

Newspaper Clips

August 1, 2012

Hindustan Times ND 01/08/2012

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ALUMNUS GUIDE

At your service, IITians for IITians

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NEW DELHI: Want to hone your entrepreneurship skills? Or, maybe, get a few tips on becoming a musician?

At your service is a pool of talented IITians who have made a mark for themselves. The only catch, however, is that you would need to be an IIT student, alumni member or staffer, or simply a relative of somebody from the prestigious institution.

IITians helping IITians — this is the tagline of

IITMentors, Delhi Chapter, which will be launched on August 1 by NIIT founder chairman and Delhi IIT alumnus Rajendra Singh Pawar. The first chapter of the initiative, mooted by PANIIT, was launched in Bangalore and Bay Area last year.

“This is the kind of a platform where an estab-

This is the kind of a platform where an established IITian can be like a guide in your career.

DAMNISH, IITMentors

lished IITian can be like a guide in your career. We will first take details of the mentees, their needs, and then start their offline match-making process with their respective mentors,” says Damnish, one of the launch coordinators in Delhi.

At least 30 mentors will be identified on the basis of their field of work, he said.

While the Bangalore Chapter had six tracks of mentoring, including entrepreneurship, corporate careers and academics, the Delhi Chapter will have one more sector — an offbeat one.

Emergency for Indian education

IT IS interesting that Amartya Sen, the Nobel laureate, when commenting on development indices in India, has said that education was in a state of emergency. He has pointed out that countries such as South Korea and Japan, as well as other Asian nations such as Singapore, Hong Kong and Thailand have taken a lead in providing quality education to their people. As a result, these countries have taken a lead and our country has fallen behind and has, thus, paid a huge price for it. Sen has rightly pointed out the deficits of the Indian education in terms of quality and content. It is true, as he has himself suggested, that Indians are doing well in jobs that demand high skills, such as those in information technology but fare badly in doing jobs of the middle skill segment. A consequence is that the fruits of the economy are not widely shared. India is widely seen as a rising power and an element of its supposed rise is what is called the demographic dividend. This is its large, young working age population supporting relatively few retirees. Yet, a look at the sorry state of India's education does not give confidence in this thesis. The reason why a few Indians do well in high skill jobs and the country is posting encouraging growth rates is because it is home to some of the world's finest technology institutes. But it also has a primary school system that is delivering an abysmal quality of education and is failing the country's poorest children. This school system is reinforcing social inequalities and undermining the skill-base needed to create jobs and to sustain the high growth which would eradicate poverty.

If education was to be measured solely by enrolment and the *Right to Education Act*, India would be the success story. However, assessments show that Indian students very often do not compare on performance tests with their foreign counterparts. Thus, Indian eighth graders have math skills comparable to South Korean third graders, and Indian students ranked second to last out of 75 countries surveyed, in the not to distant past, in writing and mathematics. The alarming state of the country's schools has implications beyond economics, for India cannot hope to claim a rightful seat at the head of global affairs if it lags behind in education. This country, which once boasted of famous universities such as Nalanda, must pay more attention to the quality and content of its education if it is to reclaim its place in the world.

Focus where you can deliver: PM tells DRDO

New Delhi: With India still importing well over 60% of its military hardware and software, PM Manmohan Singh on Tuesday asked DRDO to concentrate on key strategic and military technology areas to ensure weapon systems are de-

veloped without huge time and cost overruns.

In the backdrop of crucial projects like the Tejas light combat aircraft running way behind schedule, the PM said, "The share of the indigenous content in defence procure-

ment continues to be low. We need to take a hard look at the pipeline of our projects and focus our time and material resources on areas where we have demonstrated capacity to deliver projects within reasonable time and cost." **TNN**