Newspaper Clips

April 22, 2012

HT, Delhi, April 22, 2012

INTERVIEW RK SHEVGAONKAR

'We will double intake of PhD students'

Shaswati Das
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NEW DELHI: More than 300 students and faculty members showcased their technical know-how and craftsmanship at the Innovation Exhibition organised by IIT Delhi. The institute's director, RK Shevgaonkar, spoke about the exhibition and research opportunities for students in India:

How is such an exhibition relevant to those outside the precincts of this institute?

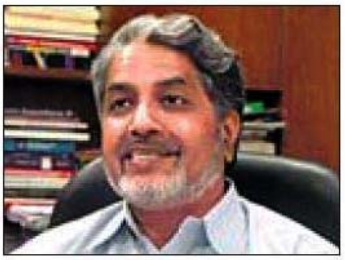
This kind of an exhibition is proof of the extensive research done by students and faculty members at IIT. There are lots of science students and aspiring engineers who would be interested. The second aim is to invite young people to try their hand at research and development in India.

There is a growing belief among students that research opportunities are limited in India, which makes the West seem more lucrative. How is that ever likely to change?

That's not true. This mindset is now changing. Earlier, in a class of 50, almost 20 students would come to us for recommendations because they were applying abroad. That number has now come down to five. India is one of the best places to carry out research work because a PhD student is given infinite opportunities to explore his field of study.

Do you think that more funds need to be pumped by the government into research in Indian universities?

Money is definitely required. But the Ministry of Human Resource Development gives



RK Shevgaonkar.
VIRENDRA SINGH GOSAIN/HT

funding for the basic infrastructure. The funding for research is usually provided by other agencies, such as the Department of Biotechnology and the Department of Space or Department of Atomic Energy. Students should actually take a look at the CSIR or DRDO labs to get a fair idea of the extent of research that can be undertaken in India.

So what role are the IITs playing to encourage students to take up research?

From the next academic year, we will double the intake of students in PhD courses. Currently, about 200 PhD scholars graduate every year. We are going to increase that number to 400 from next year and we hope to increase it further to 1,000.

There were complaints that there was a massive shortfall of teaching staff. How prudent is it to invite more PhD scholars when you don't have the required number of teachers?

That complaint has come from undergraduate students. Originally, the teacher-student ratio was 1:10. Now, because of the OBC expansion, the number of students has significantly increased. We are trying to fill that gap and are going to go to the US soon to recruit some faculty members.

Candlelight vigil by the IIT-D group Indian Yuva Manch

IITians form team to protest against JEE format change

SWATI VISHNOI
THE ASIAN AGE

The first-of-its kind online poll conducted by the IIT Bombay Alumni Association (IITBAA) had 80 per cent respondents voting against the move to change the JEE format announced by HRD minister Kapil Sibal recently. Slated to start from 2013, the new format will have CET (Common Entrance Test) for all National Institutes of Technology and IITs. IIT-Delhi students have formed a team called "Indian Yuva Manch" to protest against the proposal.

Siva Sai, a second year student of Mechanical and Computing, IIT-D, who is part of the protest group, says, "We're planning to launch the protest through Google groups and social sites. Not only the student community, even faculty members are supporting the cause."

Students have held candlelight vigils in the campus and pledged that if the policy is passed they will go on a hunger strike till the policy is withdrawn.

Sai says, "The new format will put too much pressure on students and increase the spread of coaching centers. It's an untested selection process. Why destroy something which is working so well already?"

Agrees Samant, a Ph.D student of Civil Engineering department, IIT-D. "A common entrance for all will force professors to set questions suitable for all, and this will lower the standard. A JEE aspirant might have more expertise in different areas. In this new system, very few questions will be asked from advanced topic, so brilliant students will suffer."

But few are happy with the move. Says Mridul Singh Rajput, a Ph.D student at IIT, "It's just a psychological fear among IITians, who think brand IIT distinguishes them from other engineering aspirants. I think it's a great move and will reduce the burden of multi-exams," he sums up.

We will launch the protest through Google groups and social networking sites

SIVA SAI
IIT DELHI STUDENT

Hindustan Times ND 22/04/2012 P-6

IIT-D students show off tremor mitigation device

INNOVATION EXHIBITION 300 projects on display at event including innovations in sustainable construction and reduction of water consumption

Shaswati Das
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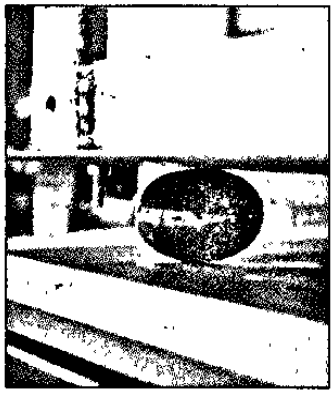
NEW DELHI: Delhi will be better prepared to brave an earthquake the next time it strikes. And this change will soon be attributed to extensive research undertaken by students at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi.

While the technology has been extensively used in Japan, which is more prone to earthquakes, it is gradually making its way in India.

Students at IIT Delhi showcased their technical prowess at an innovation exhibition on Saturday. The centre of attraction is the device that would mitigate the effect of earthquakes.

"We use a method called the base isolation technology, which is also presently being used at Bhuj Hospital in Gujarat. This method requires an isolator to be placed between the building's base and the earth so that the isolator can absorb the earthquake's vibrations, thereby reducing damage to the building," said Pravin Jagtap, a research scholar from the department of civil engineering at IIT-Delhi.



The device which will absorb the vibrations of earthquake.
VIRENDRA SINGH GOSAIN/HT

Students have been simulating earthquakes within the laboratories using a 'shake table' and, using different time histories, they have also been trying to come up with a base isolator with the maximum absorption capacity.

While the technology has proven effective for medium-rise buildings, research scholars said further extensive research needed to be done for high-rise buildings.

"This technology is being tested by close to 30 research scholars and it has proven effective for three to four storey buildings. We are still testing it in the laboratories to check its viability for some of the city's buildings. It will be fit to be used in a couple of years, even though it may still not be too effective for high rise buildings," added Jagtap.

Other innovations on display were sustainable construction and reduction of water consumption and in a completely different sphere — use of nanotechnology through development of environmentally focussed low cost nanostructured devices, among 300 other projects.

"This exhibition is an attempt by the IIT to showcase to the world the kind of projects that we undertake. Till now people have only known of the kind of work we have done, now they will be able to see it themselves," said RK Shevgaonkar, director IIT (Delhi).

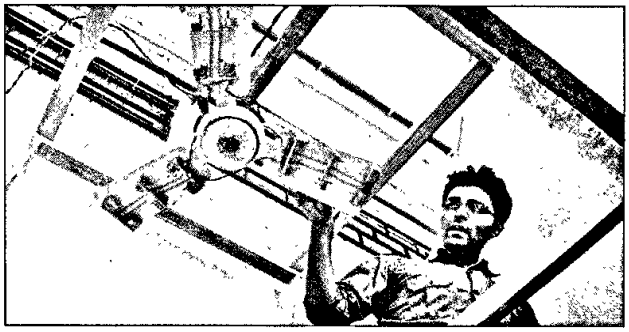
Times of India ND 22/04/2012 P-6

IIT-D students display innovative concepts

From Eco-Friendly Mobile Charger To Winter Fan, 'Open House' Had 400 Projects On Show

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Photos: Anindya Chattopadhyay



OUT-OF-THE-BOX: This ceiling fan will warm the room in winter; (right) students have built a bridge using waste paper at an IIT-D event

New Delhi: If your mobile phone runs out of battery and there is no electric point around, IIT-Delhi's green-ion charger can prove to be a life-saver. A student at IIT-D is working on an eco-friendly charger that runs on kinetic energy.

Simply put, it can produce an electric current when moved. So wearing it on the knee and walking ahead will be enough to charge your phone.

"The internal mechanism of the device is ready and it can produce a current of up to 5 volts, which is enough to charge a mobile phone. I am planning to design this device in the form of a pen. It will generate a current whenever the user moves forward, Also, one can just move it in a particular way with hands to charge a phone while travelling" said Gulmohar Khan, a first-year student pursuing master of design.

Khan's project was one among several innovative ideas and research works put forth by IIT-Delhi on Saturday in its eighth edition of 'Open House'. Nearly 400 projects were on display at the event, which had about 2,000 visitors.

"The response to the projects has been good this time considering the rush of visitors, " said IIT-D director R Shevgaonkar. The responsive camouflage textiles developed by Muksit Ahamed Chowdhury from the department of textile technology attracted many visitors. The fabric made by Chaudhury changes colours and produces heat.

He said the fabric was ideal for defence operations and can be used for making garments, tents or safety spots. The ceiling fan developed by Naveen Kumar and his team from the mechanical engineering department was a huge draw.

"This fan can be used even in winters as it will keep the room warm. We have attached heating coils to the blades of the fan, which are connected to power supply through separate connections. The fan will make the air warm when its blades rotate," said Kumar. The coils can be detached to use the fan in summer. "It will cost only around Rs 500 more than a normal fan," he added.

A team of five from civil engineering department is attempting to use waste paper to build bridges. The students insist that waste paper and an adhesive mix can be joined in a unique way to form a lightweight bridge.

Statesman ND 22/04/2012 P-4

IIT shows technologies

NEW DELHI, 18 APRIL: Indian Institute of Technology (Delhi) celebrating Open House I2 Tech 2012, today exhibited its various technologies.

Some of the projects which the students displayed include affordable cancer treatment drugs, Light weight composite hinge joint for polio patients, bamboo based structures, hydrogen powered three wheelers and many more.

Today, IIT campus changed into a fair when the projects were on display for everyone. Arnima Krishna, a students from Aligarh, was impressed with the innovation and said, "It's great to see all these innovation. Though every project is good but I personally liked, Light weight Composite Hinge Joint."

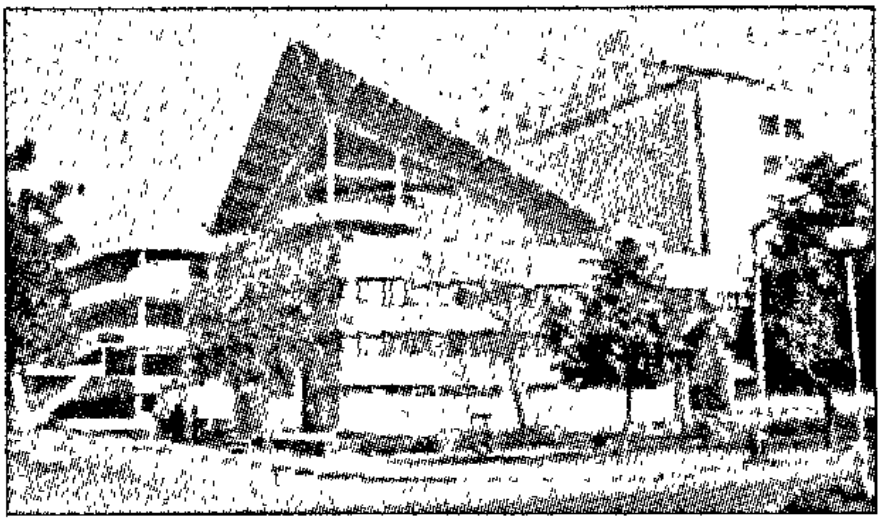
Chairman of Open House, Anup K Ghosh said India needs to invest more on research projects in order to get worldwide technology in the country. He also said though we are happy with the funds and infrastructure provided to us, we need more funds to draw better results. sns

Lok Satya ND 22/04/2012 P-3

आईआईटी ने ईजाद किया भूकंपरोधी यंत्र

आठ रिक्टर स्कैल तक के कंपन को सह सकता है उपकरण

नई दिल्ली, लोसं। भुज के भूकंप को आज तक कोई नहीं भूला। उस भूकंप की त्रासदी को देखकर लोगो ने यही दुआ कि कभी यहां ऐसा भूकंप उनके शहर में न आये, यदि आता है, तो इससे बचने का कोई तरीका जल्द ही निकल जाए। लोगों की इसी तमन्ना को लगभग पूरा कर लिया गया है।



यह अविष्कार आईआईटी दिल्ली में किया गया है। देश व राजधानी में भूकंप आने पर आपके मकान या शहर में बने पुल या अन्य भवन नहीं गिर सकेंगे। इस अविष्कार के तहत भूकंप के दौरान उसके कंपन को बेहद कम किया जा सकेगा। स्टील के बॉल व प्लेटों के माध्यम से भूकंप का असर काफी हद तक खत्म कर दिया जा सकेगा, जिससे कम से कम भवन गिरेगा नहीं। यह असर दिल्ली के आसपास आने वाले 8 रिक्टर स्केल तक के असर को रोकने में सक्षम होगा। इस तरह का अविष्कार आईआईटी दिल्ली के सिविल इंजीनियरिंग विभाग के फैकल्टी स्टूडेंट्स टीम ने मिलकर किया है। बता दें कि राजधानी दिल्ली भी भूकंप संभावित क्षेत्र में शामिल हैं। जहां भूकंप का खतरा हमेशा रहता है। अभी बीते 5 मार्च को जो भूकंप आया था वह 5 रिक्टर स्केल का था। भूकंप का केन्द्र दिल्ली से 55 किलोमीटर रोहतक के पास था। जिससे लोगों के मन में यह बात हमेशा रही कि भूकंप से आखिर उनका घर कैसे बचेगा। लोगो की इस समस्या का समाधान निकालने हुए आईआईटी दिल्ली के सिविल इंजीनिरिंग विभाग की फैकल्टी डॉ वसंत मतसागर व डॉ. आर अयोथिरमण की टीम ने यह अविष्कार किया है।

इस अविष्कार का नाम बेस आइसोलेटर है। जो कि भारत की ढांचागत निर्माण स्थिति के अनुकूल हैं। आईआईटी दिल्ली के सिविल इंजीनियरिंग विभाग के शेक टेबल में इस अविष्कार को मूर्त रूप दिया गया है। इस अविष्कार के तहत किसी भी भवन के कॉलम में ग्राउंड लोर से थोड़ा नीचे स्टील की बॉल दो स्टील की प्लेट्स के बीच लगा दी जाएगा। जिससे भूकंप के दौरान 8 रिक्टर स्केल के कंपन तक को यह बॉल व प्लेट्स मिलकर खा जाऐगा। इस आइसोलेट्र्स को भारत के किसी भी शहर या राज्यों के भवनों, पुलों आदि में लगाया जा सकता है।

Hindustan ND 22.04.2012 P-5

परिवहन व्यवस्था और पर्यावरण की बेहतरी के लिए छात्रों ने बनाई गाड़ियां

आईआईटी की खोज करेगी आबोहवा दुरुस्त

नई दिल्ली | अनुराग मिश्र

आईआईटी के ओपन हाउस में शनिवार को छात्रों ने अपनी खोजों को दिखाया। इनमें से कुछ खोजे ऐसी थी जो प्रकृति को हरा-भरा बनाने के साथ-साथ ट्रांसपोर्ट व्यवस्था को बेहतर करने वाली थी।

बाइक की पार्किंग बस में

कल्पना कीजिए कि अगर आप बस में अपनी बाइक की पार्किंग कर सकें। अगर ऐसा संभव है तो न केवल पार्किंग की समस्या संभव होगी, प्रदूषण भी कम होगा, ट्रैफिक जाम से भी निजात मिल सकेगी। आईआईटी के छात्रों ने ग्रीन अर्बन ट्रांजिट सिस्टम बनाया है जो इन समस्यों का सटीक हल प्रदान करता है। इस प्रोजेक्ट का मकसद भविष्य में ऊर्जा की बचत करने के साथ-साथ व्यक्तिगत सुविधा को भी दुरूस्त करना है। इस सिस्टम में व्यक्ति बैटरी से चलने वाली बाइक को बस में पार्क कर सकता है।

आईआईटी के छात्रों की बायोगैस कार

बायोगैस से चलने वाली कार

आईआईटी के छात्रों ने बायोगैस से चलने वाली कार बनाई है। आईआईटी छात्रों का दावा है कि यह कार सीएनजी के मुकाबले ग्रीन हाऊस गैसों के उत्सर्जन को अधिक कम करेगी। इसके अलावा ये कार कार्बन फुट प्रिंट को भी कम करने का कम करेगी क्योंकि शुरुआती अवस्था में कॉर्बनडाइ ऑक्साइड का प्रयोग बायोगैस बनाने में होता है और अंत में दहन भी कॉर्बनडाइ ऑक्साइड का ही होता है। इस स्थिति में कॉर्बनडाइ ऑक्साइड से होने वाले प्रदूषण को काफी हद तक कम किया जा सकता है।

दिल्ली आईआईटी के छात्रों द्वारा तैयार किया गया स्ट्रेचर • वीरेंद्र सिंह गोसाईं

विनय ने बताया कि शुरुआत में सड़े-गले खाद्य पदार्थों से इसे बनाया जाता था जिसकी वजह से कुछ तकनीक दिक्कत आती थी पर हमने जेथ्रोफा सीड केक से इसे बनाया है। जेथ्रोफा सीड केक, सड़े-गले खाद्य पदार्थों की तुलना में दस गुना कम लगता है। इसका माइलेज सीएनजी के बराबर ही होता है।

रोगी को ले जाना आसान

किसी रोगी को स्ट्रेचर में ले जाने में कई तरह की मुश्किलें होती हैं। खासकर हाथ और पैर टूटने के दौरान रोगी को स्ट्रेचर से बेड पर शिफ्ट करने में काफी मुश्किलें आती हैं। इस परेशानी को दूर करने के लिए छात्रों ने मिलकर पेंटेट केयर नामक डिवाइस बनाई है। डिवाइस में नीचे पहिए लगे हुए हैं। यह 150 किग्रा तक के व्यक्ति को भी बिना तकलीफ के बिस्तर पर शिफ्ट कर सकती है।

वॉकर को पेश करते आईआईटी के छात्र

बुजुर्गों के लिए खास वॉकर

बुजुर्गों को उठने-बैठने में कई तरह की परेशानी आती है। आईआईटी के छात्रों ने एक सुविधाजनक और किफायती वॉकर बनाया है। इसमें भारी वजन का व्यक्ति भी आराम से बैठ सकता है। क्लचेज के द्वारा इसकी ऊंचाई को घटाया और बढ़ाया जा सकता है। ऐसे में लकवे जैसी बीमारी से जूझ रहे व्यक्ति के लिए भी इसका प्रयोग करना मुश्किल नहीं होता है।

Times of India ND 22/04/2012 P-6

Say goodbye to jabs with electrical delivery device

Neha Pushkarna | TNN

New Delhi: If you flinch at the sight of a needle or face difficulty in swallowing pills, here's an alternative method to alleviate your pain. The Centre for Biomedical Sciences at IIT Delhi has created a device, which can be worn like a watch, to administer medicines using electric current. Agonizing as it may sound, the process is pain-free, claim researchers.

Based on a concept called Iontophoresis, the process includes application of low intensity current to the skin which causes a drug to permeate inside without any needle pricks.

Researchers at IITD say this method spares the patient the pain of injection and is more effective and healthier than consuming tablets. And the intensity of the current is lesser than 0.5 milliampere per centimetre square — low enough to possibly go unnoticed by the user.

"Transdermal delivery of drugs using electric current is beneficial for patients who have to take injections or painkillers regularly. It's a better option since the drug goes directly into the bloodstream and works faster," said professor Sneh Anand, who has been working on the project with Dr Veena Koul and other PhD scholars at IITD since 2000.

After much advancement, the team developed a handheld device which was further turned into a miniature gadget that can be worn around the arm

Anand explained, "When consumed orally, a medicine goes to the stomach, is broken down in the liver and then reaches the bloodstream. This affects the liver in the long run. We may call the new process a liver bypass."

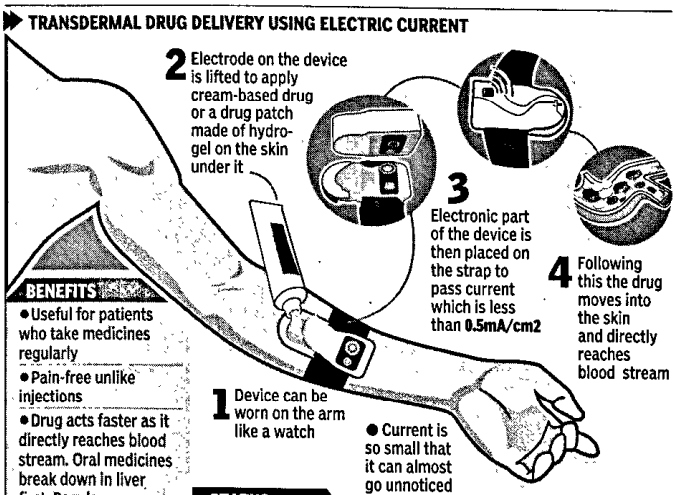
Anand says she started with a device that was in the form of a computer. After much advancement, the team developed a handheld device which was further turned into a miniature gadget — with electrodes — that can be worn around the arm. The electrode acts as a conductor through which the current passes.

The drug can be administered in the form of a cream.

Graphic: Pratima

SHOCK THERAPY

TRANSDERMAL DRUG DELIVERY USING ELECTRIC CURRENT



BENEFITS

- Useful for patients who take medicines regularly
- Pain-free unlike injections
- Drug acts faster as it directly reaches blood stream. Oral medicines break down in liver first. Regular use can affect the organ
- Device is reusable & the prototype costs not more than Rs 1,000

STATUS

- Animal testing successful for painkillers
- Human trials by a private firm to start soon
- Device is virtually fail-safe, successfully tested for insulin
- Researchers plan to test device with drugs for Alzheimer's disease

Here's how you can make the device function. Wear the strap on the arm. Lift the electrode to apply the drug on the skin under it.

Put the electrode back and place the battery-operated electronic component of the device on the strap. Push the button on it to start the flow of current which drives the ionic molecules into the skin. Another electrode completes the circuit.

The duration of current will depend on the kind of drug being administered. In case of a liquid or powdered drug, it is turned into a patch of hydro gel which is a cross-linked polymer like contact lenses.

Researchers say the device is virtually fail-safe and they have already tested it with diclofenac diethylamine for pain relief and with insulin for diabetes. They plan to carry out similar tests with drugs for Alzheimer's disease.

"We have tied up with a private company in Ahmedabad to start a human trial. All formalities for the trial have been completed and the company will market it soon," said Anand.

The device is re-usable and its cost of development is nearly Rs 1,000. "The drug patches can be manufactured for anything between Rs 10 and Rs 12.

"I can't say what the commercial cost of this product would be but it definitely won't be expensive," Anand said.

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Deccan Herald ND
22.04.2012 P-4

IIT inventions hit among schoolchildren

NEW DELHI: Various technological innovations, ranging from everyday household items to gadgetry, were a hit among schoolchildren at the Open House at Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi.

A mix of curious students as well as industry representatives attended the event on Saturday.

Close to 400 projects were on display, of which many have been completed and ready to enter the market. While some projects have been rolled over from last year, others are fairly new.

The face recognition attendance project attracted several teachers and students.

"Schools need to install cameras in classrooms and when a teacher wants to take the attendance, she can pan or tilt the camera on 10 students at a time which will record all names through the face recognition device," said Siddharth, a member of the team which worked on the concept.

The interactive virtual display was among the most praised projects.

Virtual table

"A static image can be displayed in a 3D format. Besides, we have a virtual table which can be used for viewing multiple things simultaneously. For example, a person sitting in a restaurant will be able to read, refer to the menu, play a game and read a book on the same virtual table. It will be market-ready by next quarter," explained Chirag Gupta and his team who worked on this concept.

The team has approached DLF Mall, schools, museums, car manufacturers Maruti and Mercedes with the device.

The hydrogen three-wheeler, also showcased at the Auto Expo held in January, attracted the maximum number of visitors.

"One kilogram hydrogen lasts for 83 kilometres and with an increasing speed, the amount of hydrogen required also increases.

"Five passengers can be ferried in this vehicle. We have applied for the patents and have collaborated with Mahindra," said professor L M Das.

Other projects on display include bamboo rickshaws, miniature drug delivery device, bio-gas equipment, fabric feel tester, indoor navigator system for visually impaired - named Roshini - among others.

DH News Service

Hindustan ND 22.04.2012 P-15

सिब्बल की मुश्किल

शिक्षा सुधारों पर मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री कपिल सिब्बल को संसद में झटके पर झटके लगे हैं। शिक्षा से जुड़े विधेयक पास कराने के लिए उन्हें कहीं से समर्थन नहीं मिल रहा। अब वह एक नई मुसीबत से दो चार हो रहे हैं। आईआईटी और इंजीनियरिंग में सिंगल एंट्रेस टेस्ट पर आईआईटी की फैकल्टी और स्टाफ ने ही उनके खिलाफ मोर्चा खोल दिया है। इसके चलते उन्हें केंद्रीय शिक्षा सलाहकार बोर्ड और आईआईटी काउंसिल की बैठक स्थगित करनी पड़ी। दरअसल सिब्बल उन सुधारों को लागू करना चाहते थे जिनके लिए संसद में जाने की जरूरत नहीं है। लेकिन यहां भी समर्थकों का टोटा पड़ गया है। बहरहाल, अब देखना यह है कि सिब्बल कैसे बीच का रास्ता निकालते हैं।

The Tribune ND 22/04/2012 P-2

IIT-R rejections on Akash biased, say makers

ANANYA PANDA/TNS

NEW DELHI, APRIL 21

Amid controversies surrounding supplies of Aakash, the low-cost computing and multimedia device launched last October under the National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology, its Canada-based entrepreneur Datawind said rejection of the deliveries by IIT Rajasthan were not based on scientific criteria.

Datawind CEO Suneet Singh Tuli said here, "There were disputes primarily relating to testing criteria. Specifications were very low and we met them as mentioned in the tender. In December, IIT-R brought in military ruggedised criteria that were plagiarised and not part of the tender. Their rejections were biased and had no scientific basis and so we reached out to the HRD ministry for resolving the issues."

While government decided to transfer the advanced Aakash project to IIT-Mumbai from its Rajasthan counterpart, Datawind retains the project and is in waiting for the purchase order for one lakh upgraded units from IIT-M.

"Government has taken the approval for 50 lakh devices for this budget year (till December) and we are open to bid for fresh tenders," said Tuli.

Hindustan Times ND 22/04/2012 P-19

Meet the Pulse Boys

SUCCESS STORY As a project at Stanford, duo from India developed news app that has made them millionaires

sundayspecial

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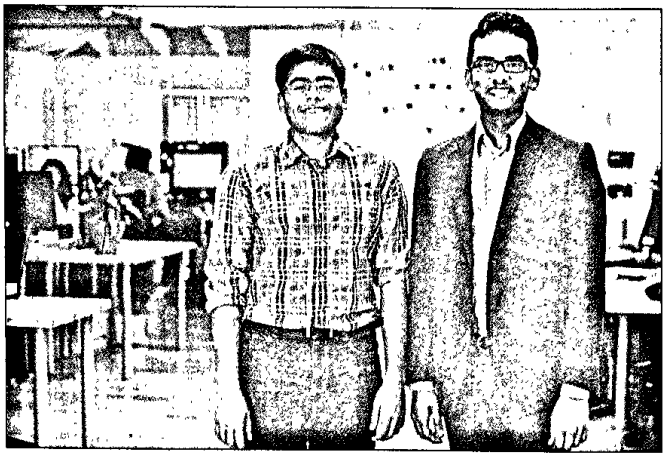
LIVING THE INDO-AMERICAN DREAM, AND STILL ONLY IN THEIR TWENTIES

App developed by Ankit & Akshay shot to the top within days of debuting on Apple's app store in 2010



Ankit Gupta (left) and Akshay Kothari. HT PHOTO

24-yr-old MIT dropout creates tablet waiter

Rajat Suri, a 24-year-old MIT dropout of Indian origin, has created a tablet waiter that lets diners take control of their restaurant experience. The tablet, called Presto, allows customers to browse restaurant menu, look at pictures of the fare on offer and order without having to wave down a waiter. Suri's company — E la carte — has 300 restaurants on its list of clients now, including Calafia Cafe, a restaurant in Palo Alto in California owned by Charlie Ayers, chef once upon a time to the Grateful Dead. Apple co-founder Steve Jobs was a frequent his restaurant. HTC, WASHINGTON

FROM LAUNCHPAD TO MURDOCH: THE STORY BEHIND THE PULSE

- In their last quarter at Stanford, Ankit and Askhay decided to do a course at the school of design
- The course was alled Launchpad, which requires students to launch a product within 10 weeks
- They were both interested in news and had observed some trends at Stanford
- One, people rarely read news on computers. Most got it from their mobiles and tablets. Two, newspapers or websites were no longer the only source. People got news from blogs, social networks
- But they also noted that one had to flip flop between different websites or go through 10 different apps
- They worked on the app at Stanford's Caffe del Doge. Within five weeks, they had a product
- They sent it to Apple, which put it up on its store and also gave it a design award
- Priced at $4, Pulse had been downloaded by 250,000 users within six months, earning them $1 million
- When they made it free, they added in one day as many new users as they had picked up over six months
- Pulse picked up its first round of investments in 2011, $9 million, from some leading media industry investors
- They were even invited by Rupert Murdoch to speak at a conference he was hosting.

It was their last quarter at the prestigious Stanford University and a career at Google or Microsoft was theirs, at the least. But they decided to take one more course.

Ankit Gupta and Akshay Kothari — from Mumbai and Ahmedabad respectively — enrolled at the school of design, simply called d.school.

Within a few months, they were heading a start-up cited by Apple boss Steve Jobs and courted by media industry giants such as Rupert Murdoch.

The two Stanford grads created a visual news reader for phones and tablets that allowed users to aggregate their favourite blogs, websites and newspapers in one place for easy browsing.

Called Pulse, the app shot to the top within days of debuting on Apple's app store in 2010, helped on possibly by Jobs's endorsement, which came as a pleasant surprise.

They hadn't met Jobs until then. And no one at Apple thought of alerting the Pulse boys to the endorsement. They met the great man at a conference hosted by Murdoch to prepare his vast media empire for the digital onslaught. Gupta and Kothari were invited there as speakers.

"Rupert really gets the digital story," says Kothari. The Wall Street Journal, which he owns, became an early believer, Pulse's first media partner.

There is a lengthening line of content partners now: Discover Magazine, Gawker, The Huffington Post, The New Yorker, Salon.com, TIME and Vanity Fair.

And here is why: Pulse has 20 million subscribers, and adds a million and half new users every month — that's one new user every two seconds. All of that in just two years.

It was created as a class project at d.school, for a course called Launchpad, which requires students to launch a product — a real product — within 10 weeks.

They are not required to do a market analysis or find a financial model or a business *model; simply launch a product publicly. Gupta* and Kothari did that in just five weeks.

"Ankit and I were both news junkies," says Kothari, adding, "We both grew up reading the morning newspaper every day in India (and watching TV news channels such as CNBC)."

But the entire news experience was changing. They had noticed two interesting trends at Stanford. One, people rarely read news on computers. Most of them got it from their mobile phones and tablets.

Two, newspapers or news websites were no longer the only source of news. People got news from blogs, social networks.

"We also observed that the whole experience of reading news on mobile devices was completely broken. You either flip flop between different websites with different layouts or go through 10 different apps."

> **We are both news junkies. We grew up reading the newspaper every day.**
> AKSHAY KOTHARI
> Pulse developer

Stanford's Caffe del Doge became their lab. They worked on the app there and took it around for immediate feedback, which then were written into the programme right away.

"Ankit (who had studied computer science) would build new versions of Pulse, while I (Kothari studied electrical engineering) went around the cafe showing it to people and getting feedback from them," Kothari said.

Within five weeks, they had a product. They sent it to Apple, which approved and put it up on its store — also gave it a design award, which, if you know Apple, counts for a lot.

Priced at $4, Pulse took off. Within six months Pulse had been downloaded by 250,000 users. That's a cool $1 million — their first million. And then one day they made it free.

Kothari remembers that day well. It was November 15, 2010.

The traffic doubled that day. They added in one day as many new users as they had picked up over six months.

"The number just doubled."

The two boys from India had come a long way. Kothari came to the US for college — first Purdue and then Stanford. Gupta is from IIT Bombay.

They are still in their twenties — Kothari is 25 and Gupta is 24.

Are they millionaires already?

They don't want't to talk about money or their worth or of the company. "Ankit and I both have had a pretty humble upbringing," said Kothari.

"Money allows you to live comfortably, but if we take a step back, we're driven less by money and more by the potential to improve the way people read news."

But here is a bit of perspective. Instagram, the photo app pikced up by Mark Zuckergberg for $1 billion was born around the same time as Pulse, and has just 10 million more users.

Pulse picked up its first round of investments in 2011, $9 million, from some leading media industry investors.

"The combination of technology and talent that the team at Pulse brings together has enabled them to jump to the head of the pack in providing customised news and related sources to readers of all iPad, iPhone, and Android devices," Greycroft managing director Alan Patricof, an investor who also founded and served as chairman of New York Magazine and Details Magazine, had said at the time of the announcement of the investments.

For the Pulse boys, it's about leaving a mark on the world.

Times of India ND 22/04/2012 P-18

Sheer number reason for more Andhra victims

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Hyderabad: Of the 1.1 lakh Indian students chasing the education-in-US dream, an estimated 45% are from Andhra Pradesh, followed by Gujarat and Punjab. Those observing the 'chalo America' trend, picking up over the last three decades, say that Telugu students figuring invariably as victims in many accidents or murders has less to do with hatred and more with sheer numbers.

K Seshadri Rao, the MBA student shot dead in Boston, hailed from Odisha, but his Telugu name had many in Hyderabad noting that their community's resolve to ensure that at least one child from the family makes it to the US has added to student numbers hailing from the state. That one in every four households has a son or a daughter studying in the US is so often repeated that it has almost become a proverbial reality. Education consultants say it's not just an estimate. "Almost half of the total number of students studying in the US is from Andhra Pradesh. Obviously if there is crime involving an Indian national, the probability of a Telugu student getting targeted is much higher," says a consultant.

V Venkatramanna, dean, school of management studies, University of Hyderabad, points out how these are crimes rooted in numbers and not hatred. Not referring to the Seshadri Rao case but speaking of the massive numbers landing in the US year after year for higher education or jobs, he said, "AP produces a lot of IIT graduates and it is only a natural progression that these graduates get into IT companies and often settle in the Bay Area. The rise (in numbers) has been phenomenal post-eighties. Add to that the great middle class aspiration (of doing well). We became an abundant supplier of talent."

IN GOOD TIMES: MBA student K Seshadri Rao with a friend in the US

Ramana Reddy, special secretary and in-charge for NRI affairs, says that the attacks are not region specific. During the last two to three years, Reddy says that around 10 students/professionals from AP have been shot dead abroad. She says the number of students going abroad for higher studies are increasing and especially to the US ever since the US Consulate was set up in Hyderabad.