

Newspaper Clips

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Pioneering quake study

The Civil Engineering Department at IIT Delhi has been at the forefront of seismological research

By Sangeeth Sebastian

EVEN a seemingly incident free earthquake like the one which rocked the Capital last week is not entirely innocuous. Nobody knows this better than Vasant Matsagar.

An Assistant Professor with the Department of Civil Engineering, IIT, Delhi, Matsagar and his team of Ph.D. students have been researching on ways to minimise damage from tremors, including those that does not lead to any visible trail of destruction and casualties.

"The media gets excited only when there are casualties," said Matsagar. "The damage done to electronic equipment inside the building or the disruption in essential communication services seldom gets reported," he said.

This impact on what he terms as the "secondary equipment and services" can be equally, if not more, devastating than one often cares to acknowledge.

"For instance, acid leakage in a chemistry lab during an earthquake has the potential to gut the entire building. Similarly, computer servers and hospital equipment cease to function in the aftermath of a tremor when they

are most needed," said Matsagar, who was conferred the 'Young Scientist Award' by the Science and Engineering Research Council at the Department of Science and Technology in 2011.

To protect office and hospital equipment against shaking and tipping over, Matsagar and his team have now come up with a technology that promises to isolate

all secondary equipment from the direct impact of an earthquake. The technology, which relies on rubber pads and stainless steel plates acts as a buffer between the floor and the equipment. "The dimension of the protective buffering varies according to the size of the equipment," said Matsagar who along with his colleague R. Ayothiraman and research students

Delhi falls in the maximum intensity zone for potential earthquakes



The researchers of IIT-Delhi with their base isolation model, last year. (left) Vasant Matsagar explaining his new technology

Pravin Jagtap and Alok Pradhan have developed the project funded by the Baba Atomic Research Centre.

The technology aimed at protecting sensitive nuclear equipment at the centre's research lab is the latest in the series of quake proof technologies, which the team has developed.

Matsagar and his team had come up with a "base isolation" technique that claimed to withstand earthquakes with an intensity of up to 8 on the Richter scale, last year. The technique relied on oblate steel

spheroids to minimise the impact of quakes. According to the IIT professor, the severity of a quake varies from region to region, classified as zones, on a scale from 1 to V, Delhi, located to the south of the Himalayas, is in zone IV. The category 'zone 1,' regarded as a safe region, was taken away from the official classification in the wake of the Latur earthquake in Maharashtra nearly two decades ago. "Almost every region in the country is vulnerable to earthquakes," said Matsagar.

TO, Chennai

IIT-M paves way for students to do research in 2 fields at once

CHENNAI: Now research scholars can sign up to pursue research on more than one field covering more than one subject at the Indian Institute of Technology - Madras. Interdisciplinary research is the newest initiative by the premier institution to draw students to research.

[IIT-M](#) has been introducing various proposals in their effort to be looked at as a global institution and a research one at that. The institute is among the few to find a place among the top 500 institutions, though no Indian institution has made it to the top 200 list.

"We have pooled faculty interested in [inter-disciplinary research](#) from 16 departments in the institute to guide research scholars. They can be attached to one of the departments for administrative purpose, but can work with more than one," said dean of academic research S K Das. He said that the idea was a hit, with the institute receiving 500 applications so far.

Academics said that such interdisciplinary research is rare in India because only universities with a comprehensive character can afford to take it up, whereas Indian policy has isolated the competency of universities into technical, medical and humanities.

There are very few model universities in this regard in India. Some research and development labs of the [Council for Scientific and Industrial Research](#) (CSIR) and the [Defence Research and Development Organisation](#) (DRDO) have been able to set up interdisciplinary research centres, but not academic institutions, said academics. Only the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore has been able to transcend this barrier.

Dean of planning and development of SASTRA University S Vaidhyasubramaniam, said, "Lack of interdisciplinary research does not mean that we lag behind in research output, only that we miss out on path breaking research and new knowledge. This is why we still import ideas from outside the country, and reflects on our poor patent output."

The idea of interdisciplinary research follows other initiatives by IIT-M to boost research, and to draw the best minds to the institute. This year IIT-M has also tried to draw the cream of undergraduates from self-financing private institutions by giving them the flexibility to join research courses directly after PhD without pursuing a masters degree. The new schemes have increased PhD and MS research applications by 15% to 20% from last year, with the count touching 10,700 in 2013.

Indian Express ND 23/04/2013

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Against freedom

Why the AICTE's decision to partner with Microsoft is unimaginative

THE All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has become Microsoft's biggest customer for cloud services. By June 30, students and teachers at 11,500 technical institutions will be locked down to Microsoft's online productivity applications and storage. Cloud services reduce the cost of computing and increase reliability, so this is a good route to go. But a better fork in the same road could have been taken. What would it have cost to develop a free and open source cloud? Or to catch the interest of free and open source software providers who already offer such services to large populations? Even if big brands are in favour, Microsoft has competition which may have been more open.

Comparisons between proprietary and free and open systems usually focus on the cost advantage — free means free to use. It is a compelling argument for poorer countries that face the challenge of educating, skilling and connecting large populations very rapidly. But the real, long-term advantages lie in the alternative meanings of free — free to play with, free to change, free to reprogramme, free to apply to un-

intended purposes. And most importantly, free to learn from and free to share. When the users of a system have technical interests, the potential gains from these flavours of freedom are immense. Instead of being passive users of a locked system, they would be encouraged to be curious, to tinker with the very tools they use and innovate ways to adapt them to their needs — or to future needs. The cloud itself could be adapted. And users would have access to at least 40,000 software packages to use, study or get involved in developing.

In the open source ecosystem, it's redundant to ask who the stakeholders and beneficiaries are. Over the long term, everyone owns the ecosystem and benefits from it. Besides, in calculating the benefit to education, a computation of savings should be accompanied by a projection of profits accruing to communities, the nation, the knowledge economy. And to students, who could start developing software professionally even before joining the workforce. In terms of opportunity cost, the AICTE's decision to partner with Microsoft is prudent but unimaginative.

How brain can do a quick search

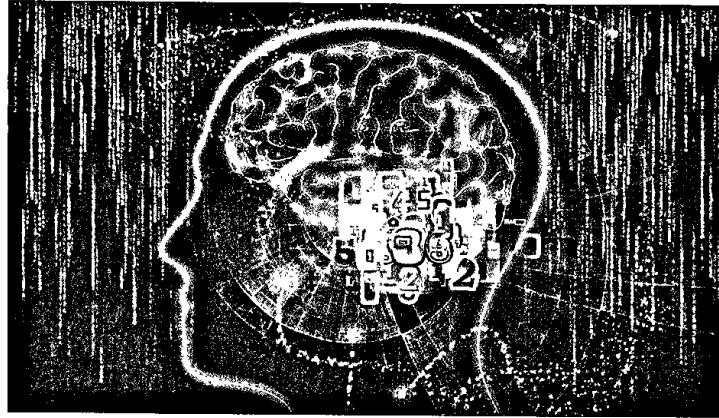
WASHINGTON: Ever wondered how we are able to focus so sharply to find that contact lens on the bathroom floor or a lost set of car keys?

Scientists have discovered that when we embark on a targeted search, various visual and non-visual regions of the brain mobilise to track down a person, animal or thing. This means that if we're looking for a youngster lost in a crowd, the brain areas usually dedicated to recognising other objects, or even the areas attuned to abstract thought, shift their focus and join the search party.

Thus, the brain rapidly switches into a highly focused child-finder, and redirects resources it uses for other mental tasks. "Our results show that our brains are much more dy-

namic than previously thought, rapidly reallocating resources based on behavioural demands, and optimising our performance by increasing the precision with which we can perform relevant tasks," said Tolga Cukur, lead author of the study from the University of California, Berkeley.

"As you plan your day at work, for example, more of the brain is devoted to processing time, tasks, goals and rewards, and as you search for your cat, more of the brain becomes involved in recognition of animals," he added. The findings may help explain why we find it difficult to concentrate on more than one task at a time. The results also shed light on how people are able to shift their attention to challenging tasks, and may provide greater insight into neurobehavioral



and attention deficit disorders.

The results were obtained in studies that used functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging

(fMRI) to record the brain activity of study participants as they searched for people or vehicles in movie clips.

In one experiment, participants held down a button whenever a person appeared in the movie. In another, they

did the same with vehicles.

The brain scans simultaneously measured neural activity via blood flow in thousands of locations across the brain.

The team compared how much of the cortex was devoted to detecting humans or vehicles depending on whether or not each of those categories was the search target. They found that when participants searched for humans, relatively more of the cortex was devoted to humans, and when they searched for vehicles, more of the cortex was devoted to vehicles. For example, areas that were normally involved in recognising specific visual categories such as plants or buildings switched to become tuned to humans or vehicles, vastly expanding the area of the brain engaged in the search.

PTI

Navbharat Times ND 23/04/2013 p-5

अप्लाइड साइंस में भी बीटेक

भूपेंद्र H नई दिल्ली

दिल्ली यूनिवर्सिटी में अप्लाईड साइंस कोर्स में एडमिशन लेने वाले स्टूडेंट्स को फोर ईयर डिग्री प्रोग्राम में बीटेक की डिग्री मिलेगी। अभी तक डीयू में कंप्यूटर साइंस, इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स, फूड टेक्नॉलजी, बायो-केमिस्ट्री, माइक्रोबायोलजी, इन्स्ट्रुमेंटेशन जैसे कोर्स तीन साल के हैं, जबकि इंजीनियरिंग इंस्टिट्यूशन में स्टूडेंट्स को कंप्यूटर साइंस, इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स और बाकी कोर्स में चार साल की बीटेक डिग्री मिलती है। माना जाता है कि इन कोर्स में चार साल की डिग्री को ज्यादा वैल्यू दी जाती है। इस साल डीयू में अप्लाइड साइंस के कोर्स चार साल की स्कीम में आ रहे हैं और स्टूडेंट्स को बीटेक की डिग्री मिलेगी।

डीयू के एक सीनियर अधिकारी का कहना है कि कंप्यूटर साइंस और इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स जैसे कोर्स को तत्काल अब पूरी तरह बदल जाएगी। डिग्री का नाम बीटेक होने से स्टूडेंट्स को बेहतर

कंप्यूटर साइंस और इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स स्टूडेंट्स को फायदा

ज्यादा कॉलेजों में हो सकता है बीटेक

करियर के बेहतर ऑप्शन

स्टूडेंट्स को फोर ईयर स्कीम में बीटेक की डिग्री पाने के कई ऑप्शन

फोर ईयर स्कीम में आने के बाद इन कोर्स की डिमांड बढ़ने का दावा

कंप्यूटर साइंस कोर्स की काफी डिमांड, प्लेसमेंट के भी अच्छे चांस हैं



मौके मिलेंगे। साइंस कोर्स के काफी स्टूडेंट्स इंजीनियरिंग के लिए अप्लाई करते हैं। डीयू में कंप्यूटर साइंस कोर्स की काफी डिमांड है। इसकी कटऑफ

भी काफी हाई रहती है और प्लेसमेंट के भी अच्छे चांस हैं। इस कोर्स में स्टूडेंट्स को बीएससी (ऑनर्स) कंप्यूटर साइंस की डिग्री मिलती है, जो

कंप्यूटर साइंस कोर्स 15 कॉलेजों में चल रहा है। पहले बीसीए और बीएससी (ऑनर्स)

कंप्यूटर साइंस के कोर्स शुरू किए गए थे।

लेकिन दो साल बाद इन्हें बीआईटी और बीआईएस

कोर्स में तब्दील कर दिया गया और इसकी अवधि तीन साल से बढ़ाकर चार साल कर दी गई। दो साल बाद फिर से इन कोर्स की जगह बीएससी (ऑनर्स) कंप्यूटर साइंस का तीन साल का कोर्स शुरू कर दिया गया। सीटों की संख्या करीब 800 है। फूड टेक्नॉलजी और इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स ऑनर्स जैसे कोर्स की सीटें भी ज्यादा नहीं हैं, पर इस साल सीटें बढ़ सकती हैं।

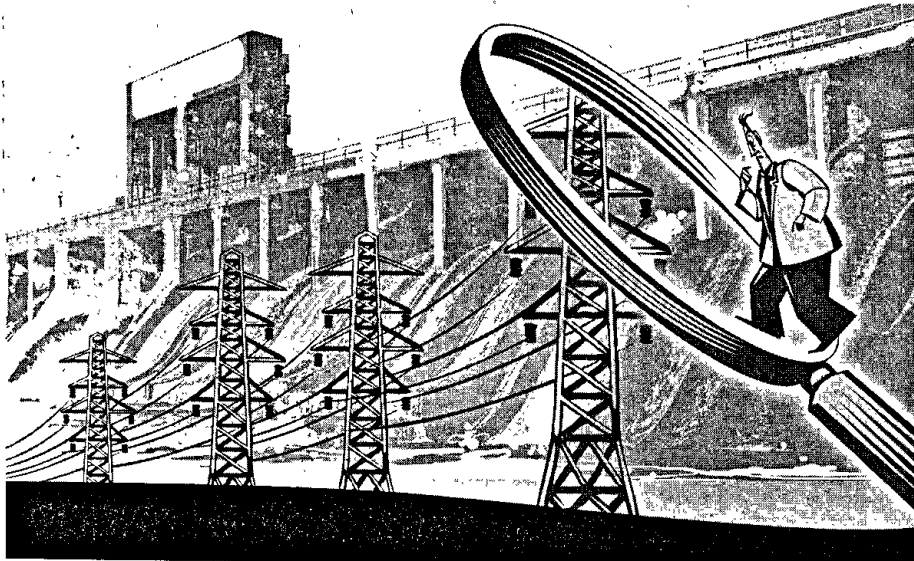
अब बीटेक हो जाएगी। इसका स्ट्रक्चर भी तैयार किया जा रहा है।

सिस्टम सॉफ्टवेयर, कंप्यूटर ग्राफिक्स, सॉफ्टवेयर इंजीनियरिंग, कंप्यूटर सिस्टम आर्किटेक्चर, डिजिटल इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स, सिस्टम सॉफ्टवेयर,

कंप्यूटर नेटवर्क, इकनॉमिक्स, डेटाबेस सिस्टम, मल्टीमीडिया अप्लीकेशन, डेटा स्ट्रक्चर, कैलकुलस, प्रोग्रामिंग फंडामेंटल जैसे इनपुट इसका हिस्सा है।

अकैडमिक काउंसिल के मंबर डॉ. अजय भागी का कहना है कि दिल्ली की बात करें तो आईपी, डीटीयू, एनएसआईटी में स्टूडेंट्स को बीटेक कोर्स में एडमिशन मिलता है।

यूनिवर्सिटी के इस फैसले से स्टूडेंट्स के पास बेहतर करियर ऑप्शन होंगे। उन्होंने कहा कि पॉलीमर साइंस कोर्स में भी बीटेक की डिग्री होनी चाहिए।



अजय मोदी

जलविद्युत हमारी मजबूरी लेकिन नदियां भी जरूरी

इसमें कोई शक नहीं है कि जलविद्युत परियोजनाएं वक्त की जरूरत हैं लेकिन इस काम में नदियों पर हो रही ज्यादाती को लेकर चिंता व्यक्त कर रही हैं सुनीता नारायण

जलविद्युत के महत्त्व से इनकार नहीं लेकिन सवाल यह है कि आखिर यह कितनी महत्त्वपूर्ण है? क्या यह इतनी महत्त्वपूर्ण है कि इसके लिए हम अपनी नदियों की धाराएं सुखा डालें? क्या कोई ऐसा रास्ता है जिस पर चलकर हम ऊर्जा संबंधी जरूरतों और नदियों का जल स्तर बरकरार रखने का संतुलन कायम कर पाएं?

मैं पिछले कुछ महीनों से इन तमाम मसलों में उलझी हुई हूँ। लेकिन अब जबकि गंगा पर बन रही जलविद्युत परियोजनाओं से संबंधित समिति (जिसकी मैं भी सदस्य थी) ने अपनी रिपोर्ट पेश कर दी है तो मैं यह बताना चाहती हूँ कि मेरी नजर में आगे की राह कैसी है?

जहां तक बात गंगा के स्रोत के निकट वाले बहाव की है तो वह पूरी तरह इंजीनियरों की देखरेख का मामला है। केंद्रीय विद्युत प्राधिकरण और उत्तराखंड के बिजली विभाग ने अनुमान लगाया है कि गंगा में 9,000 मेगावॉट जलविद्युत उत्पादित करने की क्षमता है। उन्होंने इसकी सहायक नदियों पर भी करीब 70 परियोजनाएं स्थापित करने की बात कही है। इन परियोजनाओं के निर्माण के दौरान गंगा की प्रमुख सहायक नदियों के बहाव में परिवर्तन भी किया जाएगा। यह बदलाव इतना ज्यादा होगा कि भागीरथी और

अलकनंदा का क्रमशः 80 फीसदी और 65 फीसदी हिस्सा प्रभावित हो सकता है।

अधिकांश प्रस्तावित परियोजनाएं बहती नदियों पर ही बननी हैं। ये नदियां जलाशयों और बांधों की तुलना में अधिक परोपकारी प्रतीत होती हैं लेकिन केवल उसी स्थिति में जबकि इन पर परियोजना का निर्माण सावधानीपूर्वक किया जाए। कहने का मतलब यह कि नदी को नदी ही रहने देना चाहिए, उसे इंजीनियरों की मदद से तैयार नाले में नहीं तब्दील कर दिया जाना चाहिए।

गंगा पर अनेक परियोजनाओं की योजना बनाई गई और उनको चलाया भी जा रहा है। इसके तहत एक परियोजना में नदी के पाने की राह बदलकर उसे उस स्थान पर ले जाया जाता है जहां बिजली का उत्पादन होता है, उसके बाद इस जल को वापस नदी में पहुंचा दिया जाता है। लेकिन अगली परियोजना वहीं पर शुरू कर दी जाती है जहां कि नदी ने अभी अपना पूरा प्रवाह भी नहीं हासिल किया होता। जाहिर है ऐसे में नदी में पानी का सख्त अभाव हो जाता है।

इस पूरी प्रक्रिया में बिजली का उत्पादन ही इकलौता आकर्षण था। योजना यह थी कि शुष्क मौसम में सारे पानी का इस्तेमाल करके बिजली का उत्पादन किया जाए। इस तरह से तो नदी का मूल स्वभाव ही नष्ट हो

जाता। अगर ऐसा किया जाता तो नदी एक बड़े बांध में तब्दील होकर खत्म हो जाती।

इस समिति में हमने नदियों में पर्यावरण के अनुकूल प्रवाह सुनिश्चित करने के लिए अनेक विकल्पों पर बात की। बिजली बनाने में इस्तेमाल करने के अलावा नदियों में कितना पानी छोड़ा जाना चाहिए। जलविद्युत परियोजनाओं के इंजीनियरों ने तर्क दिया कि नदियों का कम से कम 10 फीसदी जल प्रवाह के लिए शेष रहने देना चाहिए। उनका कहना है कि किसी भी परियोजना के प्रारूप में इसे आसानी से शामिल किया जा सकता है और इसकी वजह से नदियों से उत्पादित होने वाली बिजली की मात्रा पर कोई प्रभाव नहीं पड़ेगा। भारतीय वन्य जीव संस्थान को नियुक्त किया गया कि वह इस पर्यावास में मत्स्य विविधता की जरूरतों पर ध्यान दे। उसने सुझाव दिया कि विभिन्न मौसमों में नदियों में 20 फीसदी से 30 फीसदी तक पानी बरकरार रखना चाहिए।

मैंने कहा कि यह अपर्याप्त है। ज्यादातर मामलों में नदियों की विभिन्न धाराओं में नवंबर से अप्रैल महीने तक बेहतर मौसम वाले मौसम की तुलना में 10 फीसदी से भी कम पानी होता था। ऐसे में पानी का 30 फीसदी तक का स्तर स्वीकार्य नहीं था। मैंने प्रस्ताव रखा कि हर मौसम में नदियों में 50

फीसदी तक पानी का बहाव बरकरार रहने देना चाहिए। लेकिन जाहिर तौर पर मेरा प्रस्ताव सामने वाले पक्ष को स्वीकार्य नहीं था। किसी भी कीमत पर नहीं।

सेंटर फॉर साइंस ऐंड एन्वॉयरनमेंट (सीएसई) के मेरे सहयोगियों ने यह फैसला किया कि वे इन आंकड़ों की जांच करेंगे। बार-बार अनुरोध करने पर समिति ने 24 निर्मित और प्रस्तावित परियोजनाओं के जल विज्ञान संबंधी आंकड़े मुहैया कराए। मेरे साथियों ने इन आंकड़ों का विश्लेषण किया और नदियों में विभिन्न जल स्तर पर बिजली उत्पादन के असर का आकलन किया। उन्होंने पाया कि 50 फीसदी प्रवाह की स्थिति में बिजली की उत्पादन क्षमता पर उल्लेखनीय असर पड़ा। लेकिन अगर इसमें सुधार कर बिजली उत्पादन के लिए थोड़ा और पानी मुहैया कराया गया तो परिणामों में नाटकीय बदलाव आया।

इस मामले में बिजली उत्पादन में होने वाली कमी बहुत उल्लेखनीय नहीं पाई गई। इस वजह से उसकी दरों में भी बहुत अधिक बदलाव नहीं आना स्वाभाविक था। इसकी वजह एकदम साधारण थी: दरअसल ये परियोजनाएं खाली मौसम में वैसे भी बहुत अधिक बिजली का उत्पादन नहीं करती हैं। एक के बाद एक तमाम परियोजनाओं में प्लॉट लोड फैक्टर से यह पता चला कि 10 फीसदी जल प्रवाह अथवा उससे भी कम प्रवाह की स्थिति में खाली मौसम में बिजली उत्पादन के लिए जल बचा ही नहीं। मेरा सुझाव यह है कि ऊर्जा के उत्पादन में इजाफा करने के लिए नदियों के प्रवाह पर ध्यान रखना सबसे बेहतर विकल्प है। नदियों के पास हमें देने के लिए बहुत कुछ है लेकिन केवल तभी जबकि हम नदियों को अपनी जरूरतों पर वरीयता दें।

इस आधार पर देखा जाए तो हमारा प्रस्ताव था मई से अक्टूबर तक के छह महीनों में नदियों को 30 फीसदी जल प्रवाह उपलब्ध कराना तथा बाकी छह महीनों यानी नवंबर से अप्रैल तक 50 फीसदी जल प्रवाह उपलब्ध कराना। लेकिन जैसी कि उम्मीद थी इस विश्लेषण को तबज्जो नहीं दी गई। भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान (आईआईटी) रुड़की भी इस समिति का सदस्य था और उसे भी इस विश्लेषण की समीक्षा करने को कहा गया। यहीं से खेल शुरू हुआ। आईआईटी रुड़की ने जिसका प्रतिनिधित्व वैकल्पिक जल ऊर्जा केंद्र कर रहा था, ने हमारे निष्कर्षों को विवादित करार दे दिया। हमने सवाल उठाया लेकिन हमें उनके आकलन के तौर तरीके के बारे में कोई जानकारी नहीं दी गई। लेकिन हमें जो बैकग्राउंड शीट उपलब्ध कराई गई उसमें दो परियोजनाओं में पानी के बहाव के आंकड़ों का इस्तेमाल करके हमारे आंकड़ों को अस्वीकृत किया गया था। हमने दोबारा जांच की और स्तब्ध करने वाली बात यह थी कि उन आंकड़ों में संशोधन किया गया था।

इसके बाद आंकड़ों की गहन जांच पररक का काम आरंभ हुआ। अपने अगले आलेख में मैं बताऊंगी कि यह मामला कैसे हल हुआ (या नहीं हुआ)। लेकिन मैं इस आलेख का अंत एक विचार के साथ करना चाहूंगी, 'नदियों को प्रशिक्षण नहीं चाहिए। प्रशिक्षण की आवश्यकता देश के जलविद्युत इंजीनियरों को है।'

Economic Times ND 23/04/2013 P6

IIM-A is Toughest B-School to Get Into In the World

Testing into top B-school is tougher than getting into Stanford

ERIN ZLOMEK

Find acceptance rates for MBA programmes at Stanford University (7%) and Harvard University (13%) terrifying? Here's a bit of perspective: Not even 1 percent of applicants were admitted to India's top business school last year.

The Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad (IIM-A) offered spots to only 0.25% of applicants for the 2012-14 academic years. Entry is based heavily on their performance in Common Admission Test (CAT). Applicants who were admitted to the school and also took the US-based GMAT bested business students the world over: The minimum GMAT score for students in IIM-A's postgraduate programme in management was 770, compared with an average score of 730 at Stanford's Graduate School of Business, according to data reported by 200 global B-schools to QS Quacquarelli Symonds, a London-based researcher.

"Competition in India is intense. So many kids have outstanding grades," says QS Quacquarelli Symonds founder Nunzio Quacquarelli. "The application to acceptance rate probably makes [IIM-A] the most competitive



business school in the world."

The institute received 173,866 applications for 2012-14, versus 6,618 for Stanford's Class of 2013. "India's population is so large, particularly among young people, it's easy for [IIM-A] to have the luxury of making one huge cut" based on test scores, says Graham Richmond, co-founder of Clear Admit, an MBA admissions consulting firm.

Some question whether CAT is the best predictor of business aptitude. Tushar Dubish, a computer science student at the Indian Institute of Technology in Mandi, doesn't plan on applying to IIM-A and will instead shoot for Harvard Business School and the Yale School of Management, among others. Dubish, 20, says the pressure of doing well on the CAT isn't what bothers him. It's the notion that his score on a single exam — not his background, achievements, and other qualities — would determine his fate.

Bloomberg BusinessWeek

Hindustan Times ND 23/04/2013 p-5

DU faces contempt notice for not starting biometric attendance

HT Correspondent

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NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court on Monday sought the response of the Delhi University on a petition seeking initiation of contempt proceedings against it for failing to implement the biometric attendance system for its teachers.

DU's lawyer told the court that a resolution had been passed for adopting the system before the next academic session commencing in July. However, the court issued a notice to DU Vice Chancellor Dinesh Singh and Registrar Alka Sharma. Justice GS Sistani sought their reply on an affidavit by August 7.

"University of Delhi is committed to adopt and implement measures which are favourable and beneficial to the university system as a whole, such as biometric attendance system for teachers," said an affidavit filed by DU on September 19, 2012 in response to a PIL. The university had tried to introduce the



■ The university had to withdraw the decision to implement biometric attendance for teachers after they went on strike. SONU MEHTA/HT

system in 2009, but had to hastily withdraw the decision after the Delhi University Teacher's Association (DUTA) went on strike in protest.

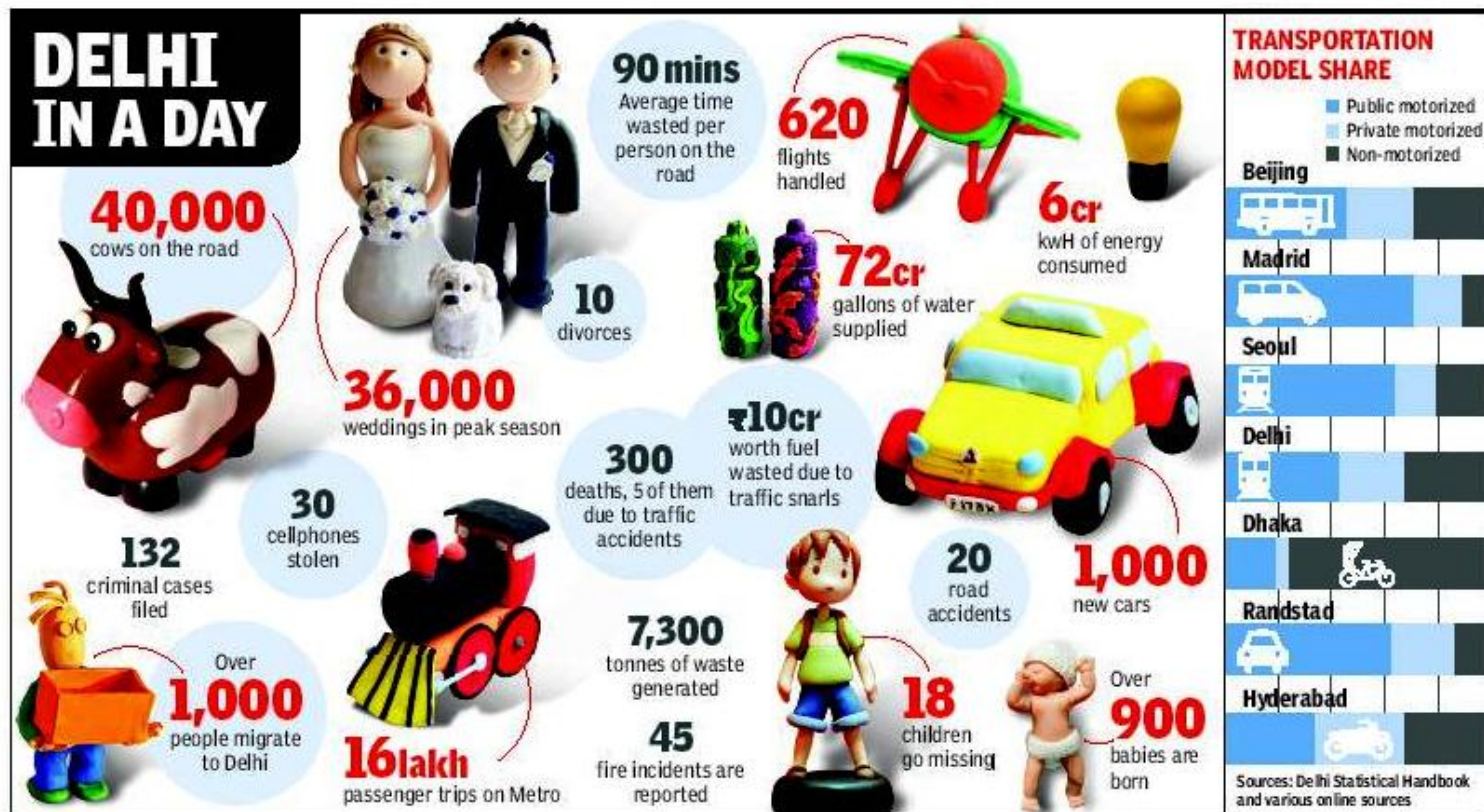
DU's failure to keep the promise was brought to the court's attention by NGO Indian Council of Legal Aid and Advice. Emphasising the need for a system to keep a tab on teachers, its lawyer RK Saini told the court: "There is no system in place to ensure that a teacher comes to class regularly. They also go on strikes for frivolous reasons. A system

must be put in place to make sure that the teachers complete their teaching hours." The decision to implement biometric attendance norms in colleges was passed in the university's executive council in October last year, but the administration has not moved forward, keeping in view the opposition from the teachers.

"We will have to implement the biometric attendance system soon despite opposition from the teachers as we cannot ignore the court's decision anymore," said a senior DU official.

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Delhi 2050: See for yourself, online



Jayashree Nandi | TNN

New Delhi: When a group of architects interviewed some children in Delhi, they found the youngsters didn't know the city developed around the Yamuna. It made them wonder if, come 2050, the river will exist at all in the new generations' mindscapes.

What else will change in the city? Will it be more unsafe to step out at night? Will the city choke on jams and noxious air? A team of architects and town planners launched a unique online project recently that aims to recreate Delhi in 2050 with inputs from citizens.

Dutchman Anne Feenstra, working with the architecture platform archi, started Delhi 2050 in 2010. "Before approaching the government, we wanted to gather all facts, figures and opinions," he said. The team recently

contacted National Capital Planning Board, Delhi Development Authority and the urban development ministry which showed interest. IIT Delhi, School of Social Sciences at JNU, School of Planning and Architecture and Indian Institute for Human Settlements are generating data for the project.

The process is simple. Anyone interested in participating may log on to the Del-

hi 2050 website. Here, infographics compare Delhi with other international cities for various parameters. Delhi has very high particulate matter pollution compared to Milan which has very high nitrogen dioxide emissions. "We are trying to see how Delhi is faring compared to other cities with similar population density and size. We cannot compare Delhi with New York or Lon-

don but it can be compared to Sao Paulo, Milan and Madrid," Feenstra said.

The team has developed a number of demo models. The 'urban harvest' model explores how a residential colony in Mayur Vihar can be completely decentralized. To harness solar energy, the infrastructure is covered with a membrane of titanium dioxide which can also harvest rainwater. Vertical farms have been installed on this micro-model which use hydroponics to reduce water intake by 1/20th of its current demand. The future societies living in this imaginary model would comprise farmers who live and work there.

The live-and-work paradigm is also in force in the Life Street model which is trying to make Khirki Village a safe and friendly neighborhood by making it a space where people put up

and work and there is activity on streets even at night. Another project, Aap Ki Sadak, has involved residents of Malviya Nagar, Khirki Extension and Sheikh Sarai in developing a consensus plan for improvement of public transport. The data collated from public consultations and online inputs will be presented to agencies in June.

The website has detailed information on the urban heat island effect (in which temperatures of built up areas are higher) in Delhi. "These areas demand more energy because their air conditioning needs are way higher. The temperature difference can be up to eight degrees," said Feenstra.

Delhi 2050 is the only Indian architecture project part of 26 international projects to be presented at the fifth International Architecture Biennale 2012 in Rotterdam.



An architect explains a model to children in Mayur Vihar

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Eng teachers vow to oppose 4-yr degree



DECISION TIME: For city residents, DU has been an automatic choice

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: English teachers from nearly 25 DU colleges met on Monday and decided to oppose introduction of the four-year undergraduate programme. About 60 teachers, including representatives from the South Campus colleges, made it to the general body (GB) meeting.

Teachers with colleagues who are part of the syllabus-design process attended just to let the others know that the selection of teachers for curriculum development wasn't a departmental decision. "Many who had refused to go said the phone call came from the vice chancellor's office," said Vinita Chandra, who teaches English at Ramjas College.

She added that just like social science subjects, those working on the English curriculum have been instructed to

keep the details confidential until the Faculty of Arts has cleared it.

The English teachers at the meeting, who resolved to oppose the new structure as "academically unsound", don't want to be "complicit in getting it through". "We feel that the structure academically dilutes the honours course," said Chandra.

Many English teachers, even some of those invited to frame the syllabus, had protested when they were given less than a fortnight for the job. "There can be no academic seriousness in this exercise. Usually there's a GB meeting and then a committee but here, the HoD didn't call the teachers," she said.

Teachers also feel an extra year will weigh heavy on students from economically weaker backgrounds without "any concrete academic gain".

HT Lucknow

He's different: IIT-B student makes it to circus troupe

Bhavya Dore

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MUMBAI: Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay (IIT-B) student Samanth Vinil has landed an opportunity of a lifetime – all because he can shimmy and shake his body in a whirl of fluid motions, amazingly.

Vinil, 22, a final year student who graduates this year, has been selected to the database of potential performers by the internationally renowned circus arts and dance troupe, Cirque de Soleil, a Quebec (Canada)-based company.

Marking a radical shift in

VINIL SAT FOR PLACEMENT PROCESS, BUT FOUND NOTHING TO HIS LIKING. HIS PARENTS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE MOVE

career choice off the beaten path of engineering and management, Vinil, 22, was selected in February after going through an audition process. The team at Cirque came across some of his videos online and invited him to the audition. The selection now makes him eligible to get a role in an upcoming show.

Described as an “artistic

dance company,” Cirque’s productions combine circus acts, dance, drama, acrobatics and story telling and have won numerous awards and performed across the world.

“I didn’t know I would reach this level, I just started dancing for fun,” said Vinil. “Later I thought maybe I can do this as a profession.”

Vinil, an engineering physics student, started dancing in his second year at IIT-B, with dancing then becoming a passion. Since then he has performed at college festivals and honed his moves from watching videos, having received no formal training.

RIGHT MOVES

IITian shimmies into Canadian troupe

Bhavya Dore

■ bhavya.dore@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: Shimmying and shaking to the beats, Samanth Vinil has all the moves, which have landed the IIT-B student an opportunity of a lifetime. The 22-year-old final-year student has been selected to the database of potential performers by the internationally renowned circus arts and dance troupe, Cirque du Soleil.

Vinil was selected in February after going



■ **Samanth Vinil, who started dancing in his second-year of engineering, has performed at many college festivals.**

through an audition process. The team at Cirque came across some of his videos online and invited him to audition. The selection now

makes him eligible to get a role in an upcoming show.

Described as an “artistic entertainment company”, Cirque’s productions combine circus acts, dance, drama, acrobatics and story telling and have won numerous awards and have performed across the world.

“I didn’t know I would reach this level,” said Vinil, adding that his parents are concerned about his career choice. “It’s not a conventional choice, so they are a little worried.”