapil Sibal, has been opposed by the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs).

There was no consensus on a single entrance examination—National Aptitude Test (NAT)—during a meeting of the IIT Council in New Delhi on Friday; also, the IITs were against the idea of completely scrapping their Joint Entrance Examination (JEE).

Institutes to offer courses in medicine

The IITs will now be able to offer new courses in medicine. The IIT council has decided to include the study of medicine in the system, as per the rules and regulations laid down by the Medical Council of India (MCI). This implies that the IITs will not teach MBBS courses without MCI clearance and an amendment in their own act.

However, the IITs are allowed to start those courses that do not need a degree to practice like PhD in bio-medical engineering, bio-technology and e-health. This also includes areas requiring technology.

Seven out of 15 institutes favoured a separate “add-on” test in addition to NAT as proposed by the committee on examination reforms.

While members agreed that multiple-entrance tests put pressure on students and their parents, no consensus could be reached on how to go about reforming the system.

“There was unanimity on changing the present examination system of JEE and AIEEE and reduce the multiplicity of entrance exams. But the seven IITs, which included both new and old ones, did not wish to limit themselves to NAT and wanted an extra examination to select their students,” said IIT Guwahati director Gautam Barua.

Almost all IITs favoured giving more weightage to standard 12 examinations and allowing only the top students of each state to take NAT.

Keen on doing away with multiple entrance tests, Sibal set up another committee to suggest an entrance model for engineering.
MCI permission needed for courses

Rider in IIT medical nod

BASANT KUMAR MOHANTY

New Delhi, Sept. 10: The IIT council, the apex decision-making body of the tech schools, today granted them permission to teach medicine but they need the approval of the Medical Council of India (MCI).

The announcement settles a year-long debate over whether "national institutions of importance" such as IITs need clearance from councils monitoring a specific field when the institutes step into unfamiliar territory.

The council, headed by HRD minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, said the institutes would have to seek the approval of the Medical Council of India to offer degrees for the practice of medicine. But they can launch inter-disciplinary courses involving medicine and engineering on their own.

"IITs can start degrees like MBBS, MD etc for practice of medicine with approval from MCI. If the degree is not aimed at practice of medicine, the IITs themselves can start such inter-disciplinary programmes," Prasad said after the meeting.

The IIT Act of 1861 will have to be amended to include medicine as a subject to be taught in the institutes.

IIT Kharagpur has already proposed to start a medical institution in collaboration with Indian Railways, which will offer courses leading up to MBBS, MD, MS and PhD degrees.

The issue has been hanging fire for the past year because of divergent views within different ministries. Earlier this year, the HRD ministry had suggested that since the IITs are institutions of national importance, they need not go through the MCI to start courses in medical education. However, the health and the law ministries opposed this.

The law ministry said IITs had established themselves in engineering education but should not be given the status of top medical schools AIIMS and PGIMER, which do not need the MCI's approval to start courses. The health ministry also said the IITs can start courses in medicine if they meet the criteria laid down by the MCI, which governs medical education in the country.

For inter-disciplinary courses in bio-technology, bio-engineering and e-health, however, the IITs will not need the MCI's approval.

IIT Kharagpur says its medical courses will be unique programmes that will bring medicine and engineering together and produce doctors with high knowledge of mathematics, simulation, animation and engineering. They will be able to design low-cost technology for health care and deliver cheaper health care.

"While teaching physiology, there is a requirement of models, animators and simulators. The idea is to develop a new health care delivery system. The cost of medical tests is too high these days that patients cannot afford. The students at the proposed medical college will get knowledge in engineering which they can utilise to develop low-cost equipment," an IIT Kharagpur official said.

Medical education and research in technology are going hand-in-hand in all developed countries and in most developing countries, the official said. He gave the example of Johns Hopkins University, Imperial College London and Harvard Medical School, which have brought together the medical and engineering disciplines.

The official said the proposed medical colleges will start a medical outreach programme to provide health care advice in villages through a cellular phone network. For small ailments, patients can consult doctors over the network.
12th marks, aptitude test to be criteria

SIBAL VOWS TO ABOLISH JEE FOR IIT ENTRY

FROM OUR BUREAU
NEW DELHI

In a direct confrontation with directors of
the IITs – which have decided to hold the
IIT joint entrance examination for the year
2011 on April 10 – Union Human Resource De-
velopment Minister Kapil Sibal on Friday re-
asserted his resolve to allow admissions based
on Class 12 marks without any examination.
His contention is that why should students
study hard to get the best marks in the final
school examination if they are of no use in ad-
mission to a college. The only concession he is
ready to give is to allow an aptitude test, but he
insisted that the class 12 marks would be the
basic criteria for selection in IITs and other en-
gineering colleges.

"There are two things. Firstly the present
system of coaching must go as it is detrimen-
tal to quality of intake; secondly the problem
of children appearing for multiple entrance
exams causes financial and psychological
pressure on the children and their family," Sibal
said.

"Weightage will be given to 12th exam
marks, and those marks will be based on the
performance through the year. It will auto-
matically discourage coaching," he said.

He told reporters that modalities for change
in the admission process are still being worked
out and as such he cannot give a time frame for
implementation.

He also disclosed that he is pursuing a pro-
posal for allowing the IITs to offer medical
courses despite strong objections from the
Health Ministry earlier this year. Such courses
will, however, be launched only after the Med-
ical Council of India gives the clearance, he
said. Sibal said he was quite aware that IITs
could not give degrees in medicine unless and
until MCI gives the approval and that is what
he is exploring right now. Unlike the courses
offered by the medical colleges, he said the

Continued on page 2 *
Stalin promises IT sector world-class infrastructure

Wants projects in SEZs speeded up

RECOGNITION: Deputy Chief Minister M.K. Stalin presenting the CII-ICICI Venture Connect Entrepreneur award to Madhava Reddy, founder-president and CEO, HTC Global Services, and Lifetime Achievement Award to R. Ramaraj, co-founder and CEO, Sify Private Ltd., at Connect 2010 in Chennai on Thursday.
— PHOTO: BIJOY GHOSH

Special Correspondent

CHENNAI: Urging the IT industry to expedite their projects in SEZs in the State, Deputy Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Thursday promised to provide the sector world-class infrastructure.

Addressing the valedictory of ‘Connect 2010,’ the annual ICT event hosted by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Mr. Stalin said the government was actively promoting IT SEZs and 19 of the 29 notified zones were functional. It was especially significant that Tier II cities were part of the overall growth in software exports that grew from Rs.161 crore in 1996-97 to Rs.36,680 crore in 2008-09.

The government was also focussed on making Chennai a destination of growth and development through projects such as greenfield airport, aerospace park, Metro Rail and Financial City.

“While growth is welcome, it creates its own problems of emerging bottlenecks. I assure you that the government will provide infrastructure of universal standard.” Mr. Stalin said.

State IT Minister Poongothai Aladi Aruna said Tamil Nadu had the highest number of IT SEZs in India and the ICT industry collectively provided direct employment to about 3.24 lakh people.

Noting that the future growth of the sector lay in a broader and deeper integration with the State’s strong base of auto, healthcare, entertainment industries, Dr. Poongothai urged the industry to go to tier-2 and tier-3 cities and create a level-playing field across the State.

S. Gopalakrishnan, Chairman, CII-Southern Region, said the IT industry would continue to grow and add jobs in the State.

The industry has done well in Tamil Nadu owing to support from the State government and academia.

S. Mahalingam, Chairman, Connect 2010, said some of the key ideas mooted included the need for creating a strong intellectual property foundation in the State, setting up of skill development centres and vocational institutes, and creating a world-class technology institute in Chennai for developing a conducive eco-system.

Earlier, the Deputy Chief Minister presented the CII-ICICI Venture Connect Entrepreneur of the Year Award to Madhava Reddy, founder-president and CEO, HTC Global Services, and the Lifetime Achievement Award to R. Ramaraj, co-founder and CEO of Sify.

Gopal Srinivasan, CMD, TVS Capital Funds, said the CII had instituted the entrepreneur award along with ICICI Ventures to recognise the contribution being made by IT entrepreneurs to the State’s economy, employment generation and social development.