Newspaper Clips

December 23, 2010

Times of India
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IIT scam: Panel set up

Akshaya Mukul | TNN

New Delhi: In a delayed reaction to the CVC's order for an investigation into the fake institute — Institute of Electrical Engineers (I) — being run by faculty members of IIT-Kharagpur, the HRD ministry has finally set up a three-member probe panel.

The committee will consist of Pradip Mathur, director of IIT-Indore and S K Jain, director of IIT-Gandhinagar. Surendra Prasad, director of IIT-Delhi, is likely to be the third member. Though CVC had given the ministry four-week deadline to wrap up the probe, the delay in setting up the committee could lead to missing the stipulated timeframe. Also, getting people from the IIT system is bound to raise the concern about a possible conflict of interest.

When the CVC's directive came, the ministry had first planned to set up athree-member committee, comprising IIT directors. However, later it changed its mind and said a senior HRD official would carry out the investigation. Finally, it has decided to let IIT directors investigate the fake institute allegation. West Bengal Police is already investigating the case, and is likely to quiz former directors K L Chopra and S K Dubey.

The panel has been asked to verify the allegations. In case the allegations are found to be true, the panel has been asked to find out the complicity of others.

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Rajini's 'Robot' part of IIM-A course

Dayananda Meitei | TNN

Ahmedabad: He can get millions raving about tricks like getting a cigarette somersault and land in his mouth or a pair of shades land on his eyes from mid-air, romance a woman onscreen half his age and rake in over Rs 100 crore in the first week of his film's release. That's the phenomenon called Rajinikanth.

'Robot', the Rajinikanth-starrer which became the second highest grosser among Indian films and spawned a slew of Rajini jokes, is set to come to the laboratory of IIM-Ahmedabad.

As part of an elective course called 'Contemporary film industry: A business perspective', students of the postgraduate programme at IIM-A will take up 'Robot' or 'Enthiran' as a case study to analyse the business of cinema and its success story. The course will also study 'Muthu', another Tamil film starring Rajinikanth. The movie was later translated into Japanese as 'Muthu Odoru Maharaja' or 'Muthu: The Dancing Maharaja'.

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Internet companies are changing the look and feel of email

Change is the only constant

Who says less cannot be more? In a move motivated by how people connect with each other, internet companies are simplifying the products they offer. In doing so they are returning the emphasis to what is important, the message rather than the medium.

Email, the first product to be affected, could indicate the shape of changes to come. Those addicted to the present format of email should remember that nothing stays the same. For instance, Facebook has removed the 'cc' and 'bcc' buttons from its emailing page and is about to remove the option of typing a subject. Not only could a cleaner, less cluttered page be more pleasing to the eye but a leaner, faster and less formal messaging system may be what many people want. Facebook claims to have analysed billions of messages and is therefore changing its interface to make emailing more real time, conversational and casual. In short, more like sending an sms.

There can be nothing wrong with this. Not only do the changes in progress make for convenience but more significantly, they broaden consumer choice. After all, people who want to use traditional email have a range of companies to turn to. But patently, there is a new and growing community whose needs have to be met and they are the beneficiaries of the changes being brought in by some companies.

TIMES VIEW

In a world of fast changing expectations, and rife with start-ups offering alternatives, the biggest companies have to constantly adapt if they want to grow or retain market share. This is why platforms such as Googlemail, which have incorporated facilities from chat to video calling, are thriving. In contrast, platforms that were slow to adapt or did so clumsily have lost market share. The message is clear, adaptation is better than perishing.

Whose message is it anyway

Time was when you used pen and perfumed paper to write letters and not email. You were thought daft. Then, to join the crowd, you switched to email, and the postman stopped ringing twice. Now, they say you must also junk emails with its cumbersome log-ins and sign outs, awaiting a cutting-edge avatar that's more like texting. To be 'with it', you need sexy stuff like instant messaging, online chatting et al, communication having become instantaneous gratification. A director of engineering at Facebook has announced an interactive New Age: "The future of messaging is more real time." Cling to the present, and you face Gen Next's firing squad for fuddy-duddies.

COUNTERVIEW

Rupa Sengupta

Only, no one should tell others what to use and when, and even less make them feel small or superannuated because they stick with, say, grammatical English while the swish set talks in Twitter code. Yes, obsolescence is programmed into technology. New products are born, serve value-added purposes and die out, much like biological organisms. That's life. But as in nature, forced – as opposed to natural – extinction isn't kosher. So, tech-savvy folks needn't parade as sole purveyors of taste and fashion, telling consumers to kick 'old' habits because the future is a fait accompli. People don't serve technology; it's the other way around.

Adaptation to technological change must be organic, not bamboozled by peer or the futuristic seer's pressure. That's why researchers see a "demographic split" in use of email. Society isn't just made up of teens on a tech rush. And older people don't need lectures on how to get messages across. Expecting everyone to change at breakneck speed is counterproductive: it merely swells the ranks of the technophobes. Lastly, technology helps celebrate individuality. Don't reduce it to the mentality of the herd, whose members use the same hip gadgetry just because it's the latest on the shop shelf.

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UK science journal publishes study by 8-year-old students

A science journal from Britain's prestigious Royal Society has published a study conducted and written by 8-year-old students. The children from an English elementary school investigated the way bumblebees see colors and patterns, based on fieldwork in a local churchyard. The scientific organization says the children's school science project reported findings that were a "genuine advance" in the field of insect color and pattern vision. Scientists say although the experiments were modest and lack statistical analyses, they hold their own compared to those conducted by trained specialists.

Now, video's 'DNA' to check piracy:

Israeli researchers have developed a novel technique to track video piracy and nip it in the bud. The technique is "video DNA matching". It detects aberrations in pirated videos in the same way that biologists detect mutations in the genetic code to determine an individual's family connections. The technology employs an invisible sequence and series of grids applied over the film, turning the footage into a series of numbers.

Moms who take iron have smarter kids:

Children in rural Nepal whose mothers were given iron and folic acid supplements during pregnancy were smarter, more organized and had better fine motor skills than children whose mothers did not get them, US researchers said. "Iron is essential for the development of the central nervous system," said Parul Christian, an expert in international health at the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health.

'One embryo better than two in IVF':

Infertile women undergoing in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatment are more likely to have a baby if they have only one embryo implanted at a time during the procedure, according to a new research. A team at Aberdeen University also suggested that having two rounds of IVF treatment using one embryo each time is better than having two implanted in one go, due to the higher risk of suffering a miscarriage, reports the *Daily Express*.

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Paralysed for 23 yrs, woman walks again

London: You may call it a miracle, but a woman, paralysed from the waist down in a car accident, has walked again, after nearly 23 years in a wheelchair, reports said.

According to the Daily Mail, 46-year-old Delia Knox was paralysed when a driver in a drunken state ploughed into her car on Christmas Day in 1987. But during a recent visit to a British spiritual healer, she suddenly stood up and walked.

Knox's "miracle moment" was filmed and has now become a favourite 'YouTube' clip. After the accident Knox had almost given up hope of walking again. When she went to a meeting with preacher Nathan Morris earlier this year, she had no idea healings were happening.

"I wanted to get in the presence of God. I knew it was an evangelistic meeting but I didn't know healings were taking place. To be honest I've stayed away from healing meetings.

"Then all of a sudden I felt a voice which I knew was the Holy Spirit saying to me, 'Get up', and I felt feeling in my legs and then faith came on me to walk. I walked and walked and felt I had entered another realm," she said. PTI

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No need to tip: Robot waiters in China a hit

Jinan: Service with a smile also comes with an electronic voice at the Dalu Robot restaurant, where the hotpot meals are not as famous yet as the staff who never lose their patience and never take tips.

The restaurant, which opened this month in Jinan in northern Shandong province, is touted as China's first robot hotpot eatery where robots resembling Star Wars droids circle the room carrying trays of food in a conveyor belt-like system.

More than a dozen robots operate in the restaurant as entertainers, servers, greeters and receptionists. Each robot has a motion sensor that tells it to stop when someone is in its path so customers can reach for dishes they want.

The service industry in China has not always kept up with the country's rapid economic growth, and can be quite basic in some restaurants, leading customers in the Dalu restaurant to praise the robots.

"They have a better service attitude than humans," said Li Xiaomei, 35, who was visiting the restaurant for the first time.

AP

SERVICE WITH A SMILE: The eatery has robots circling the room on a conveyor belt-like system

"Humans can be temperamental or impatient, but they don't feel tired, they just keep working and moving round and round the restaurant all night," Li said.

Inspired by space exploration, robot technology and global innovation, the restaurant's owner, Zhang Yongpei, said he hopes his restaurant will show the world China is a serious competitor in developing technology. "I hope this new concept shows that China is forward-thinking and innovative," Zhang said.

As customers enter the dimly lit restaurant lined with blinking neon lights to simulate a futuristic environment, a female robot decorated with batting eyelashes greets people with an electronic "welcome".

During the meal, crowds of up to 100 customers, are entertained by a dancing and talking robot that looks more like a mannequin with a dress, flapping its arms around in a stiff motion. Zhang said he hopes to roll out 30 robots in the coming months and eventually develop robots with human-like qualities that serve customers at their table and can walk up and down the stairs. AP

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Warming behind biting winters

Paris: Counter-intuitive but true, say scientists: a string of freezing European winters scattered over the last decade has been driven in large part by global warming.

The culprit, according to a new study, is the Arctic's receding surface ice, which at current rates of decline could to disappear entirely during summer months by the century's end.

The mechanism uncovered triples the chances that future winters in Europe and north Asia will be similarly inclement, the study reports.

Bitingly cold weather wreaked havoc across Europe in the winter months of 2005-2006, dumping snow in southern Spain and plunging eastern Europe and Russia into an unusually — and deadly — deep freeze.

Another sustained cold streak in 2009-2010 gave Britain its coldest winter in 14 years and wreaked transportation havoc across the continent. This year seems poised to deliver a repeat performance.

At first glance, this flurry of frostiness would seem to be at odds with standard climate change scenarios in which Earth's temperature steadily rises, possibly by as much as five or 6°Celsius by 2100.

Climate sceptics who question the gravity of global warming or that humans are to blame point to the deep chills as confirmation of their doubts.

DEEP FREEZE: Bitingly cold weather has wreaked havoc in Europe in recent years and 2010 too has seen the continent grind to a halt due to heavy snowfall

Such assertions, counter scientists, mistakenly conflate the long-term patterns of climate with the short-term vagaries of weather, and ignore regional variation in climate change impacts.

New research, however, goes further, showing that global warming has actually contributed to Europe's winter blues.

Rising temperatures in the Arctic — increasing at two to three times the global average — have peeled back the region's floating ice cover by 20% over the last three decades. This has allowed more of the Sun's radiative force to be absorbed by dark-blue sea rather than bounced back into space by reflective ice and snow, accelerating the warming process.

More critically for weather patterns, it has also created a massive source of heat during the winter months.

"Say the ocean is at 0°C," said Stefan Rahmstorf, a climate scientist at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany.

"That is a lot warmer than the overlying air in the polar area in winter, so you get a major heat flow heating up the atmosphere from below which you don't have when it is covered by ice. That's a massive change," he said.

The result, according to a modelling study published earlier this month the Journal of Geophysical Research, is a strong high-pressure system over the newly-exposed sea which brings cold polar air, swirling counter-clockwise, into Europe.

"Recent severe winters like last year's or the one of 2005-2006 do not conflict with the global warming picture, but rather supplement it," explained Vladimir Petoukhov, lead author of the study and a physicist at the Potsdam Institute. "These anomalies could triple the probability of cold winter extremes in Europe and north Asia," he said.

The researchers created a computer model simulating the impact on weather patterns of a gradual reduction of winter ice cover in the Barents-Kara Sea, north of Scandinavia. AFP

It's official: December blues really do exist

Do you feel low during winters or are you the kind who hates summers? Turns out, weather affects our moods more than we think. Researchers at Humboldt University in Berlin studied over 2,000 Germans and found that people can be categorized in four basic ways — those people who are unaffected by the weather or seasons, people who love summer, people who hate summer and people who love rain. They also found that kids tend to be the same types as mothers but don't know if the categories have any genetic basis. One underlying cause of some weather-related depression could be vitamin D deficiency. ANI

Economic Times ND 23/12/2010 P22

The Economics of Education

Education is the process that enables you to have knowledge. Education allows us to access the collected wisdom, learning and conclusion of the human race since methods of knowledge transmission began

Nilakshi Sharma

India is poised on the edge of a precipice - our undeniably unique demographic situation can either be an unparalleled dividend or absolute disaster. And the pivot upon which the fate of the nation hangs in balance is Education. Kapil Sibal succinctly summed it up when he said, "If you look at the history of civilizations, the economic prosperity of countries depends upon conquering newer frontiers of knowledge." The contours of the modern world were forged in the most significant era of the last two thousand years, the European Renaissance, which at heart was the discovery of a richer vein of knowledge and a new methodology of education known as Humanism. It was precisely this educational and hence knowledge advantage that led Europe to colonise the rest of the globe. Five hundred years later, we are at the brink of another knowledge revolution as we begin to explore and map newer kinds of knowledge from artificial intelligence to gigantic computing methods, from nano technology to space exploration. The truth is that human civilisation is poised for a leap analogous to the change from say the Stone Age to the Iron Age. If India is to reap the benefits from this hangeover from Information society to Knowledge based society then we need to act quickly in order to reform and streamline our education system to enable the development and assimilation of knowledge.

Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another

— Gilbert K Chesterton

At this point it becomes vital to distinguish between knowledge and education. Often used interchangeable, they are in fact two different things; intertwined yes, but not the same. Albert Einstein, physicist extraordinaire and perhaps the most pertinent example of the difference between knowledge and education summed the difference aptly when be pointed out that "Education is what remains after one has forgotten everything he learned in scool." Education is defined as "a process of teaching, training and learning, especially in schools or colleges, to improve knowledge and develop skills." Knowledge on the other hand is "the information, understanding and skills that you gain through education or experience." So, simply put, education is the process that enables you to have knowledge. Education allows us to access the collected wisdom, learning and conclusion of the human race since methods of knowledge transmission began. From oral to the written word and today finally to the virtual transmission, formal education allows to tap in the a collective information so that we neither have to keep reinventing the wheel nor develop our knowledge base only within the limits of our geographical or cultural space.

(L to R) Kapil Sibal, Suresh Bharwani, B B Bhattacharya, Jitendra Chaddah, Dinesh Singh, Suneel Galgotia

Knowledge: Tool or Product

The development, if the not the invention, of the term knowledge based economy is attributed to the self described "social ecologist" Peter F Drucker. For the world of academia, the difference between a knowledge economy and a knowledge based economy is an important distinction: in the former knowledge is the product and in the latter it is a tool. While the individual purpose of education is the realisation of one's inherent potential, the societal purpose is the realisation of the potential of the society as a whole. And this perhaps is the dividing line between an academic pursuit of knowledge and an economic outcome of knowledge. It is at this precise juncture that an interesting discussion between the two opposite ends of the spectrum, Academia and Industry, was enabled by The Economic Times at their third annual Edvantage Conference. The specific concern was "Plugging The talent Gap," which not only highlighted the difference between knowledge as a Tool and as a Product, but more importantly emphasized the need for a strategic convergence between the two. Industry experts such as NASSCOM's Sandhya Chintala and Manipal K-12 Education's Vishal Sharma put forward the industry requirements while academics such as Kiran Dattar and JNU's vice chancellor B B Bhattacharya discussed acedemia problems.

Today, in India, we are facing a crisis of both, knowledge and education. On the one hand we have a staggering shortage of a skilled and educated workforce, which is clearly an educational lag, on the other hand we are also facing a crisis of knowledge in terms of its expansion, development and deployment. The gap between the supply and demand of an educated work force is approximately 10 million people. And it is set to grow. Simultaneously, we are not mapping new frontiers of knowledge. It is problematic enough in epistemological terms but it is nearing the level of disaster when we consider thé lack in geographical, physical, sociological and other parameters.

A mind once stretched by a new idea never regains its original dimensions.

—Anonymous

A large part of the problem is infrastructural and in terms of quality. Ideally, in the land of Nalanda and Taxila, we should be the proud possessors of numerous world class Universities that generate knowledge, while Colleges concentrate on teaching. Instead there is a blurring between the two. In large measure this is a colonial legacy, whereby our system is focused not on the production and creation of knowledge but on the mass production of an educated workforce. If we are to become a knowledge based economy then the first thing we have to do is encourage a culture of research and independent thinking rather than rote learning and an over emphasis on 'getting through the exam'. At the end of the day, education is the art oflearning, of acquiring knowledge. And there is an incredible joy in doing so. But that is a joy that is systematically destroyed in the grind that education is in India today. Therefore, it is not in the least surprising that we are not producing scholars and researchers who love learning for the sake of learning. And when we don't encourage that then it becomes correspondingly harder to find faculty that is of a good quality. Our brightest and best students head to foreign shores to pursue their research, to think, to teach, to innovate and ultimately enrich their adopted land. If we measure our economic loss in terms of brain drain then scams such as the current telecommunications skulduggery appear mere trifles.

The lack of quality also delivers a crippling blow; today most of our colleges and universities are producing students who are to quote an Industry descriptive 'educated but unemployable'. And this is the outcome of a lack of quality on two fronts: the quality of the faculty as well as a syllabus that is more often than not outdated. It is unfair to discuss higher education and its shortcomings without also discussing primary and tertiary education infrastructure. And the simple truth is that the infrastructure is sadly lacking at all levels. Given the emergence of an unprecedented global-local continuum, we can no longer succeed unless we can match global standards.

Our Indian Institutes of Technologies and the Indian Institutes of Managements are testimony to the fact that we can do it and do it well. But, and this is the crux of the problem with the education sector in India, institutions like these are tiny islands of excellence in a vast ocean of mediocrity, fluctuating standards, poor quality and plain shoddiness. What we need is to replicate this level of quality and competence across the nation, across the levels. It is a particularly urgent requirement when we consider that at this moment India is a young country with the majority of its population under 35. If we fix this gap now, we can reap an educational and ultimately economic dividend that is enough to catapult India to super power status.

One of the biggest problems that dog the education sector is the lack of a coherent vision. The other, of course is implementation. Despite having centralised the processes; which means that we have central agencies which set the educational agenda such as the University Grants Commission for higher education, we have not witnessed a truly integrated approach that would seek to ensure the same level of quality across universities and colleges. Instead, we have some universities such as Delhi University, which pulled themselves towards betterment through their own efforts and others such as Allahabad University and Benaras Hindu University, once acknowledged centres of excellence, which have been on a marked downwards curve.

This being the land of ingenious schemes and scams, we also have the problem of a mushrooming industry in the sector. The number of unauthorised institutions that call themselves universities, technical, schools, management schools and various other institutions is yet to be fully catalogued. But that this problem exists and is a huge one is undeniable. And yet the flipside of this observation is that there is a huge population of young people hungry to learn, to become educated and acquire skills. And the government is unable to cater to them. So perhaps the government should work towards integrating these illegal institutions and focus instead on holding them accountable to some common, clearly implements standards.

For all our talk of India shining and GDP growth that is close to 9 per cent, we forget that the single unit upon which this nation, any nation, rests is the individual. And if we cannot educate that individual, if we cannot teach that individual to think for himself, to innovate for himself then we as a society, and as nation pay a price for that failure, in cultural and economic terms.

As Pratibha Jolly, the Principal of Miranda House pointed out, "The aspirations that unit, the individual remain the same across Bharat and India. They want to better themselves." If we want to achieve that goal then we need to match international standards. And in order to do so we need to set our own house in order, let go of entrenched notions. What worked even twenty years ago is inadequate today. We need to honestly asses our shortcomings and initiate the badly needed reforms today in order to prevent a bloody revolution tomorrow. And that is on the horizon, because economics is unforgiving. If our population cannot match the international standards of quality in a knowledge based global economy then we are going to be left aside. Look around in India itself, where there is insurgency there is also illiteracy, poverty and lack of development and most importantly, educa-

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New Year will ring in more cheer for Big IT

Improved Tech Spend And Better Pricing Will Result In 20%-Plus Growth Rates

LOOKING AHEAD

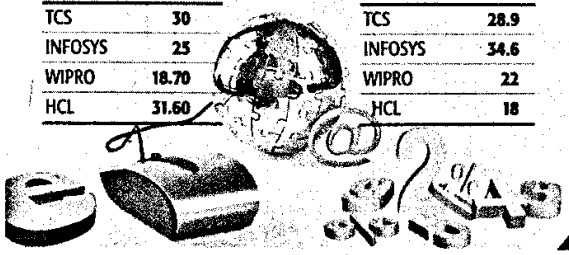
24 months P/E expectations:

Company	2009	2010	2011E	2012E
Tata Consultancy Services	41.8x	31.4x	26.7x	22.5x
Infosys Technologies	30.7x	29.2x	26.3x	21.5x
Wipro	28.0x	24.2x	20.3x	19.4x
Hcl Technologies	23.5x	25.5x	18.7x	13.4x
Average (TOP 10 IT COS)	22.9x	18.0x	17.5x	14.2x

SOURCE: HSBC

FY 11	GROWTH(%) SALES
TCS	30
INFOSYS	25
WIPRO	18.70
HCL	31.60

FY 11	EBIDTA MARGIN (%)
TCS	28.9
INFOSYS	34.6
WIPRO	22
HCL	18



Analyst Expectations FY11 and FY12

TCS
- Increasing in both discretionary and non-discretionary spend by clients
- Pricing to be upped in Q4FY11, to firm up in FY12
- Utilisation to peak out in Q3FY11, will drop going forward as fresher recruitment picks up
- Margins may decline by 100 bps in Q3FY11, with 7-8% effort-based volume growth
- Operating margins likely to sustain in FY12 around 27%
- Exchange rate remains a concern

INFOSYS
- Pricing to be stable in FY12 unlike TCS, which expects an increase
- Growth of 20% in FY12 in the absence of global macro shocks
- Margin headwinds in 3QFY11 due to rupee appreciation
- Attrition rates to drop going forward
- Supply visibility better than demand

WIPRO
- Margins (at 22%) to lag peers TCS & Infosys
- Stability in Pricing
- US sales (56% of turnover) growth showing slower growth
- Focus on fresher hiring

HCL
- No margin improvement
- HCL Tech margins declined by 644bps over the last five quarters
- Margin for Q4FY11 would be same as Q4FY10 (18.5%)
- Expected to bag new deals in Apac region
- Integrated deal wins in IMS, BPO and App development
- BPO to show negative profitability for FY11

(Analysts Consulted: HSBC, Edelweiss, Macquarie, MF Global, PINC, Motilal, Enam)

UPNESH

Harsimran Julka
NEW DELHI

THE new year is expected to ring in glad tidings for Indian IT services companies with clients increasing their IT spending and willing to pay more for services. Top Indian IT providers are set to show revenue growth of 20% and more for the fiscal year ending March 2011, primarily driven by higher spending on IT from US customers.

For the three months to September 2010, IT spending of US firms grew 12% and the trend is expected to continue in the quarters ahead with firms chasing their hardware buys with more software and services purchases. "US corporates will enter their next-year budgeting exercises in January and the demand outlook for Indian IT services is optimistic for FY12. We are factoring over 27% US dollar revenue growth for top IT players," says Atul Soni, an analyst with Macquarie Equities Research.

"In 2011, we could see a higher budgetary allocations for software and services. Although protectionism may be a thorny issue in the near term, in the longer term we believe that the offshoring trend will remain strong," said Rumit Dugar of Religare Capital Markets. US corporate profits grew 28% year-on-year in the July-September 2010 quarter, bouncing back to 2007 levels.

In FY11, higher demand is estimated to drive a 30% growth in sales for top IT exporter Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and a 19% growth for Wipro, according to consensus estimates from analysts. Infosys Technologies, the second largest, is estimated to show a 25%-sales growth while HCL Technologies, which is growing from a smaller base, is estimated to show a 31% sales growth. HCL's focus has been to grow revenues even if at a slightly lower margins.

TCS is estimated to close FY11 at $ 8.2 billion and well on its way to join the $10-billion club within next two years. "TCS' growth story is the sustainable improvement in operating margins (earnings before interest and tax), at 27%," says Kunal Sangoi, analyst at Edelweiss Securities. "We continue to maintain our 22% dollar growth assumption for FY12. Further, declining attrition could help increase margins."

TCS employs about 174,000 people and is operating at a record high utilisation of 78% as of Q2 FY11. "We note that TCS has given out 35,000 campus offers for FY12. As fresher recruitment picks up in January-March, 2011, utilisation could trend down," says Vihang Naik of MF Global. He expects TCS' utilisation to peak in December 2010 and fall thereafter. TCS sales for last twelve months stand at $7.7 billion.

> **"We believe 2011 will remain a positive year for Indian IT, which we estimate will report robust earnings growth of 20%"**
>
> **YOGESH AGARWAL** ANALYST, HSBC SECURITIES & CAPITAL MARKETS

Infosys is expected to post sales of $6 billion in FY11, while continuing to enjoy the highest margins in the industry at 34.6%. "Infosys' deal pipeline is strong and it sees no impact of an uncertain and cautious macro outlook reflected in its business," says brokerage firm Motilal Oswal in a report.

"We believe 2011 will remain a positive year for Indian IT," says Yogesh Agarwal, analyst with HSBC Securities and Capital Market. "The macro environment, protectionism in the US and austerity measures in Europe are the biggest threats to sustainable demand for firms like Infosys," says Kuldeep Koul, analyst with Motilal Oswal.

Specifically for the current quarter, all IT companies are expected to see about 3% lower volume growth, due to fewer working days in December.

Indian IT companies are projected to pay more in taxes for FY12 but will be able to sustain margins as pricing starts improving. The higher tax rate, due to phasing out of tax sops, will have a 3-4% margin impact. Tax rates for all Indian IT companies are expected to rise by 2%-4%. For TCS, the tax rate is expected go up from 19% to 21%, and for Wipro from 17% to 21%.

India's third-largest IT company, Wipro, is expected to post sales of $5.2 billion in FY11, an increase of about 19% from last year. Operating profit margins for Wipro are expected to lag behind peers at 22% in FY11. The company is expected to post a net profit growth of about 16% for the full year.

"The company's revenues from telecom and hi-tech verticals have been under tremendous pressure on the back of muted spending by clients in R&D services," says Rohit Kumar Anand, analyst at Pinc Research. The company is expected to increase salaries for its 115,000 employees in February 2011. But the impact of the salary increase on margins could be offset by a 1-2% pricing hike.

HCL Technologies will continue to see a margin depletion, say analysts. Margins have declined by almost 600 basis points in the last five quarters, primarily due to investment of profits back in the business. "Investment in sales and marketing at a time when the competition is as fierce has yielded them good results in the past and is expected to deliver a similar trend in the coming quarters," says Shashi Bhushan of brokerage firm Prabhudas Liladhar. The company's BPO business is seen to post losses for FY11 but sales are expected to rise to $3.5 billion.

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INCREASING COOPERATION

Medvedev ends India trip with visit to IIT, Taj

Wraps up two-day tour with a reiteration of support for India's bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat

By Phil Hazlewood
feedback@livemint.com

MUMBAI

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on Wednesday wrapped up a short trip to India during which he focused on reviving ties between the two Cold War allies to offset approaches by Western powers.

Medvedev squeezed in a tour of the Taj Mahal before heading to Mumbai to meet students at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and to visit a Bollywood film studio.

His departure on Wednesday evening ended a flurry of diplomacy in which the leaders of all five permanent members of the UN Security Council have visited India in recent months.

The Russian leader, dressed casually in an open-neck shirt and jacket, told IIT students that his country backed fast-growing India's totemic foreign policy ambition—a permanent Security Council seat.

"We do support India's bid," he said to loud applause. "India is a major state and has a right to be represented... Russia will not be found wanting for support."

Medvedev's visit to the university came nearly half a century after Leonid Brezhnev planted a sapling on the campus grounds before he became leader of the former Soviet Union.

"Doubtless the ties that were established back in the 1950s have not disappeared," he said through a translator. "They used to be stronger... The ties should be bolstered and scaled up, if not to Soviet levels, but more."

On Tuesday, Medvedev held talks with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in New Delhi and witnessed the signing of a raft of defence and nuclear deals potentially worth billions of dollars.

Danish Siddiqui/Reuters

Reviving ties: *Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.*

The two sides also agreed to double bilateral trade to $20 billion (₹90,200 crore) by 2015.

"I believe that trade between us does not nearly reflect our privileged partnership," Medvedev told reporters at a joint press briefing.

One standout deal was a contract on the joint design and development of fifth-generation fighter aircraft with stealth capabilities.

Although no figures were mentioned, experts say the final fighter deal could be worth close to $30 billion, with India planning to induct up to 300 of the aircraft into its air force.

British Prime Minister David Cameron was in the country in July, and US President Barack Obama, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao have passed through over the last six weeks.

Each visitor brought large-scale business delegations and used their visits to trumpet new deals with the world's second fastest growing major economy. **AFP**

Mint ND 23.12.10 p-11

ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

Using technology to solve India's perennial electricity shortage

One-fifth of the budget of the govt's power automation project is expected to be spent on technology

By Surabhi Agarwal
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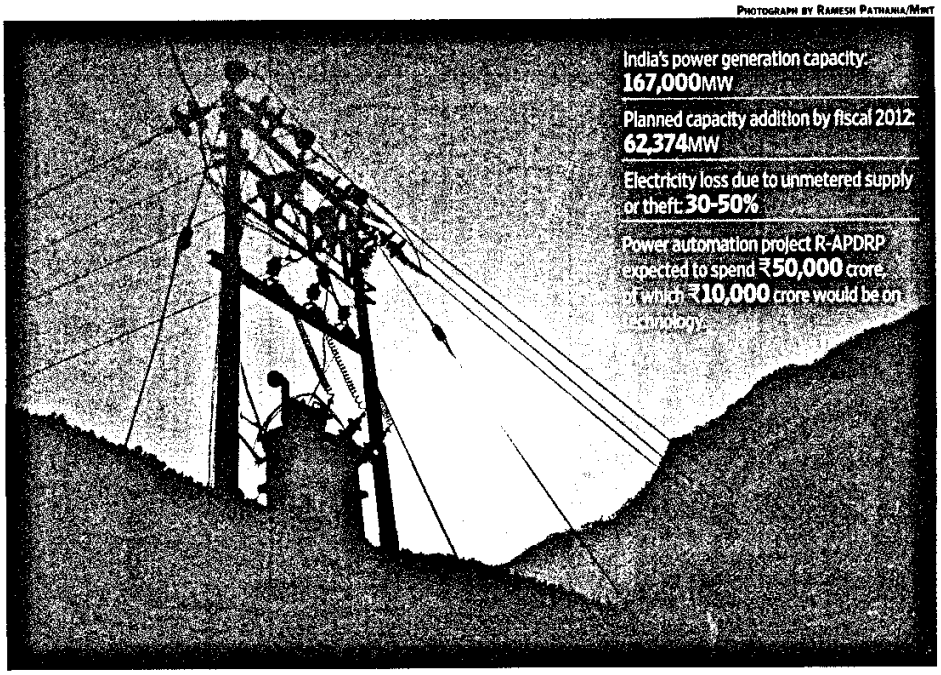
NEW DELHI

Photograph by Ramesh Pathania/Mint



In the tribal village of Nandurbar in Maharashtra, many people, especially youngsters, can be spotted flashing a cellphone. They use the phones while in nearby Gujarat for work. But back at home, it's not easy using the handsets as most households do not have electricity.

It's not that the village isn't connected to power lines, but electricity doesn't reach many of the homes there.

A huge shortfall in electricity generation is crimping India's economic growth. The country has a power generation capacity of 167,000MW and aims to add 62,374MW of capacity by the end of fiscal 2012.

A big worry, though, is the loss of electricity due to unmetered supply or theft during transmission and distribution, estimated at 30-50%.

A 2008 report by a team led by Nandan Nilekani, then a co-chairman of **Infosys Technologies Ltd**, said technology could be the key to solving India's electricity woes. Nilekani now heads the unique identity programme, or Aadhaar.

The report, commissioned by the power ministry, has suggested innovations such as advanced metering, automation to measure and control the flow of power, and moving to a smart grid—a transmission network that uses two-way communication and modern computing.

The report, titled *Technology: Enabling the Transformation of Power Distribution in India*, said effective adoption of technology would require a transformation of utility companies, involving technology providers, vendors, consumers and the government.

Small wonder then that the Restructured Accelerated Power Development and Reforms Programme (R-APDRP) is the largest technology project under the 11th Five-year Plan (2007-12). The power automation project is expected to spend at least ₹50,000 crore, of which ₹10,000 crore would be on technology.

R-APDRP is a reformed version of APDRP, launched in 2002-2003. That programme could not reduce aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses as it had no way to compute actual losses.

The power sector has three legs—generation, transmission and distribution. Shubhranshu Patnaik, executive director at consultancy firm Deloitte India, said many utilities have largely automated generation by implementing enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, but the transmission and distribution aspects need better handling.

R-APDRP is expected to improve the situation as it is designed to put in place a mechanism that works on computing the baseline data, or the AT&C losses. Moreover, while half of the funding by the Union government will be in the form of grants, the balance will be given as loans to utilities and is linked to actual reduction in losses by states.

The scheme will be implemented in two parts. The first will include projects for establishing baseline data and technology applications for energy accounting or auditing and consumer service centres. The second, which will begin after the first part is completed, includes regular distribution-strengthening projects.

Audit firm KPMG, the consultant to the government on the project, is drawing the road map for its implementation. Naveen Agrawal, executive director of KPMG, said apart from developing a model at the central level that can be replicated by states, his firm will help the governments identify firms that can help upgrade technology on a large scale.

India's biggest technology firms—**Tata Consultancy Services Ltd**, Infosys and **Wipro Ltd**—are on the empanelled list of vendors for the project and are betting big on it to shore up their local revenues.

Apart from R-APDRP, there are several projects that are currently in the conceptualization or implementation stage. Smart grids, which have to be implemented by the utilities, is one such project that's expected to revolutionize the sector.

Patnaik said the smart grid project, now in an initial design stage, will bring transmission of electricity in line with requirements through integration and IT layering via intelligent software. India has established a Smart Grid Forum and a Smart Grid Task Force to develop a framework and a national policy.

Tribune, ND 23-Dec-10 p-10

Quota for only girl child in colleges soon

PRATIBHA CHAUHAN
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, DECEMBER 21

Having made great strides in the field of literacy, almost on a par with Kerala, the state will reserve a seat each in all professional courses in 200 colleges for the single girl child, its novel way of fighting female foeticide.

The executive council of Himachal Pradesh University (HPU) has approved the proposal put forward by the secretary, student council, Shalini, that the provision of seat reservation for single girl child should be extended to professional courses in all colleges in the state.

Once the academic council at its meeting scheduled for February approves the proposal, one seat each will be reserved in all professional courses except in medicine and engineering in over 200 colleges of the state.

It was in June this year that the HPU had introduced this scheme on the campus here for the post-graduation courses.

The state incidentally has women occupying senior positions, including Governor Urmila Singh, Chief Secretary Rajwant Sandhu and two Additional Chief Secretaries Harinder Hira and Sarojini Ganju Thakur. In fact the percentage of girl students in the HPU too is above 65 per cent, with most of them being toppers and bagging most positions in the merit list as compared to boys.

"It is on the suggestion of Shalini that the proposal was placed before the executive council, which has granted its approval. The moment the academic council gives its nod, the facility will be extended in professional courses like BBA, BCA and MCA at the college-level too," said Prof Sunil Kumar Gupta, Vice-Chancellor.

Even though the sex ratio in the state is far better than the neighbouring states, this is an incentive for those who do not discriminate between a girl and a boy and have only one girl child.

The state's literacy rate as per the 2001 Census was 76 per cent and is likely to touch 84 per cent in the 2011 Census.

"The women literacy rate in the state as per the 2001 Census was 67 per cent and during the last one decade, it has increased by at least 10 per cent," said Pradeep Chauhan, adviser, economics and statistics department.

He added that within the next two years the literacy rate of the state would easily touch 90 per cent, almost on a par with Kerala.

Women Power

- Proposal forwarded by Student Council secretary Shalini
- Literacy rate is likely to touch 84 per cent in the 2011 Census
- Women literacy rate as per the 2001 Census is 67 per cent

The executive council of the HPU has approved the proposal. Once the academic council approves it, one seat each will be reserved in all professional courses like BBA, BCA and MCA

Tribune, ND 23-Dec-10 p-18

Time to talk of 'education for profit'

ADITI TANDON/TNS

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 22

Top industry leaders have told the government that it was time to talk about education for profit instead of sticking to the old ideological perception of education being not for profit.

The sentiment found generous mention at the two-day National Summit for Higher Education that went underway in the capital today to discover new models of increasing private participation in the sector, which is facing a crunch of institutes.

India has just 373 universities compared to China's 900. The government is seeking private capital in the sector to meet its goal of increasing the gross enrolment ratio in higher education from 12.4 per cent currently to 30 per cent by 2020.

But the industry has its concerns and it made no bones today about telling the government that businessmen would enter education only if they saw certain returns on their investments. Representing the HRD Ministry was Secretary, Higher Education Vibha Puri Das who stuck to the government stand of education being for "no profit". The pending Foreign Education Providers Bill also clearly stipulates that anyone wanting to set up a campus in India would have to plough back profits into education itself.

> **"It is time we talked about education for profit. That's not to say one can profiteer in the sector. There's a difference between making profits and profiteering. The latter needs to be curbed by ensuring transparent delivery of promised services by the providers of higher education."**
> — CEO of a business model in education abroad

But industry representatives countered the government's assertions. Speaking to The Tribune, Anand Sudarshan, the Chief Executive Officer and MD of Manipal Education, which runs successful business models in education abroad, said, "It is time we talked about 'education for profit. That's not to say one can profiteer in the sector. There's a difference between making profits and profiteering. The latter needs to be curbed by ensuring transparent delivery of promised services by the providers of higher education."

The Summit, being organised by the Confederation of Indian Industries, saw the industry arguing that the "not for profit" phrase was misdirected and needed to be reworked if private capital was to be sought in education.

"Education is not a holy cow. It ironical that we at Manipal Education are running profitable educational institutes abroad but not at home," Sudarshan said. Manipal runs medical colleges in Malaysia and Nepal; a University campus in Dubai and a Health Science University in Antigua - all for profit institutes.

Arun Bharat Ram, chairman of SFR Limited, the second largest world producer of Nylon 6 Tyre Cords and Belting Fabrics, also argued along Sudarshan's lines, saying why any industrialist would put money in education if he does not get ensured return on his investments. "Services have to be provided at competitive rates. To that extent, some profits would have to be allowed and the national policy changed though the profiteering has to be prevented by ensuring proper means to check the fly by night operators of education and to also ensure that outcomes are being delivered," he said.

After the deliberations, the industry would submit a white paper on the subject for government's consideration.

Tribune, ND
23-Dec-10
p-18

Medvedev says Russia and US working to reduce nukes

SHIV KUMAR/TNS

MUMBAI, DECEMBER 22

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, on a state visit to India, today told students and faculty of IIT Mumbai that his country and the US have long abandoned superpower rivalry and were looking towards reducing nuclear weapons.

"I hope US President Barack Obama succeeds in convincing his senate to ratify the new strategic arms reduction treaty (START)," Medvedev said in a reply to a query by students.

Under the START treaty signed between Medvedev and Obama earlier this year, both USA and Russia would reduce the number of nuclear weapons held by them from 2,200 to 1,550 each. The agreement will come into effect as soon as the US senate ratifies the treaty. Medvedev who called for global reduction of nuclear weapons of mass destruction, however, did not think that such moves would happen quickly.

Asian Age, ND23-Dec-10
p-5

Medvedev openness charms IIT students

K.A. DODHIYA

MUMBAI

Dec. 22: Russian President Dmitry Medvedev feels that India and Indian students have the potential to help global advancement in technology and play an important role in combating terrorism. During his visit to the Indian Institute of Technology, Powai, on Wednesday, the Russian Premier did not hold back when praising India for striving to become self-sufficient and be ranked as a nation that is capable of making a difference by overcoming adverse problems like terrorism.

Mr Medvedev's tour of the campus started with a visit to the nano-technology department, where he saw the research work of the students. The explosive detective device and the cardio device that the institute has been working on particularly impressed him. "The President's protocol office had specifically asked for a laboratory visit. Hence, he was brought to the nano-technology department which is by far the best in the country. He very keenly watched and heard the explanations provided by the department head and also showed interest in the projects that the department had worked on in the past," said the IIT spokesperson.

Thereafter, Mr Medvedev headed to the auditorium, where more than 300 students and faculty members had been waiting since 2.30 pm. After Prof. Devang Khakkar, director IIT, welcomed the President, Mr Medvedev, after a brief address, got down to fielding the students' questions.

"The President had specified that he wanted to interact with the students and he did not disappoint. In the hour long session, he fielded 10-12 questions and answered them very frankly and honestly without shying away," said the spokesperson.

The questions ranged from education to terrorism, the controversial WikiLeaks and even the chances of Russia giving democracy a chance as the country's ideology.

"We never imagined the head of state to be so open and amiable to difficult questions," said Nandan Sawant, a fourth year mechanical engineering student.

"Though the President did not take names, he did condemn terrorism and was concerned about its effect on the growth of the country. He even welcomed the chance of Indian students studying in Russia and vice versa, revealing that he had in fact, entered an agreement with the Indian government for the same," said Sawant.

Asian Age, ND23-Dec-10 p-11

Microsoft plans a Windows version for tablets

Los Angeles, Dec. 23: Microsoft Corp is working on a version of its core Windows operating system for devices such as tablets, according to media reports on Tuesday, and the company said its Windows Phone 7 software is making headway in the booming smartphone market.

Microsoft plans to unveil a version of its operating software that runs for the first time on processors designed by UK-based ARM Holdings Plc, the Wall Street Journal and Bloomberg reported. ARM's processors dominate the tablet and handheld device market.

Microsoft intends to announce a version of its operating system to run on ARM chip architecture, which competes with the "x86" designs favored by Intel, the Wall Street Journal cited people familiar with the plans as saying.

It was unclear when such an operating system might come to market, but the U.S. software maker could claim lost ground in tablets and other battery-powered mobile devices by forging a new partnership with ARM.

Microsoft and ARM declined to comment.

Microsoft said on Tuesday that more than 1.5 million cellphones carrying Windows Phone 7 operating software have sold in the first six weeks of launch, meeting what the company called "realistic" expectations.

Windows Phone 7 may be Microsoft's last chance to establish a major presence in a hot cellphone market now dominated by Apple Inc and Google Inc, analysts say.

The sales numbers were disclosed for the first time by Achim Berg, vice president of business and marketing for Windows phones, in an internally conducted interview posted on Microsoft's website.

"It's a decent number. The mobile market is going to be a battle for Microsoft," said Colin Gillis, an analyst with BGC Partners who has a "buy" rating on Microsoft.

Microsoft's disappearance from the phone market and its delayed response to tablet devices like Apple's iPad has been seen as a drag on shares this year. Its shares closed up 26 cents on Tuesday at $28.07.

But Gillis noted that the shipment of 1.5 million phones was sales into the distribution channel, rather than directly into consumers' hands, which tempers the announcement.

Taiwan's HTC, Dell Inc, Samsung Electronics and LG Electronics are among the vendors who have launched or plan to begin selling Phone 7-based devices.

The industry is closely watching the early days of what could be a longer-term driver of growth. Gillis forecasts about 25 million Phone 7 sales in 2011. In contrast, analysts expect Apple to sell more than 60 million iPhones next year.

"We all know that the competition is extreme in this industry, and we have to compete on multiple fronts," Berg said in the interview.

"We are on a path to begin releasing the first of several updates in the next couple of months, and several more mobile operators around the world will introduce Windows Phone 7 on their network in 2011."

Gillis noted that Microsoft is spending $500 million to market the Windows 7 smartphone, and suggested the company could see market gains by using some of that cash to subsidize the devices so consumers get them for free. *—Reuters*

Indian Express ND
23/12/2010
p-9

Govt to bring compatibility in ICPR, UGC fellowships

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 22

THE amount of fellowships for the Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR) will be increased and made compatible with fellowships awarded by the University Grants Commission, Union Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Kapil Sibal said Wednesday at the silver jubilee celebrations of the ICPR.

The minister also underlined the growing "hiatus" between professional and liberal programmes and the need to strike a balance.

"Young brilliant students opt for more lucrative professional streams leading to societal distortion reflected in our societal values. I believe the time is ripe to bring about a balance between the professional and applied disciplines on the one hand and basic ones on the other, that is between the 'outer' and 'inner' disciplines," Sibal said while announcing an increase in the ICPR fellowships as a step in that direction.

The function also saw Prime Minister Manmohan Singh conferring the ICPR lifetime achievement award to Prof D P Chattopadhyaya and Prof Rajangam Balasubramanian.

Emphasising on the need for interdisciplinary studies, the PM said philosophy can play a pivotal role in this direction. "As the mother of all sciences, philosophy is necessarily interdisciplinary. Therefore, it should be pursued not merely as a separate discipline, like economics or political science, but as a trans-disciplinary subject taught along with other subjects," the PM said.

Hindu ND 23.12.10 p-16

50 years of CIRUS: some unforgettable memories

On December 18, the scientists and engineers in the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) celebrated the Golden Jubilee of CIRUS and the Silver jubilee of DHRUVA. The organizers invited everyone who was associated with the two research reactors. It was an emotional homecoming for many, especially for those who retired decades ago.

The 40 MW research reactor attained criticality on 10th July 1960. It was constructed under Canadian assistance. India and Canada shared the cost of about $14.14 million. CIRUS, the workhorse of BARC is a symbol of the advanced developments in nuclear science, engineering and technology in India.

Dr Bhabha chose this heavy water moderated, uranium metal fuelled reactor as it would be a powerful tool for research. Also Dr W.B. Lewis, the eminent scientist who led the designers of the reactor was close to him in his Cambridge days.

Veterans recalled the teething problems they faced, the ways in which they solved them and their unforgettable memories. The 188-page commemorative booklet which describes them is a lucidly written, technical document, an A to Z cookbook on research reactor operation and maintenance!

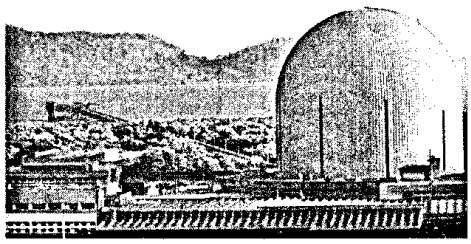
Priceless experience

The reactor operation and maintenance group acquired priceless experience by studying the failure data of components such as valves.

Floating materials, mainly plastic waste and seeds and leaves from ever expanding mangroves, clogged the travelling water screens in the sea water inlet system; silt accumulation in the gland vent ports damaged the pumps. Scientists addressed these issues promptly.

" In a hurry to start the reactor early, Bombay municipal water was charged to the high head storage tank (ball tank) and was used in the recirculating coolant water circuit" Shri S.M. Sundaram, former Director, Reactor Operation and Maintenance Group (ROMG) recalled. The total dissolved solids (TDS) such as silica in water got deposited on the fuel cladding, reducing coolant flow and damaging many of them at higher power level.

The Canadians did not face such a problem in their reactor; they used fresh water from Ottawa River. Sundaram and his team purified water using ion exchangers and solved the problem.



OLD WARHORSE: *Research Reactor CIRUS at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre at Trombay.* – PHOTO: V.V. KRISHNAN

He remembered that then he worked against the orders from their superiors. Bhabha tacitly supported them. "...he said that there may be rare occasions when one may need to disregard the orders of his superior, for a good cause".

By October 1963, they could raise the power level to 40 MW.. "ever since, CIRUS has been the workhorse of Indian atomic research programme", Shri N. Veeraraghavan, former Associate Director, ROMG recalled.

He remembered that Dr Bhabha addressed a meeting in the indoor games room in the Old Yacht Club Building, which was attended by CIR project related scientific community sometime end of 1959 or early 1960.

"Bhabha expressed full confidence in the ability of Indian engineers in the production of indigenous, pure natural uranium and its fabrication into fuel rods for the initial loading of the CIRUS reactor", Shri Veeraraghavan said .

Very bold commitment

" As I see it today, this was a very bold commitment at that time, which ended happily for all, especially the chemical and metallurgical engineering staff that really worked hard and met the commitment with the loading of indigenous uranium fuel for the first "criticality" of CIRUS reactor," he added

Most of the members of the newly recruited scientific and engineering staff for CIR operations sent for training to Canada during 1956-1957 came from very conservative backgrounds. They were from different regions of the country and spoke different languages. Most of them were strict vegetarians.

Dr M.R. Srinivasan, former Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), delivered a few lectures to them. Bhabha asked him to take them to the Taj Hotel so that they would learn to use knife and fork before going to Canada for further training!

Dr P.K. Iyengar, former Chairman, AEC, recalled that the training school programme which Bhabha spearheaded helped national integration; it brought people from different parts of the country together.

Heartbroken

"I am truly heartbroken to learn that this old workhorse will be put to sleep at the end of this year for reasons that are anything but technical" the words of Shri S.K. Sharma, former Director, Reactor Group, truly reflected those of many others present.

"But then those are the ways of the world that we live in," he consoled everyone.

In his inaugural address Dr R.K. Sinha, Director, BARC, stated that the CIRUS reactor provided research and development inputs to the nuclear power programme in the country.

It provided a platform to train engineers and technologists in the area of reactor management.

"This is an occasion to reflect on the past and to pay our gratitude to our elders" Dr Srikumar Banerjee, Chairman, AEC, said while addressing the gathering.

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Hindustan Times ND 23/12/2010p-11

Extension to IIT-M director draws flak

'REPEAT VIOLATION' Mandatory nod not taken

ht EXCLUSIVE

Charu Sudan Kasturi
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NEW DELHI: The President has renewed the appointment of controversial Madras Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) director MS Ananth for another two years, triggering allegations that the government is following a process declared illegal by the high court.

Ananth's "extension" till June 30, 2012, was approved without the government seeking sanction from the IIT Council — the highest decision-making body of the IITs — sources on the panel have told *HT*. The government may call a meeting of the panel for post-facto approval.

This is not the first such case. "The government has repeated its violation of taking the IIT Council for granted, and ignoring the IIT Act," said Dr E Muralidharan, who challenged Ananth's second term, given in 2007, in the Madras HC.

> **Government has taken the IIT Council for granted and violated the IIT Act**
> DR E MURALIDHARAN, Litigant

Muralidharan plans to legally challenge the latest order too; he has already filed Right to Information (RTI) applications to get back-up files.

The HC in 2008 initially stayed Ananth's 2007 reappointment on the grounds that the government had not obtained the sanction of the IIT Council, as is required under the IIT Act. The order was the only occasion when an IIT director's appointment was stayed.

A different bench of the HC later vacated the stay after the human resource development ministry convened a meeting of the IIT Council and obtained post-facto approval for Ananth's appointment.

Government officials, however, argued that the 2007 reappointment could not be compared with the present extension awarded to Ananth.

Ananth, who was first appointed IIT director in December 2001, was appointed for a second term on July 1, 2007, for five years or till the age of 65, whichever came earlier. He turned 65 in November 2010. (Earlier this year, the HRD approved an increase in retirement age of IIT directors to 70.)

Note, however, that the President's order awarding Ananth's extension till July 1, 2012, came on November 16, 2010, two days after Ananth turned 65, on November 14. "How can someone receive an extension after they have officially completed their term?" wondered Muralidharan.

To his credit, Ananth launched the National Programme for Technology Enhanced Learning under which several IIT courses are available online. The It is modeled on a Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) open-source project. But he has faced allegations of caste bias.

Indian Express ND 23/12/2010 P-2

Black holes: LISA pathfinder holds the key

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 22

THEORETICAL cosmologists apprehend that delay in the launch of LISA pathfinder, which is being developed jointly by the US and European space agencies, will delay the validation of the scientific understanding about the working of the early stages of the Universe after the Big Bang.

"Instruments like LISA will revolutionalise the theoretical studies on the early Universe with the huge data captured by them from space. However, at the moment it appears that LISA pathfinder will be launched only in 2017 and subsequently, LISA could take another decade to get operational to provide necessary data to validate the studies," Priyamvada Natarajan, a theoretical cosmologist with the Department of Astronomy and Physics at Yale University, said on Wednesday. She was addressing a seminar here on 'Supermassive black holes in the Universe', chaired by noted theoretical physicist Sir Roger Penrose.

Pathfinder LISA (Laser Interferometer Space Antenna) is slated to be the prototype to demonstrate the key technologies to be used in the future LISA mission. LISA has been conceptualised as three identical spacecraft orbiting in an ecliptic plane around the Sun, with all the three positioned at the corners of an equilateral triangle five million km on a side.

"Theoretical scientists have come out with the science behind the early universe. It is the technology behind the LISA that holds the key to reolutionalise our understanding or early universe and other developments related to black holes," Natarajan added.

This mission will use the laser interferometry in space to detect the gravitational waves that cannot be detected from the ground because of their weak strength. The scientific community has zeroed in on gravitational waves as one of key 'observational signatures' of mergers of black holes to form supermassive black holes.

Pioneer ND 23/12/2010 p-12

More bad news in store for Indian IT firms

S RAJAGOPALAN ■ WASHINGTON

Months after the unresolved controversy over the hefty hike on H-1B, L-1 visa fees, there is more bad news in store for Indian IT firms who are being specially targeted by a set of US lawmakers. A modified legislation dealing with health concerns of 9/11 victims and rescue workers has proposed an extension of the heavy impost on Indian IT firms by seven more years till September 30, 2021. Under the impost, first built into a border protection legislation in August, Indian IT companies are being charged an additional $2,000 per H-1B visa and $2,250 per L-1 visa. This provision was to expire on September 30, 2014. But under "The James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act", now before the US Senate, two Senators have sought to milk the Indian cash cows for another seven years. The Indian companies could be affected by an additional measure that seeks to levy "a 2% excise fee on certain foreign companies that receive US Government contracts".

In a joint statement, Senators Kirsten Gillibrand and Charles E Schumer, both Democrats from New York, have defended their controversial proposal as one of the key avenues to meet the $6.2 billion bill to take care of the health of ailing Ground Zero workers.

Their proposal to continue the H-1B and L-1 visa fee hikes, if approved, would generate $800 million over 10 years, they say. Making it clear that they have no qualms over singling out the Indian companies, the two Senators noted in their statement that the fee increase "affects outsourcing companies such as Wipro, Tata, Infosys, Satyam — but does not affect American companies such as Microsoft, Oracle, Intel, Apple, etc."

That is because of the way the Emergency Border Security Appropriations Act of 2010 has been worded. Approved in August, the fee increase was restricted to "companies who have more than 50 per cent of their employees on these visas".

The two Senators argued that extension of the fee hike by seven years will "continue levelling the playing field between companies that follow the Congressional intent and companies that use these visas to outsource American jobs".

Business Line ND 23/12/2010 P2

In a class of its own

IIM Ahmedabad illustrates how great academic institutions can become strong brands.

Illustrious heritage: (Above) The Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad; (Clockwise from top left) The late C. K. Prahalad (alumnus), Bakul Dholakia (former director), M. S. Banga and Mallika Sarabhai (alumni) _ RAJEEV BHATT, V. SUDERSHAN, KAMAL NARANG, NAGARA GOPAL

HARISH BHAT

The golden jubilee celebrations of IIM Ahmedabad (IIMA), which are under way this month, give us opportunity to reflect on how great academic institutions, including universities, colleges and schools, transform themselves into powerful and timeless brands. IIMA is an excellent illustration of this phenomenon – it commands universal brand recognition and top-notch brand preference scores amongst all stakeholders, including corporates, government, faculty and students. Like the best brands, it is highly aspirational, and its name evokes widespread awe and admiration.

Brand IIMA has achieved somewhat iconic status. It has a formidable academic reputation, built over half a century. It tops virtually every ranking of Indian business schools today. *The Economist's* Survey of Global Business Schools 2009 points out that it is the "toughest in the world to get into", with over 600 students competing for every seat. Its alumni occupy some of the most coveted positions in Indian industry. Like Harvard and Oxford across the oceans, it has developed its own distinctive culture which sets it apart.

In summary, IIMA is as powerful a brand as some of the best known trademarks in the FMCG, durables, media or financial industries. Admittedly, only a few academic institutions make this transition to becoming big brands in their own right. What triggers this big leap?

At the core of any reputed academic brand is excellence in education. This is derived from a sound and proven syllabus of learning that constantly evolves to meet the demands of the present and future, the ability to attract and retain brilliant and committed faculty passionate about teaching and research, and, of course, excellent physical infrastructure and facilities including laboratories and libraries. These constitute the foundation for any academic institution aspiring to greatness, and IIMA scores high on all of them. Unfortunately, not many universities and colleges in India can claim to possess these essential building blocks, in sharp contrast to their counterparts in the US. This explains why America boasts so many globally respected Ivy League academic brands – Harvard, Wharton, MIT, Stanford, UC Berkeley, University of Chicago, Princeton and so on – while India has so few that make the global cut.

Excellence in education is a necessary but not sufficient condition for a great academic brand. First amongst other factors which count is the heritage of the institution. Great academic brands should have necessarily stood the test of time. Several batches of students should have successfully graduated from its portals. The institution should ideally have been spawned or nurtured by great names in education, arts or the sciences, whose creative vigour, wisdom and vision would have helped shape its canvas. For instance, IIMA has completed 50 immensely successful years, and was also built in collaboration with one of the world's finest names in management education, the Harvard Business School.

Yet another important factor are the alumni of the institution, who serve as ambassadors of the brand. An academic brand grows greatly in stature when its alumni reach important and well-regarded positions in the world at large. The achievements of its alumni are seen as a strong vindication that the academic institution has excelled in imparting relevant knowledge to its students, in creating champions and winners who serve as role models to future generations of students. Brand IIMA has greatly benefited from distinguished alumni such as C. K. Prahalad, K.V. Kamath, M.S. Banga, Jerry Rao, Raghuram Rajan, Kiran Karnik and Bhaskar Bhat (Managing Director of Titan Industries, where I work), who are greatly admired for their success in the world of business, economics or finance. Alumni who have struck out and made it big in non-mainstream areas - such as danseuse Mallika Sarabhai, cricket commentator Harsha Bhogle and author Chetan Bhagat – have also given the brand an edge and energy which helps break the clutter very well.

Equally important in today's competitive world are the ratings obtained by the college or university each year, in internationally and nationally reputed compilations. These rankings are a surrogate for the aspirational appeal of the brand, and also an important yardstick by which students decide where they will pursue their future studies. Therefore, they help academic institutions attract the best and brightest students, which further strengthens the brand and protects its future appeal. A top rating also adds greatly to the halo effect surrounding the brand. Undoubtedly, the fact that IIMA obtains the numero uno rank in virtually every rating of Indian business schools adds greatly to its lure.

Every great brand has its legends and mystique, and this is equally relevant to academic institutions. Such legends can spring from many sources – they can emanate from the founders, from professors whose stature and lectures evoke immense admiration and special respect, from researchers and students who win celebrated awards, from famous campus rituals which leave a mark. At IIMA, many such legends have their origin in great faculty – to name just a few (from my time at the Institute), Pradip Khandwalla, Indira Parikh, V.L. Mote, Abhinandan Jain, T.V. Rao, Bakul Dholakia, N. Ravichandran and Samir Barua – the manner in which they taught, guided and tested their classes, and brought out the best in their students. Several years after graduation, many of us who have studied in IIMA continue to discuss these legends, and we will perhaps remain in awe of them for the rest of our lives. That's what legends are for.

Finally, every great brand rests on its key differentiators, or unique selling points (USPs), which set the brand apart from competition. For academic institutions, such differentiation can arise from areas as diverse as the syllabus, the mode of instruction, undisputed prowess in a specific (sometimes even narrow) functional area, strong links with industry, or even the location of the campus. Brand IIMA has built itself a strong differentiator through its case study method of learning. Lessons in marketing, finance, strategy and the behavioural sciences are taught and learnt not merely through text books and theoretical questions, but through study and discussion of evocative case studies drawn from the real world of business. Despite many contrasting views on how well this works, the institute has remained steadfastly committed to the case study methodology, throughout its existence. This is certainly one of the key reasons why brand IIMA has such distinctive appeal today.

In conclusion, students of marketing as well as aspiring builders of academic institutions would do well to remember one of the fundamental tenets of building great brands – you have to fulfil all key points of parity in your category (such as an excellent academic reputation, and very good physical infrastructure) and also build important points of differentiation (such as a distinctive method of instruction, or heritage and legend). These make all the difference between the many mediocre colleges and schools we see all around us, and the few truly great academic brands.

▶At the core of any reputed academic brand is excellence in education. This is derived from a sound and proven syllabus of learning that constantly evolves to meet the demands of the present and future, the ability to attract and retain brilliant and committed faculty passionate about teaching and research, and, of course, excellent physical infrastructure and facilities.

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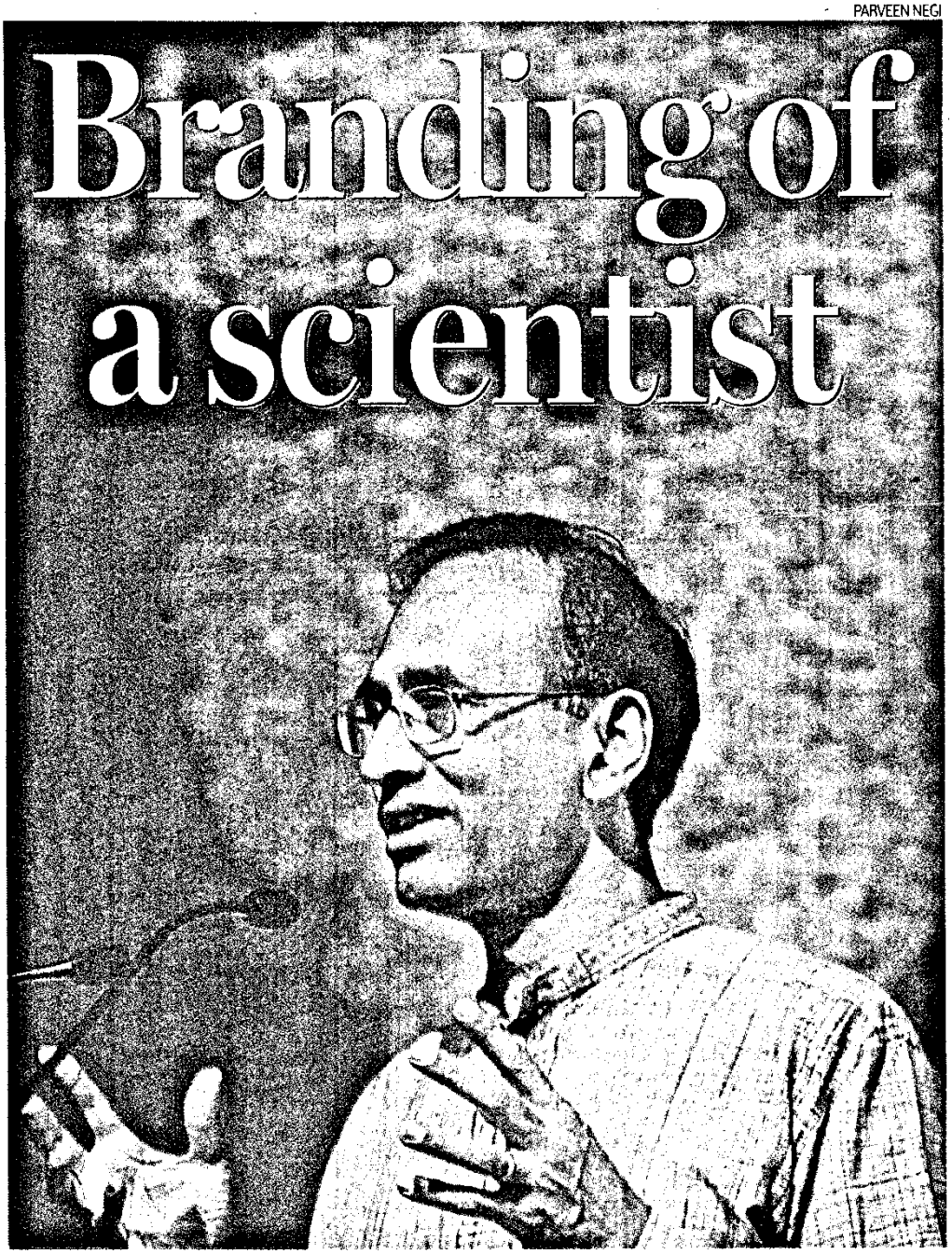
PARVEEN NEGI

Branding of a scientist



MOST scientists prefer to shun limelight and open up only within the circle of their narrow discipline or the boundaries of hallowed academic institutions. The only exception they make is when they are awarded or honoured by the government, academies and other bodies. Very few choose to engage in communication with the public and talk about their work. But when they get something like a Nobel prize, it changes their world.

Overnight such scientists become a brand. Their lives suddenly become public and they are under constant gaze. People like to be photographed with them and eager youngsters want their autographs. They are flooded with offers of lecture tours, television shows and other such public appearances. This new found celebrity status is bit unnerving for scientists. Nobel indeed provides a powerful branding. Venkatraman Ramakrishnan or Venki — who shared the chemistry Nobel with two other scientists last year — is no exception to this trend.

TO THE life sciences community in India, Venki was not a new name even before the Nobel. He has maintained constant touch with research groups in India and has been regularly visiting academic centres like the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore. He spent a week at the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology in Delhi a couple of years before he got the Nobel. But his appearances outside this circle have been rare. Post-Nobel, however, the situation has changed.

This week the Department of Biotechnology, joined hands with industry lobby Ficci, to organise a public lecture by Venki at the centrally located Ficci auditorium (instead of a faraway location like an academic or research institute).

The event was well advertised in newspapers and outdoor media. Those who arrived late had to return disappointed because there was no room inside the hall. Venki made a lucid presentation on his work on ribosomes — complete with a music video — to a packed audience and then answered a volley of questions on his work as well as life. He was informal and candid and left the audience asking for more.

Such branding of scientists is not frivolous. It is very important from the point of view of public communication of science. It is not that only Nobel laureates can be branded. The moon mission came as a huge branding opportunity for the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and it grabbed it very well. We have several scientists who are doing significant work in areas ranging from stem cells to dinosaurs. There is no reason why they shouldn't talk about their work to the public at large and inspire youngsters. Unfortunately, our science academies and government agencies tasked with science communication have failed miserably in this regard. Unlike the West, we don't celebrate science and our scientists. It is high time we break this 'ivory tower' approach to science. Some new thinking is required in this direction and Venki's lecture in Delhi is a pointer to that.

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इकलौती बेटी को रिजर्वेशन

प्रस ॥ नई दिल्ली : दिल्ली टेक्नॉलाजिकल यूनिवर्सिटी (डीटीयू) ने बी.टेक के सभी 14 कोर्सेज में सिंगल गर्ल चाइल्ड (ऐसी लड़कियां जो अपने माता-पिता की इकलौती संतान हैं) के लिए 1-1 सीट रिजर्व करने का फैसला किया है। इस तरह से 14 सीटें सिंगल गर्ल चाइल्ड के लिए रिजर्व होंगी। ये रिजर्व सीटें तय सीटों से अलग होगी। यूनिवर्सिटी की ऐकडेमिक काउंसिल ने इस फैसले को मंजूरी दी है।

⏭ पेज 2

डीटीयू का फैसला

सिंगल गर्ल चाइल्ड है तो रिजर्व होगी बीटेक की सीट

प्रमुख संवाददाता ॥ नई दिल्ली : दिल्ली टेक्नॉलजिकल यूनिवर्सिटी (डीटीयू) ने एक महत्वपूर्ण फैसला करते हुए बी.टेक के सभी 14 कोर्सेज में सिंगल गर्ल चाइल्ड के लिए 1-1 सीट रिजर्व करने का फैसला किया है। यानी 14 सीटें खास तौर पर सिंगल गर्ल चाइल्ड के लिए ही होंगी। ये रिजर्व सीटें तय सीटों से अलग होंगी। मसलन, अगर किसी कोर्स में 60 सीटें हैं तो 61वीं सीट सिंगल गर्ल चाइल्ड के लिए रिजर्व होगी। यूनिवर्सिटी की ऐकडेमिक काउंसिल ने इस फैसले को मंजूरी दी है। इसके अलावा अगले साल से बी.टेक लेवल पर एक नया कोर्स शुरू करने का फैसला भी किया गया है। इस कोर्स का नाम बी.टेक (मैथमेटिक्स एंड कंप्यूटिंग) का होगा।

यूनिवर्सिटी के मुताबिक, सिंगल गर्ल चाइल्ड के लिए रिजर्व सीटों का फैसला अभी सिर्फ बी.टेक कोर्सेज के लिए ही किया गया है। यह फैसला 2011 सेशन से लागू हो जाएगा। हालांकि, रिजर्व सीट पर एडमिशन क्राइटेरिया वही रहेगा, जो दूसरे स्टूडेंट्स के लिए होता है। यूनिवर्सिटी का कहना है कि लड़कियों को इंजीनियरिंग की शिक्षा को लेकर प्रोत्साहित करने के मकसद से यह फैसला किया गया है। अभी इंजीनियरिंग की फील्ड में लड़कियों की संख्या कम है। यूनिवर्सिटी ने मैथ्स और कंप्यूटर की फील्ड में स्पेशल एजुकेशन को ध्यान में रखते हुए मैथमेटिक्स एंड कंप्यूटिंग का नया कोर्स भी शुरू किया है। कोर्स में साइंस और इंजीनियरिंग का खास इनपुट होगा।

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प्राइवेट पार्टनरशिप से होगा शिक्षा में सुधार

मंजरी चतुर्वेदी ॥ नई दिल्ली : भारत उच्च शिक्षा में विस्तार के बावजूद ग्रॉस एनरोलमेंट रेश्यो (जीएनआर) के मामले में तमाम देशों से काफी पीछे हैं। हमारी मौजूदा जीएनआर 12 पर्सेंट है। ऐसे में साल 2020 तक इसे 30 पर्सेंट तक ले जाने का लक्ष्य रखा गया है। इसके लिए 1,000 यूनिवर्सिटीज और 10,000 कॉलेजों की और जरूरत पड़ेगी, जिसे बिना प्राइवेट संस्थानों की भागीदारी के पूरा नहीं किया जा सकता।

यह कहना है एचआरडी मिनिस्ट्री के अतिरिक्त सचिव (उच्च शिक्षा) सुनील कुमार का। वह बुधवार को सीआईआई द्वारा उच्च शिक्षा पर आयोजित नैशनल समिट में बोल रहे थे। इसकी थीम थी, 'उच्च शिक्षा में प्राइवेट भागीदारी बढ़ाने के नए मॉडलों की खोज।' समिट में प्राइवेट भागीदारी से जुड़े तमाम मुद्दों, मसलन निवेश, बेहतरीन इन्फ्रास्ट्रक्चर योग्य टीचर्स व फैकल्टी पर चर्चा हुई। सुनील कुमार ने निजी संस्थानों की भागीदारी का स्वागत करते हुए कहा कि उच्च शिक्षा में क्वॉलिटी इन्वेस्टमेंट की जरूरत है।