Alumni open purse to help IIT-D build research schools

NAVEED IQBAL
NEW DELHI 1 SEPTEMBER 22

THE highly successful alumni of IIT-Delhi have pumped in millions of dollars to the alma mater since it was established in 1961, helping the institute look beyond government funding for several ambitious research projects.

Currently, two complexes are being built in IIT-Delhi with 100 per cent alumni funding and the foundation for another one was laid recently to boost the institute’s research prospects.

The first is Amarnath and Shashi Khosla School of Information Technology, named after parents of IIT-Delhi alumnus and US-based venture capitalist Vinod Khosla. Khosla, a BTech in Electrical Engineering from IIT-Delhi, co-founded Sun Microsystems along with his Stanford classmates in 1982.

Dean of Alumni Affairs Ambuj Sagar said Khosla has provided $5 million for construction of the building and research work to be taken up there.

“The complex will be ready in the next six months,” Dean of Infrastructure Ashok Gupta said.

It will be for inter-disciplinary, goal-oriented research, and also serve as an innovation centre for post-graduate education in information technology.

Kusuma School of Biological Sciences, funded by alumnus Anurag Dikshit through the UK-based Kusuma Trust, named after his mother, is another project coming up on the campus.

The trust has said to have contributed more than $5 million to build the school.

Dean of Infrastructure Gupta said Rs 10 crore has already been released for the building, while the rest would be utilised for setting up research laboratories within the facility.

The project mission is to promote research by “interfacing modern biology with applied engineering sciences to address problems affecting human health and welfare, and training scholars to be the next generation scientists”.

Patanjali Keswani, managing director of Lemon Tree Hotels and an IIT-Delhi alumnus, recently announced Rs 20 crore for GH Keswani Research Centre at the institute. Union HRD Minister Kapil Sibal laid the foundation of the project, which will be built in an area of approximately 1.30 lakh square feet. It will be reserved for research facilities for students.

IIT-Delhi has so far produced over 30,000 engineers, technologists, scientists, managers and entrepreneurs. Over the years, this rich roll-call has helped the institute financially and logistically take up several alumni-funded projects.
IIT Bombay-incubated firm gets ₹2.5 cr from VCs

Covacs holds promise, say Blume Ventures, India Venture Partners

KALPANA PATHAK
Mumbai, 22 September

Covacs, a three-year-old start-up, has secured venture capital funding of ₹2.5 crore from Blume Ventures, India Venture Partners (IVP) and a European fund.

Incubated in the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, it helps manufacturing companies measure floor economics in real time. Tarun Mishra, founder and promoter, said, "The bridge financing will give wings to our international plans." With manufacturing changing and companies looking at new ways of managing it, Covacs' technology helps companies convert operational data into real-time financial numbers, he added.

Blume Ventures provides seed funding to the range of $50K-$250K to early-stage tech-focused/tech-enabled ventures. "We fundamentally believe input cost efficiencies, whether it translates into energy or productivity, is the key for the next 10 years in the global markets. Covacs has got everything to become a leader in the space of transforming microeconomics of production floor," said Karthik Reddy, founder, Blume.

According to IVP Chief Navneet Gosal, through its initial set of customers, Covacs has generated traction via a proven use of its technology.

"Covacs has developed unique and interesting technology in the shop floor intelligence space. We believe the capital investment in Covacs can help the business scale across manufacturing and production industries in India."

Covacs, which serves Sun Pharma, Ipca Labs, Cipla, Godrej Industries, Tata Chemicals, Welspun, Raymond and Ruby Mills in pharma, chemical and textile, plans to expand its bouquet of services to companies in the automobile, steel, oil and gas and FMCG segment too.

"Covacs' solution makes the operator and chief executive talk in the financial language," said Pranay Godha, executive director, Ipca Labs.

Mishra, 38, started Covacs with a seed capital of ₹20,00,000 in 2003. He gave up his job as the business head of financial product of a Canadian company, after working for four years, to give shape to his entrepreneurial dreams.

Covacs built a solution called 'real time production measurement & diagnostics (RTPM), which helps organizations avoid inevitable changes on the production floor. While shop-floor managers may miss the intermittent breakdowns and millions of reprocessing and utilities cost fluctuations, etc, which affects the product quality and plant efficiency on the floor, Covacs' RTPM helps the management understand the impact of each and every incident on the top-line and bottom-line and respond to such incidents in the shortest possible time.

Mishra's company has been incubating at IIT Bombay's Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship for the past three years. IIT-B takes a minority stake of four-five percent in each of the firm that incubates on its campus. Once the company gets funding, IIT-B would liquidate part of its holding.

Mishra now plans to buy-back IIT-B's stake.

With a team of 33 executives, Covacs aspires to become a 100-crore company in valuation in less than 36 months. Covacs has aggressive non-linear growth strategy said Tarun.

The company plans to go in for second round of funding next year to the tune of $5.5-6 million.
इंजीनियरिंग दाखिले में बोर्ड के अंकों का मिलेगा वेटेज

एस.के.श्रीमती, नई दिल्ली

वर्ष 2013 की मुख्य ज्वाइट इंजीनियरिंग प्रवेश परीक्षा (जेइई) में एनआइटी और आइआईटी की छात्राओं पर दाखिले के लिए छात्रों के बैंडीय माध्यमिक शिक्षा बोर्ड (सीबीएसई) के परीक्षा परिणाम का 40 प्रतिशत वेटेज मिलेगा और जेइई मुख्य परीक्षा का 60 प्रतिशत। यह निर्देश इंजीनियरिंग प्रवेश परीक्षा की तैयारी का दबाव।

- एनआईटी और आइआईटी की सीटों पर 40 प्रतिशत वेटेज वेटेज
- कोचिंग सेंटरों की महंगी पौस से छात्रों को राहत देने के लिए लिया निर्देश

कोचिंग सेंटरों की महंगी पौस से छात्रों का राहत देने के लिए लिया गया है। सीबीएसई के चेयरमैन नीलकंठ जोशी ने अनुमति कि ग्रामीण परिवेश से छात्रों को करवाए वाले उन छात्रों को इसका फायदा होगा, जो संस्थानों के अभाव में प्रवेश परीक्षा परिणाम के आधार पर दाखिले में पिछड़ा जाता है। इन छात्रों को बोर्ड परीक्षा का 40 प्रतिशत वेटेज मिलेगा तथा छात्रों का मदद मिलेगी।

उन्होंने बताया कि वर्ष 2013 में बोर्ड द्वारा एचआई (आईआईटी इंजीनियरिंग प्रवेश परीक्षा) के स्थान पर देशभर में जेइई एडवांस परीक्षा का आयोजन किया जाएगा। इंजीनियरिंग शिक्षण संस्थाओं में दाखिला पाने के लिए देशभर से कीबी बैंडीय छात्र प्रति 130 युवा 4 कालन 1 पर

इंजीनियरिंग दाखिले में बोर्ड के अंकों का मिलेगा वेटेज

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UGC declares NET result first, posts qualifying criteria later

**Aditi Tandon**
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 22**
Lakhs of candidates who appeared for the refurbished, MCQ-based National Eligibility Test (NET) this year are asking the same question—why did the UGC declare the result first and post the final qualifying criteria later?

Close to 5.70 lakh candidates appeared for NET conducted on June 24 this year to certify students’ eligibility for the posts of lecturer in colleges and universities; only around 7.76 pc passed. Courtesy, objective format introduced for the first time this year for all three papers of NET, numbers of applicants doubled from 2.5 lakh in 2011 when the pass percentage was just 5.1.

However, none of these candidates knew until a day after their result had been declared on September 18 as to what formula the UGC followed to rule them out.

The NET notification issued around March this year stated two things clearly—the minimum cut-off marks which every candidate would have to score in each of the three NET papers separately to be considered for the preparation of final results and final qualifying criteria for NET to be intimated by the UGC before the declaration of results.

But the final criterion was uploaded by the UGC on its website only after the declaration of the result. Consequently, candidates were clueless about their status until September 19 when the UGC suddenly disclosed new qualifying criterion saying every general category candidate would have to score aggregate 65 pc marks (out of 350 marks) in all three NET papers to be successful.

UGC officials say they introduced the concept of aggregate marks to sift meritorious students.
More freedom or pressure? Students split wide open

Sheyna Roy Chowdhury | 1130

New Delhi: Students are divided over the four-year degree system that will be introduced next year. Some welcome the move, believing it will mean more freedom and less pressure. Others are worried about it.

"Our semester system is already so hectic that adding another one will be very difficult," one student said.

"There has been a lot of pressure on us for the past seven years instead of six," said another.

"If anything, the new system will be even more stressful," a third said.

But there are pluses as well. An added advantage is that the new four-year degree system will be more aligned with international standards.

However, the new system will work as a "stress test" for the students, the "first of its kind," said a teacher at St Stephen's College.

"The new system will be a big challenge for us," she said.

"But we are ready for it. We have been preparing for it for the past two years," she added.

The new system, which will be introduced next year, is expected to reduce the stress levels of students.

"The new system will be a big relief for us," said a student at St Stephen's.

"We have been looking forward to it for a long time," she said.

"But we are still a bit worried about the exams," she added.

"We are not sure how the exams will be conducted," she said.

The new system will also bring in more flexibility for students.

"The new system will be more flexible," said another student.

"We can take breaks during the course and even change our course if we want," she said.

"But we are still a bit worried about the exams," she added.

The new system will also bring in more opportunities for students.

"The new system will bring in more opportunities," said another student.

"We can do internships and even take a gap year if we want," she said.

"But we are still a bit worried about the exams," she added.

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DU Eng dept among world’s best

Shreya Roy Chowdhury | TNN

New Delhi: A reputed global survey of universities has ranked Delhi University among the 100 best places to study English. Even as Indian institutions of higher education have drawn flak for failing to make the top 200 in overall university rankings, DU’s English department features in the 51-100 group in the QS annual survey.

English (or language) departments of three other Indian universities are on the QS list by subject (in this case, English language and literature) — Jawaharlal Nehru University, University of Calcutta and University of Hyderabad. But unlike DU, they are in the 151-200 ranks group.

DU’s English is better than that of Purdue University, Nottingham University and University of Liverpool.

DUTA seeks President’s intervention

New Delhi: In a general body meeting on Saturday, the Delhi University Teachers’ Association decided to “intensify the stir” against the vice-chancellor’s policies by starting an indefinite relay hunger strike from October 10. The meeting was held a day after DUTA members met President Pranab Mukherjee, seeking his intervention as visitor of the University.

Apart from complaining to the President about the VC’s “stonewalling” the associations — DUTA and DUCKU — it also complained about “the cheap and cowardly tactic of putting pressure on the principals of SRCC and Ramjas College to deny DUTA a space to conduct its annual general body meet on September 22.” The meeting was held at Ramjas College.
THE SCIENTIST WHO WASN’T A SPY

S Nambi Narayanan has lived an extraordinary life. Branded a spy in 1994, the Isp scientist has fought hard for his honour. The recent NRC order for monetary compensation to him has brought a little more cheer to the man who says he’s now ready to bring his tormentors to justice and expose the conspiracy against India’s ambitious cryogenic project.

When I met him in his spacious apartment on the fourth floor of his residence in the suburb of Vasundhara, I was struck by the man’s quiet confidence. He spoke softly, but with determination, about his life and work.

Narayanan, along with six others, including his late colleague V. Subrahmanyan, was arrested on November 10, 1994 on charges of espionage and for acting in furtherance of activities by foreign governments. He spent 90 days in jail before he was exonerated by the Supreme Court. He was released on the conditions set by the Supreme Court. He has since been rehabilitating his reputation and fighting for justice.

In those days, he was a young scientist working on the Indian nuclear program. He was an integral part of the team that developed the R70 engine, which is the heart of the Indian nuclear program. He was also involved in the development of the R59 engine, which is used in the Agni missile.

Narayanan, who was a member of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), was alleged to have been in touch with foreign intelligence agencies. He was arrested on November 10, 1994, along with six others, including his late colleague V. Subrahmanyan. He spent 90 days in jail before he was exonerated by the Supreme Court. He was released on the conditions set by the Supreme Court. He has since been rehabilitating his reputation and fighting for justice.

Narayanan’s case is a microcosm of the struggle for justice in India. He was falsely accused and detained for nearly three years. His family and supporters have fought tirelessly to clear his name and expose the conspiracy against him.

In November 2011, the Supreme Court had ordered a panel of experts to investigate the allegations against Narayanan. The panel, headed by former Supreme Court judge Ashok Kumar, submitted its report in January 2012, recommending a fair and unbiased inquiry into the allegations.

Narayanan’s case is a reminder of the importance of justice and fairness in our legal system. It is a tribute to his courage and determination in fighting for his rights.

The case also highlights the need for greater transparency and accountability in the government’s handling of such sensitive cases. It is a call to action for all of us to work towards a just and fair system of justice.

Narayanan’s children, who were not aware of the allegations made against him, have been deeply affected by the experience. They want to continue their father’s work and contribute to the development of India’s space program.

Narayanan, who is now working on a new project in his home, is determined to continue his work and contribute to the development of India’s space program. He is inspired by the example of his father, who was a scientist and a fighter for justice.

Narayanan’s story is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit. It is a reminder of the importance of justice and fairness in our legal system. It is a call to action for all of us to work towards a just and fair system of justice.

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MY MIND IS MY EYE NOW,
I CAN HANDLE ANYTHING

Sheer grit and determination can do wonders. And 23-year-old Pratish Datta, a visually challenged student from IIT-Kharagpur, knows all about it. He recently received the J C Bose Memorial Gold Medal for best academic performance in the two-year PG course in science from President Pranab Mukherjee. While this honour has been special, Datta has been a topper all his life. He tells Shobha John that if one tries, one can do anything; lack of sight is hardly an impediment.

FOR THE RECORD

You did MSc in mathematics at IIT and are known to do complex mathematical calculations mentally. How is that possible?

- It goes back to my childhood. I lost vision in one eye at six months of age and had poor vision in the other. My parents felt that if I studied a lot, the pressure would damage this eye too. So my mother would read all my lessons to me and I would memorize them. Even maths sums were done mentally. I knew no other way to do it. Over time, practice made me perfect. I also managed to finish my exams in almost the same time as normal students. But a lot of higher mathematics is not just calculation but visualization too and I can handle that. Even Swiss mathematician Leonhard Euler lost his vision in the last 17 years of his life. But he continued to do research. My mind is my eye now.

How did you cope with the loss of your eyesight?

- I was doing my second year at St Xavier’s College in Kolkata in 2008 when I lost vision in my second eye. I was shocked to suddenly see a dark world but my parents and teachers stood by me. As I loved studies, I decided to concentrate on that. All my happiness is related to studies. Even when I came to IIT, there were many questions about whether I would be able to cope. But my faculty helped me with a competent scribe, which itself takes the load off students like me. He’s a computer operator here who understands mathematics symbols and has done presentations for various seminars.

The dean of student affairs also helped me find accommodation within the campus. I also have nice friends, especially Fouzoul Atik who studied with me in MSc. He would sit beside me, dictate what was written on the board, take me from one class to another, xerox pages for me...he was very happy when I got the gold medal.

Was it difficult to handle the pressure in IIT with this impairment? Your mother seems to have sacrificed a lot.

- As I was able to see in childhood, I understood maths symbols and could do well. But for many others, the fact that higher education books aren’t in Braille are a handicap. An attempt should be made to convert them so that others like me don’t suffer. As for my mother, she has stood by me like a rock. Even when I said I wanted to study in IIT, she told me bravely, ‘Go as far as you want, I will be with you.’ And she did. She left Kolkata where my father is a civil engineer and came to stay with me, an only child, here at Kharagpur.

What should education institutions do for the visually challenged?

- They should be generous towards them and help them as much as possible. Such students already start with a disadvantage and could do with a leg-up in life. Give them competent scribes and good scholarships.

What do you plan to do now?

- I want to do my PhD in cryptography and network security as it’s a field which is gaining importance and involves both maths and algebra. I want to continue doing research.

You seem to lead a normal life—you use the mobile quite well and have a Facebook profile. How do you manage these?

- I have memorized the keys and functions of my mobile so I can use it effortlessly. I also have a computer screen-reading software called JAWS which reads out whatever text there is on it.

Your Facebook profile shows you having varied interests, including football and cricket.

- I used to play cricket when I could. Now I just hear the commentary. It also mentions that you like chatting with hot girls. Does that happen often?

- (Laughs) It’s not like that. I have got some popularity after the award but it’s not like I chat with many girls. I am particular.
Aakash 2 supply to IIT Bombay starts; launch likely in October

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, 23 September

Datawind, the maker of low-cost Aakash tablet, today said it had started supplying the new version of the tablet to the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay, and the tablet was likely to be launched in October.

"Supplies are on to IIT Bombay. In the next few weeks, it should be launched. I do not have the exact date, but Kapil Sibal, the human resource development (HRD) minister, has said he wants to launch on the anniversary date, which is October 5," Sunit Singh Tull, chief executive officer, Datawind told PTI.

The launch will depend on the minister's schedule, but it is not very far from now, he added.

Tull said Datawind has started supplying the next version of the low-cost tablet, Aakash 2, to IIT Bombay since the last one month and a half, while at the same time refusing Aakash tablets for price of around $49 per unit. Apart from this order, the company has also received orders for 5.5 million more from general customers.

Tull said the company has cleared most of the pre-paid bookings and will now start focusing on supplies for the non-paid bookings.

"Out of the 5.5 million orders, 4 to 5 per cent were pre-paid bookings. May be in a week or 10 days, all the pre-paid will be done. Then we will focus on pre-bookings. We are giving them offers to upgrade to Android 4.4 version," he said.

Datawind is delivering around 1,500 to 2,000 tablets each day, being assembled within the country as well as outside, Tull said. He added that the company is in talks with channel partners to sell products across the country, but it will first focus on the pre-booking order that it has.
Tablet stuck as ministries tussle

NITIN MAHAJAN
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 23

Despite heading both the Union HRD and IT ministries, Kapil Sibal has been unable to launch the much-publicised and much-anticipated Aakash tablet, with repeated deadlines being missed. It is understood that the two ministries have been “discussing” the launch of the Aakash-2 tablet despite preparing a Cabinet note almost six months ago for procurement of 50 lakh devices. The two ministries have been unable to seek the clearance of the Union council of ministers, further delaying the project.

Projected as the cheapest computing device in the world, the announcement of the tablet targeted at the student community was made by Mr Sibal in October last year. The government has been unable to procure the tablets for students and faculty despite a prototype of the device being unveiled as far back as July 2010.

Sources stated that the tablet, this time being developed in coordination with IIT-Bombay, is far from being finalised and could take another few months before becoming a reality for end users.

Sources stated that the launch date of the Aakash-2 tablet is yet to be known. The delays and controversies affecting the project have been repeated withholding the low-cost computing device from the student community in India.

Priced at ₹2,276, the device will be subsidised by up to 50 per cent for students as the government prepares to expand information technology education in the country. The device was developed as part of India’s aim to link 25,000 colleges and 400 universities in an e-learning programme.

It is understood that the government plans to upgrade Aakash-2 over the original Aakash tablet. It is claimed that the initial version, procured through a private firm, had failed to perform up to expected standards. It ran Android v2.2 on a 366MHz processor, based on an older ARM architecture. The Aakash-2 tablet is likely to be replaced by a successor, which will have a dual core Cortex-A9 processor by the end of this year.
10-yr term soon for college principals

Manash Pratim Gohain | TNN

New Delhi: College principals are likely to have a fixed term of 10 years. The review committee set up by the University Grants Commission (UGC) has made this recommendation at its last meeting on Friday. If approved, all new appointments for college principals will be for 10 years. The principals can, however, have a second term of five years. At present, the principals retire at 65.

The UGC, in June 2010, had limited the tenure of the post of a college principal to five years in its new regulations for appointment of teachers and other academic staff in universities and colleges. The regulations on fixed term for college principals were opposed and the committee was asked to review the norms.

The UGC's regulations say that “the term of appointment of the college principal shall be of five years with eligibility for reappointment for one more term only after a similar selection committee process”. In its final meeting on Friday, the review committee chaired by vice-chancellor of Delhi University, Dinesh Singh, recommended that the term of appointment of the college principal shall be of 10 years with eligibility for reappointment for one more term of five years only.
Four-year degree at DU

Vatsala Shringi/TNN

Students at Delhi University (DU) will be introduced to a four-year Bachelor’s degree programme in 2013. The university authorities have been working on it to frame a student-oriented degree course, likely to be implemented from next year for first-year students.

The new syllabus will be project-oriented and hands-on, offering greater flexibility of choice. Says Malashri Lal, dean, academic activities and projects, “The recent academic congress initiated by the VC, in which more than 3,000 students and parents participated, was held to get an idea of what kind of courses they are looking for, their expectations from the university, where sports and extra-curricular activities stand, etc.”

Further, she says, “In the meetings, everyone was keen to have an integrated syllabi, flexibility to opt for varied subjects, quality IT capability, project, field work and internship opportunities in every discipline. We are trying to integrate all this in order to formulate the new curriculum.”

The plan for the four-year programmes involves credit points system and various exit options for students. “Students will be awarded credit points for both academics as well as extra-curricular activities. The credit system is not new as many universities in India have credit transfers including the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU),” informs Lal.

Students in the new scheme will have exit options. If they opt to exit after two years, it will be a diploma. After third year, it will be a general degree and an honours degree on completion of the full programme.

The final plan has to go through the academic council (AC) meeting. However, Debjani Sengupta, faculty, department of English, Indraprastha College for Women says, “We roughly know that students will be having credit points, etc. Teachers who will be teaching the course must be consulted as we have a stake in it.”

While some faculty members are apprehensive about the feasibility of the new course, another section of teachers welcome the plan. As Ajay K Arora, principal of Dehidandhru College, says, “Though there is little time to develop the new course, we have a large faculty and we will manage.”
Higher Education Bill

‘Legal education will be under BCI’

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Law minister Salman Khurshid on Sunday gave an assurance that the legal education would continue to remain within the purview of the Bar Council of India (BCI), the country’s apex body of lawyers. He said the new higher education bill was framed to cater to students who desire to study law as an additional subject while pursuing other courses.

Khurshid said the bill was in line with the structural changes in education taking place across the world, and a balance had to be made between professional bodies like the Bar Council and other bodies regarding legal education.

“There are people who want to read law not to crack law, but who want to combine law with subjects like physics, chemistry, mathematics, management,” he said at a seminar at the Indian Law Institute and Bar Council of India to mark 50 years of Advocates’ Act. The minister’s comments come in the backdrop of strong opposition from the legal fraternity to the proposed bill of the HRD ministry. BCI has alleged that the bill on higher education was aimed at usurping its control over legal education.

Senior advocate and BJP Member of Parliament Ravi Shankar Prasad noted globalization of economy, knowledge and governance was “seriously affecting the landscape of the profession.”

Lok Sabha speaker Meira Kumar stressed on speedy delivery of justice and made fervent plea to lawyers not to undermine their contribution to it.
FRESH CHAPTER

Industries may soon get a role in higher education

Govt expects industry involvement will, apart from employability, solve issues related to land availability, finance

By Prashant K. Nanda
prashant.n@givemint.com

NEW DELHI

India is preparing to involve industries in higher education in an effort to boost both research and employability.

The human resource development (HRD) ministry expects this will, in addition to employability, solve issues related to land availability and finance. In return, the government will give industries independence and fast-track regulatory clearances for opening institutes that will focus on research specific to industry requirements.

The ministry, in association with lobby group Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), has invited 17 government departments and ministries and nearly 60 companies to a two-day conference in Delhi that will begin on Monday, according to a ministry concept note that Mint has reviewed.

"If we reach an agreement, then we don’t have to go to Parliament and it will be more of a ministry-level decision to engage industry in higher education," said S.S. Mantha, chairman of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), the regulator in the higher education sector for technical institutes and a part of the HRD ministry. "Through the conference we want to understand what the industry requires on regulatory front. We will try to accommodate that."

Shalini Sharma, head of the education wing at CII, said companies are open to the idea and want to know "what the government is offering". The exercise will fast-track industry involvement and is a positive for higher education, Sharma said, particularly as research needs to pick up in the country and should happen in sync with industry demand.

"The government cannot do everything by its own. Once the industry participates, issues like land and finance will be taken care of easily," said Mantha.

Mantha said involving the industry will promote theme-based research and innovation during the 12th Five-Year Plan (2012-17). This will "stimulate discussion between industry players and ministries" on setting up institutes that will focus on specific research and enter into twinning and collaborative programmes with other universities and research organizations, he said.

Such institutes should admit trained people across disciplines to do research, leading to the award of doctoral degrees in sectors ranging from water to chemicals, urban development to manufacturing, and energy and mines, the concept note underlined.

The HRD ministry will function as the nodal agency for setting up such institutes, it said. Higher education reform has been left cold the past couple of years, but the government has given education a priority sector tag for the 12th Five-Year Plan period that began on 1 April 2012.

Several proposed legislations related to higher education, including the foreign university Bill, education tribunal Bill, education malpractice Bill and accreditation Bill are pending in Parliament.
Social networking nets
IIT-B donations in US

Bhavya Dore
bhavya.dore@hindustantimes.com

Mumbai: The IIT Bombay Heritage Fund, a registered charity in the US, has won $10,000 (Rs 5.33 lakh) through a crowd-sourced philanthropy programme.

A total of $5 million was awarded to charities through online voting as part of the fourth edition of the Chase Community Giving contest, run by global financial services firm JP Morgan Chase. When the results were announced on Thursday, it emerged that the IIT Fund was one of 196 charities from around the world to be awarded donations, from among a total of 30,000 nominees. This is the first time the Fund participated in the challenge.

“As a relatively young charity restricted to IIT-B, we didn’t even think we had a chance,” said Bakul Desai, chairman of the IITB Alumni Association. “It was through viral networking of our alumni as well as support from other IIT alumni groups that we did well.”
IIT-B team points out shortcomings in SAS Nagar drainage system

SAS NAGAR: An experts’ team from Mumbai-based Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) has observed what the public already knew: Not all is well with the drainage system in SAS Nagar.

Drains in the city were not cleaned properly, thus causing waterlogging after every spell of rain and resultant inconvenience to local residents, observed the IIT-B team which is visiting SAS Nagar to help resolve the perennial waterlogging problem in the city.

The visit of IIT team, which conducted a survey and identified problem areas in SAS Nagar, comes in wake of a tie-up between Greater Mohali Area Development Authority (GMADA) and IIT-B to find a solution to waterlogging problem.

Talking to media persons here on Saturday, Dr Kapil Gupta, head of IIT department of drainage management, said, “The drainage system in the city needs to be upgraded, which is long overdue.”

He also suggested construction of walls along the chow passing through the city.

“Re-carpeting of roads over and over again has raised their level in comparison to houses which results in waterlogging in that particular area. To avoid such situations, old roads should be dug up before new roads are laid,” Dr Gupta added.

Talking about the increasing incidents of flooding in urban areas, he said, “Changes in climatic conditions has brought about a drastic change in the pattern of rainfall. The number of rainy days has shrunk and the quantity of rain in much smaller spans affects drainage of rainwater. Unlike the earlier days, about 80% rainwater goes waste through drains.”

The IIT professor also pointed out that the diameter of drain channels was less, adding that there was urgent need to increase their diameter.

“Automatic rain gauge equipment should be installed at distances of four square km that will help measure rainfall and help experts devise the drainage system plan. Drains should also be properly cleaned before March 31 every year,” Dr Gupta suggested.

GMADA authorities said that they would implement the team’s recommendations within two months, before its second visit scheduled in November.