Now eligibility for IITs, 75% marks in 12th board exams

Brajesh Kumar

The percentile system that decides students' eligibility for admissions into the IITs is set to change with the Joint Admission Board (JAB) of the premier technical institutions recommending 'top 20 percentile or 75% marks in the state board examinations, whichever is lower,' for a seat in the IITs.

The recommendations came in a meeting of Standing Committee of IIT Council, a sub-committee of the IIT council on Saturday, sources in the government said. The final decision will be taken in the meeting of IIT council, later this month. The top 20 percentile system introduced during the UPA regime and under former Human Resources Development minister Kapil Sibal in 2013, required successful candidates to be among the top-20 percentile scorers in Class 12 exams of their respective boards.

This rule had sparked a controversy as there was huge variation in the cut-off marks of different boards and had resulted in 80 students mostly from Andhra Pradesh missing a seat in IITs despite qualifying the entrance examination, as they had failed to figure in the top 20 percentile.

The cut-off (to figure in top-20 percentile list) for Andhra students had shot up to 91.8% in 2014, which was higher than the national average of 90.9% in 2014 and 90.8% in 2013.

The modified rule, when accepted by the IIT council, will benefit students who score 75% marks in the board examination as they will qualify the eligibility criteria of the IIT irrespective of the variations in the percentile cut-off.

The new system was introduced in 2013 to make students give more focus on their class 12 board examinations, which was widely ignored by IIT aspirants who, according to the earlier rule just had to score 60%.

The 20 percentile system, after it was introduced saw rise in cut off from 81.6% in 2013 to 81.2%. For Andhra Board this increased from 91.8% to 93.03%, for Karnataka board from 86% to 89%, for Tamil Nadu from 83.2% to 85%, Tamil Nadu board from 90.9% to 91.7%.

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"हा कॉन्सेप्ट इससिलिए खास"

आईआईटी ऑफ देश के 16 आईआईटी और 13 आईआईटी सहित 43 केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालयों में अब हर छात्र को पढ़ाई करने का मौका मिलेगा। यह पूरी तरह से आनलाइन होगी और मुफ्त भी। इन संस्थानों में पढ़ाई मांगकर के लिए कराई जा रही, जिसमें कोई भी बच्चा अपने पसंद के जनश्रुति के हिसाब से आनलाइन ले सकेगा।

लोगों की इस बड़ी संख्या में पढ़ाई करने को लेकर मानना सासापलक विकास मंत्रालय द्वारा बनाई गई "डिटीआई वेब ऑफ एक्टिंग लिस्टिङ" पोर्ट एम्सिअरिंग माइड योजना 2014 के अंतर्गत एक नया क्रिएटिव लाउंथेज। ये डिटीआई माइड योजना 2014 के अंतर्गत एक नया क्रिएटिव लाउंथेज।

अब कोई भी स्टूडेंट्स को निखृंच कर सकेगे।

कोर्स का स्टूडेंट्स जारी करने के लिए लिखा जाने वाला सामान्य शुल्क, एज लिमिट का इंटरन नहीं।

कोर्स के माध्यम से ड्राइ सैकड़ों नौकरी निकाली सुन्दर सकेगे।

एससे हगी पदार्थ

आईआईटी ऑफ देश के 16 आईआईटी और 13 आईआईटी सहित 43 केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालयों की वेबसाइट पर इस योजना की एक विस्तृत होगी। जिसमें कार्यालय की आगाज होगी।

प्रतिव मास का अंतराल तहत लिख लाइफ टाइम 40 वर्ष होगा। जिससे संबंधित प्रोफेसरों के संबंध का मिश्रन, विषयों के स्थान में होगा।

जिससे दिन ड्राइ के तहत ड्राइ मॉडलिंग को विकसित कर सकेंगे।

वमना होगी पुर्ख

डायरेक्टर की तमना होती है की हां आईआईटी ऑफ देश के 16 आईआईटी और 13 आईआईटी संस्थानों में पढ़ाई का प्रान्त आईआईटी सामान्य अंतर्गत एक नया क्रिएटिव लाउंथेज।

लेकिन इस मंच के कार्य का यह नहीं आये जो संकुच के लिए यह डायरेक्टर होता है की उसके लिए यह डायरेक्टर होता हैं।

जिसे तथ्य के रूप में उसके द्वारा लिखने वाले अनाजम टीप का विकसित कर सकते हैं।

संजय दुबे, आईआईटी ऑफ
India is going to experience a revolution in academics, as a new education policy is going to be introduced on the basis of academic merit and how curriculum should be taught, Human Resource Development Minister Smriti Irani has said.

In a press conference Smriti Irani highlighted the initiatives that her ministry has put forth in the first 100 days of the national democratic alliance government.

The discussions on the new policy are going to be carried out at the regional as well as the national level said the minister. “We are trying that this deliberation on the national education policy begins across the country from January 2015, and the views of all stakeholders on which course should be structured in which way will also be taken,” added Smriti.

Smriti also informed the press that the University Grants Commission (UGC) is working on the basis of the National Education Policy, which was framed in 1986. The National Education Policy, 1986 advocates the 10+2+3 system. Irani also added that a review of the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the RTE will soon be carried out.

“We will carry out a review on these issues. In the last 100 days, when I have met many chief ministers and other officials even they have presented their challenges before us on these issues and even the state education secretaries have expressed the need for a review, and we will soon have the review process,” she said.
BANGALORE: The only saving grace for Bangalore in the latest Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings announced on Tuesday is the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), which ranks 11th globally for high research output. The 105-year old premier institute made a significant jump this year in the area of citations-per-faculty, which carries a ranking weightage of 20 per cent and is an indicator of an institute’s research output.

Last year’s rankings placed IISc 24th globally in this area. According to QS, a citation means a piece of research being cited (referred to) within another piece of research. Generally, the more often a piece of research is cited by others, the more influential it is. While it is high on citations, the IISc remains one of the top 200 institutions. In fact, apart from the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (222), IIT Delhi (235), IIT Kanpur (300), IIT Madras (322) and IIT Kharagpur (324), the IISc does not even figure in the top 700 institutions based on overall indicators.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology leads in the rankings for the third consecutive year and increased its year-on-year citations-per-faculty by 14 per cent. Imperial College London also reported a 14 per cent increase in this metric compared to 11 per cent by Cambridge and 2 per cent by Harvard. The California Institute of Technology remains the world’s top university for research citations.

“To be included in the overall ranks, universities need to be active in at least two of these macro faculty areas - arts and humanities, social sciences, life sciences and medicine, natural sciences, engineering and technology. They must offer undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. The IISc is active only in one macro faculty area,” said QS World University Rankings spokesperson Simona Bizzozero.

The IISc is ranked 185th for academic reputation (206 last year), but suffers on the employer reputation aspect with a global rank of 332. It does not figure in the top 200 in the areas of facultystudent ratio, international faculty and students. A total of 31 countries are represented in the top 200. United States is the dominant nation, with 51 institutions, ahead of the UK (29), Germany (13), Netherlands (11), Canada (10), Japan (10) and Australia (8).
DU ranks top among varsities other than IITs

ANANYA PANDA

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 17

Delhi University has been placed sixth in the overall ranking in India after the five IITs - Bombay (222), Delhi (235), Kanpur (300), Madras (322) and Kharagpur (324) among 800 universities across the world by the QS World University Rankings 2014-15.

In terms of "Academic Reputation", DU ranks second (196) in the country followed by IIT Bombay which tops the list of Indian varsities (160). On the same count, DU's ranking is better than even four other IITs mentioned above (Delhi-199, Kanpur-229, Madras-236, Kharagpur-328).

When it comes to 'Employer Reputation', the varsity has improved to 122nd position in global rankings and bagged the third position after IIT Bombay (80) and IIT-Delhi (96) respectively.

Put in the group-421-430 in all-round popularity chart, DU has moved up by 20 ranks as compared with previous year's rankings and maintained a lead of at least 130 points from the University of Mumbai (551-600 points) followed by University of Kolkata (801-850), Banaras Hindu University (701+).

DU has also left other such universities behind in "Faculty Areas", such as Social Science and Management wherein it has been ranked 186 globally and in Arts and Humanities and Natural Science, the university remains second with a world ranking of 184 and 220 respectively.

"DU has been placed at a higher position in global rankings than five other Indian IITs which have a very different structure since they are self-contained small campuses," said Joint Dean, Students' Welfare and media co-ordinator, Prof Malay Neerav.

The survey for QS ratings is based on various parameters, including academic reputation, teaching and research standards, employer reputation, faculty-student ratio, etc.
उपरेष्ट ग़ाड़ा झंडा

उपरेष्ट ग़ाड़ा झंडा मामले में भी 122 प्लाइट्स के साथ डीप्यू पहले पारदार्शन पर हैं। जबकि यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ मुंबई के 242 प्लाइट्स के साथ दूसरे स्थान पर है। नैतिकता संकुलक में डीप्यू को 220 प्लाइट्स के साथ दूसरे स्थान पर है। नैतिकता संकुलक में डीप्यू को 140 प्लाइट्स के साथ तीसरे स्थान पर है। 

वर्ल्ड रैकिंग में टॉप 10 यूनिवर्सिटी

1. मैसाइकल इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ टेक्नोलॉजी
2. यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ कैलिफोर्निया इमरिटास कॉलेज ऑफ लैंडन
3. होम्बिया यूनिवर्सिटी
4. भेंटरॉफ कॉलेज ऑफ यूनिवर्सिटी
5. स्टेनफोर्ड यूनिवर्सिटी
6. भेंटरॉफ कॉलेज ऑफ यूनिवर्सिटी
7. रिलिफोर्म इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ टेक्नोलॉजी
8. यूनिवर्सिटी
9. यूनिवर्सिटी
10. यूनिवर्सिटी
IIM-C among the best non-European B-schools

IIM-Calcutta has been ranked number one and adjudged the best management institute globally for study in economics. It also ranks number one in the careers rank.

HT Education Correspondent

IIM Calcutta has been ranked among the best from across all non-European B-schools. It has been ranked 13 in the 2014 Financial Times Master in Management ranking, post an impressive debut at rank 19 in the list of 70 B-schools in 2013. IIM-C is the highest ranked non-European B-school.

With only six non-European schools in the list of top 70, the other Indian school in the ranking is IIM Ahmedabad at rank 16. IIM-C has been ranked number 1 and adjudged the best management institute globally for study in economics.

A valuable factor in the ranking methodology is the careers rank under the the alumni career progress section of parameters for which the batch of 2011 had been considered.

IIM Calcutta ranks number one in the careers rank signifying that the alumni have registered the best career growth (calculated in terms of seniority and company size and employee strength) over the last three years in comparison to all other participating B-Schools.

Professor Ashok Banerjee, dean, new initiatives and external relations (NIER) says, “PT rankings is considered the gold standard in B-School ranking and we are indeed happy and proud to make such progress in a single year.

This is a significant milestone in our globalisation journey along with our recent achievements including the AMBA (association of MBAs), AACSB (advance collegiate schools of business) accreditations and the CEMS membership. The rankings will help us network more closely with the top European B-schools.”

It is also interesting to note that the FT has devised a concept of clustering. The top 14 schools form the top cluster, with IIM Calcutta being ranked 13. While 186 points separate the top ranked school from rank number 70, the differences are small within the group. The second cluster includes schools from rank 15 to 33; IIM Ahmedabad belongs to this cluster.
मोदी का विकास मॉडल जमीन पर उतारेंगे विशेषज्ञ

ये पाँच उपाय बनाएंगे भारत को ‘उन्नत’

- स्थानीय रोजगार का विकास करना
- वृन्द के माध्यम से पैंपन दर सिंचाई की व्यवस्था करना
- गृह आधारित गृह और अत्याधुनिक जटिलता को विविधित करना
- आम छायांकन की उपलब्धता में सहायता

योजना का लक्ष्य वाला बना कर इन विविधों को योजना का मुख्य क्षेत्र बनाया गया है। यह योजना इस निशान से अनुभूत है कि इसमें सिर्फ विकास के प्रारूप ही नहीं बनाया जाने, बल्कि उन्हें विविधित भी करता है। आम जनता के लिए पाँच प्रमुख विविधों की पहचान की गई है।

पत्रिका : देश के शीर्ष प्रोफेसर प्राइमरी संस्थान अपनाएंगे गांवों के समूह को

पाठ: इस बार उनके क्रियान्वयन को भी योजना में शामिल किया गया है। योजना के मुद्दों, देश भर के आआईटी और राष्ट्रीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थानों (एनआईटी) से 50-60 राष्ट्रीय संस्थान इसमें शामिल होंगे। निचले स्तर तक इसके क्रियान्वयन के लिए पावन से छोटे इंजीनियर तक की स्थापना की जा सकती है। प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थानों को एक क्षेत्र के दृष्टि गांवों का समूह बना उनकी समस्याओं की पहचान करने तथा लेकर विकास को योजना तैयार करने की जिम्मेदारी हो जाएगी। इस संस्थान में आर्थिक और तकनीकी जरूरत का आकलन करने और योजना को विविधित करने की भी जिम्मेदारी इन दों होगी। इसमें वे संबंधित संस्थाओं, सरकारी, तेज कृत्रिम और पंचायतात्त्व जनसेवनों की मदद लेंगे। निचले स्तर पर तैयार किए गए ये प्रस्ताव प्रदेश स्तर पर ग्रामीण प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान समूह (स्तंभ) के साथ और फिर राष्ट्रीय कार्यालय में रखे जाएंगे।
गंगा तीरे प्रदूषण निवारण को लगेंगे
‘जीरो डिस्चार्ज टायलेट’ सिस्टम
गंगा निर्मलीकरण पर जोर से आईआईटी कानपुर द्वारा विकसित तकनीक की पूँछ बढ़ी
नितेन्द्र लाल दास/एस.ए.नबबी

कानपुर। देश में नरेंद्र मोदी की अगुवाई में नहीं सरकार के गठन के बाद गंगा निर्मलीकरण पर जोर के परिश्रम में आईआईटी कानपुर द्वारा विकसित ‘जीरो डिस्चार्ज टायलेट’ सिस्टम की पूँछ बढ़ गयी है। गंगा बेसिन डेवलपमेंट प्लान के तहत फिलहाल इस सिस्टम को बद्रिनाथ, केदारनाथ जैसे धार्मिक स्थलों के साथ ही गंगा के उद्गम क्षेत्र में गंगा तीरे सामुदायिक शौचालय के रूप में स्थापित करने को लेकर सहमति बनी है। यदि सफलता मिली तो देशभर में गंगा तीरे जीरो डिस्चार्ज बाले शौचालयों की स्थापना की राह खुल सकती है।

गत वर्ष इलाहाबाद में समन कुंभ व माध मेले में ‘जीरो डिस्चार्ज टायलेट’ सिस्टम का सफल उपयोग किया जा चुका है, जहां लाखों लोगों ने इसका उपयोग किया। आईआईटी ने कुंभ मेले के लिए मोबाइल जीरो डिस्चार्ज शौचालयों का निर्माण आलय समय में एक माह के अंदर किया था। इस प्रयोग से उत्साहित आईआईटी ने उक्त शौचालयों का प्रयोग गंगा तीरे स्थित शहरों/कस्बों में सामुदायिक शौचालय के रूप में करने का प्रस्ताव गंगा बेसिन डेवलपमेंट अथारिटी की किया। अथारिटी ने इन शौचालयों को उपयोग में लाने की हरी झंडी दी दी है।

आईआईटी कानपुर ने ‘जीरो डिस्चार्ज टायलेट’ सिस्टम का विकास अपने मौलकालिक इंजीनियरिंग एंड मैनेजमेंट कार्यक्रम के तहत किया है। इस सिस्टम को विकसित करने वाली टीम के अनुसार आईआईटी के प्रोफेसर विनोद तारे ने बताया कि भारत सरकार के सहयोग से गंगा बेसिन प्लान के तहत फिलहाल बद्रीनाथ व केदारनाथ में इन शौचालयों को लगाया जाने पर सहमति बनी है। शीघ्र ही गंगा के उद्गम क्षेत्र में भी गंगा तीरे चिह्नित स्थानों पर ‘जीरो डिस्चार्ज टायलेट’ स्थापित किये जाएंगे, जिसको लेकर बातचीत चल रही है। उनका मानना है कि शहरों के स्थानीय प्रशासन के रुख लेने पर आम शहरों में भी इस प्रकार के शौचालय स्थापित किये जा सकते हैं। फिलहाल कोशिश गंगा बिनाईर स्थित शहरों/कस्बों में ऐसे शौचालय स्थापित करने की है।

खाद संग बनायी जा सकती है बिजली: ‘जीरो डिस्चार्ज टायलेट’ सिस्टम से उत्साहित वेस्ट से खाद बनाने के राष्ट्रीय ही उपयोगिता जा सकती है। इससे सीवर व नदियों में प्रदूषित जल जाने की समस्या भी धीरे-धीरे निवृत्त हो की जा सकती है। उत्साहित वेस्ट से वर्मा कम्पोस्ट, नाइट्रिजेशन, फार्मेसिस्व और पौधाशेष जैसे अर्थव्यवस्था एंड केमिकल खाद बनाये जा सकते हैं।
THE MISSING WOMEN OF INDIAN SCIENCE

THE OTHER HALF Despite measures to make the fields of science and technology more inclusive, the number of women in top positions remains low.

Poulomi Banerjee

It offers little scope for display of physical prowess or machismo, yet the arena of science and scientific research is as male-dominated as the defence or emergency services. Fresh graduates in recent years, may have swelled the ranks of software developers in information technology firms, but when it comes to core engineering and science, campuses, research institutes and laboratories still remain boys clubs, where the few women present are more of an oddity than the norm.

Raising the Ministry of Human Resource Development attempted to correct the imbalance, by nominating Tessy Thomas and Vaishnavi Ramachandran to the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Council, the governing body for all 16 IITs. These are the first women scientists to have been nominated to the council.

The union minister for science and technology, Harsimrat Badal, also announced a fresh scheme titled KIRAN (Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing) which will seek to bring gender parity in the field of science and technology by creating leadership positions for women. The scheme would look at a mobility mechanism for women scientists who have to change residences due to family compulsions and provide them with feasible employment opportunities.

The Department of Science and Technology one of the three major departments under the Ministry of Science (the other two being the Department of Biotechnology and the Department of Science and Industrial Research) already has in place a Women Scientists Scheme. "Many women scientists suffer a break in their careers because of motherhood and family responsibilities. This scheme provides opportunities to women scientists and technologists between the age group of 30-55 years who desire to return to mainstream science and work as bench level scientists," explains Dr Prassads Raju, scientist-advisor at the Department of Science and Technology.

Under this scheme, the department offers scholarships for research in basic and applied science, scholarship for research in science and technology based societal problem and internship for self-employment. Additionally, a mentoring programme has been initiated to improve PhD standards in engineering institutions in which women scientists and their PhD supervisors participate. "Traditionally, social conditioning has not been in favour of seeing women as engineers. Their number is more in the life sciences. In many southern states, where engineering institutes have 40% reservation for women, the number of women studying engineering is more," says Dr Prassads Raju.

The department has also been providing support for six Women's Universities under the CURIE (Consolidation of University Research for Innovation and Excellence in Women Universities) programme since 2009. "We have also started leadership programmes for women scientists, because their numbers are few at the top," adds Raju.

The department's Annual Report 2013-14, available on its website, mentions that the department received a total of 1,397 (plus 300 in Societal Research Fellowship) new proposals from women scientists in this period under the women's empowerment schemes, of which a total number of 267 projects have been sanctioned. The numbers look encouraging when seen in isolation.

But Dr Jyoti Sharma, principal scientific officer, In-charge, science and technology based Societal & IPF Research Fellowship for Women Scientists, reveals that of the total scientific manpower in India today, the percentage of women in full-time employment at research and development organisations is only 17%. Also, earlier only 13% of fresh research proposals received in a year would be from women scientists. Today after a decade of efforts to empower them, the number has gone up to 21%.

Many complain of a gap when it comes to women scientists who have received prestigious awards. According to figures presented in a paper by Dr Vineeta Bai of the National Institute of Immunology, New Delhi, of the total 97 Swarnajayanti Government awards between 1998 and 2004, only eight have been women. Physicist Rohini Godbole feels the only way to ensure recognition for women scientists and boost their presence at the top, is to increase their number at the grassroots level.

"We need to stem the leak in early careers for women scientists and realize that the solution to the career-life balance is not only providing ways to come back after a break but to make the passing over the speed breaker for the young ones, manageable," she says.

A 2008 report of the National Task Force for Women in Science had submitted a list of recommendations to attract and nurture talent to women in science. In addition to an annual gender audit, the task force had suggested introducing time-bound recruitment target systems, having women's representatives in search and hiring committees and promoting women scientists as science planners and managers. Still, six years down the line, while steps have been taken to make science more women friendly (the Department of Science and Technology claims KIRAN will cover most of the task force's recommendations) the glass ceiling is yet to be broken.
Talent from Outer Space

Major missions like moon and Mars have helped ISRO spruce up its image and get new talent. Hari Pulakat unpacks how Mangalyaan is helping ISRO attract more and better talent

Men and Money in Space

The world's major space powers at a glance

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<th>Country</th>
<th>ISRO</th>
<th>NASA</th>
<th>European Space Agency</th>
<th>Russia Federal Space Agency</th>
<th>China National Space Administration</th>
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Chairman K Radhakrishnan

There's a big change in public perception for ISRO from the 1990s, when it was ridden with failures and scandals. The no. of applicants for jobs then was only a few thousand. Now, the Mars mission has attracted public interest and ISRO has received over 2 lakh applications for all levels of jobs. In 2013, it had received only 6,000 applications for all levels of jobs. The number of jobs has declined because it added an additional stream of recruitment: the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST) in Thiruvananthapuram, an engineering institute set up by ISRO and now a deemed university.

This increase in public interest happened in other institutions too. The Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) had a similar spurt of applications after the nuclear tests in 1998. Unlike the DAE, ISRO has been able to maintain public interest through the Mars mission, and should be able to continue to do so through future missions to the moon, sun and other spaceships. It is a big change of public perception for ISRO from the 1990s, when it was ridden with launch failures and public scandals. The number of applicants for all jobs has increased from a few thousand to over 2 lakh.

"The perception of the public changed after the successful programmes." says P Koshala Mukherjee, project director of PSLV.

ISRO did not have so many technology development programmes in the 1990s. So, an engineer who joined the organisation could work on one development project, after which he was set in. Some of those who left the organisation more than a decade ago, and are now in the private sector, had told ET that they were happy to be back in the organisation. New engineers at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) and Centre for Applied Isotopic Studies (CAIS) of the ISRO Do not underestimate the ISRO, it has a great heritage.
India ranks 6th in billionaire numbers

Country's total billionaire wealth fell by $5 bn to $175 bn; total wealth of world's billionaires rose 12% to $7.3 trillion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Singapore/New Delhi, 17 September

India has retained its sixth position in the number of billionaires residing in the country. It is home to 100 such people, with a collective net worth of $175 billion. Globally, the number of ultra-rich people has reached a record 2,325.

According to the Wealth-X and UBS Billionaire Census 2014, released on Wednesday, though the number of billionaires in the country has decreased from 103 last year, India still enjoys a decent sixth position (the same as last year) in the top 10 league.

Interestingly, India has a higher number of billionaires than Switzerland, Hong Kong and France, among others. With 28 billionaires, financial capital Mumbai is among the top 20 'billionaire cities' globally — the top being New York, which is home to 103 billionaires.

On the top 40 list of billionaire countries/territories, the US maintained its position as the first, with a population of 571 billionaires in 2014, followed by China (190) and the UK (130) respectively in the second and third positions.

According to the the report, which looks at the global billionaire population from July 2013 to June 2014, India's billionaire population has decreased three per cent to 100 and the total billionaire wealth has fallen by $5 billion to $175 billion. However, the world's population of billionaires continues to grow. The global billionaire population reached a record 2,325, with addition of 155 new ones in 2014, a rise of seven per cent from last year.

"The combined wealth of the world's billionaires increased 12 per cent to $7.3 trillion, higher than the combined market capitalisation of all the companies that make up the Dow Jones Industrial Average," the report said.

Europe, with 775 billionaires, is the region with the most billionaires and billionaire wealth ($2.37 trillion). Asia boasts the largest billionaire wealth increase, with the fortunes of the region's billionaires growing 18.7 per cent over the past year. "The region (Asia) is responsible for 30 per cent of the net increase in global billionaire wealth in 2014. Asia's billionaire population grew 10 per cent in the year, with 52 new entrants into the billionaire club. Of them, 33 are from China," the report said.
Mars much better than moon, says ‘Buzz’ Aldrin

BEIJING, AGENCIES: Apollo 11 astronaut Buzz Aldrin will support a new mission to the moon by countries other than the US, and is looking forward to a manned mission to Mars.

One of the icons of space exploration, Aldrin was the second man to set foot on the moon July 20, 1969, only minutes after Neil Armstrong.

Now, 45 years after the historic mission, Aldrin longs for a return to the moon. “I support a return, but not for Nasa, for every other country,” Aldrin said in an exclusive interview with Xinhua at the recent meeting of the Association of Space Explorers in Beijing.

Aldrin explained that Americans have been there, and know what needs be done to land on the moon. Aldrin believes the US should build a permanent station on the moon’s surface, so that China’s Shenzhou spaceships, Russia’s Soyuz and other spaceships could go there.

After setting foot on the lunar surface, Aldrin uttered the words “magnificent desolation”, which later became the title of his book. “It was magnificent for human beings to progress to the point where we could make airplanes, spaceships and go to the moon. It was a magnificent achievement. But looking around, it was the most desolate, lifeless and not welcoming place,” Aldrin said.

“No air. In one month, 14 days very hot and 14 days very cold and darkness. (The moon is) not a very good place to live. Mars is much better,” he added.

He also clarified that he was misunderstood and did not see any unidentified flying objects (UFOs) during the mission as some claimed.

In an interview on the Science Channel in 2005, Aldrin said the crew of Apollo 11 had seen a UFO on their way to the moon. However, Aldrin later said that his words were taken out of context.

Aldrin told agencies that he was convinced that he saw light reflected off one of the four panels which split away in different directions when the lander detached from the rocket, but he did not know which panel the reflected light was from, so it was “unidentified”.

“We did not say ‘Houston there is a spacecraft following us to the moon.’ We did not say that,” Aldrin added.
Nasa to announce US human spaceflights

The US space agency said on Wednesday that a “major announcement” is coming regarding the return of human spaceflight launches to the United States, AFP reports from Washington.

Nasa, which has been unable to send people to space since the retirement of the space shuttle in 2011, said the announcement would be made at a news conference from Kennedy Space Center in Florida, and would be broadcast live on Nasa’s television station and website.

“We’re returning human spaceflight launches to America. Learn who will take crews to the ISS (International Space Station),” Nasa said on Twitter.

A Nasa spokesman declined to give further details until the announcement, which is timed to coincide with the closing of the US markets.

The agency has spent hundreds of millions to help private companies like SpaceX, Boeing and Sierra Nevada develop their own crew transport vehicles so that Americans could launch flights to the ISS by 2017.

In the meantime, the world’s astronauts have had to rely on Russia’s Soyuz spaceships for transport to the orbiting outpost at a cost of $70 million per seat.