Tall claims spell trouble for 44 deemed varsities

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NEW DELHI: PhDs in subjects they cannot spell, wine tasting as an “innovative” course — misleading and false claims form evidence the government is submitting to the Supreme Court to nail 44 deemed universities it wants to derecognise.

Verbatim transcripts of interviews of the deemed universities by a human resource development ministry review panel, sought by the SC, also reveal that many institutions that have now challenged the government’s move in the SC had accepted their flaws.

The HRD ministry plans to submit the transcripts — accessed by HT — to the SC early next week. The apex court is scheduled to hear the case on September 28. The SC’s evaluation of this fresh evidence is likely to play a key role in the case that affects students enrolled at these institutions and the future of the deemed university system.

The review panel consisting of four eminent academicians had to repeatedly ask Janardhan Rai Nagar deemed university in Rajasthan what “archaeology” mentioned in its documents meant, only to finally realise that the institution offers PhDs in archaeology.

Among the “innovative” programmes it is running, Bangalore’s Christ University listed wine studies. Other “innovative” programmes listed by institutions included Information Technology — a subject taught by almost every engineering college in the country. Karpagam deemed university did not know how many of its teachers hold PhDs.

Several deemed universities that have filed affidavits in the SC challenging the HRD ministry’s move to derecognise them had accepted they were wrong during the interaction with the panel. Vinayaka Misslon University accepted it was running 125 distance education courses without requisite approval, while Ponnus Vanamang Institute of Science and Technology accepted that it was running programmes different from those for which it got the deemed tag. Rajasthan-based Institute of Advanced Studies in Education accepted it ran unrecognised distance education programmes between ‘03 and ‘07.

Sri Siddhartha and Dr. MGR deemed universities accepted families of the sponsor, controlled the institutions.
Sector review: Information technology

Although IT firms had earlier raised concerns about US protectionist moves, the industry now feels it will have little impact on them.

IT firms feel US moves

THANKIR BM

The second quarter of this financial year has been a tough one for the Indian IT industry. For Hewlett-Packard, the US firm that is playing a significant role in this sector, the situation is no different. While some firms are reporting growth, others are struggling to maintain their position in the market. The industry is facing challenges due to various factors such as increased competition and the need for innovation.

Mid & small-cap IT stocks vs BSE IT index

Although the sector is vast, some firms are performing better than others. For example, companies like Wipro and Cognizant are making significant strides in the market. These firms have been able to adapt to the changing market conditions and are now able to compete effectively with their international counterparts.

Marginal impact

Many Indian IT firms have been affected by the US trade tariffs, but the impact has been marginal. Most firms have been able to mitigate the impact by diversifying their customer base and increasing their focus on emerging markets.

Large IT companies to hog the limelight

Nitin Pandit

The Indian IT industry is expected to continue growing in the coming years. By 2024, the country is expected to be the largest market for IT services in the world. This growth is expected to be driven by the increasing demand for digital services and the growing use of technology in various sectors.

ANALYST OUTLOOK

Large IT companies to hog the limelight

The growth of the Indian IT industry is expected to continue in the coming years. This growth is expected to be driven by the increasing demand for digital services and the growing use of technology in various sectors.
Mumbai: It's hard to pull a 'Munnabhai' on the IIMs this year. Stringent security measures have been put in place in order to prevent proxy candidates from taking Common Admission Test. Incidentally, last year when some aspiring managers sent in proxies to take CAT, they were caught as soon as they reached the gates of the IIMs and promptly shown the door.

While last year itself, candidates were put through a round of biometric tests which included fingerprinting, this time Prometric, the company that is conducting the computer-based CAT, says it has included some additional security measures.

"At the final stages of selection, after candidates have finished with the group discussion and personal interview, we match their fingerprints with the ones taken at the time of the CAT. So it's easy to catch the proxies," said Soumitra Roy, managing director, Prometric India.
T he world university rankings have just been released by the three ranking agencies – Times Higher Education World University Rankings, Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) composed by Shanghai Jiao Tong University and QS World University Rankings. In an unexpected comeback, University of Cambridge, UK, has topped the QS World University Rankings for the year 2010-11.

Harvard University, US, has topped both the ARWU and Times Higher Education World University Rankings. In fact, the US clearly dominates the world ranking arena. While the QS rankings have six US universities in the top 10, Times Higher Education has seven US universities and US dominates the QS top 10. In the ARWU rankings, the four top positions have been hogged by the American universities, while 17 of the top 20 are American universities.

As to the performance, experts feel that US offers a good salary to its academics that ensures a strong faculty. US universities have been consistently ranked among the top universitites in the world, and have a reputation for producing world-class graduates.

However, India finds no place in the top 100 in any of the three rankings. While IIT Bombay is ranked at 187 in the QS ranking, India figure nowhere in the top 500 in the ARWU ranking.

RANKING METHODOLOGY

Times Higher Education World University Rankings is the most comprehensive ranking, which assesses universities on the basis of a wide range of indicators, including teaching, research, international outlook and industry收入. The methodology is based on 13 performance indicators, which are divided into five categories: teaching (30%), research (30%), citations (27.5%), international outlook (7.5%) and industry income (5%).

ARWU is a research-based ranking, which evaluates universities on the basis of the number of alumni and faculty members who have won Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals. The methodology is based on 10 indicators, which are divided into four categories: international reputation (30%), reputation in natural sciences (20%), reputation in social sciences (20%) and reputation in natural sciences and social sciences (20%).

QS World University Rankings, which is the most comprehensive ranking, assesses universities on the basis of a wide range of indicators, including teaching, research, international outlook and industry income. The methodology is based on 10 indicators, which are divided into four categories: teaching (30%), research (30%), international outlook (20%) and industry income (20%).

INDIA FINDS NO PLACE IN THE TOP 100 IN ANY OF THE THREE RANKINGS. WHILE IIT BOMBAY IS RANKED AT 187 IN THE QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS, INDIA FIGURES NOWHERE IN THE TOP 200 IN THE OTHER TWO RANKINGS.
Fee exemption for Indian students

IN a breakthrough for Indian students keen on studying in a Canadian institution, according to a recent agreement between the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute (SICI) and Quebec government, an Indian student pursuing higher studies in Quebec, Canada, will pay the same tuition fee as a domestic student. Around 27 higher education institutions are based in Quebec, including McGill, Concordia and Laval, among others.

The move came into effect from February 2010. The eligibility criterion requires that an Indian student pursues full-time study in a programme offered by a Quebec institution of higher learning. The number of university level exemptions is 15 at the Master’s level and 14 at the doctoral level.

Says Sunaina Singh, president, SICI, “Selection of students recommended for fee exemption is to be conducted in a transparent manner through an adjudication committee. The criteria for selection may include the latest transcripts, a CV, letters of recommendation from the schools attended, a letter of intent and description of achievements.”

ROAD AHEAD

Discussing SICI’s future plans, Singh says, “We would be revitalising our academic collaborations and research in higher education with the view to promote Canadian and Indian studies; develop a synergy between research and its dissemination, twinning programmes, joint or dual degrees, and develop a strategy to promote post-doctoral research and training in Canada and proactively focus on research objectives as the institute has a rich bank of knowledge with 89 premier institution members. We also plan to develop a database/portal and renew our foundations including partnerships, administration and governance.”

Facilitating ‘joint research’ is another area of focus and the institute will be investing in students and researchers through student-scholarships, internships, research fellowships, culture and fine arts training for both graduate and undergraduate students. There will also be renewed emphasis on international development. SICI’s faculty and student mobility programme, initiated by Singh as a pilot programme under the IX Addendum of the MoU, aims at ‘internationalisation of the curriculum.’

SK Thorat, chairman, UGC, attending ‘Focus Canada,’ a forum organised by SICI, said: “One area that needs attention is investing in teachers who should be sent abroad for faculty exchanges. These programmes not only help in value addition, but also the experiences they bring back can further help in improving our educational techniques and curriculum.”

Vocational sector is one area that has tremendous scope, feels Amit Khare, Joint secretary, department of higher education, MHRD. Besides, institutional linkages need to be strengthened, he added.

The institute has a range of fellowship programmes, which include India studies, understanding Canada, collaborative research projects, visiting lectureship, partnership development seed grant and millennium development goals research grant for both faculty members and students of both countries.

SICI has 50 academic institutions in India as its members. They include the IITs, IIMs, law schools and central and state universities. It has 37 members in Canada including McGill, Queen and York universities. Its scope has expanded to include law, management, environment, science and even biotechnology, among others.
DU JOINS THE CATWALK

THE COMMON ADMISSION TEST (CAT) SCORE IS SOON GOING TO BE THE DECISIVE FACTOR FOR GETTING ADMISSION INTO SEVERAL POSTGRADUATE COURSES IN DELHI UNIVERSITY. NEHA BHATIA REPORTS

With several departments revising the admission criteria for some of the courses in DU — Master's of Human Resource and Organisational Development (MHROD), Master's of Finance & Control (MFC), Master's of International Business (MIB) and Master's of Business Economics (MBE) — CAT is going to play a major role from the next academic session, which starts in April 2011.

The move is expected to simplify the admission process as students will be saved the trouble of taking multiple entrance exams. Says KV Bhanumurthi, head, department of commerce, Delhi School of Economics, “The move will standardise the examination process and also ensure intake of quality students. Students on the other hand will not have to take multiple exams. Also, when it comes to placement, selection through CAT gives more credibility and acceptance at the corporate level.”

It is expected that the new move would further popularise these courses in the country, says CP Gupta, admission in-charge, MFC, adding, “We do have centres in a few places, but CAT has a far wider reach than that of an individual institute. We shall be able to have a common benchmark at an all-India level, which will help us in making our selection process more transparent.”

Students agree that one common examination for PG courses will be helpful. Ankur Mehra, a student of the current batch of MFC says, “Earlier, a series of tests would leave students drained out. With one common admission test in place, students will be able to focus on group discussions (GD) and personal interview (PI).”

Though the criteria of final selection are still under consideration, broader guidelines have already been prepared by departments including MHROD and MFC. Talking about the procedure, Ajay Kumar Singh, course coordinator, MHROD and MIB explains, “Tentatively the ratio will be 5:1, which means five students will be competing per seat. There are 31 seats for the general category in each course. We will also be taking into consideration sectional cut-offs.”

Gupta adds, “For the final selection of students in MFC, 60% weightage will be attributed to CAT, 20% to PI and 10% to GD. The remaining 10% will be attributed to the total marks scored in class X and XII.”

While the DU administration is busy finalising the, new admission procedure, some feel that it is too late for students, especially with CAT 2010 not far away. However, senior faculty members in DU point out, most students do appear for CAT. “For any B-school applicant, CAT is a must. So it won’t be late for them. In fact, this year onwards, we are only saving students from taking multiple examinations,” says Bhanumurthi.
NEW PRESCRIPTION
THE IITs ARE ALL SET TO INTEGRATE SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY BY INTRODUCING COURSES IN MEDICINE. SORBHI BHATA REPORTS

Following a recent meeting with the HRD minister, the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) have decided to offer courses in medicine. Explaining the larger intentions behind this, M Anandakrishnan, chairman, IITK, Kanpur, says the move was to "integrate the fields of medicine, basic sciences, engineering and technology".

To meet the challenges posed by medicine in the 21st century, the country needs a new breed of medical professionals who can fuse medical science and technology together. "In countries abroad, educational institutions have always integrated branches like engineering, science," he says.

He says that the Harvard-MIT Division of Health Sciences and Technology (HST) brings together MIT, the Harvard Medical School and an assortment of resources to solve problems regarding human health. "But the Indian education system has fragmented these areas of study. If an engineer is completely unaware about the field of medicine, it would be difficult for him to innovate," he lamented.

Realising this, some of the IITs have started offering interdisciplinary courses in biotechnology and biomedical engineering. IIT Delhi, Kanpur and Madras have schools and centres for carrying out research in biotechnology. IIT Kharagpur also offers a three-year Master's programme in medical science and technology.

According to Anandakrishnan, IIT Madras is collaborating with Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST) on various projects integrating science, medicine and technology. If the IITs start their own course in medicine, they will either collaborate with other medical colleges or have their own separate degree programme.

Yashpal, chairman of the UGC committee on UGC, has proposed that the IITs should expand their spread of disciplines and operate like universities.

"The report talks about complete autonomy of educational institutes. What should be taught in an institution should be decided by the institute without interference from any external agency like the MCI (Medical Council of India)," he says.

For this, the Yashpal Committee has proposed the formation of the National Commission on Higher Education and Research (NCHER) which will be a single supervising authority.

"The success of the IITs’ vision to offer interdisciplinary education will depend on the NCHER. Till the time the NCHER Bill is not cleared, the IIT Council has worked out a compromise. For a degree course that enables a student to practice medicine, clearances will have to be sought from the Medical Council of India or its successor body. However, for a medical course that doesn’t confer a practicing degree, no approval will be required," says Sanjay Dhande, director, IIT-Kanpur.

Outsourcing emerged as a new business strategy in early 1980s.
New CAT tutorial for students

NEW FEATURES HAVE BEEN UPLOADED ON THE CAT WEBSITE TO DEMYSTIFY ISSUES RELATED TO THE ONLINE TEST.

ABHISHEK GHOSH REPORTS

A number of measures have been taken this year to ensure that the online exam of CAT 2010 is candidate-friendly. A new feature called the CAT tutorial — with 12 questions where candidates can take a demo-version of the actual test — will soon be uploaded on the CAT website.

The tutorial will clearly explain the function of each button that students see on screen. The tutorial will, however, not be representative of the difficulty level of the actual CAT.

Prometric — the US-based firm assigned the task of conducting the CAT exams — has taken these steps to acclimatise students with the test. “Candidates can take this practice test as many times as it takes for them to get comfortable with the format. We have introduced these measures after consulting candidates who had taken the test last year. We want to make sure that there are no more doubts or queries regarding the format of the exam,” says Soumitra Roy, managing director, Prometric India.

Last year, after the IIMs had decided to go online to conduct CAT, many candidates were taken in by surprise. This was partly due to technical malfunctioning in some test centres as well as a lack of understanding of the new online format. To redress the latter, a number of videos have also been uploaded on the website, www.catim.in. The audio-visual format will help students with the registration and scheduling process, test-day procedures, test-format and scoring process, in addition to any additional information that students may find helpful. Candidates appearing for CAT this year have been urged to visit the website for further clarification.

This year, Prometric has also decided to increase the test-window (number of days the exam is going to be conducted). “Last year, we had a testing window of 10 days, this time we have kept it to 20 days. We are expecting 18,000 candidates to appear for the test every day. We will have the test across 33 cities, in 78 centres, in 247 labs with 9,000 computers. We want to be absolutely certain that no candidate is inconvenienced due to technical malfunctions. We will have enough spare terminals to ensure that a candidate will be tested in the same time slot he has been allotted,” informs Roy.

Security and surveillance is another aspect, which will be a priority this year. “We are fingerprinting every candidate appearing for CAT and in case candidates get a call, their fingerprints will be matched to ascertain their authenticity,” Roy concludes.
The grand design

THE National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, in association with the micro, small and medium enterprise ministry organised an orientation workshop for designers. The workshop aimed at sensitising the design community about India’s MSME sector and the need for design expertise in the sector. “With globalisation, it has become important for the Indian industry to be competitive in terms of cost, quantity and quality. Big enterprises have started evolving their own strategies to address these issues. However, it is the MSME that still needs to work towards it,” said Pradyumna Vyas, director, NID.

According to him, MSME is one of the biggest employers in the economy. It contributes to over 45% of industrial production and around 40% of the total exports. There are about 13 million MSMEs in India, employing about 31 million people. “But it is one of the most vulnerable sectors. It needs expertise and interventions at various levels.”

Vyas explained that with the help of a designer, MSME can improve their competitiveness. “Designers’ role is not limited to providing appearances to a product. Designers work with the psychology of consumers, they can provide consultancy on what and how to manufacture various products. A designer can advice and offer solutions on real-time design problems, resulting in continuous improvement and value addition for existing products,” Vyas explained.

The government of India is realising that MSME can be a backbone of economy and designers can play a crucial role in increasing productivity of MSME. It has recently launched a design clinic scheme in association with NID. “The scheme will assist industrial clusters to open a channel for design information inflow for creative, innovative and futuristic approach towards the product, process, operations, manufacturing and business design,” informed Madhav Lal, additional secretary and development commissioner, office of development commissioner, MSME.

designclinicsmsme.org

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EMBA: a costly lesson

If executive MBA programmes are not much different from their full-time counterparts, how do business schools justify charging twice the price?

EMBA STUDENTS
EXPECT TO BE TAUGHT
BY PEOPLE WHO NOT
ONLY HAVE THE THEORY
BUT WHO ALSO HAVE
DEMONSTRABLE
REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCE

strains real-life experience. Sean Kilbride, a professor at IESE
School of Management, Paris, says that this means drawing
on professors from all over the world and recruiting business
veterans with credibility in their respective industries.

Is there any question whether it is ever valid to make a direct comparison between an executive and a standard MBA? Paul Healy of the Vikrant Saraswat College in Delhi points out that a full
time MBA takes students out of the workplace for at least a year, with consequences of salary. EMBA students, on the other hand, remains in employment and thus part time. Looked at this way the difference in the cost to the student quickly shrinks—although this does not
take into account why the school itself should charge more. Nevertheless, having MBAs who remain in their jobs can produce benefits both for the students and the employer. Simon Learmont, director of the EMBA at Cambridge Judge, cites examples from his own class who applied classroom learning as soon as they returned to the office, including one who concluded a lucrative deal with a Latin American client on the back of a single presentation.

Perhaps the best answer to the question about what differential lies not in the quality of teaching or faculty or even in the standard of curriculum, and hence, the price. Instead, the prime mover lies in the doors open to these students. One of the unexpected benefits of an EMBA is that graduates admit that the most valuable thing they get from their business school was not easy classroom interactions or for guidance, but membership of an exclusive club. And while a full-
time MBA might give you access to the junior branch an EMBA gives you a lifetime pass to the senior common room itself. As Mr Cres's lawyer could have argued, it's not what you know but who you know.
**CAMPUS OF THE WEEK: PENDEKANTI INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, HYDERABAD**

**Theme of the week: Why do we need to revolutionise the usage of green technology?**

**Arghya Sharma**

The term “technology” refers to the application of knowledge for practical purposes. And the field of “green technology” encompasses a continuously evolving group of methods and materials, new techniques for generating energy to minimise cleaning products. Its major applications are:

- **Sustainability:** Meeting the needs of society in ways that can continue indefinitely into the future without depleting natural resources.
- **Resource reduction:** Reducing waste and pollution by changing patterns of production and consumption.

**Innovation:** Developing alternative technologies that have been demonstrated to damage health and the environment.

- **Viability:** Creating a centre of economic activity around technologies that are efficient and products that benefit the environment.

Also, renewable energy sources such as wind turbines, solar panels, or gas biogas created by animal dung should be encouraged. Cities should aim to provide economic incentives so that people can make such energy resources viable.

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**Green technology is the ‘future at large’**

**J.Karthick**

**Green** technology is a technology that is environmentally friendly and ensures that natural resources are conserved. Green technology is the ‘future’ at large, and the main aim of this innovative technology is to offset the degradation to the environmental resources. In a way, green technology helps in reducing the amount of pollution that is being emitted into the environment.

India about the interdependence between human beings and natural resources, and the irreversible threat that is being caused to the same. India is a country that needs to implement green technology because of its vast geographic area and huge population, and also for the reason that India has been identified as one of the promising and ever growing markets for the world’s producers. Both the production and consumption are so massive that one can witness the tremendous amount of damage that is being caused to the environment and natural resources every second.

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TERI University celebrates Aahvaan—a three-day ‘green’ cultural fest
To build a new consciousness on social and environmental sustainability, TERI University celebrated Aahvaan 2010. The fest reaffirms TERI University’s commitment to contribute globally as a seat of advanced learning in the realms of energy, environment, and sustainable development. Aahvaan 2010 took place from September 17 to 19, 2010.

We invite colleges and universities to send in information—on new faculty, courses, alliances, projects and other events—for this section. Email: vikram.chaudhary@expressindia.com
OHIO PILL MAY NOT WORK FOR OUTSOURCING ILLS

Is US President Barack Obama really losing sleep over outsourcing, or is he just fulfilling his poll promise of fighting to regain American jobs? Is he really afraid about Indian talent riding roughshod over American enterprise, or is he just trying to please lobbyists? These are difficult questions to answer, but one thing is sure—India's capabilities in the software field are not something he can ignore. Though the US President has been highly vocal on the subject, deep within he should know that outsourcing is a global reality and free trade an essential element in a liberalised world.

Debajyoti Ghosh

If you have been listening to US President Barack Obama's talk on the outsourcing industry, you might be wondering where does India stand in this scenario. Is the honeymoon period over for the $60 billion offshoring industry in India? The answer to that might not be as clear, but industry experts feel it is not yet over though, and India will keep on serving the US strong story ahead. Recently the government indicated that it is taking some steps towards curbing outsourcing-related services from India by the US, but experts are apprehensive about the impact.

Outsourcing is an economic reality ("India has a part in the global sourcing strategy and cannot be excluded in the world picture. One such US state housing government department offshoring to India doesn't talk of India is on the downer," a senior official in the state department says). "It is not possible to offload the outsourcing process, it is a global trend," says Kumar R. Pekhalia, global head, outsourcing advisory, KPMG.

The Indian IT-BPO industry is estimated to be a $50 billion business, of which exports account for about $25 billion and the rest coming from domestic revenues. According to Nasscom, the IT-BPO export revenue could reach $60 billion by 2012. Today the Indian supply chain is a 30 million people already working in the US and the number is expected to rise. "India is working on solutions that are better than manual work," says Sandeep Aggarwal, executive vice president and chief financial officer of IBM Global Services, says "Outsourcing to Indians is a lot easier than outsourcing to people in India,"

I hope the US would make more positive investments in research and development to create jobs and to become more competitive, rather than taking any aggressive action which seems negative and will lead to protectionist measures around the world.

Srinath Raman, president, Nasscom

Marketing gimmicks rather than agendas by the US government because of the elections in November. This is a fact which will disintegrate the US unemployment rate, says Brent Just, IT analytics, and briefing.

However, the Indian government is busy planning its own strategy. Focus has been on providing a platform for the start-up divisions of small and medium enterprises. The government is keen on encouraging the IT-BPO sector to start up new ventures.

There could be a positive impact of the Indian Prime Minister's recent visit to the US which will benefit the Indian IT-BPO companies in the future. India needs to increase its share in the global cloud industry, and this will benefit the US and India.

The US government is spending huge amounts on the announcement of the IT-BPO sector, and this will benefit the Indian IT-BPO sector. The US government has been promoting the Indian IT-BPO sector by providing various incentives to the sector. The Indian government is also working on creating a conducive environment for the IT-BPO sector to grow in India.

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TECH TALK: SAURABH SRIVASTAVA

Cloud computing is a game-changer for Indian businesses

About three months ago, I wrote an article in this column titled "Cloud On The Horizon" where, in a generic fashion, I outlined what cloud computing was about. I concluded my article by saying, "I am convinced that cloud computing is a technology that's here to stay. This shift promises to transform the IT industry and influence any industry with a dependency on IT. This means every industry."

I think it is time now to revisit this phenomenon on which so many players are placing huge bets on. There has always been a mismatch between the speed of innovation required by businesses and the time it takes for IT organisations to deliver utilising traditional methods. It has improved its efficiency in many ways, but the gap between IT supply and business demand is too broad, and growing too fast for IT to continue to rely on traditional approaches. Cloud computing is a game changer in solving this problem.

Cloud computing is a way of efficiently delivering consuming and managing technology. It creates agility and efficiency benefits through an evolution of proven management capabilities like provisioning, self-service, security and assurance that span virtual and physical environments. CIOs are beginning to leverage cloud computing technology to enable them to become more responsive to the business needs for innovation with an economic model that matches usage where and when needed.

With the cloud, IT is delivering services to the business using a combination of virtualised internal and external resources. It's challenge is no longer to just manage its own internal resources—it is to get optimum business value out of a budget that it can allocate with tremendous flexibility across an extended technology supply chain.

A few companies like CA Technologies approach the cloud, beyond operational efficiency, to enable companies to optimise IT's business value. Unlike approaches that focus on one narrow aspect of cloud computing from the bottom up, these companies approach both public and private cloud computing with a top-down perspective, based on the services and applications businesses depend on. This is the right way to go.

To make the promise of cloud computing real for customers and, more specifically, to help IT accelerate its transformation to master a dynamic service supply chain, companies must do three things. IT organisations must realise the agility of cloud computing by providing solutions to design, assemble, provision and scale services across both private and public clouds. They must also give IT closer control of security and assurance monitoring. Public versus private cloud

Public clouds offer services to essentially anyone willing to pay for them. These are the ones most of us are familiar with, like Salesforce.com, Microsoft Azure and Amazon EC2. Benefits of public clouds include:

- Reduced capital expenses through pay-as-you-go service models
- Reduced operating expenses due to less internal infrastructure to maintain
- Access to best-in-class services in real-time
- Ability to build new elastic services on hosted platforms
- Freedom to focus internal resources on core competencies

Private clouds can be on-premise and operated by the internal IT organisation using its own resources. Or a managed service provider can host and even operate a private cloud specifically for a single customer, using the MSP's own computing resources. Benefits of private clouds include:

- Reduced capital expenses through more efficient use of assets
- Reduced operating expenses through reduction of infrastructure
- More transparency into the business through increased metering capabilities
- Increased agility through a combination of self-service and elasticity, which allows users to quickly order and receive a service when they need it
- Flexibility to quickly align resources with operational demand with just-in-time provisioning of services and capacity

When taken together, you get a third model of cloud computing. This is the hybrid cloud. It is a model that combines elements of both private and public cloud computing. A common example of a hybrid cloud is "cloud bursting," where a service running in a private cloud can automatically harness resources from a public cloud to handle peaks in demand. Hybrid clouds are useful when customers need a highly tailored solution to address their IT and business needs. A successful cloud computing strategy delivers a combination of private and public cloud computing.

I am often asked what model is most likely to work in India. There is no blanket one-size-fits-all solution. Having said that, generally speaking, going forward I am convinced that Indian businesses will adopt the cloud far quicker than the advanced economies. Talk surrounding cloud computing in India has generated keen interest during the economic difficulties of the last 18 months or so. This is simply because the technology helps reduce operating and capital costs.

India's 8 million population of small-to-medium-sized businesses represents huge potential for cloud computing. The next three years will be a critical period during which to develop strong cloud offerings and guide customers on their journey to the cloud and the tremendous business value that awaits them as the prize. A report suggests the Indian market for cloud alone would be worth $260 billion by 2021.

I believe many large companies will start with the private cloud. This is because they have multiple data centres and significant excess capacity—so the natural implementation for them will be a private cloud. However, as that develops and especially as smaller organisations try to implement in those areas, they will use a public cloud. We are seeing small businesses moving faster towards the public cloud simply because it is an easy way for them to get cost-effective access to really good technology.

The author is chairman, CA Technologies
'Send UK jobless to India for IT training'

Move will improve employment prospects for British youths, suggests biz secy Vince Cable

London, Sep 19: British youths who cannot get jobs here should be sent to India for IT training which could improve their prospects for employment when they return home, business secretary Vince Cable has suggested.

Cable, who was in India recently, made the remarks at the annual dinner of Indian Journalists Association.

He said during his meetings in Bangalore, India's IT tycoon Anil Ambani had expressed the view that he could train British youths and send them back so that they could have better job prospects.

Cable is also expected to place an annual cap on grants from India and other countries outside the EU.

On Friday he told the Financial Times that the limit imposed by the Home Office is already affecting the country's economic recovery.

Placing an annual limit on the number of Indian and other non-EU professionals who could come to Britain for work is one of the key items on the coalition government's agenda.

The plan, however, has been opposed in several quarters.

Cable said the cap—currently placed at 24,100 until April 2011—was leading to companies moving jobs overseas because they are unable to hire key personnel.

The limit placed by the David Cameron government on the number of professionals British firms can hire from outside the European Union is preventing the recruitment of key employees from India, according to the companies.

General Electric, one of the major employers in Britain with 18,000 workers, has complained that it has been unable to hire a stem cell research executive from India because of "very very small quota has been given to the company to hire people from outside the EU."

It has also not been able to hire gas turbine engineers from outside the EU due to the annual limit placed by the government.

General Electric is the latest in the list of companies that business secretary Vince Cable says have been prevented from hiring the required skills from outside the EU because the skills are not available locally.

Mark Elborne, General Electric's national executive for North Europe, told The Sunday Telegraph, "It is very difficult to make planning decisions and know where to allocate people if you have a limitation on the number you can bring in."

"We can't be prevented from doing business by some cap that is simply not effective of our needs..., That is just an intractable problem,..."

He added that his company needed 500 specialist engineers but was given a quota of four.

"We simply has to stay competitive in an open, global market place," he said.

Cable said in one instance a UK company needed 500 specialist engineers but was given a quota of four.

He mentioned an entrepreneur who abandoned plans to open a factory and create 400 jobs in north England after failing to secure visas for key staff.

PTI

Campaign to hunt for budding innovators

'We want to nurture ideas that can decide the future'

Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI: The National Geographic Channel and Volkswagen have joined hands to come up with a unique initiative to identify innovations that lead to technological or scientific breakthroughs.

"Innovations for Everyone" campaign will hunt for individuals who have conceptualised radical ideas that can make a difference to society and to the country. The innovations will be evaluated across three categories: technology, edge, a breakthrough project on investing something new; re-engineering edge, re-inventing and improving any existing invention; and environment edge, to save the environment.

To make the campaign successful, NGC and Volkswagen have collaborated with the Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer, the industrial interface of country's leading educational institute IIT-Delhi.

FITC managing director Anil Wall, who is heading the jury, says: "We want to nurture ideas that can decide the future and it would be excellent if these innovations can be adopted by business groups. The ideas must be original and not be plagiarised ones."

Pointing out that several interesting innovations cutting across technical domains are taking place at the grassroots level, Dr. Wall says these are being identified and documented by the National Innovation Foundation. Many of the innovations are helping to address local issues though some have much bigger potential. The 'Innovations for Everyone' campaign intends to capture as many interesting innovations that address the broad thematic issues underlying this initiative.

Dr. Wall says the participant can be anyone who has an idea, however small in magnitude but big in impact, that could make a significant difference to society. "The entries are not restricted to candidates with engineering background. There are many other non-technological ways to offer solutions. Like for example global warming which is a concept non-friendly environmental measures. Entries will be judged on the following parameters -- social impact, economic feasibility, usage of locally available material, ergonomics of design, ease of use and scope of scaling."

Three winners will be shortlisted from the three categories and will be awarded a cash prize of Rs. 3 lakh.

Three short films will be created on each of the winning projects and will be aired on the channel. "This initiative will provide all the budding innovators an opportunity to put their out-of-the-box ideas to test," says Keerant Adyanthaya of the National Geographic Channel.

Interested participants can send their entries either by post to the NGC office or register on line at www.innovationsforeveryone.com by October 18.
JNU students plan fresh stir
‘If the High Court order on OBC quota is not implemented’

Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI: A section of Jawaharlal Nehru University students has said they would launch a fresh agitation if the authorities do not implement the September 7 Delhi High Court verdict that criticised the varsity’s reservation policy for the Other Backward Classes. The students have been agitating against the same since 2008 academic year.

The Delhi High Court had termed the JNU’s OBC reservation policy as “contrary to the concept of reservation” and “illusory” and asked the university to admit two petitioners who had been denied admission within one week of their complying with requisite formalities.

The two petitioners had gone to the Court on the ground that the university had applied cut-off norms contrary to the Human Resources Development Ministry guidelines and denied them admission.

Students affiliated to the All-India Students Association (AISA) said the Court’s verdict was “historic and far-reaching”. They said the University should now admit over 300 OBC students who were denied admission this year and over 200 others in the past two years.

They claimed that following a student demonstration on September 13 demanding implementation of the Court verdict, the JNU administration had “agreed in principle that JNU would admit the OBC students who did not make the earlier cut-off criteria”.

The JNU administration said it has begun moves to admit one of the two petitioners. The administration said it will not apply the verdict to all the OBC students who did not get admission this year because the verdict has now been challenged in the Supreme Court.

The matter is coming up for hearing in the Supreme Court on September 27.
Delhi fastest job generating among four metros: Assocham

Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI: The National Capital Region has emerged as the fastest job generating city among the four major metropolitan cities in the country by fuelling a growth of 34.27 per cent in employment generation during the April-August period of the current fiscal, according to the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India.

The Assocham Placement Pattern study on “Job Trends in the Four Metros” analysed the trend of job openings in 60 cities and 32 sectors from a sample of 2,40,314 employment opportunities generated during the period April-August this year. Delhi (NCR), Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, with a share of 57.22 per cent in the sample size, was the focus of the study.

According to the study undertaken by Assocham Research Bureau, NCR with 34.20 per cent was the most prominent employment destination for the aspirants. It was followed by Mumbai (12.70 per cent), Chennai (6.12 per cent) and Kolkata (4.19 per cent) at second, third and fourth positions respectively during April-August 2010.

“The job creation is happening at all levels including senior, middle and junior management and executives. Even in the engineering and management colleges, the campus placement trends are positive compared to the last year trends. Companies are back in campus with a cautiously optimistic approach and the same pattern of growth is expected to continue for another next 6 months,” said ASSOCHAM secretary general D. S. Rawat.

NCR recorded a growth of 34.27 per cent during April-August 2010 compared to the same period of last fiscal with increase in total share of 34.20 per cent compared to 32.35 per cent last year. Agriculture and allied services sector are on top in creating jobs in the NCR and show a growth of 314.29 per cent from the same period last year. Textile (159.83 per cent) and real estate (158.51 per cent) are on second and third position respectively.

The infrastructure and aviation sectors are ranked fourth and fifth constituting 147.41 per cent and 146.49 per cent of the total vacancies offered during the period April-August 2010, added Mr. Rawat.

Mumbai and Chennai are ranked second and third with 12.70 per cent and 6.12 per cent of the total vacancies offered. Next in line is Kolkata with a share of 4.19 per cent in generating employment opportunities.

Academics emerged as the largest share of the vacancies posted in the metro cities for teachers and professors in schools, universities and private institutes (engineering and management). Almost 59.47 per cent of the openings publicised in last five months belonged to the education sector.

The IT sector created maximum number of jobs constituting 57.99 per cent in four metros despite the dip in the earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and operating margins of the top IT companies. This was largely due to the spurt in wage inflation and low demand in European countries.

The IT and IT-enabled services accounted for 57.07 per cent of the total job openings, followed by IT/hardware sector which contributed 54.93 per cent of overall openings in four cities.

The number of job openings in the segment remained buoyant on account of a rise in the engineering goods and other activities of different projects running under progress in NCR in view of the Games.

The engineering segment has the share of 54.29 per cent in the total employment generation in the sector.

With a contribution of around 53.71 per cent in job openings, the manufacturing sector found a highly skewed distribution of the new job openings in the metros. On the other hand, telecom, banking and logistics sectors recorded marginal decline during the analysed period.
Glaciers: weaknesses in IPCC review to the fore

R Ramachandran

NEW DELHI: The review by the Inter-Academy Council (IAC) of the working of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which was released on August 30, has brought out some interesting facts about the Himalayan glacier controversy.

Significantly, besides revealing the weaknesses in the multi-layered process established by the IPCC to review draft chapters of its reports and correct errors, the IAC report highlights the shortcomings in the internal process of review within the government when the reports are received by it for comments.

The observation on the Himalayan glaciers in the Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) of the IPCC, issued in 2007, was one of the controversial statements in the report that led the Panel to request the IAC on March 10 to "conduct a thorough and independent review of the processes and procedures followed by the IPCC in preparing its Assessment Reports."

The controversial statement on the Himalayan glaciers appeared in Section 10.6.2 of the report of the Working Group II on Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation. Citing a 2005 report of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), a non-peer-reviewed (grey) literature, it said: "Glaciers in the Himalayas are receding faster than in any other part of the world, and if the present rate continues, the likelihood of them disappearing by... 2035 and perhaps sooner is very high if the Earth keeps warming at the current rate. Its total area will likely shrink from the present 500,000 km2 to 100,000 km2 by... 2035."

The WWF report had, in turn, cited a 1999 report of the Working Group on Himalayan Glaciology (WGHI) of the International Commission for Snow and Ice (ICSI) whose chairman at that time was the well-known Indian glaciologist, Syed Iqbal Hasmain, formerly of the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and now with The Energy Research Institute (TERI), New Delhi. The ICSI report had also resulted in a New Scientist article in June 1999 that quoted Professor Hassain as saying that the Himalayan glaciers would vanish within 40 years as a result of global warming.

"No critical comments"

Investigating the error, the IAC committee examined the draft text of the chapter in question and the relevant reviewer comments. The committee's analysis showed that six experts reviewed this section in the first draft and, interestingly, none of their comments was critical. However, at the stage of the second draft, which is sent to both the governments and expert reviewers, two comments were related to the erroneous statement on Himalayan glaciers, but neither of them was from the Indian government or any Indian expert.

David Saltz of the Desert Research Institute, Ben Gurion University, Israel, had pointed to the contradiction in the text, which spoke of glaciers disappearing by 2035, and in the same breath said their total area would shrink by 2035. However, the authors or the review editors "missed" clarifying this and failed to change the text.

Another reviewer, Hayley Fowler of the University of Newcastle, asked the conclusions of the section and referred to the work that arrived at different conclusions. Professor Fowler pointed out that measurements by Hewitt suggested that the western Himalayan glaciers were expanding and added that the changes in precipitation and temperature trends, which he along with D. R. Archer had observed, also supported that. After merely noting on the margins, "Was unable to get hold of the suggested references; will consider in the final version," the writing team failed to act upon the comment and the final version of the chapter remained unchanged.

Professor Fowler and Mr. Archer had said in their 2006 paper: "The observed downward trend in summer temperature and runoff is consistent with the observed thickening and expansion of Karakoram glaciers, in contrast to widespread decay and retreat in the eastern Himalayas. This suggests that the Western Himalayas are showing a different response to global warming than other parts of the globe."

In contrast to this recommendation the final version of the WG II report, the final version of the Summary for Policy Makers (SPM), however, does not have any statement on the Himalayan glaciers. This is because the final draft version of the report, which is sent to experts and the governments, elicited a response from the Indian government and interestingly, none from any expert.

The remark included in the draft SPM from Section 10.6.2 was: "If the current warming rates are maintained, the Himalayan glaciers could decay at very rapid rates, shrinking from the present 500,000 km2 to 100,000 km2 by 2035."

The Indian government had commented: "This is a very drastic conclusion. Should have a supporting reference otherwise should be deleted." In response, the writing team removed the contentious statement from the SPM.

But what is interesting to note is the lacuna in the review process.
FULL-TIME MEDICAL COURSES FAIL TO ENTHUSE MOST IITs

However, the institutes could offer inter-disciplinary courses in medicine and engineering

KALPANA PATHAK
Mumbai

The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) may have got the nod from the IIT Council to teach medicine, but barring IIT-Kharagpur (IIT-Kgp), none of the IITs will venture into full-time medical education in the near future.

"We will continue to offer courses related to medicine. But we do not wish to venture into medical education full time. We have access to good hospitals in our neighbourhoods and we need good technology, we use their services. IIT-Kgp is remotely located and needs a good hospital facility. This move will help them tremendously," said Professor Surendra Praasad, director, IIT-Delhi.

IIT council, the apex decision-making body of the technology schools, on September 11, allowed the IITs to offer medical education after seeking approval from the Medical Council of India to offer post-graduate degrees in medicine.

The IITs can, however, on their own, launch inter-disciplinary courses in medicine and engineering. Some IITs have been offering such courses since the past few years. The IIT Act of 1961 will have to be amended to include medicine as a subject that will be taught in the institutes.

"The permission from IIT Council does not mean all IITs will be able to offer a degree in medical education. They can offer a course. A 40-hour lecture for IITs is one semester course whereas, universities have the power to grant degrees. If we wish to introduce a medical course (which IITs have been delivering), we do not need permission from the Medical Council of India. We need their permission to offer the course," said an IIT director.

IITs, IIT-B, TIFR to set up national mathematics centre

The Indian Institute of Technology Bombay and Tata Institute of Fundamental Research have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a National Centre for Math at IIT-B.

Mumbai has the largest concentration of mathematicians in India with the majority at TIFR, IIT-Bombay and Mumbai University. The institutes have well-developed mathematics departments of international reputation and the faculty members have strong research groups that would help organize various programmes of the Centre throughout the year.

NCM will be modelled on the famous Oberwolfach Mathematics Research Institute (MFO), in Germany, that was set up in 1944 and played an important role in re-establishing Germany as a leading nation in mathematics, post the Second World War. About 50-week-long international workshops and conferences are held per year at Oberwolfach. NCM aims to have workshops, conferences, instructional schools year-round for students, young teachers and researchers.

"IITs said they would indeed be happy offering inter-disciplinary courses in medicine and engineering, but we have to get the funding and the expertise to expand in this area. We could deliver post-graduate courses in some specific areas where technology is applicable in the use of biomedical engineering or applications. It is certain not about starting a medical school," said an official of IIT-Madras.

For IIT Bombay and IIT Kanpur, medical education does not figure for the next five years, at least.

"We have a good bio-medical engineering programme. Delivering a post-graduate programme means we need to have a good hospital and carry out big expansion. We have good tie ups with local hospitals and we are happy with that at present. We may give it a thought five later," said Professor Devang Khakhar, director, IIT-Bombay.

The whole idea of the IIT Council giving a go-ahead to the medical education programme, explains the IIT, "is to facilitate IIT-Kgp which is deprived of good medical facilities owing to its remote location."

IIT-Kgp had in August 2009, signed a $50-million MoU with the University of California, San Diego, to set up a state-of-the-art 300-bed hospital, expandable to 750 bed and a research center at the institute. IIT-Kgp started the School of Medical Science and Technology in its Gold Jubilee year in 2001. Its objective was to provide a platform for interdisciplinary teaching and research in medical science and technology.

AK Majumdar, deputy director at IIT-Kgp said, "The institute will be guiding the implementation of a full-fledged medical school at IIT-Kgp in an integrated manner to provide state-of-the-art medical education, research and training facilities in medical sciences."

"However, the cost of the project has gone up in the past one year and we will need to estimate how much it would cost us now," he said.
Industry-institute interface takes root in premier Kolkata varsities

GOLDFAN GHOSE

A productive interface between industry and academia, in the current era of knowledge-driven economy, is crucial. And this idea appears to have taken deep roots in Kolkata.

Two prominent varsities in the city, the University of Calcutta (CU) and Jadavpur University (JU) along with the Indian Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management (ISSWB) have been promoting industry-institute interface in their academic activities. The concept had initially been suggested by the National Knowledge Commission in its report.

On the 150-year celebrations of the universities of Calcutta, Mumbai and Madras in 2007, CU took the initiative to get into a partnership with the two other institutes to establish the Centre for Research in Nano-science and Nano-technology (CRNNT).

"The CRNNT has two representatives from the universities of Mumbai and Madras," said Dhrubajyoti Chattopadhyay, vice chancellor of CU. The university has tie-ups with several Indian and foreign institutes for exchanging visiting fellows and professors.

"On the initiative of the West Bengal Higher Education Council, we partake in the inter-university exchange programmes. Several such programmes have been undertaken by the departments of Environment and Social Sciences," among others. At least 10 faculties of other universities have visited CU till date," said Chattopadhyay.

CU had also asked the Confederation of Indian Industry for suggestions in the area of Nano-technology before setting up CRNNT. The university had also asked the Merchants' Chamber of Commerce in Kolkata for upgrading its syllabus for the Commerce department. "We have the Calcutta University-Industry Partnership Programmes (CU-IUP) in place that interacts with the industry. All departments are party to this initiative." Chattopadhyay added.

JU, which has made a name for itself in science and technology, has also taken initiatives for increased interaction with the industry. "We are into consultancy services to a big way. Last year, we serviced 150 industries. We have a consultancy unit, which has been in the market for a long time," said Siddhartha Datta, vice chancellor of Jadavpur University.

The first management institute in the country, IISWBM, also has strong bonds with the industry. "We invite experts from the industry to share their expertise on various topics on a weekly basis. This interaction continues for two hours. Apart from this, we send students to visit plant sites so that they get first-hand knowledge about the industry," said SN Ray, director of IISWBM.

The students are required to submit a project report as part of their management degree programmes. "We have set up the Centre for Research in Materials Management (CRMM) which is one of the three institutes in the world and the only one in India. CRMM trains working executives in materials management in association with the Indian Institute of Materials Management and the certificate is provided by the International Federation of Purchasing and Supply Chain Management," said Ray.

"Already, 12 researchers have received their fellowships under the programme. The CRMM Board is a perfect blend of industry, academic partners. The board comprises 60 per cent members from the industry and the rest from the academia," said Ray.

IISWBM updates its syllabus every two years to keep itself abreast with the changing scenarios. "We have made the Marketing Research paper more applicable. Last year, we started the specialisation in Operations Management. Before that, we had included in four industry topics and held workshops to know what they expected from the students," said Ray.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA AND JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY
along with the Indian Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management have been promoting industry-institute interface in their academic activities.
Practice test for CAT 2010 in 2 weeks

BS REPORTER
New Delhi

Students aspiring to take the Common Admission Test (CAT) this year may find it easier to navigate through the computer-based CAT. Prometric, the US-based agency that is conducting the exam, will release practice tests for the candidates in two weeks.

The test is being jointly worked out with the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and will have two parts — a tutorial and the actual test.

"A practice test will be available on www.catim.in website at least a month before the start of the testing window to familiarise candidates with the navigation and functionality of the CAT. There will be a tutorial followed by 12 sample questions. The sample questions in the practice test are not representative of the content or difficulty level of the actual test," said Soumitra Roy, MD, Prometric India.

Roy said the test will be released in two weeks on the website. The tutorial will explain how to navigate the different options — question number, on-screen timer, next button, previous button, mark button, review button and quit test button — available on the screen.

Last year, when the CAT became CBT for the first time, candidates complained of difficulty in navigation during the test.

Every question will have four options — A, B, C and D. Candidates will have to read the question on the screen and click on the circle next to their selected answer. They can change their answer by clicking on any other circle.

Three points will be awarded for each correct answer and one point will be deducted for each wrong answer. Candidates may choose not to answer a question if they are not sure.

"There is no penalty for unanswered questions. If they've already selected an answer but later decide that they would prefer not to answer that question, all they need to do is click on the circle again. Candidates have 15 minutes to complete the practice test and they can return and try the practice test as many times as they want," said Roy.

Candidates will have to sign a non-disclosure agreement to take the test. Disciplinary action may be taken against those who reveal the type of questions to other aspirants.

"We have kept some sessions idle for testing and there will be backups for every lab everyday. We can test 18,000 candidates in one day. Each lab will have 40 work stations and we have 247 labs across 78 centres," he said.
Will e-readers improve the adoption of e-books in India?

Amazon pioneered the e-reader through Kindle, and Apple set the trend with its much-publicised iPad, launched in April this year. While iPad received a huge response with 50,000 units sold in the first hour and about 300,000 on the first day, the phenomenon may be repeated with Samsung's Android-based tablet PC, the Galaxy Tab, which was unveiled this month. The question now we ask ourselves is, is now the time to replace our much-cherished books and newspapers in the big bookshelf with a compact e-reader?

Though electronic publishing has existed since the advent of the web, it is the new generation of e-readers that are likely to improve the user experience and, hence, the adoption of e-content, especially e-books and e-newspapers. An e-reader is an electronic device, designed primarily for reading digital books and periodicals. A typical e-reader supports 6- to 9.7-inch display screen, weighs between 300 and 600 grams, uses either e-ink monochrome display, used in devices like Amazon's Kindle and Barnes & Noble's Nook, or color LCD screens like those used in Apple's iPad.

Compared to the developed countries, where most people are exposed to the internet and computer-based reading, online reading habit in India is much less, thanks to poor PC and internet penetration. The PC penetration, even in urban households, is just about 30 per cent, while the internet user base stands at a poor 7 per cent of the population. The other barrier in e-readers adoption is the one-time cost of the device, considerably higher than the conventional books. The present price of e-readers in India ranges between Rs 10,000 and Rs 35,000. Colour screen e-readers like iProf costs about Rs 15,000, with iPad yet to be introduced in India.

Also critical to the success of e-reader adoption is the availability of appropriate content. Traditional e-readers sold in the US are bundled with content provided by book stores like Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Newspapers like Wall Street Journal are available on subscription on the iPad. The iPad also plans to support select 10,000 applications in the AppStore developed for iPhones. This requires an ecosystem comprising device vendors, application developers, content providers and publishers, collaboratively working together.

There are other intangible benefits of using e-readers in schools and colleges. It is well known and researched that the weight of bags of school-going children cause serious neck and shoulder injuries. In a move that could well set a trend, the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan earlier this year came up with a graded formula that prescribed weight limits on schoolbags of its students in the range of 2 kg to 6 kg. An e-reader can easily fit into the bags of even small children, making these easy to carry. The e-readers can also transform the way students learn from static book content to active learning, enabled by dynamic content download in real time from the internet and other sources.

What could be a better way for device manufacturers to earn carbon credits and students to reduce paper consumption by switching from heavy book-laden bags to smart lightweight e-readers?

(This article is authored by Subhash P V Sridhar and Siddharth Gaykowd of Sasken Communication Technologies. Views expressed are personal)
In Naxal hotbed, varsity shows the way to development

The Central University, Koraput, celebrated its first anniversary recently by chalking out plans for next year.

DEBARBATA MOHANTY
BHUBANESWAR, SEPTEMBER 19

Located hundreds of kilometres away from Orissa's corridors of power, Koraput mostly evokes images of impoverished tribes dying of starvation or cholera-like epidemic. The added menace of Maoists spreading in the district since the past six years has made the place a virtual hell. However, this image notwithstanding, since last year about 300 boys and girls have flocked to Koraput to study anthropology, sociology, English, Orissa and journalism at the Central University there.

The university, which a fortnight ago completed a year of its existence and works from a once-derelict Central government building, may well be the brightest spot in the Maoist-scared region.

Since the past few years, Koraput has become the new hub of Naxal activity in the state. The series of major rebel attacks in the district, starting with the February 2001 one in which over 1,000 Maoists attacked Koraput town and killed 200 security force personnel and other weapons worth Rs 50 crore, has made the district a danger zone. There have been other big attacks in recent times, including the April 2009 raid on public sector aluminium major Nalco's bauxite mine in Damanjodi in which 10 jawans of the Central Industrial Security Force were killed. This April, 11 policemen, including 10 jawans of the elite Special Operation Group, were blown off by a landmine blast while clearing the road.

If such bloodlettings in its backyard was not enough, the Central University at Lankagada village near Koraput town faced other daunting challenges as it did not have its own premises and had to take the decrepit building of the Central Silk Board on rent. But its Vice-Chancellor Surabhi Banerjee, currently the senior-most woman VC in the country, was not deterred by the situation.

"I knew it was a Maoist hotbed. But if the Maoists say they are working for the development of tribes, are we not making an effort towards development too?" asked Banerjee. Banerjee, who deftly divides her time between Koraput and New Delhi, networking with the HRD Ministry officials for getting more facilities and more teaching disciplines, faced more challenges as the Naveen Patnaik government did not offer much help, despite all the promises.

We had to build everything from the scratch — starting from the building to getting hostels for students. In a place like Koraput there's hardly any building worth taking on rent. The biggest problem was getting faculty here as the distance and location of the varsity was a deterrent. One has to travel by road or board a train and that means a loss of three days. Several times people from Delhi just don't come here saying that it's a back-breaking journey," said Banerjee.

Despite such challenges, in the first year of its existence 470 students applied for admission to MA courses of which 150 got through. Of these 150, 13 were tribals and 59 Dalits. Incidentally, there were 77 women students compared to 73 men. This year, there are 15 tribal students among the 148.

The university now has its own video-conferencing facility which was used by Sanjay Pitroda to deliver the first foundation day lecture from New Delhi. "We have not faced any Maoist threat since the day we came here. It's been peaceful and a happy time at the university," said the Indian Institute of Mass Communication at Dhenkanal, but I chose this place as it's the only university in Orissa offering MA in the subject," said Sujit Sahoo, a second-year MA Journalism and Mass Communication student at the varsity.

Banerjee has ambitious plans for the university, including its own medical college and hospital. In the past few months, the university has signed a deal with MoUs with eminent institutions for starting courses in health sciences, MBA, MCA, legal education and biodiversity, among several others.

It has signed MoUs with the Public Health Foundation of India for establishing a School of Health Sciences where Masters in Public Health Management, nursing sciences and allied health sciences will be taught. Similarly, an MoU with British Council has been signed for a course in spoken English. Another MoU will be signed with Narayana Hrudayalaya, Bangalore, for training in medical and allied health sciences. Banerjee said the trained manpower will be a boon for the ailing healthcare sector in the region.

Jams Island University, New Delhi, has extended help in the field of allied sciences. As the university enters its second year, it intends to tie up with the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation for setting up a School of Bio-Diversity and Conservation of Natural Resources, and with the Chennai Institute of Mathematical Studies that will offer a five-year integrated M Sc in Mathematics. From the next academic year, M Sc courses would be offered in information science. Besides, within the next two to three years, the university will shift to its own premises at Sunabeda in Koraput. The campus will be spread across 450 acres.

Keeping in mind the local tribal population, Banerjee is planning a Centre for Tribal Welfare and Communication Development. The university has already conducted courses for tribals in mushroom cultivation.
Accessing IITs without even cracking the JEE

A government scheme, under which classes at IITs, NITs and other engineering colleges are videographed, is helping other students

By Pradnya K. Nanda

One failing to clear the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) twice to enter the elite Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Rohit Varshney recently joined a lesser-known private engineering college in Greater Noida, in the outskirts of New Delhi. But now, he is able to take IIT classes and benefit from the notes of its professors — virtually.

A government programme, under which classes at all seven IITs in New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bhopal, Kanpur, Guwahati and Kharagpur (IIT-KGP) are videographed, is benefitting hundreds of thousands of students who are unable to crack the exam.

The scheme was introduced in 2005 under the aegis of the Department of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Human Resource Development, to make IIT education accessible to students who are unable to attend classes due to financial constraints or other reasons.

“Some of the students who are unable to afford the fees of IITs are able to follow the classes and benefit from them through this programme,” said Rohit, who is in his final year at the ITES College, Greater Noida.

The scheme, which is implemented by the Department of Science and Technology, provides access to IIT classes through a video conferencing system. The classes are conducted by faculty members of IITs and are streamed live to select engineering colleges in remote areas.

“IIT education is not just about attending classes, but also about the quality of education,” said Rohit.

“While IIT education is not just about attending classes, but also about the quality of education, the programme is a great opportunity for students who are unable to afford the fees of IITs,” he added.

The programme is expected to benefit thousands of students who are unable to afford the fees of IITs. The programme is also expected to help reduce the burden on the education system by providing access to quality education to students from remote areas.

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Not the right time to expand

The proposal to expand the sphere of the IITs by including medical education is a wrong step as it will not be possible for the authorities to concentrate on both the subjects under one roof.

This idea seems to be a brainchild of HRD minister Kapil Sibal whose department rechristened the World Chess Champion Viswanathan Anand to prove his nationalistic aspirations, according to his wife submitting a copy of his Indian passport.

Even the Union health ministry is not in favour of IITs starting medical courses as the two streams are poles apart. Although there is no doubt that medical education and research in technology are going on in places like Johns Hopkins University, Imperial College, London or Harvard Medical School, the situation does not seem ripe in India because of structural weaknesses.

At a time when modern technology is advancing rapidly in developed countries, the government should concentrate on bringing these technologies to the country instead of trying to burden the IITs with additional fields of study.

Is the proposal to expand the activities of the IITs so as to include education in medicine a step in the right direction?

These institutes, with an additional stream for which the authorities can set up separate medical colleges and produce dedicated doctors, for this, an IIT will need another director with a medical background and this may result in clash of interests.

There are already flaws in IIT courses and a government committee has been set up to review the course content. In an interim report, it has called for “drastic changes” at the PG level, with stress on research to match developments in industry. Basic research in various streams of technology is not getting priority in these premier institutes.

The committee has suggested that setting up of research councils at each of these IITs to coordinate work with other Institutions and Industry.

In opening a new chapter, the IITs’ attention will be distracted. Also, the IITs will have to follow a number of procedures before they can start a medical course.

They will have to seek approval from the Medical Council of India to start. The HRD ministry will also have to amend the Institutes of Technology Act to allow them to offer medical course. Of course, a proposal to start a Medical College and Hospital at IITs across the country have proposed to introduce new courses in medicine, humanities and design, among others. The IITs are autonomous engineering and technology-oriented institutes of higher education.

These were created to train scientists and engineers with the aim of developing a skilled workforce to support the economic and social development of India. The basic objective was to create a benchmark for technological studies. However, according to the rankings of World University Rankings, only IIT Bombay managed to secure 167th place among the top 200 universities in the world. It shows that the IITs lag behind in the global ranking.

Considering the present scenario, expanding the network for studies is not at all desirable. This will set up another area for medical education without the supervision of the Medical Council of India which will only aggravate the situation. It is time the IITs adhered to the benchmark surely instead of making the road to excellence unnecessarily wider.

World standard

Kharagpur, has been in the pipeline for several years and the Railway Ministry has since come forward to start it as a joint venture.

Besides, the Centre would do well to concentrate on improving teaching in IITs which are lagging a faculty crunch now. Although there are 4,257 vacancies in the faculty, only 2,903 have been filled. This has prompted the IIT Council to decide to fill up the vacancies by inducting foreign nationals up to 10 per cent of the faculty strength on contract after security clearance. Since India is poised now to become a knowledge superpower, its growth is often initiated by deep-rooted maladies. The HRD ministry should see to it that they are not ignored.

Is the proposal to expand the activities of the IITs so as to include education in medicine a step in the right direction?
IT Inc claims to create jobs in US

Lack of talent in US forces Indian cos to import skilled staff

By Anuradha Shakil

Far from taking away US jobs, Indian IT companies are actually creating wage employment in the US. In fact, disavowing US President Barack Obama’s argument that Indian IT companies are responsible for rising unemployment, these companies say it is the shortage of talent in the US that is forcing them import talent from India.

“The fact that we are not contributing to the US economy is totally baseless. The Indian IT companies have created about 25,000 jobs in the US in the last three years and most of them are high paid jobs,” said Amee V Nishaar, vice-president (global trade), the National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nasscom).

According to Nasscom, the IT industry is the second largest in terms of cost but also in terms of knowledge base and large talent pool that is available in India. US has a scenario of talent base.

According to commerce minister Anant Agarwal, in August, the US firms have been indicating they will create 7,000 jobs in the US if they get the right protectionist measures taken in the US. The US trade deficit in services has increased from $73 billion in the US in 2006 to $165 billion in 2007.

Indian IT cos created 250K jobs in US in 3 yrs

Indian IT companies have also increased their hiring profile in the US. According to a recent survey by Nasscom, the companies are importing over 1,000 IT professionals every year. The companies say that they are doing so because the industry is facing skill shortage in the US.

Indian IT companies are also investing heavily in the US. According to a recent report by Nasscom, the companies have announced plans to create over 100,000 jobs in the US in the next three years.

In the meantime, the US is also seeing a rise in unemployment. According to a report by the US Department of Labor, the unemployment rate in the US has increased from 4.5% in 2006 to 6.5% in 2007.

Experts feel it's just brief spell of rough weather for IT firms

By Mall Today Science Bureau in Bangalore

As the rhetoric in the US about Bangalore taking away US jobs grows shriller, it is causing some concern here — but not enough to cause a storm. Though there are indications that US firms are ceasing to cut short-term deals, the predominant industry sentiment is that it is just a brief spell of rough weather.

However, experts have noted that it is time to prepare for more jobs, especially by narrowing profit margins.

President of the Nasscom Som Mittal has acknowledged the fears of any long-term impact on the industry. He has acknowledged that the US statements and policy directions smack of protectionism and are not in the industry's nature.

Observers confirm that much of the noise has to do with the upcoming Senate elections in November. A strong voice against outsourcing during an election year is unusual — it happened during the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections, as well.

NOW WHAT? Indian firms may have to work hard on smaller profit margins

"All this happens at a time when the job situation back home is not very good after the slow down, the politicians want to make them feel happy — showing a bogeyman," Infosys HHI director Mohandas Pai described it earlier. Infosys is currently on a silent period.

Mittal says beating Bangalore is not the solution to the problem that the US is facing. "I hope the US makes more positive investments to create jobs," he said. He listed, among others, "unacceptable data security, and thus, privacy and identity theft risks," earlier this month.

On this point there are indications of uncertainty. Infosys chief executive officer (CEO) S. Gopalakrishnan had said that the US firms are now committing short-term projects, responding to the right to cancel. He said clearly, everybody is playing the "short-term game."

"One of the key factors is the US should look at the jobs being created in India. Infosys, and said, Sodapopan says it is a complicated scenario when the government projects to grow and wants to be seen as protecting jobs.

(The dollar of costs the US moves offshore, it brings in a net benefit of $1.12 to $1.14, according to recognise and financial service firms in the US.

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