Newspaper Clips

April 19, 2011

Hindustan Times ND 19-Apr-11 p-11

Govt panel provides relief to IIT students

PROPOSAL The Anil Kakodkar panel suggests that students will have to pay only 25% of all recurring costs

ht SPECIAL

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NEW DELHI: Students at the Indian Institutes of Technology will not have to pay for more than a quarter of the recurring costs of the premier engineering schools even as the IITs move towards financial autonomy from the government.

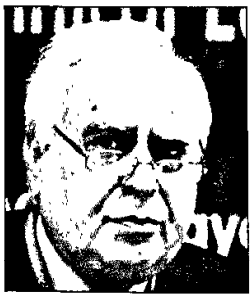
A panel appointed by human resource development minister Kapil Sibal to prepare a blueprint for financial and administrative reforms at the IITs has dumped a controversial plan to use student fees to meet all recurring costs.

Sources on the panel headed by former atomic energy chief Anil Kakodkar have told Hindustan Times that the panel has instead recommended a set of other strategies to help the IITs generate funds.

The panel is scheduled to submit its final report to Sibal on Thursday.

The strategies include increasing research collaboration with industry to draw more research grants, using consultancy of faculty, and attracting funds from alumni, apart from student fees, the sources said. "Instead of a single-pronged strategy, the panel has decided to recommend a multi-pronged approach towards resource generation," a panel member said.

Tuition fees will constitute no more than 25% of the recurring costs of the IITs unlike the 100%, which the Kakodkar panel had proposed earlier at a meeting of the IIT Council — the highest decision making body of the IITs — this January.



■ **Kapil Sibal:** Plans ahead

Instead of a single-pronged strategy, the panel has decided to recommend a multi-pronged approach towards resource generation
A PANEL MEMBER

Sibal — though keen on the IITs gaining financial autonomy — had objected to the proposal to allow the Institutes to use student fees as the principal tool to reduce their dependence on government funds.

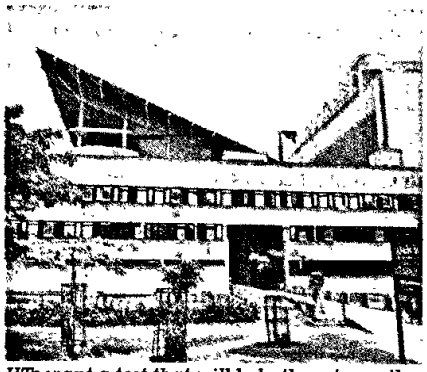
The Kakodkar committee report, panel members said, also contains other key differences to the earlier blueprint the panel had suggested.

The report will suggest a mechanism to measure accountability to justify the increased autonomy Sibal is keen to award the IITs.

Sections of the government are also concerned over a proposal of the Kakodkar panel to allow IIT Boards pick Institute Directors without any government role.

Mail Today ND 19-Apr-11 p-15

IITs grapple with conducting simplified entrance test



IITs want a test that will help them to easily select the best from the lakhs of applicants.

By **Kavita Chowdhury** in New Delhi

THE IITs are caught with the onerous task of overhauling the selection procedure to the prestigious engineering institutes.

The IITs want to conduct the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) in such a way that it would enable them to easily select the best from the lakhs of applicants and at the same time make the need for coaching redundant.

In general, the IITs agree on having an exam pattern that is more aligned to the board exams, thus eliminating the need for coaching.

Meanwhile, a mathematics professor of IIT-Bombay has found errors of approximately 10 marks in this year's math papers.

According to IIT-Guwahati director Gautam Barua, despite the talk about easing the pressure on students taking the tough admission test, the format of the recently-concluded IIT-JEE 2011 reflected no change since the last year.

He also pointed out the "larger problem" which is to "screen ten thousand odd students from the five lakh who apply". The question paper has to be tough to be able to identify the best from such a large number, he said.

Aim to align test to board examinations

IIT-Kanpur being the convener of this year's JEE, director Sanjay Dhande said: "The issue of taking steps to do away with coaching has to be handled separately... There are 44 school boards and it's a very difficult task to find a method to take all of them into consideration. It's a long-term initiative."

As for the errors pointed out in the mathematics paper, Dhande said: "Experts are looking into it. Whatever remedial actions are needed will be announced in a few weeks."

IIT-Bombay director Dewang Khakhar, meanwhile, cautioned that "the competitive situation is such, students make a beeline for coaching centres, come what may."

The Acharya committee, appointed by the HRD ministry last year, suggested admission on the basis of students' combined score of the Class XII exams and a subjective test. However, it was struck down by the IIT council and a new committee was formed.

Tribune ND 19-Apr-11 p-5

Poor support infrastructure an impediment

MEGHA MANN
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

ROPAR, APRIL 18

The IIT-Ropar, among the eight new IITs set up by the Ministry of Human Resources, is facing teething problems. Not only the faculty members but its students too are trying to come to terms with the fact that it's support infrastructure leaves a lot to be desired. The IIT is using the building of Government Polytechnic College for Women as its campus for now.

It is located on the Ropar-Nangal road on the periphery of the city, with few means of transportation and poor connectivity. "At times, we don't even get a rickshaw to reach the bus stand. Students have to walk all the way to Nangal Chowk or the bus stand," points out a senior functionary of the institute, pleading anonymity.

Many faculty members are putting up in rented accommodation in Ropar for better access.

Also, with only one convent school in Ropar city, faculty members prefer residing in Kharar for the sake of their wards. "The Ministry of Human Resources has decided to come up with Kendriya Vidyalaya for wards of staff members of all new IITs. We are waiting for one at Ropar," says Prof BK Dhindaw, Dean, Academics and Research.

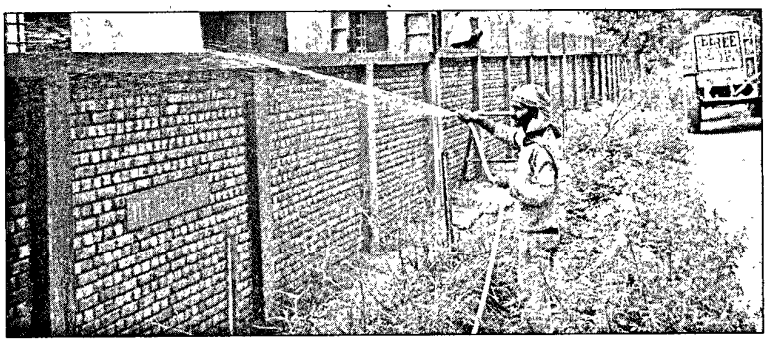
The transit campus does not have enough number of hostels for students and quarters for teachers. "We have two hostels for boys and one for girls, which is not enough. For the time being, we have asked our teachers to find accommodation outside the campus," said a faculty member.

PART-II

- WORKING FROM TRANSIT CAMPUS; POOR CONNECTIVITY
- INADEQUATE ACCOMODATION FOR STAFF, STUDENTS
- CAMPUS AT BIRLA FARMS MAY TAKE THREE MORE YEARS

The staff and students are eager to shift to their permanent campus at Birla Farms. However, construction work at Birla Farms is on at a snail's pace with even the 11-km-long boundary wall yet to be completed. This was because certain issues with the irrigation department needed to be sorted out, said official sources.

The IIT is to come up on 501 acres of land on the banks of the Sutlej. The road connecting Ropar city with the new IIT site is incomplete. "This road is a major part of the project. We cannot start construction at the site unless the road is made motoro-able for heavy vehicles like trucks," pointed out CPWD officials. They said it might take another three years for the building to come up.



A labourer waters the under-construction boundary wall of IIT-Ropar. A Tribune photograph

Former HRD Minister Arjun Singh had laid the stone of the IIT on February 24, 2009. The first batch of 105 students were admitted at the IIT-Delhi and later shifted to the transit campus at Ropar in June 2009.

Indian Express ND 19-Apr-11 p-4

HRD grounds 6 schemes for lack of funds

The step comes even as education budget was increased by 24 per cent this year

ANUBHUTI VISHNOI
NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

THE education budget was increased by 24 per cent this year, but the HRD Ministry is still facing a fund crunch, so much so that it has put six new schemes on hold.

These are the schemes that have run aground after the Finance Ministry said it did not have the money to fund them.

- The HRD Ministry planned to set up 200 Kendriya Vidyalayas in this plan period, but has managed to get only a 100 off the block. Another proposal to set up 50 more of these vidyalayas is also on hold.
- A proposal to set up 10 Science Magnet Navodaya Schools, at an estimated cost of Rs 15-20 crore each, in close collaboration with R&D institutes like the Indian Institute of Science, Bhaba Atomic Research Centre, National Physical Laboratory, Council for Science & Industrial Research, Indian Space Research Organisation and IITs.
- A partially Centrally-funded "incentivisation plan" to help states set up universities and colleges and upgrade existing ones to increase gross enrolment ratio.
- Setting up teacher training institutes to meet the stringent demands of the Right to Education Act. Estimates suggest that some 5 million teachers will be needed over next three years to ensure a 30:1 pupil teacher ratio as mandated by the Act.
- A bouquet of teacher welfare schemes to attract talent to the profession, including a life and health insurance and housing scheme that is estimated to cost the Centre Rs 2,500 crore a year.
- A long-pending proposal to set up 2,500 model schools under a Public Private Partnership format. At least 500 of these schools were planned to be set up in 2011-12 at a cost of over Rs 500 crore.

While the Finance Ministry has made it clear that many of these plans cannot be implemented during this plan period and would have to be pushed to the 12th plan, others would be scrutinised by the Planning Commission before they are cleared.

This year's budget had allocated Rs 52,060 crore to the HRD Ministry, the highest for a social sector ministry, but this now seems insufficient.

The ministry had placed a demand for Rs 80,000 crore, arguing that it needed more cash as it runs a host of flagship programmes, has to stabilise a bunch of new IITs, IIMs and Central universities set up by the UPA government and push forward the Right to Education Act.

Against a demand of Rs 60,000 crore for school education, the department got Rs 38,957 crore, while the Higher Education department got Rs 13,103 crore against the Rs 21,000 crore it had asked for.

Publication: The Times Of India Delhi;Date: Apr 19, 2011;Section: Times Global;Page: 26;

Cambridge pips Oxford as top UK univ

London: Cambridge has overtaken Oxford to become the leading university in the UK, being ranked at the top of the table among 116 institutions.

According to a league table published on Monday, Cambridge ranked top out of 116 universities in a guide rating institutions by measures such as student satisfaction, research, entry standards, spending on facilities, degree grades and job prospects.

According to the Daily Telegraph, Cambridge is also named as the best university

2ND TIME IN 10 YRS

for the quality of courses delivered in more than four in 10 subjects. It is only the second time in 10 years that the university has beaten Oxford in the annual league tables. The last time was in 2007.

Imperial College London came third followed by London School of Economics. Duerham was ranked fifth while St Andrews stood at the sixth position. University College London was seventh followed by Warwick, Lancaster and Bath among the top 10. PTI

Indian Express ND 19-Apr-11 p-3

IIM-type entrance test for MBBS from next year

TEENA THACKER
NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

CURRENTLY used for entry into the Indian Institutes of Management, the percentile-based selection system may now be used to select MBBS students as well.

The Medical Council of India (MCI) plans to start the new method of selection in the proposed National Eligibility Entrance Examination (NEET) — a common entrance test — to be introduced next year.

Currently, a minimum of 50 per cent marks are required by a general candidate and 40 per cent by other categories for admission to MBBS courses.

Once notified, the merit list will be prepared using the percentile score and there may not be any cut-off level, the MCI has proposed.

The new system — put for the first time in public domain — proposes 40 per cent weightage to Biology and 30 per cent each to Physics and Chemistry marks.

For the first time ever, it has been proposed that the score in Physics could act as a "tiebreaker" along with Biology and Chemistry.

The NEET is a single test by merging the All India Pre-Medical Test as well as entrance examinations conducted by states and other bodies.

THE NEW system proposes 40 per cent weightage to Biology and 30 per cent each to Physics and Chemistry marks. It has been proposed that the score in Physics could act as a "tiebreaker" along with Biology and Chemistry

"Instead of a preliminary examination and the final test, there will be single-step exam. From this, two ranks will be generated — at all-India and state level. The students will have a choice to either go for an all-India seat or simultaneously for states, except in states like J&K and Tamil Nadu where there is no sharing," said an MCI official.

"In the PG entrance examination, however, distribution of marks would be as per relevance of the subjects, with clinical subjects carrying more weightage than pre- and paraclinical subjects," says the MCI proposal.

The MCI has proposed an online examination for DM/MCH and PG entrance examination. "The entrance examination will be conducted by a standard paper-based test," the MCI says.

With a view to ensure uniformity, the evaluation will be done centrally with the help of an agency and a merit list as per eligibility decided by the MCI would be prepared.

For the MBBS entrance examination, a three-hour duration single paper of 250 questions — 75 from Physics and Chemistry each and 100 from Biology — has been proposed.

As per the draft, the admit cards will be sent on April 15 and the MBBS entrance exam will be conducted on the last Sunday of May every year.

The PG entrance exam will be conducted at the end of the internship between mid-January and mid-February as is the current practice.

For DM and MCH, the admit cards will be sent by the middle of April and the exam will be conducted on the first Sunday of June.

To prevent impersonation, biometric data — finger prints, photo and signature — of each candidate will be collected and matched at the time of admission, says the draft.

Hindustan Times ND
19-Apr-11 p-5

RAJIV GANDHI INSTITUTE USES ROBOT FOR CANCER SURGERY

HT Correspondent
htreporters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The uterus of a woman suffering from uterus cancer was removed with the help of a robot at Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre on Monday. The woman was 30kg overweight.

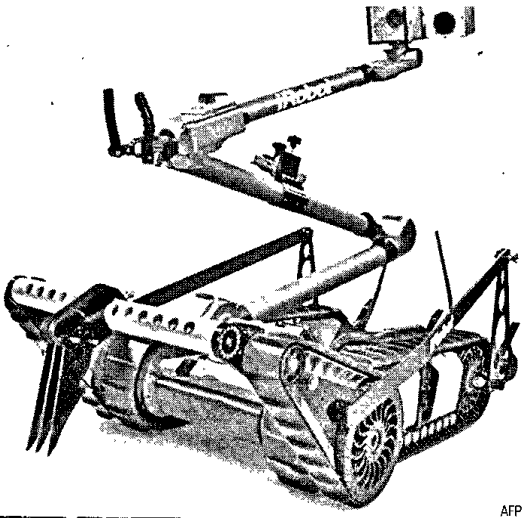
The hospital is the latest to join the list of cancer hospitals globally that use robots for assistance in cancer surgeries. But it is the first cancer hospital in India to do so.

"It would not have been possible to operate upon the woman had it not been for the robotic facility. With a restricted 2D vision and hand movement, laparoscopic surgeries are not possible on obese women," said Dr Sudhir Rawal, director, surgical oncology at the hospital.

Using a robot provides 10 times more magnification and a three-dimensional view. "The expertise of the surgeon's brain is utilised by the robotic arms," said Dr Rawal.

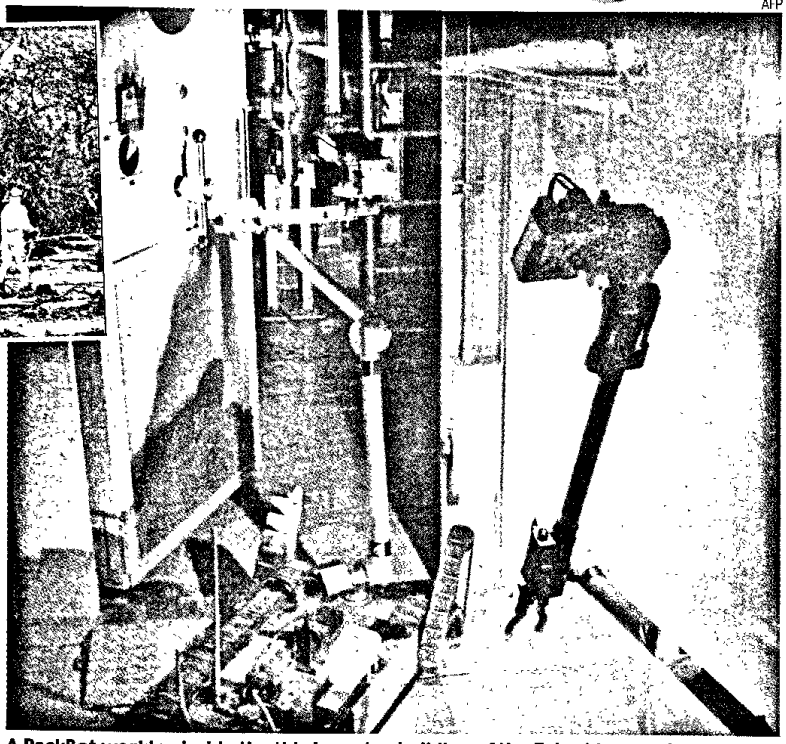
Mail Today ND, 19-Apr-11 P-22

US robots to Japan's N-rescue



AFP

Policemen in radiation-proof suits search for missing victims in Fukushima, less than 20 km from the reactors that are still dangerous for workers to enter.



A PackBot working inside the third reactor building of the Fukushima nuclear plant.

IN A COUNTRY that has made break-dancing androids and artificially intelligent pets, nuclear cleanup crews are depending on US-made robots to enter the tsumani-hit Fukushima reactor units.

A pair of PackBot robots from Massachusetts-based iRobot Corp were deployed at the Daiichi plant to measure radiation levels, temperatures and other conditions inside the reactors.

And readings on Monday from the robots, that entered two of the reactor units, displayed a harsh environment that is still too radioactive for workers to enter.

The devices opened closed doors and explored the insides of the reactor buildings, coming back with radioactivity readings of up to 49 millisieverts per hour inside Unit 1 and up to 57 millisieverts per hour inside Unit 3.

The US environmental protection agency recommends an evacuation after an incident releases 10 millisieverts of radiation, and workers in the US nuclear industry are allowed an upper limit of 50 millisieverts per year. Doctors say radiation sickness sets in at 1,000 millisieverts and includes nausea and vomiting.

With its tractor-like base and wiry frame topped by cameras and sensors, the PackBot vaguely resembles the metallic protagonist of the 1986 film *Short Circuit*.

Takeshi Makigami, an official with Tokyo Electric Power Co (TEPCO), the operator of the crippled nuclear plant, said humans must still do the sophisticated engineering needed to stem the radiation, but robots can go in first to monitor when it will be safe for people to enter.

TEPCO spokesman Shogo Fukuda said the company has only now begun using the PackBots because it took several weeks for crews to learn how to operate the complex devices.

The robot's foray into the damaged reactor units was the deepest entry yet by man or machine since the first of several explosions rocked the plant the day after the March 11 earthquake and tsunami.

The PackBot is already a veteran of several other disaster zones. After the 9/11 attack, the robot was sent to search through the rubble of the collapsed World Trade Center. Another of the company's robots has disarmed roadside bombs and sussed out buildings and caves in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Although Japan has a sophisticated robotics capability, most of its development is in household applications rather than disaster recovery. *Agencies*

MADE IN AMERICA PACKBOT

- **PackBot is a series of military robots by Massachusetts-based company iRobot**
- Has tractor-like base and wiry frame, topped by cameras and sensors
- **PackBots are being used by US ground troops in Afghanistan and Iraq to help clear caves and bunkers, search buildings and vehicles and cross live anti-personnel minefields**
- An earlier version of the PackBot was used in the aftermath of the 9/11 attack to search through the rubble of the collapsed twin towers of the World Trade Center
- **Packbot has a road speed of up to 14 kmph**
- Its distinctive 'flippers' offer continuous 360 degrees rotation and negotiation of rough terrain and obstacles such as stairs, rocks, logs and debris
- **It can withstand a 6-foot (1.8-metre) drop onto concrete & survive submersion in water up to 2-metre deep**
- PackBot's chassis has a GPS system, an electronic compass and built-in temperature sensors

The 18-kg robot can be carried in a backpack and deployed in a few minutes