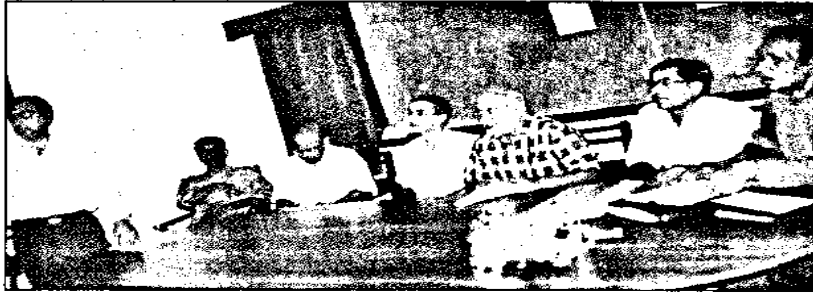


# Newspaper Clips

December 9, 2010

Hindustan Times ND p-10  
09/12/2010

FAKE INSTITUTE



■ Convocation of the Institute of Electrical Engineers, the fake institute run from IIT Kharagpur. (From Left) IIT professors AK Ghosh, NK Kishore, Jayanta Pal, PK Chattopadhyay, P Das Gupta, JC Biswas and institute secretary JK Tiwari. HT PHOTO

## More IIT profs caught in the act

Charu Sudan Kasturi

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**NEW DELHI:** Investigators have unearthed evidence linking four more Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur professors to operations of a fake institute run by senior IIT professor Amit Kumar Ghosh using the Institute campus and brand.

The evidence comes even as the Central Vigilance Commission has asked the HRD ministry to probe alleged irregularities in the appointment of Institute registrar TK Ghoshal.

HT first exposed the scam involving the fake Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) run by Ghosh using his IIT Kharagpur department office and the IIT brand to dupe students. Ghosh has named two former IIT Kharagpur directors in the scam, who denied the charge.

Police sources said the fresh evidence with them involves a photograph from a convocation ceremony of the fraud institute which shows five IIT Kharagpur professors seated next to Ghosh. Two of them — Pallab

### PHOTOGRAPH FROM CONVOCATION CEREMONY SHOWS 5 IIT-KGP PROFESSORS

Kumar Chattopadhyay, professor of agricultural and food engineering and Punyabrata Dutta Gupta, electrical engineering professor — have retired from IIT Kharagpur, sources said.

Two others include Jayanta Pal, current acting as head of department of electrical engineering at the IIT, and NK Kishore, another electrical engineering professor at the Kharagpur IIT. Retired professor JC Biswas, already under the police scanner, is also seen in the photograph.

“These professors... knew about the IEE. Their presence at the convocation of the fraud institute gave it legitimacy. We need to determine their level of involvement,” an investigator said. Duped students have also written to HRD minister Kapil Sibal asking him to take action against these professors.

# Delhi HC slams AIIMS for waste of PG seats

**EXPOSED** Court orders probe by health ministry; accuses medical institute of creating illegal reservation, transfer of seats

## ht FOLLOW-UP

Charu Sudan Kasturi

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**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi High Court has slammed the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) for wasting precious postgraduate medical seats, directing the health ministry to probe the wastage and drilling holes in the premier medical school's arguments.

Hindustan Times had, on December 5, exposed how AIIMS had allowed almost 30% of its highly coveted postgraduate seats to go waste over the past three years because of flaws in its admission process.

The institute argued that the

vacant seats — left by a growing number of students who take up seats before quitting to join preferred streams at other institutions — would be transferred to the next academic session, claiming that this would prevent wastage.

But a division bench of chief justice Deepak Misra and justice Manmohan has asked AIIMS to promptly call a meeting of its academic committee and explain why it was transferring vacant seats instead of offering them to students through open counselling.

The bench also picked holes in the AIIMS claim that it transfers vacant seats to the next session, by pointing out that the number of seats was decreasing annually, whereas it should have increased, if earlier vacant

seats were added.

In at least two independent orders, the Supreme Court has rejected the transfer of seats as valid.

Directing the health ministry to probe the seat wastage, the bench also asked the government to find out why AIIMS was following an admission and counselling process that leads to wastage of seats.

As reported by Hindustan Times, details obtained through

**HT HAD, ON DECEMBER 5, EXPOSED HOW AIIMS HAD ALLOWED ALMOST 30% OF ITS PG SEATS TO GO WASTE OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS**

the Right to Information Act revealed that 138 students admitted to AIIMS postgraduate programmes, over the past three years, soon quit, joining preferred courses at other institutes. Contrary to what AIIMS claimed in its own prospectus, it did not hold open counselling for seats that fell vacant this year.

The High Court bench also challenged the institute's policy of giving preference to its MBBS students for postgraduate seats.

The argument forwarded by AIIMS at the hearing suggested that the institute had found an "ingenious" way of introducing a quota for its students, even though the SC has banned any internal reservation, the bench said.

ROAD TO PERDITION

# Noida roads fail to clear IIT test

Darpan Singh

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**NOIDA:** It's official. Roads in Noida are in poor shape, cannot cope with growing vehicular pressure and can cave in if not repaired under a dedicated action plan.

The city has 21 important roads, and all have failed a test conducted by the IIT, Roorkee.

In a report, the premier institute pointed out that given the increasing number of vehicles, the general thickness of roads is less than what is required. None of the roads could meet the "load-bearing" standards set down by IIT.

The Noida authority had asked IIT, Roorkee to conduct a comprehensive survey to study vehicular pressure, encroachment and other such factors before renovation and widening of roads could begin.

The report continues that if



■ None of the roads in Noida could meet the load-bearing standards set down by the IIT, Roorkee. HT FILE PHOTO

the thickness of these roads is not increased, they will cave in. Besides, it will also result in daily traffic snarls.

Experts have suggested that Noida authority should construct seven-tier roads (as seen in Delhi) instead of the existing

five-tier ones.

"The way roads have been constructed in Noida has made repairs a difficult task. In Delhi, carrying out repairs is not that taxing," an official said.

Experts said that Master Plan road III will be exposed to max-

The way roads have been built in Noida has made repairs a difficult task.

AN OFFICIAL

imum pressure in the coming years.

In the next 10 years, this road alone will bear a load of 50 crore tonne.

The second in line, set to bear the maximum load, is Udhog Marg. Over the next decade, it is expected to carry a load of 35 crore tonne.

The Khoda road will also bear a load of 33 crore tonne over the same period.

The IIT report has categorically said the Noida authority needs to prepare a dedicated action plan to improve riding quality among other things. The report has also recommended periodic repair.

Times of India ND 9/12/2010 P-19

# Tainted money: Cash, receipts tied to cancer

## Hazardous Chemical In Currency Notes: Study

**Washington:** Cash register receipts and paper money have been found to contain high levels of bisphenol A (BPA), a chemical linked to cancer, obesity and early puberty, a study published on Wednesday says.

Researchers from US non-profit groups Safer Chemicals, Safer Families and the Washington Toxics Coalition tested till receipts made from thermal paper which they collected from 22 popular retailers and cafes, and found that half of them were coated with large quantities of BPA.

"Since BPA in thermal paper is present in a powdery film, we suspected it could easily travel from those receipts to other objects," says the study, led by Washington Toxics Coalition scientist Erika Schreder.

Holding the receipts for



**BEWARE:** The chemical, bisphenol A, can also cause obesity and early puberty, says the study

just 10 seconds caused up to 2.5 micrograms of BPA to

transfer from the paper onto a person's fingers, and rubbing the receipts increased around 15-fold the amount of BPA transferred from the receipts onto fingers, the study said.

From the fingers, the bisphenol A transferred easily onto dollar bills: the researchers found the chemical on 21 of 22 bills tested, although in much lower levels than on the till receipts.

More than 130 studies over the past decade have linked even low levels of BPA to serious health problems, including breast cancer, obesity and early onset of puberty.

BPA is widely used in plastic water jugs, soft drink cans, hockey helmets, mobile phone housings, computers, car bumpers and other consumer products, and the health impact of the chemical on humans has been disputed. AFP

**Times of India ND**  
**9/12/2010**

**P-19**

# Ray of hope: New glasses use tongue to help blind see

**London:** A British policeman who was blinded by a gunman earlier this year could soon have his sight restored thanks to a device that uses his tongue to help him see.

David Rathband lost his sight when he was shot in the face while on patrol in July this year. The 42-year-old is now taking part in a trial of the BrainPort device. He said, "The thought of being able to see my wife and children again is just amazing."

The device involves a camera mounted on a pair of glasses being connected to a sensor on the patient's tongue, which then sends signals from the camera to the brain, bypassing the user's damaged eyesight, reports the Daily Mail.

The BrainPort has already changed the life of Craig

The device uses a camera mounted on a pair of glasses connected to a sensor on tongue, which sends signals from the camera to the brain, bypassing damaged eyesight

Lundber, who was blinded by a grenade and was the first Briton to try out the device. He can now read words, identify shapes and walk unaided. A camera attached to the glasses captures a moving image. The device transfers the image via a cable to a lollipop attachment on the tongue. Electrodes tingle on the tongue to reflect the image with darker areas creating stronger pulses. IANS

## China attempts to organise international boycott of Nobel peace prize ceremony

### No bowing to Chinese demand

India chose not to bow to China's thinly veiled threat to various countries, that they will face 'consequences' if they attend the Nobel peace prize giving ceremony in Oslo. The Nobel peace prize is an internationally respected institution. China is a sovereign nation and can boycott the award ceremony if it wishes to, but by the same token it should not dictate to other sovereign nations whether they should attend or not.

Ironically, China's high-level diplomatic campaign to boycott the ceremony is motivated by a single man, Liu Xiaobo. While others deliberate about whether they should attend, what is certain is that the mild mannered activist who calls for managed change to democracy using non-violent means, will not. Not for Liu revolutionary change, yet he remains locked up in a Chinese prison for his beliefs. They provide impetus to why we reattending, because we pride ourselves on those very ideas. This is very different from man China protected to our cost. As WikiLeaks revealed China, at Islamabad's behest, locked the UN Security Council from imposing sanctions on Hafiz Saeed and

the militant organisation he heads, directly implicated in the 26/11 attacks on Mumbai.

Neither does Beijing respect Indian sensitivities in other areas, for example by stapling visas of Indian nationals from Jammu and Kashmir instead of stamping their passports. India doesn't respond by stapling visas of, say, Chinese nationals from

#### ■ TIMES VIEW ■

Tibet, which signals India's desire for good relations with China despite the latter seeming to abandon its earlier neutrality on Jammu and Kashmir. Such relations, however, have to be on the basis of mutual respect for each other's interests. If India had succumbed to Chinese blandishments on even such minor matters as attending a Nobel ceremony it would have decreased respect for India in the international system, including in China.



### Not worth a quarrel with China

It now seems there will indeed be an Indian presence at the award ceremony for Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo. The sensible thing for New Delhi to do would have been to change its stance on the issue. Unfortunately, it chose otherwise - and in so doing, committed a tactical blunder. Certainly, Liu is an admirable individual who

block an Asian Development Bank loan to India, tension over the status of Arunachal Pradesh, its backing for Pakistani attempts to keep Lashkar-e-Taiba chief Hafiz Saeed on the UN terror list - these are the substantive issues New Delhi should be focussing on. And to engage Beijing on these, it must face up to the reality that it's in a geopolitically weaker position than its northern neighbour at the moment

#### ■ COUNTERVIEW ■

Anil Thakkar

has sacrificed his liberty for the sake of promoting peaceful change and democracy. But that has precisely nothing to do with Indian interests. By seizing upon this to inflict a petty annoyance upon Beijing, New Delhi is displaying a woeful shortsightedness.

After a brief period of relatively amicable relations between the two countries towards the middle of the decade, matters have been tense again. Chinese attempts to

and work towards creating a conducive atmosphere for dialogue.

Other countries such as Russia and Saudi Arabia have been more pragmatic, and with good reason. The international arena is a place where pragmatism and national interest must dictate a government's policies, something New Delhi would do well to remember. The sanctuary it has provided to Dalai Lama has already proved to be a major irritant to Beijing over the decades. But the situation, if exploited correctly, also provides New Delhi handy leverage. Attending the Nobel peace prize ceremony, however, will be a further irritant without any benefits.

## Sibal's first date with telco biggies today

Shalini Singh | TNN

New Delhi: At his first public meeting at Ficci's India Telecom 2010 on Thursday, telecom minister Kapil Sibal will be addressing a large number of cellular stakeholders, including operators, equipment providers, international investors, analysts and the media.

Sibal is standing in for Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who usually inaugurates India Telecom—a key telecom conference—jointly hosted by DoT and Ficci.

Barring a few private meetings and TV interviews, this will be the sector's first tryst with Sibal's vision on how he plans to tackle the 2G telecom scam and whether he can drive confidence among investors and telecom stakeholders. Undoubtedly, India's telecom sector—once the crown jewel of investments, privatisation and successful PPPs—faces its biggest crisis of confidence ever.

According to telecom analysts, Sibal has so far done some right things including issuing show-cause notices to

companies identified by the CAG for ineligible applications for 2G spectrum, or formed a part of Trai's list of companies that had defaulted in meeting roll-out obligations. He has also taken steps to clean up the DoT.



Kapil Sibal

However, his critics argue that his actions display a lack of choice rather than vision. Slapping show-cause notices on errant companies is the next logical step for DoT, which should have acted by itself in the first place, rather than waiting for CAG

or Trai. Even officials, who have been removed, had become unpalatable and it was clear that CBI was ready to raid them which it finally did on Wednesday.

"Sibal is accompanied by foreign delegates which may restrict his comments at India Telecom. However, as a savvy lawyer and popular politician, he could seize this opportunity to show that he means business without clinging on to Raja's defence or blaming others for loss to exchequer revenue," points out a DoT official.

**Times of India ND**  
**9/12/2010 P-19**

# **Heart trouble? Blood test to tell years in advance**

**Chicago:** A new blood test may be able to tell whether a seemingly healthy person is at risk of dying from heart disease, US researchers said.

An older, less sensitive version of the test detects a certain protein in only a small percentage of people, but a study of the newer test made by Roche found it in about 25% of 3,500 blood samples. And people who had detectable levels of the protein, released by damaged heart muscle, were nearly seven times more likely to die of heart disease within six years.

Both tests look for a protein called cardiac troponin T, which indicates muscle damage in the heart, but the newer test called Elecsys Troponin T is 10 times more sensitive. "This test is among the most powerful predictors of death in the general population we've seen so far," said James de Lemos of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, whose study appears in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

"It appears that the higher your troponin T, the more likely you are to have problems with your heart, and the worse you're going to do, regardless of your other risk factors," he said in a statement. **REUTERS**

Times of India ND 9/12/2010 P-19

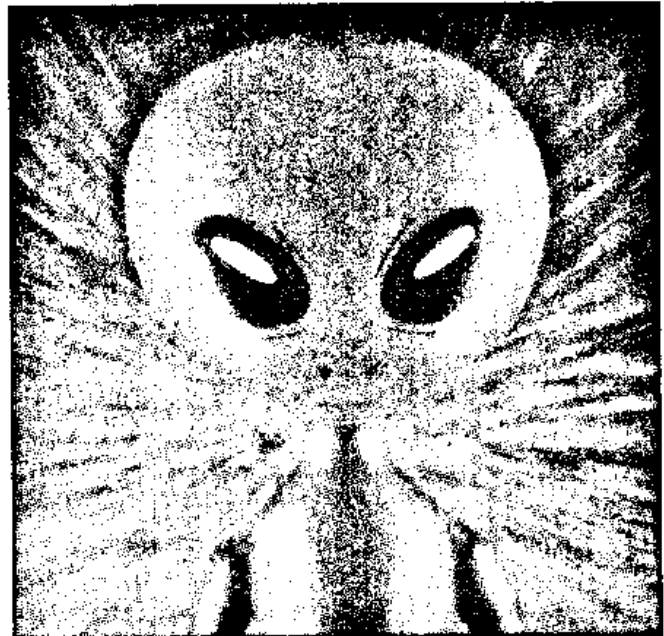
# Anyone out there? Proof of alien life is mounting

**Washington:** Lately, a handful of new discoveries make it seem more likely that we are not alone — that there is life somewhere else in the universe.

In the past several days, scientists have reported there are three times as many stars as they previously thought. Another group of researchers discovered a microbe can live on arsenic, expanding our understanding of how life can thrive under the harshest environments. And earlier this year, astronomers for the first time said they'd found a potentially habitable planet.

"The evidence is just getting stronger and stronger," said Carl Pilcher, director of Nasa's Astrobiology Institute, which studies the origins, evolution and possibilities of life in the universe. "I think anybody looking at this evidence is going to say, 'There's got to be life out there.'"

A caveat: Since much of this research is new, scientists are still debating how solid the conclusions are. Another reason to not get too excited is that the search for life starts small — microscopically small — and then looks to evolution for more. The first signs of life elsewhere are more likely to be closer to slime mold than to ET. It can evolve from there.



## WE'RE NOT ALONE?

Scientists have an equation that calculates the odds of civilized life on another planet. What last week's findings did was both increase the number of potential homes for life and broaden the definition of what life is. That means the probability for alien life is higher than ever before, agree 10 scientists interviewed. AP

Times of India ND 09/12/2010 P10

# Photograph linking IIT-Kgp profs, fake institute surfaces

Akshaya Mukul | TNN

New Delhi: IIT-Kharagpur has all along been in denial that its faculty members were involved in the running of fake institute — Institution of Electrical Engineers (I). But the hollow claims now lay in tatters, thanks to a photographic proof showing teachers of the institution along with J K Tiwari, the brain behind the institute, who, incidentally, has nothing to do with IIT-Kharagpur.

Police recovered the photograph during a raid and are soon going to question faculty members — both serving and retired — who are seen along with Tiwari. The photograph shows A K Ghosh, former head of department of aerospace engineering and an ex-chief vigilance officer, who has since been suspended for his alleged involvement in the scam.

The others caught in freeze frame are N K Kishore,



Prof A K Ghosh (extreme left) with J K Tiwari (extreme right) and other professors at the aerospace department of IIT-Kharagpur

professor, department of electrical engineering; Jayanta Pal, head of department, electrical engineering; Pal-lab Kumar Chattopadhyay, retired professor of agricultural and food engineering; Punyabrata Dutta Gupta, retired professor of electrical engineering; J C Biswas, retired professor of electronics & electrical communication engineering.

Tiwari, who conceived IEE (I), and even managed to get an official quarter for the institute, is seen sitting along

with a section of IIT-Kharagpur faculty members.

Police sources said they are investigating if the photograph was taken during the convocation of IEE (I) as claimed by many students of the fake institute.

T K Ghosal, officiating registrar of IIT-Kharagpur, also conceded that he has seen the photograph, but denied that it was seized from the institute.

“The institute has nothing to hide. We’re cooperating with the police. I’ve filed FIR against Ghosh, Biswas, Tiwari and others on behalf of the institute.”

Meanwhile, the issue of the fake institute came up as a question in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. The HRD ministry informed the House about the FIR, and Prof Ghosh, who surrendered before the Midnapur District Court on November 30. He was granted bail on December 3.

Times of India B'lore 08.12.10 p-11

# IITians won't be held back, say no to bonds

Hemali Chhappia | TNN

Mumbai: Gentlemen don't prefer bonds. When it comes to most IITians, agreements that tie them down to an organization are a definite no. With the good times rolling back, engineering grads from tech schools want an active lifeline to navigate around the job market.

Companies, in turn, have read the writing on the wall and, at IIT-Bombay, 90% of the recruiters are not insisting that students sign on the dotted line. Similar is the case with organizations, domestic or international, which are participating in the placement season at other IITs. Again, about 70% of the firms recruiting from IIT-Madras expect a mere nod from the grads.

**Just a handful of companies were insisting that students enter into a time-bound contract. The bonds of even those companies are just mentioning a short time frame of a year or two**

“Most candidates are not signing any bonds. We tell the companies that they need to incentivise students to work for them,” said IIT-M academic affairs secretary Anuraag NVS. Companies were reasoning that students must sign a commitment to stick around in return for the intensive training that firms would put the fresh

graduates through. “But most of us on campus look down on an arrangement that holds us back,” said an IIT-Kanpur student who is registered for placements this year.

At IIT-Bombay, the process started early in the day: when firms evinced interest in participating in the campus placements. Companies which insisted on contracts were politely declined, or convinced that the reason to stay in an organization should be positive.

Placement head Ravi Sinha said, “Some of our past students have worked in one company for decades and made their career there if the work profile was interesting. More than anything else, I feel it's the fear of not fully understanding where they will be a right fit, that is discouraging a lot of

students from signing bonds.”

S K Srivastav, IIT-Kharagpur placement head, said just a handful of organizations were insisting that students enter into a time-bound contract. The bonds of even those companies are just mentioning a short timeframe of a year or two, he added.

But these terms are stopping companies from hiring. At each of the old IITs close to or over 300 students, which makes up a third of the total population in queue to be placed, have got job offers over six days of hiring. On Monday, ISRO, the first public sector firm to visit IIT-B this year, selected five students. On Tuesday, IIT-Kharagpur saw a high point when 53 of its students were offered jobs by Deloitte, an accounting and consulting firm.



Mint, ND 09-Dec-10 p-6

## IMPROVING SKILLS

# Industry being enlisted to boost vocational training standards

BY PRASHANT K. NANDA  
prashant.n@livemint.com

NEW DELHI

The central government is enlisting a number of industry segments to help it improve the standards of vocational education so that students emerge better skilled and become more employable.

In a first-of-its-kind initiative, the human resource development (HRD) ministry interacted with the automobile sector on Monday to devise vocational courses tailored to the needs of the industry.

Representatives of auto companies including Tata Motors Ltd and Ashok Leyland Ltd attended the meeting, ministry officials said.

Next in line are the construction and hospitality industries.

The effort is a departure from the tradition of academics and bureaucrats deciding what and how students should be taught, with no role for their eventual employers.

Industry has for long complained that students may graduate with diplomas and degrees, but lack the requisite and relevant skills to be employable, forcing companies to spend time, effort and money to train them.

"We had a constructive interaction with the automobile industry and we have formed a committee headed by R. Ses-



Fresh approach: HRD minister Kapil Sibal.

hasayee (managing director of Ashok Leyland) to help the ministry in its effort," HRD minister Kapil Sibal said on Wednesday.

"The committee will submit a report within three months detailing the road map for vocational education relevant for the concerned industry," said the minister, adding that this initiative is aimed at making students more employable.

The initiative is aimed at helping both students and industry, he said.

According to official statistics, India's unemployment

rate was 9.4% in 2009-10, an increase of 1.2 percentage points from the level in 2005.

Narayanan Ramaswamy, executive director (education) at consulting and auditing firm KPMG, said involving the industry in formulating vocational courses had the potential to bring "path-breaking results".

The automobile industry alone faces a shortage of 300,000 skilled people, he said, citing a survey.

"This effort will bridge the gap and give employment to a large number of students with

a handsome salary," he said. "Providing skilled people to labour-intensive sectors like automobile, construction and manufacturing will reduce unemployment in India. The moment you involve industry in education, you get the perspective on the demand and supply chain."

The effort will start at the senior secondary level with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and then spread to the state educational boards.

While 220 million students are in schools, less than 15 million are expected to pursue higher education, and better vocational education will improve the chances of employment for the dropouts.

"Once you give them the option at the secondary level, students will go for it," said an HRD ministry official. "Industry too is facing a huge shortage of skilled manpower in the lower and middle strata of the human resource structure."

The official didn't want to be named because he is not authorised to speak to the media.

Sibal said a separate section will be created within the CBSE to promote vocational education. The HRD ministry is targeting mid-2011 to put in place a national vocational education framework that will give students from Class 8 onwards the option of choosing from a range of subjects including hospitality, electronics and automobiles that they would study alongside their regular syllabus.

"We are for inclusive education and we will bring in necessary changes so that students specialising in vocational courses can smoothly go to the universities as well," Sibal said.

Hindu Chennai 07.12.10 p-9

# India, Germany urged to take up research on sustainability

## M.S. Swaminathan suggests patent bank for sustainable development

Special Correspondent

**CHENNAI:** The foundation stone for the Indo-German Centre for Sustainability (IGCS) was laid on the IIT-Madras (IIT-M) campus on Monday.

Speaking after unveiling the stone, Thomas Rachel, German Parliamentary State Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, said there was a drastic increase in demand for energy and the increase in greenhouse gases emission was causing concern. It was important for both India and Germany to take up research on sustainability.

Germany had planned to reduce greenhouse gases by 40 per cent in 2020 and 80 per cent in 2050. For this, the Federal Government had presented a new energy policy. The biodiversity challenges needed international help to take up research to find solutions, Mr. Rachel added.

### Patent bank

A patent bank for sustainable development should be started, suggested agriculture scientist M.S. Swaminathan. Though a new set of green technology innovations had been introduced, most were covered under patents. The bank should buy the patented technologies and make them available for researchers, he



*M. S. Ananth, Director, IIT - Madras, Thomas Rachel, German Parliamentary State Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research; M S Swaminathan, chairman, MSSRF; Hans Burkhardt Sauerteig, Consul-General, German Consulate, Chennai; Prof. Ernst M Schmachtenberg, Co-Chair, Advisory Board, IGCS and Max Huber, vice president, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), at the inaugural function of Indo-German Centre for Sustainability on IIT-M campus on Monday. - PHOTO: R. RAVINDRAN.*

said.

M.S. Ananth, Director, IIT-M, said the proposal to construct the centre was finalised in 2008 when the German Minister for Science and Technology visited IIT-M and announced 'A new

Passage to India' programme. Following this, the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, also promised to provide a matching grant for the Centre for Sustainability. "The Centre for Sustainability' will

function with minimum administrative support and maximum research effort," Dr. Ananth said.

Raffig Azzam, Coordinator, IGCS, said the Centre would take up a study of sustainable use of water, land, energy and

waste. According to a study, in 2020 Asian countries would face severe water shortage.

This would result in desertification and contamination of groundwater. The Centre would launch an inter-disciplinary research, which would address these issues, he said.

The Centre would develop courses for both Indian and German students, which would be aimed at improving the level of science students in India, said Professor Max Huber, Vice-President, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). The relationship between DAAD and India began 50 years ago, when the first DAAD centre was inaugurated in New Delhi, he added.

Premier institutions the world over should collaborate with each other to tackle the issue of climate change, threat to biodiversity and resource depletion, said Hans-Burkhardt Sauerteig, Consul General, German Consulate Chennai.

The building for the Centre would be ready in a year's time. The DAAD would contribute 3.7 million Euros per year to the centre for four years to take up research on water, land use, waste management, bio-diversity loss, climate change and related issues.

T1  
—

Economic Times Kolkata 08.12.10 p-21

# Army, Microsoft join hands to give jawans IT training

Peerzada Abrar  
BANGALORE

IT IS one of the largest exercises in re-skilling employees underway in the country. The Indian Army has launched a vocational training programme in association with Microsoft Corporation to equip over a million jawans with viable skills for a second career when they retire from service.

The initiatives are clubbed under the umbrella Project 'Samarth', meaning capable, which has a number of subsidiary projects under it. One such initiative is Project Kshamta designed by Microsoft which offers basic IT training skills through an initial network of 1,000 master trainers.

"The training module created by Microsoft is backed by certification from reputed institutions such as Educomp and arrange-

ments are also being made to help individuals secure a job post retirement," said Chandan Lal, Director Projects, Army Headquarters.

The retraining is part of an overall initiative to improve employability of junior army personnel who have limited options post retirement and largely end up with jobs in areas such as security services, as they lack soft skills, English language ability and have little knowledge of information technology.

The majority of Indian jawans retire below age of 40, leaving them with at least twenty more years of gainful employment.

"Before joining the new education initiative of the Army, I was unaware of the IT skills. I realised the need of developing the

skills that go beyond the battlefield. Without these skills, you can't get job in civil as well as government sector," says 41-year old Havaladar Mohan Kumar.

This is the first engagement ever for Microsoft with defence forces for IT skilling programmes.

"The objective is to upgrade the skills and give them some kind of certification. We are also working with the Army to set up IT academies for training Army personnel in IT courses of various levels. Microsoft will provide a lot of e-learning courses and software and make the education model more sustainable," said Irina Ghose, director-education public sector, Microsoft. The project, which is under a year old, is also focused on creating a growing pool of master trainers.

## SECOND CAREER

The army has launched the training programme to equip jawans with viable skills for a second career when they retire