Newspaper Clips
December 29, 2010

Single-campus hiring sets new records

Ishan Srivastava | TNN

Chennai: With the economy back on track and companies looking to expand, the fight for talent is getting intense. Companies are always looking at ways to optimize their hiring process, and taking in big numbers from a single campus is one such strategy.

Though IT companies have been doing this for quite some time, the practice seems to have picked up in the last two years, especially 2010. Last year, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) hired 1,075 students from the Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT)—the placement found its way into the Limca Book of Records for the largest number of students to be hired from a single campus.

TALENT HUNT

▸ Cognizant has hired 1,643 students from VIT, beating TCS's last year's record

▸ It is cost-effective for companies to hire in big numbers from a single campus

▸ Companies fight for early placement slots and refuse to share them with others

Cognizant also hired more than 1,100 students from Anna University, but that was done across four campuses.

This year, Cognizant hired 1,643 students from VIT, beating TCS's record. TCS, too, hired 1,091 students from SRM University in Chennai and 1,359 students from Shanmugha Arts, Science, Technology & Research Academy (SASTRA) University in Thanjavur. "TCS broke its own record of 1,091 students, which was set a few weeks earlier at SRM, by hiring 1,359 students at our campus this year," says S Vaidhyasubramaniam, Dean, Planning & Development, at SASTRA University.

Also, Accenture hired 1,309 students this year from Amity University in Noida while Infosys hired 1,224 students from Amrita University in Coimbatore.

"This reflects the increase in demand for talent. It is also very convenient and cost-effective for companies to go to a single campus and hire in big numbers than dispatching teams and hiring in small numbers across campuses," says Madan Padaki, CEO of MeritTrac, a testing and assessment company which assists companies and institutions in hiring.

Placement officials believe that the diversity on their campuses plays a significant role. "Companies generally go to big campuses having students from different cultures and languages. They see it as a good environment from where they can hire," says S R Pullabhotla, Dean, Placement, VIT University.

The placements are an intense affair. Companies fight for early placement slots to get access to more students and many a time refuse to share slots with others. Not to miss an opportunity, more than 100 panellists from a company descended on a campus. One day was reserved for the written examination and two for interviews. Interviews took place from morning to night with very few breaks. In many cases, a certain percentage of top performing students from each branch are directly called for interviews.

Mapping the mind, slice by slice

Scientists Use Ultra-Thin Pieces Of Rodent Brain To Stitch Together A Picture

Ashlee Vance

Cambridge (Massachusetts): Jeff Lichtman likes his brains sliced thin — very, very thin.

Lichtman and his team of researchers at Harvard have built some unusual contraptions that carve off slivers of mouse brains as part of a quest to understand how the mind works. Their goal is to run slice after minuscule slice under a powerful electron microscope, develop detailed pictures of the brain's complex wiring and then stitch the images back together. In short, they want to build a full map of the mind.

The field, at a very nascent stage, is called connectomics, and the neuroscientists pursuing it compare their work to early efforts in genetics. What they are doing, these scientists say, is akin to trying to crack the human genome — only this time around, they want to find how memories, personality traits and skills are stored.

INSIDE VIEW: Jeff Lichtman, a professor at Harvard University, with a 3D image of a section of the mouse brain

They want to find a connectome, or the mental makeup of a person. "You are born with your genes, and they don't change afterward," said H Sebastian Seung, a profes-

sor of computational neuroscience at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who is working on the computer side of connectomics. "The connectome is a product of your genes and your experiences. It's where nature meets nurture."

The task is arduous and years from fruition, and even the biggest zealots acknowledge that their work may not pay off. But connectomics has gotten some meaningful financing: In September, the National Institutes of Health handed out $40 million in grants to researchers at Harvard, Washington University in St Louis, the University of Minnesota and the University of California, Los Angeles, to pursue connectomics. Together, their research efforts comprise the Human Connectome Project.

Since the 1970s, researchers have only had one connectome to play with — that of a worm with a measly 300 neurons. Now they are trying a mouse brain, with its 100 million neurons. NYT NEWS SERVICE

IIT-Kgp in denial over copying allegations

Akshaya Mukul | TNN

New Delhi: IIT-Kharagpur's Senate, the highest academic body, on Monday took up the issue of rampant copying during examination, but instead of finding a solution it is in denial about the anomaly.

The Senate also decided to issue a statement refuting allegations of copying as has been reported earlier. However, officiating registrar T K Ghosal told TOI that the statement would be issued after minutes of the Senate meeting is confirmed. He claimed that allegations of copying were false. In the meeting many speakers from the ad-

Mahesh Benkar

ministrative side and former professors-in-charge of examinations, too, denied that copying ever takes place in the institute.

Sources in the IIT-Kharagpur admitted that since the institute is the largest of the 15 IITs, it also has the largest intake of students. As a result, classrooms are crammed even during examinations with

students seating next to each other like a normal class.

What makes copying easier is the fact that IIT-Kharagpur does not have any provision of allotting a seat to a student during an examination. A student is free to choose any seat allotted for the subject. Examination rooms have a seating for a single subject or two subjects. Crowded examination rooms, sources said, makes copying easy. Also, it is difficult for invigilators to do anything during examination since copying is silent. At the time of evaluation, teachers — even if they find similar answers — find it time consuming and difficult to take action.

First humans came out of Middle East?

London: In what could change the whole picture of human evolution, archaeologists claim that modern man may have evolved in the Middle East, rather than Africa, after they discovered remains said to be 400,000 years old.

A team, led by Avi Gopher and Ran Barkai of Tel Aviv University, has in fact found eight human-like teeth in the Qesem cave near Rosh Ha'Ayin, 15km from Israel's Ben Gurion airport.

According to them, the teeth were 400,000 years old, from the Middle Pleistocene Age, which would make them the earliest remains of homo sapiens yet discovered in the world. If true it overturns the belief that homo sapiens, the ancestor of modern man, evolved in Africa about 200,000 years ago, say the archaeologists.

According to the "Out of Africa" theory, homo sapiens gradually migrated north, through the Middle East, to Europe and Asia between 70,000 and 50,000 years ago.

But, in recent years, discoveries in Spain and China have also questioned the theory that man originated in Africa.

Homo sapiens discovered in Middle Awash, Ethiopia, from 160,000 years ago were believed to be the oldest modern human beings. Other remains previously found in Israeli caves are thought to have been more recent and 80,000 to 100,000 years old.

The latest findings, published in the American Journal of Physical Anthropology, said the size and shape of the teeth were very similar to those of modern man.

The Israeli team also found evidence of the use of fire, hunting, and the cutting and mining of raw materials to produce flint tools, which suggested a sophisticated form of society. However, they said that further research was needed to solidify their claim.

Sir Paul Mellars, a prehistory expert at Cambridge University, said the study is reputable, and the find is "important" because remains from that critical time period are scarce, but it is premature to say the remains are human. AGENCIES

Neanderthals also ate veggies

A US study on Monday found that Neanderthals, prehistoric cousins of humans, ate grains and vegetables as well as meat, cooking them over fire in the same way homo sapiens did. The new research published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences challenges a prevailing theory that Neanderthals' over-reliance on meat contributed to their extinction around 30,000 years ago. AFP

Times of India ND
29/12/2010 P19

Now, power in pants to charge your phone

Washington: Sure, we have heard of solar powered heaters and calculators, even plans for a Japanese space station to get its energy from solar power. Now prepare yourself for an entirely new 'solar power' pants.

A new clothing line from Silvr Lining puts solar panels on its $920 Go Urban Cargo Pants pockets and each comes with power supply. The pocket-sized solar panels can charge small electronic items like MP3 players and smart phones, reports Discovery News.

The 6x8 inch solar panels can be connected to a device through a USB port, to provide a supply voltage of 5volts. ANI

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New school of thought: Robots teach English in South Korea

AFP

Seoul: Almost 30 robots have started teaching English to youngsters in a South Korean city, education officials said on Tuesday, in a pilot project designed to nurture the nascent robot industry.

Engkey, a white, egg-shaped robot developed by the Korea Institute of Science & Technology (KIST), began taking classes on Monday at 21 elementary schools in the southeastern city of Daegu.

The 29 robots, about 1m high with a TV display panel for a face, wheeled around the classroom while speaking to the students, reading books to them and dancing to music by moving their head and arms. The robots, which display an avatar face of a Caucasian woman, are controlled remotely by teachers of English in the Philippines — who can see and hear the children via a remote control system.

Cameras detect the Filipino teachers' facial expressions and instantly reflect them on the avatar's face, said Sagong Seong-Dae, a senior scientist at KIST.

"Well-educated, experienced Filipino teachers are far cheaper than their counterparts elsewhere, including South Korea," he said.

Apart from reading books, the robots use pre-programmed software to sing songs and play alphabet games with the children.

"The kids seemed to love it since the robots look, well, cute
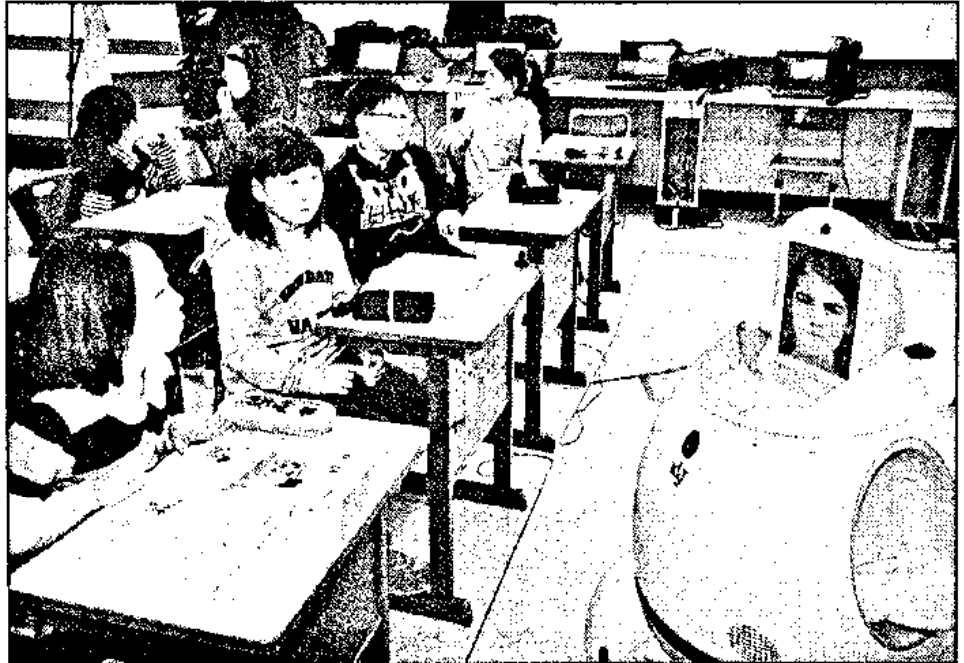
CYBER CLASSES: A robot, Engkey, teaches at an elementary school in Daegu. In all, 29 robots have begun teaching English in the South Korean city. The robots, which feature the face of a Caucasian woman on a display panel, are controlled remotely by teachers in the Philippines

and interesting. But some adults also expressed interest, saying they may feel less nervous talking to robots than a real person," said Kim Mi-Young, an official at the Daegu city education office.

Kim said some may be sent to remote rural areas of South Korea shunned by foreign English teachers. She said the robots are still being tested. But officials might consider hiring them full time if scientists upgrade them and make them easier to handle and more affordable.

"Having robots in the classroom makes the students more active in participating, especially shy ones afraid of speaking out to human teachers," Kim said.

She stressed the experiment was not about replacing human teachers with robots. "We are helping upgrade a key, strategic industry and all the while giving children more interest in what they learn."

The four-month pilot programme was sponsored by the government, which invested $1.37 million. AFP

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Device zaps tongue to block snoring, sleep apnea

Washington: Loud snoring may do more than irritate your spouse: It can signal sleep apnea, depriving you of enough zzzz's to trigger a car crash, even a heart attack.

Now scientists are beginning to test if an implanted pacemaker-like device might help certain sufferers, keeping their airways open by zapping the tongue during sleep. Wait, what does your tongue have to do with a good night's sleep?

One of the main causes of obstructive sleep apnea is that the tongue and throat muscles relax too much during sleep, enough to temporarily collapse and block breathing for 30 seconds or so at a time. The person jerks awake and gasps, a cycle that can repeat itself 30 or more times an hour, depriving patients of crucial deep sleep.

The idea behind the experimental implant: Stimulate the nerve that controls the base of the tongue with a mild electrical current during sleep, and maybe it will stay toned and in place like it does during the day rather than becoming floppy. A Minneapolis-based firm plans a study in to see if so-called hypoglossal nerve stimulation really could work. **AP**

New IIMs: The reach widens

The new IIMs are attracting many students who had given up hope of studying in India's top management institutes

Vimal Chander Joshi
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Ankush Jain, a computer engineering graduate, couldn't make it to any of the seven IIMs last year, but a high CAT (common admission test) score of 99.94 percentile secured him admission in a top private B-school in Gurgaon. Then an admission announcement for IIM Rohtak appeared in national dailies at the eleventh hour after admissions at old seven IIMs had already taken place. Much to his delight, Jain was offered admission and his dream of being an IIM student was realised. So did the dreams of 163 students who joined the fledgling IIMs – located in Rohtak, Ranchi and Raipur last year. Another IIM in Trichy will be added in 2011, taking the total number of seats in all the eleven IIMs to 2650.

Most of the students who joined the new IIMs had turned down offers from good private B-schools, like Jain, to become a part of the IIM culture.

It is now being debated whether the new IIMs will be able to live up to the expectations of students and the industry. The students we spoke to were quite optimistic. "Getting into a new IIM gave us added responsibility. Setting up placement cells, introducing the institution to the industry in the first year is a great task to perform. I want to be an entrepreneur, so I think that being in the first batch gives me that opportunity to hone my entrepreneurial skills," says Jain.

These new IIMs are being mentored by the older IIMs which are responsible for providing the faculty to their "younger cousins". But the premier faculty can't help much when these students go to apply for internships. "We faced problems convincing the industry for summer placements. Many of the corporate executives don"t even know that this institute is also an IIM. Then we tell them this was also established by the HRD ministry" informs Jain.

Corporate obscurity doesn't deter the students from apply in large numbers. IIM Rohtak invited candidates with 95 percentile, yet the average percentile of the current crop is 98.5. In the case of IIM Ranchi also, the average percentile of the existing batch is more than 99. Not only students, faculty members are also scurrying to join the elite club of IIMs.

At IIM Raipur, around 500 PhD holders applied for just 11 vacancies, says Dr BS Sahay, director, who quit the top slot at a popular B-school in the private sector to head an IIM.

A similar overwhelmingly high response was seen at other places too. "Among hundreds of applications received for 10 places, I have shortlisted 80, and a large number of them are PhD holders from IIT, some are from IIMs and a few are teaching at reputable B-schools in the US,"says Dr P Rameshan, director, IIM Rohtak.

But why are these professors willing to forego the fat pay packages earned in dollars in order to teach at IIMs? "Academicians aren't drawn purely by money. A teacher is like a classical singer who looks for the right audience. Teaching gives a satisfaction which is intoxicating. I also shifted from industry to academics (without bothering about money). Earlier, I used to teach part-time during weekends. When I realised that I was enjoying teaching so much, I quit the job after spending 10 years and became a full time faculty member and later I did my PhD too," says Prafulla Agnihotri, director, IIM Trichy, the newest of the management institutes, to be followed by one IIM in Kashipur and the other in Udaipur.

No prizes then for guessing as to what it is that makes students and teachers rush to jump on the IIM brand-wagon. "We don't see competition from private B-schools because with an increase in seats, the IIMs can attract a larger number of students which is a cause of worry for many private sector B-schools. When a candidate can get admission in an IIM, why would he choose a private B-school? But yes, I think IIMs can face competition from these B-schools if they don't live up to their brand equity," adds Dr Rameshan.

Meanwhile, students somehow manage in the small makeshift campuses which are big enough to accommodate classrooms, administrative blocks as well as hostels. IIM Raipur, albeit, is accommodated in a non-residential campus. " The students are now staying at a place which is around 10-15 km from the campus. Faculty (once hired) will also stay there (and not on the campus)," says Dr Sahay.

Gujarat govt eyes IIM-A help for development

Proposes core committee to focus on six key areas

**Press Trust of India**
Ahmedabad, Dec. 27

In a bid to provide impetus to planned development in key sectors, Gujarat government on Tuesday proposed setting up a core committee in collaboration with the IIM-A.

"We propose to have a core committee in collaboration with IIM-A, including its officials, IIM-A alumni, government officials, and representative from the industry," the Principal Secretary (Industry), Mr Maheshwar Sahu, said while speaking at the IIM-A conclave here.

"The government has identified six areas where synergy can be there, such as coastal and port-related development, medical services, urban development and multi-modal transport, finance, tourism and education services, between IIM-A and government," Mr Sahu said.

The aim is to have six working groups that can suggest the way forward for development in these sectors, he said.

On development opportunities in the State, Mr Sahu said in the next decade planned development will take place on 2.50 lakh hec-
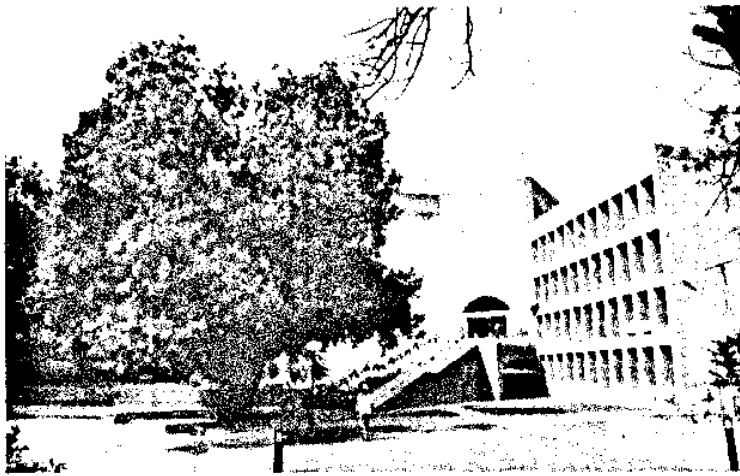
IIM-A: Development path

tares. The area spreads across 13 Special Investment Regions (SIRs) proposed in the State, of which Dohelar-SIR alone has 80,000 hectares.

The Gujarat government has projected to attract around $54 billion of investment along the 38 per cent of the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor stretch passing through the State, out of the total projected investment of $90 billion along the corridor in country.

The Gujarat government through its biennial flagship programme Vibrant Gujarat Summit so far has inked MoUs with the industry pledging an investment of $367 billion across various

sectors, in last four editions of the summit held here.

Giving project details, Mr Sahu said: "Out of the 1,600 large projects, nearly 850 are on stream now which is 43.62 per cent, and in next five years we expect it to touch 60-65 per cent, which is far higher than the national average of project implementation of 20-25 per cent."

According to him, 70 per cent of the projects account for infrastructure development and manufacturing sectors.

"Nearly 1,800 projects in SME segment were signed, of which 76.16 per cent are under implementation," he added.

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IIT-Madras to host meet

Chennai, Dec. 28

IIT-Madras will host the 24th International Conference on VLSI (very-large-scale integration) design and the 10th international conference on Embedded Systems from January 2- 7. The event for the VLSI and semiconductor industry returns to Chennai after a decade. The VLSI is the process of creating integrated circuits by combining thousands of transistors into a single chip. Fellowships are offered by the conference to students and faculty, covering free registration and accommodation at IIT Madras campus, according to a press release issued by the VLSI Society of India. — **Our Bureau**

Pioneer, ND 29-Dec-10
p-7

Anand wants Super-30 institute in every State

Bangalore: Anand Kumar, whose Super-30 institute has helped numerous economically backward students to crack the IIT-JEE by giving them educational and moral support, wants to start the programme's branches in every State.

"My dream is to expand my student base from 30 and open up branches in every State of India where poor and meritorious students who cannot afford good education can get higher education and contribute to India," Kumar said.

He was here to receive the Yeshwanth Rao Kelkar award from the ABVP on Tuesday.

"It is also my dream to create an educational institution where we can train students, who contribute to the family income due to the strains of poverty, from the level of standard 4 or 5 and create many Nobel Prize winners from India," he said.

Kumar, who is a mathematician, educationist and columnist, started his Super-30 programme in Patna in 2002. **PTI**

Kelkar panel to take final call on CSIR's business body

Soma Das

New Delhi, Dec 28: A high powered committee headed by Vijay Kelkar, chairman of the 13th finance commission, would take the final call on the structure of the company that the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) plans to float to commercialise its technologies. The other members on the committee include former Sebi chief M Damodaran and Saurabh Srivastava, chairman of CA India, a leading IT entrepreneur, angel investor and venture capitalist.

The final shape of the technol-ogy commercialisation agency is expected to become clear within a month's time. The latest project draft of CSIR which conceptualises the idea, refers to this private entity as CSIR Tech Private Ltd and envisages creation of multiple spin-off ventures within its scope, each around one technology (identified mainly on the criteria of market opportunity and potential) emanating from several CSIR laboratories. In this venture, CSIR proposes to own equity of less than or around 50% but still have a controlling position in decision making process.

The CSIR Tech Private Ltd, which would essentially be in the

THE FINAL SHAPE OF THE TECHNOLOGY COMMERCIALIZATION AGENCY IS EXPECTED TO BECOME CLEAR WITHIN A MONTH'S TIME

nature of a product R&D firm, is expected to better monetise the CSIR technologies for the organization alongside making transition process of products from the lab to the market smoother. Additionally, this aims to enhance the conversion rate of technologies to products and ensure that the research scientists as well as the organisation get their due. The entity would have teams with participation of research scien-tists, entrepreneurs and investors among others.

Samir Brahmachari, DG, CSIR confirmed the plan to *FE*. "We are ready with a detailed draft proposal on the formation and structure of the entity that would create the spin off ventures. This has been finalised after having undergone scrutiny of many financial and technical experts. A lot of models have been debated before we could arrive at a suitable structure for this agency. Now we are awaiting a final nod from the high powered expert committee," he said.

Before finalising the structure of the private entity, CSIR studied various marketing and commercialization models — national and international that include Singapore's A star, the government agency that nurtures public sector research and development in sciences and Antrix, the marketing arm of Indian Space research Organisation. Till now, much of CSIR's monetary income comes from royalties earned out of licensing out its patented technolo-gies to private companies which in many cases is pittance compared to what the firms are making by using CSIR technologies.

Brahmachari is however, clear that since public interest and not monetisation the primary goal of CSIR, the organisation has been able to deliver on wide ranging products such as Sonalika tractors and drugs like streptokinase, a clot dissolving drug for heart patient at such lower rates. However, this dream of CSIR, once realized could streamline and professionalise the product route from R&D phase to market and augment CSIR's income considerably.

Business Standard ND 29/12/2010

Technology rolls on p-11

It will help beat poverty in a decade

The year 2010 has been good for India in terms of technology and 2011 holds the promise of taking the country one step forward in harnessing technology to make a dent in some of the problems that continue to challenge it. The most obvious sign of the robustness of India's technological capability is the way in which IT-ITeS exports have been able to pick up even though recovery in the developed world remains weak and much of the year has gone by amidst speculation whether there will be a setback through a double-dip depression. In fact, the revival in IT-ITeS exports indicates that businesses, particularly the large ones, in the developed world are using India's technology offerings to retain their competitiveness when they are weighed down by the extremely weak domestic demand. The promise that 2011 holds is that India's technological capability will be able to play a similar role in its uplift, something that it was not able to do in the past when there was a glaring discrepancy between its IT exports and the very poor level of IT adoption within the country.

There are two clear signs that technology has arrived domestically. One is the confidence that Indian corporates have developed in their ability to stand up on their own feet technologically. The prime and most recent example of this is the decision of the Munjals to part ways with Honda which had provided the technological bulwark in the highly successful Hero Honda joint venture. In the post-Independence era, the period up to the seventies had been marked by an obsession with self-sufficiency which resulted in nominal import of technology and reliance on reverse engineering. The eighties marked the beginning of technology imports within a still closed environment when reverse engineering declined but India's own technology development did not emerge as selected corporates which were able to get their joint ventures approved paid royalty and reaped a rent income. But the recent years have been marked by robust technology development, particularly in the automotive sector, as Bajaj has ventured out on its own and Tata Motors has acquired Jaguar-Land Rover to give itself a technological leg-up. So India is now at the stage where Japan was in the seventies when it acquired technology to power its own incremental technological progress.

The second sign and the greatest Indian technological effort that addresses the task still ahead at the bottom of the pyramid and uses innovation to crash costs is the successful launch and on-time performance of the Aadhaar project. Giving every Indian an identity, which will enable her to have a bank account, having already acquired a mobile telephone, marks the drumbeat of progress down the road of inclusive growth. India did not buy the unique identity solution from elsewhere on payment of a royalty, it was developed within India. In a sense, Nandan Nilekani is seeking to finish the task that Sam Pitroda began in the field of telephony but could not take up to the finish. As Mr Nilekani has articulated, in the next ten years, every Indian will be defined and powered by three numbers — UID number, mobile phone number and bank account number. That will define the unique low-cost solution to the problem of poverty.