

Newspaper Clips

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IIT hanging case: Father alleges ragging, fresh case registered

SHALINI NARAYAN

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 10

SEVEN months after Dinesh Ahlawat, a first-year chemical engineering student, allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself from a ceiling fan in an IIT Delhi hostel, his father has filed a case of abetment to suicide, saying ragging by seniors forced his son to end his life.

Dinesh died two days before his 19th birthday. His father Yashveer Singh, who teaches science at a school in Rohtak, alleged that Dinesh spoke to him twice and complained that he had been ragged by seniors.

When his body was found on August 4 in the Zanskar hostel, police ruled out ragging as a reason for the

alleged suicide and said he may have had “adjustment problems and homesickness”.

While investigating officers said the case was one of suicide, Dinesh’s death remained a mystery since he was found hanging with his hands tied with a handkerchief and legs bound with his vest.

Police now say the probe will continue, that the autopsy concluded it was “suicidal hanging” with no external injury marks on the body.

Yashveer Singh appealed before the Saket court, saying he wasn’t satisfied with the response he got from the institute or the police. The court directed police to register a case. A case under IPC Section 306 — abetment of sui-

cide — has been registered.

In his statement to the police, Singh said: “Students had to break open the door to get in and lower my son’s body. He was rushed to hospital where he was declared brought dead. On 30.7.2011, he told me he was ragged by his seniors. I spoke to him on August 1 and 2 when he spoke to the rest of the family too. Later, I found out that on August 3, seniors had ragged the juniors.”

“I strongly suspect that it was because of this (ragging) that my son felt humiliated and took his life,” Singh said.

He told *Newsline*: “My son called me and told me that he would be coming home for his birthday... The college administration has hidden the real issue from us.

Otherwise, why was my son’s body discovered by three seniors? What were seniors doing in his hostel at that time?”

Shashi Mathur, Dean of Students at IIT Delhi, said: “We are as confused about the matter as anyone else. He was a bright student, a very nice boy. An inquiry committee was constituted which stated that there was no element of ragging. The institute carries out regular sessions on anti-ragging awareness. I lead the team that goes around the 12 hostels and counsel students about the Supreme Court ruling. It is mandatory for students to attend this.”

Chhaya Sharma, DCP (South), said: “We received orders from the court under Section 156 (3) CrPc and we have complied with it.”

Why IIT grads love to sell shampoo?

India needs talents to create economic value from technology

**SALAD
DAYS**

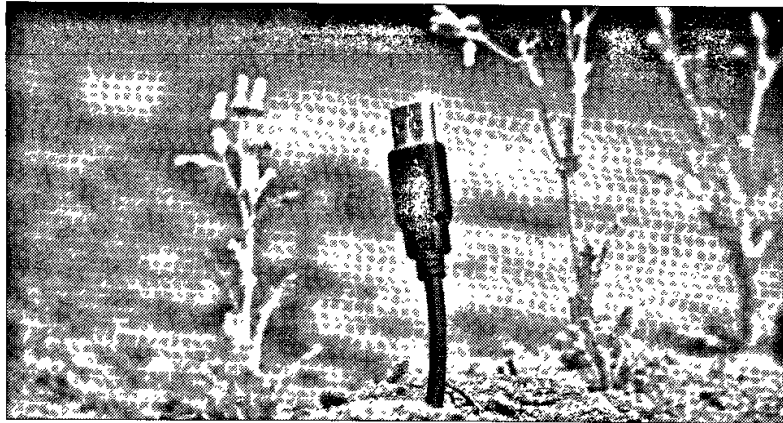
BIJOYSANKAR SAIKIA

WHEN Aamir Khan, in his film *3 Idiots*, took a smart dig at the IIT graduates who go in for non-technological pursuits, we expected desi technocrats to hit back with something like this: "Reboot your brains, dude. Technology doesn't have to be all nuts and bolts and chips. It's about mindset; it's about disruptive innovation. How does it matter to you anyway, you didn't fund my BTEch, did you?"

The point is: Who did? Let's look at the costs at, say, IIT Bombay. It spends Rs 16 lakh on producing one BTEch engineer. Of this, Rs 2.21 lakh comes as fees from the student and the balance Rs 13.79 lakh comes from the taxpayer's pocket, which is the cash you, me and our kith and kin pay from our earnings year after year. So, don't we have the right to point fingers at those who spend our cash arguably the wrong way?

By intent and purpose, IITs are meant to provide technological leadership to the country. But, we have a situation in which four out of 10 IITians do anything but pursue technology after graduation. Another two fly off to Silicon Valley because they would argue, in a global village, technology created in Timbuktu and Trivandrum caters to all mankind. If only the French had given us the Rafael M-MRCAs as Diwali gifts!

Almost every single dream project in India's technology research has had a 10- to 50-year lag. We have been building the Arjun main battle tank for close to 40 years now. HALs Tejas light combat aircraft, sanctioned way back in 1983, is yet to take wings. We are not ready or in a position to replace the MiGs, those



DETACHED: The fact that we do not know much about those IIT graduates who have contributed to the technological advancement of the nation indicates how unappreciative we are of achievements

aging fighters that keep crashing every now and then.

Recently, a journalist asked a CEO what he would be had he not been running the company. "I would *still* be a scientist at Isro," said the gentleman. We don't know if he too is an IIT product. But, it did give us a sense of anguish to see our indigenously developed GSLV satellite blow up and crash into the Bay of Bengal on December 26, 2011.

There isn't much difference between the role of a CEO and a scientist. Both are visionaries; one draws plans in boardrooms, the other in an electronic or genetic circuit. The only distinction is in the rewards for their work. There would possibly be little in the form of Esops and bonuses for the scientist even for the best of achievements. The fact that we do not know much about those IIT graduates who have contributed to the technological advancement of the nation indicates how unappreciative we are of achievements and how oblivious we are to our technological backwardness. A 9 per cent GDP growth, and we go celebrating.

Rough estimates show one out of every 10 IITians go to IIMs with the hope of becoming CEOs and CMOs of banks and FMCG companies. They say an IIM degree with an IIT tag works like

magic in ensuring a cushy corporate life at 35 or getting VC/PE funding for a startup.

The VC/PE funding pattern in India over the past few years does show that a huge chunk of money has gone to IITians trying their hand at entrepreneurship. Such a trend, if it can be called that, can only be explained as an aberration. But some of these businesses do show a mindset of disruptive innovation, even though many might just be doing conventional things in unconventional ways to make money.

Some of us may still not regret indirectly funding the education of those IITians who went on to set up own businesses. With 1.2 billion people, India needs at least 12 million enterprises to keep the engines of growth buzzing and the youth force productively employed.

But the IIT graduates who chose to sell shampoo are a waste of the taxpayer's money. At least, they should have given the taxpayer the option to choose at the start if he or she would still like to fund them should they opt to deviate from their defined goal.

Are IITs, India's august houses of excellence in scientific and technical education and research, failing in their mission? Or are they so confined in approach and the eco-system so discour-

aging that young minds don't think technology? One wonders why these institutes can't be turned into hubs of R&D outsourcing for private companies and, thus, made self-sustaining.

Each year, 54 students vie for every IIT seat offered through the IIT-JEE, and this ratio is growing at 5 per cent a year. It's great injustice to the 53 who don't make it if the IIT authorities are failing to spot the right people — whose, as Aamir Khan would say, girlfriend and wife are both pursuing technology.

The right to choose a profession is fundamental. But if the government can impose a few initial years of public service in the case of graduating doctors, why can't it do the same with engineers?

India today offers the greatest opportunity for technocrats to do some creative thinking so as not to let technological backwardness become a drag on our growth, because they are supposed to know how technology can create economic value for a nation.

If we remain technology clients of technologically advanced countries forever, our developmental goals will continue to be set back decade after decade, with no one in particular taking the blame for it.

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आईआईटी कानपुर के नए निदेशक की तलाश शुरू

नई दिल्ली (ब्यूरो)। मानव संसाधन मंत्रालय ने उच्च शिक्षा के तीन प्रमुख संस्थानों आईआईटी कानपुर, खड़गपुर और आईआईएसईआर मोहाली के नए निदेशकों की तलाश शुरू कर दी है। तीनों संस्थानों के वर्तमान निदेशकों का कार्यकाल 2012 में समाप्त हो रहा है। मंत्रालय के उच्च शिक्षा विभाग ने कानपुर और खड़गपुर आईआईटी निदेशक के पद के लिए इच्छुक योग्य उम्मीदवारों के आवेदन मांगे हैं। वर्तमान में कानपुर आईआईटी के निदेशक संजय गोविंद धांडे को मानव संसाधन मंत्री कपिल सिब्बल का काफी करीबी माना जाता है। उन्हें किसी महत्वपूर्ण पद की आगे भी जिम्मेदारी मिल सकती है। खड़गपुर आईआईटी के निदेशक प्रो. दामोदर आचार्य भी किसी नए संस्थान में नियुक्ति के लिए मंत्रालय में प्रयासरत हैं।

Amar Ujala ND 11/02/2012 p-7

एआईईई के लिए चुनें मनपंसद तारीख

सीबीएसई ने तिथि को 15 फरवरी तक बढ़ाया

● अमर उजाला ब्यूरो

नई दिल्ली। सीबीएसई ने एआईईईई-2012 के ऑनलाइन एग्जाम के लिए मनपंसद तिथि चुनने की डेट को फिर से आगे बढ़ा दिया है। सीबीएसई ने पहली बार ऑनलाइन एग्जाम तिथि चुनने की समय सीमा सात फरवरी तक बढ़ाया था। अब फिर से इस तिथि को 15 फरवरी तक बढ़ा दिया गया

● लेट होने पर बोर्ड आवंटित कर देगा तिथि

है। ऐसे में जो उम्मीदवार अब तक तिथि का चुनाव नहीं कर पाए हैं उन्हें राहत प्राप्त होगी। उल्लेखनीय है सीबीएसई ने जनवरी के दूसरे सप्ताह से एआईईईई का ऑनलाइन एग्जाम देने वालों के लिए मनपंसद तिथि का चयन करने की व्यवस्था की थी, जो 31 जनवरी को समाप्त

हो गई थी। जिसके बाद तिथि सात फरवरी तक बढ़ाई गई। सीबीएसई पहले ही साफ कर चुका है कि यदि आखिरी तिथि तक उम्मीदवार अपने मुताबिक तारीख का चयन नहीं कर पाते हैं तो उसके बाद बोर्ड की ओर से उन्हें तिथि का आवंटन किया जाएगा।

Aakash's the limit



VIEWPOINT

DEVANGSHU DATTA

In October 2011, when Aakash launched, I expressed doubts about the device's quality, and also about the government's ability to develop and deliver a mass-adoption device. Readers castigated me for unpatriotic doubts and some accused me of being paid by rival tablet makers.

The government placed an initial order of 100,000 Aakash tablets. Manufacturer Datawind said it would deliver 8-10 million units by March 2012. As of now, Datawind has delivered

30,000 units, some of which have been rejected.

The GoI has asked for an upgrade to a new version (Aakash2) for the next 70,000 units. Aakash2 will launch by April 2012. The public-sector Indian Telephone Industries has been pulled in as an alternate supplier. The R&D skills of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Rajasthan have been supplemented with that of three more IITs. The Human Resources Development (HRD) ministry has also announced it will indigenise while rolling out 220 million units.

Instead of a cost \$35-50/unit (₹1,700-2,500) equivalent for Aakash1, the estimates for Aakash2 range between \$60 (₹3,000) and \$100 (₹5,000). The government will keep it subsidised or even free. Economies of scale count, and 220 million is a huge number. Globally, 67 million tablets were sold in 2011.

So, the HRD ministry targets subsidising roughly three times current global volume. If we

assume a price of \$50/unit (₹2,500), that could work out to a total spend of ₹55,000 crore. Just for comparison, the entire 2011 HRD ministry budget was ₹52,000 crore.

The global electronic components industry is located in East Asia. It took the Japanese, Koreans, Taiwanese, Chinese and Thai electronic component

Even allowing for the fabled efficiency of India's public sector, it will be challenging to hit the projected scale for the tablet in a meaningful time frame

of India's public sector, it will be challenging to hit the projected scale in a meaningful time frame.

The specs of Aakash2 are already obsolete. Low-end cell-phones already have faster processors and memory. Processors double in power every 18 to 24 months. So Aakash may need multiple upgrades before the 220 million rollout com-

plet. India has little competency in chip design and this means a major R&D effort.

I will commit the sin of being unpatriotic all over again and doubt the ability to achieve this. There are reasons of comparative advantage, which explain why India doesn't already possess these skill sets and capacities. Perhaps a push from the HRD ministry will be sufficient to overcome this?

However, Aakash wasn't really supposed to be about giving

the Indian electronics industry a leg-up. It was about bridging the digital divide and e-enabling education. There are less convoluted, and perhaps far more

efficient, ways to do that.

Regardless of hardware, there is an imperative to focus on developing free educational content that is platform-independent, and widely accessible. There is also a need to train teachers to handle such content. As of now, even standard CBSE and NCERT textbooks aren't available in e-editions. I haven't yet seen any

Budgetary estimates, or tenders from HRD, to address the content gap.

Instead of spending resources on a device that is behind the curve before its launch, the GoI could just offer a flat cash subsidy to students to buy any tablet of choice, to access educational content (that it hasn't yet developed). There are multiple available options.

Unbranded Taiwanese and Chinese tablets (with specs like Aakash2) are available from \$40 up. The new solar-cum-hand crank powered device from the One Laptop Per Child project (which the GoI abandoned) is priced at \$100. A certain telecom service provider (who is sadly not paying me!) has announced the intention to offer 4G access via a ₹4,000 tablet.

However, none of these common-sense options is grandiose enough. The GoI will bash on regardless with its commitment. Huge amounts will be spent, either on delivering a crippled device or, perhaps, on not delivering anything, if there are further procurement issues. Either way, the digital divide will not be bridged.

JANSATTA ND 11 FEB 2012 P10

कीमतें नहीं सिर्फ खूबियां बढ़ेंगी 'आकाश' की

नई दिल्ली, 10 फरवरी (भाषा)। सरकार ने सस्ते टैबलेट लैपटाप आकाश की कीमतों में बढ़ोतरी की संभावना से साफ इनकार करते हुए कहा है कि यह इसी कीमत में उपलब्ध रहेगा। साथ ही इसकी खूबियों व विशिष्टताओं को बेहतर बनाया जाएगा और यह दुनिया का सबसे सस्ता टैबलेट बना रहेगा।

मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय के अतिरिक्त सचिव एनके सिन्हा ने कहा कि आकाश की कीमत 2,276 रुपए रहेगी और भविष्य में इसे और कम करने की कोशिश की जाएगी। इस टैबलेट की विशिष्टताओं और खूबियों को उन्नत किया जाएगा ताकि यह अपने स्तर पर दुनिया में उपलब्ध अन्य टैबलेट से बेहतर बन सके। अधिकारी से उन खबरों के बारे में पूछा गया था कि आकाश की खूबियों को बेहतर बनाने पर इसकी कीमत बढ़ कर 100-डालर (करीब पांच हजार रुपए) हो सकती है। इन खबरों से इनकार करते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि अगर ऐसा हुआ तब आकाश का कोई मतलब नहीं रह जाएगा।

आकाश के स्तर के आई पैड, सैमसंग, रिलायंस 3जी, बीटल इमेजिंग जैसे दुनिया में कुछ ही चुनिंदा टैबलेट प्रचलित हैं लेकिन इनकी कीमत आकाश से बहुत ज्यादा है। आकाश का प्रोसेसर 366 मेगाहर्ट्ज का है जबकि सैमसंग का एक गिगा हर्ट्ज, आईपैड का एक गिगा हर्ट्ज, रिलायंस का 800 मेगा हर्ट्ज और बीटल इमेजिंग का एक गिगा हर्ट्ज का है। आकाश की मेमोरी 2 जीबी है। इसके मुकाबले सैमसंग की 16 जीबी, आईपैड की 16 जीबी, रिलायंस की 4 जीबी और बीटल इमेजिंग की 8 जीबी है। आकाश का रैम 256 एमबी का है जबकि सैमसंग का 512 एमबी, आईपैड का 256 एमबी, रिलायंस का 512 एमबी और बीटल इमेजिंग का 256 एमबी है।

इन टैबलेटों में आकाश का काफी सस्ता होना उसे शिक्षा के प्रचार की दृष्टि से अहम बनाता है। आकाश की कीमत 2,276 रुपए है जबकि आई पैड की करीब 30 हजार, सैमसंग टैबलेट की 23 हजार, रिलायंस की 13 हजार और बीटल इमेजिंग की कीमत करीब 10 हजार रुपए है।

आकाश की गुणवत्ता के बारे में कई शिकायतें मिली थीं। कहा गया था कि इस सस्ते टैबलेट लैपटाप की बैटरी, प्रोसेसर और आर्किटेक्चर संतोषजनक नहीं है। अधिकारी ने कहा कि इसमें सुधार किया गया है। बैटरी की क्षमता जहां डेढ़ गुना बढ़ाई गई है, वही प्रोसेसर को 366 मेगा हर्ट्ज से बढ़ाकर 700 मेगा हर्ट्ज कर दिया गया है। इसके आर्किटेक्चर को भी बेहतर बनाया गया है जबकि कीमत 2,276 रुपए ही रखी गई है। उन्नत आकाश अप्रैल तक उपलब्ध होगा। उन्नत आकाश की क्षमता में पहले के मुकाबले तीन गुना वृद्धि की गई है। साथ ही इसपर यूट्यूब से भी डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है। इसकी मेमोरी क्षमता में भी वृद्धि की गई है।

आकाश के बारे में आ रही शिकायतों के बारे में हालांकि एक वर्ग का मानना है कि यह कुछ बड़ी कंपनियों की साजिश का नतीजा हो सकता है। सात इंच के इस टच स्क्रीन टैबलेट लैपटाप में हार्ड डिस्क तो नहीं है लेकिन लिनक्स आधारित इस उपकरण को 32 जीबी के बाहरी हार्ड ड्राइव से जोड़ा जा सकता है।

What you lose when you 'buy' an education

The gruesome murder of a Chennai schoolteacher by her 15-year-old student should serve as a wake-up call to educators and parents to focus on what is missing in the way we approach schooling.

Aruna Sankaranarayanan

Shock. Outrage. Fear. The brutal murder of a schoolteacher by a 15-year-old student in a classroom is chilling to the bone. While this atrocious act evokes strong emotions and will rightly be condemned by educators and parents, we simply cannot give vent to our emotions and then carry on as usual. Rather, this gruesome and tragic incident should serve as a wake-up call for us to take corrective action collectively and collaboratively. Both educators and parents have to respond to this alarming and heinous act before another person becomes a victim of unchecked and uncontrolled teenage angst. If we fail to act in a constructive manner, a dystopian future where children have to pass through scanners and their bags X-rayed before they enter schools that have CCTV's surveying every nook and cranny is not so far away.

First and foremost, every school should have a qualified counsellor who is accessible to students, teachers and parents. While the counsellor may address problems when they arise, she must also be an integral part of the school — otherwise teachers and students are unlikely to confide in her. In order to facilitate this process, a school in Chennai has sagely allotted Value Education classes to counsellors. This makes sense as students can be taught valuable and practical skills to help them deal with their confusions and conflicts. Value Education curricula need to be revamped to address real issues that students contend with. Programmes on anger management can be introduced as early as Grade I so that children learn acceptable and unacceptable ways of expressing negative emotions. Through stories, role-plays and activities, schools may impart social problem-solving skills and inculcate empathy.

Teacher training

Schools should also invest more heavily and wholeheartedly in teacher training. One-time workshops are not as beneficial as ongoing mentoring programmes where teachers can give and receive feedback on specific strategies. More experienced teachers may also guide their younger colleagues through buddy programmes. Teachers should be trained to identify children at risk of various psychological problems. Teaching is, indeed, a very taxing profession that is not accorded the status it deserves. Instead of working in isolation, managements should encourage teachers to work collaboratively on lesson plans, behaviour management policies



LIFE LESSONS: Students interact in a high school classroom in Bangalore. If we want a holistic education, students have to be equipped with skills and techniques to cope with life's strains and stresses.

— PHOTO: V. SREENIVASA MURTHY

and co-curricular activities. If schools have regular and frequent staff meetings, problems are more likely to come to the fore before they grow out of hand.

Another aspect that is seriously lacking in many schools is an open channel of communication between parents and teachers. Parents are as much to blame as schools in this regard as parents often make unreasonable demands. Further, some parents view "education" as a commodity that can be purchased and expect their children to be served like customers. This consumerist view of education is counterproductive as teachers feel belittled in the process and do not receive the respect that is due to them. As child psychologist Tamar Chansky points out, "children will pick up on any conflict between the parents and the school and will side with the parents, thus devaluing the school..." Schools may also have a grievance cell where thorny issues between students and teachers are raised and addressed confidentially.

The fact that media have infiltrated every aspect of our lives is another issue that we need to contend with. While there are immense benefits to digital devices, parents and students need to be

cautioned about their ill-effects too. In addition to limiting television viewing to strictly not more than 30 minutes on school days, parents should also encourage children to self-monitor the content they view. If children happen to watch inappropriate content, it is best that it is followed up by a discussion. Almost every school introduces Computer Science as early as primary school; if schools can allot at least one period a week to Media Studies, children can be taught to discern and critique the information that bombards them from various channels.

Shun the utilitarian model

We, as a society, have embraced a very utilitarian model of education. For most Indians, the main aim of education is to get a good job that pays a lucrative salary. As a result, parents put undue pressure on their wards and teachers to obtain stellar results on examinations. Schools have also succumbed to this unidimensional perspective and advertise the number of rank holders and professional college placements. In the process, education has lost its soul.

The cultural critic Neil Postman writes, "There is no question that list-

lessness, ennui, and even violence in school are related to the fact that students have no useful role to play in society." We need to reinvigorate our curricula so that students see meaning and purpose beyond fulfilling parental ambition in schooling. Is the goal of education simply to balance chemical equations and factor polynomials? In addition to learning literature, mathematics and science, children have to feel empowered and not enervated by going to school.

Students also have to be equipped with skills and techniques to cope with life's strains and stresses. If we want a holistic education, we cannot ignore our interests and emotions as feelings are an integral aspect of being human. Both in word and deed, we, as a society, should learn to be more emotionally sensitive and responsive to each other. Our education, in turn, will reflect our humaneness and humanity.

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Crossing The Finish Line

If the government's social policies are to be effective, it must look at the last mile problem

Sunil Khilnani



The 'last mile' is a term of trade in the telecom business – a metaphor to describe that difficult final link in the chain of communication needed to establish connectivity between each individual household and the network highway. Getting that link established can be difficult because it involves spanning real and often difficult terrain, cutting through highly local environments. It's the stretch of distance where the technological solutions, universal and context-free in form, must immerse themselves in the busy tangle of the actually existing world, the haphazard landscape of a real neighbourhood.

The 'last mile' is also a perfect and telling metaphor for the difficulties that face social policy initiatives. It identifies the most difficult step in turning a good policy idea, often invested with resources, into an effective social outcome.

For, our main problem in India today doesn't lie in a paucity of policy ideas or goals. Indeed, Delhi is thronged with people advocating policy fixes and solutions, and there is little real dispute about the goals we should be pursuing. Nor is the main problem the lack of funds: government revenues, made rich by steady growth, are now freely on tap, regularly released to fund large-scale social policy schemes.

The core problem, in domain after domain of social policy, lies in the inability to bridge that last

mile – to translate intention, law and resources into outcomes that improve individual opportunities. Take for instance the case of primary education. We have fine legislation in place that establishes a right to basic education. We have quite reasonable levels of funding to build schools. We are even doing pretty well with getting children into the school buildings, and onto enrolment registers.

And yet, as we know from a series of recent reports, the gains across India's school-bound young in literacy and numeracy are shockingly poor and depressing. It's that last mile – delivering the actual classroom lessons that improve learning and the capacity to

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learn – which is the weakest link.

It would be easy to point to parallel examples in health, policing, housing, where major initiatives, heralded not least because they promise to be scalable, are blunted by reality. Too often, policy elites respond to such blunting by resorting to belief in a single, 'silver bullet' fix. So some advocate transferable vouchers enabling parents to choose schools for their children, others public-private partnerships, while still others focus on e-governance or



Will they have something to write home about?

wish to generalise methods such as randomised trials in order to evaluate policy options.

But such affirmations of big policy principles can prompt commitments that have diverting consequences. Because what we really need to focus on is not the abstract design of our pet policies themselves – the clarity and consistency of their formulation, the resources put behind them, or even their

'all things being equal' evaluations – but rather the diverse, dense and often subversive ecologies of that last mile that stands between individual Indians and the policy promises of government. It's the social ecologies of the local habitats in which most Indians live that need more explication and understanding.

For it is over the space of that last mile that all the best policy

ideas, the best legislation, the most generously funded schemes get altogether subverted. That's why we need to focus on what happens in the classroom, the hospital ward, the police interrogation desk, the courtroom. And we can only begin to gain that focus when we get more accurate, textured accounts and reports about what is actually happening in them.

Then we might see the precise ways in which money is siphoned off, offices misused, things covered up and disguised – accountability undermined, responsibility obfuscated. But sadly, few are interested in devoting the time and effort to finding out and tracking the precise details of how these subversions occur – and certainly not the policy brokers who would prefer to look at the world from on high.

Perhaps it is time to inflect – or at least supplement – the flow of policymaking, so that we view it less as a form of social truth handed down from above, which merely has to be propelled downwards to reach everyone. Better might be to experiment with tools and implements that, deployed at the local level, show for instance how thin accountability subverts fine policy. So the use of Right To Information legislation to yield documents that can show discrepancies between what was supposed to have been done by public officials and what actually was done helps to make people aware of the 'last mile' barrier – and such tools need to be spread more widely.

Here, experimentation is also needed, especially in a society where most cannot read or write. So, for instance, the use of documentary methods like participatory videos, where local people are given access to cheap video cameras in order to film interactions with officials, or between teachers and schoolchildren, can be a powerful tool in creating documents that reveal to people themselves why that 'last mile' is not closed up.

As one starts to look closer, one sees a range of obstructions and sources of disconnect which systematically keep citizens beyond the 'last mile'. Closing that gap in turn needs a range of micro-policies: to deal with corruption, impunity, abuse of power. It needs a culture of record and documentation by citizens as a critical defence against power.

The writer is director of the India Institute, King's College, London.

Supercontinent Amasia to form in 50m yrs?

Australia May Merge With India As All Continents Could Collide To Create A Huge Landmass

Washington: In the coming 50 to 200 million years, Australia may merge with India while all the continents may collide each other to form one massive supercontinent, scientists have claimed.

Geologists at Yale University in the US predicted that the Americas and Asia will drift northward, closing off the Arctic Ocean and Caribbean Sea to merge around the North Pole and form a supercontinent called Amasia.

The research, published on Thursday in the journal *Nature*, is a vivid reminder that the plates of the Earth's crust are always moving and that one very far-off day, the world will be a very different place. "This would lead to a collision with Europe and Asia, more or less at the present day North Pole," Yale geologist Ross Mitchell was quoted as saying by the *National Post*.

"Australia would also



ON COLLISION COURSE

most likely continue its northward motion and snuggle up next to India."

The geologists believe that supercontinents – massive continents formed by other continents squishing together over millions of years – form at 90 degrees from each other. Mitchell and his colleagues analyzed ancient rocks to create a map of their locations around the globe and used it to map how the Earth's mantle causes

continents to move over time.

They found that formation of supercontinents follow a pattern. The last supercontinent Pangea – formed 300 million years ago – was preceded by three others, Mitchell said. Pangea, where giant reptiles and dinosaurs arose, formed at 90 degrees to the Rodinia, the supercontinent before it, which in turn formed at 90 degrees to the supercontinent before it, Nuna. PT

Google Working on 'Home Entertainment Device'

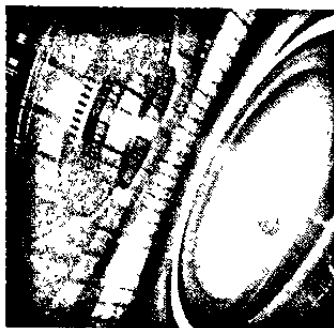
**DAVID STREITFELD
& NICOLE PERLROTH**
SAN FRANCISCO

Google is developing a home entertainment device, according to people with knowledge of the company's plans.

The device, which exists as a prototype and will eventually be sold as a branded item to consumers, is the company's most significant venture into hardware. While its initial purpose will be for streaming music, its eventual use could be much larger.

Larry Page, who last year took the reins of the company he co-founded, has been intent on moving into hardware. To compete with Apple and Amazon, Google thinks it has to have greater control over production.

Next week, Google is likely to complete its acquisition of the handset maker Motorola Mo-



bility for \$12.5 billion. That purchase puts Google into direct competition with the phone makers that use its Android software as well as Apple and its iPhone. The leader in desktop search, Google did not want to be left behind as computing went mobile.

Motorola, which made an earlier generation of home entertainment systems before stumbling, is the likely

manufacturer of the new device. A Google spokesman declined to comment.

While Google has talked openly about its designs on consumers' living rooms, news that the device was becoming a reality surfaced last week in an application the search giant filed with the Federal Communications Commission. In the application, Google said it would begin testing a device it labeled simply an "entertainment device."

The device will have Bluetooth and Wi-Fi and, as Google noted in the application, it will "connect to other home electronics equipment." The application, which was first reported by the tech website GigaOM, said Google would test the device for stability in employees' homes through the summer.

Analysts are wary of Google's venture into the notoriously cutthroat hardware field. Apple has loyal, sometimes fanatical followers, and enviably rich profit margins. Amazon is willing to lose money on its devices and make it up on sales of content. Most other hardware makers have a much tougher slog.

But Google is seen as having

little choice.

"Google's future depends on extending its influence beyond the PC screen," said James McQuivey, a Forrester analyst. "They've made tremendous progress in the mobile phone business, but their attempts to do the same thing with the TV and tablet flopped because the hardware manufacturers they relied on were not able to move fast enough."

But McQuivey noted that controlling manufacturing meant calling the shots. "It's quite telling that Amazon introduced its tablet two months ago and is already the second tablet maker in the market," he said. Google's larger goal, a person closely tied to the project said, was to connect everything in the home to the Internet, including light bulbs, speakers and TV sets. The initial version will all be controlled from an Android device. The first version of Google TV was considered a disaster, both internally and with partners.

Guerrino De Luca, chief executive of Logitech, which manufactured the Google TV set-top box, has acknowledged publicly that Google TV was "a mistake of implementation of a gigantic nature." —NYT

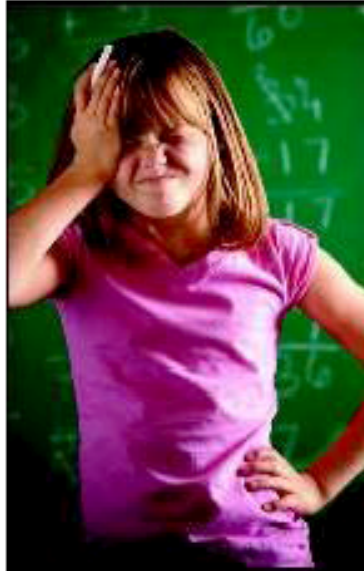
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UK teachers, pupils lagging in maths

London: UK's universities and graduates have their reputation under threat as substandard maths education in schools has led to a 'crisis' in England's number skills, a report has claimed.

According to a report titled "Solving the Maths Problem", published by the education lobby group RSA, formally called the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, Universities are dropping maths from degree courses because students and their lecturers cannot cope with it.

Decades of substandard maths education in schools has led to a 'crisis' in England's number skills, threatening the future of the economy the report pointed out. Universities are being forced to dumb down degree courses requiring the use of maths, including sciences, economics, psychology and social sciences.



NUMBER CRISIS

"Universities are sidelining quantitative and mathematical content because students and staff lack the requisite confidence and ability," the Daily Mail reported. English universities are 'not keeping pace' with international standards, the report added. ¶¶

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Indian IT ups green quotient

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi/Bangalore: How green are our IT firms? A Greenpeace report finds they are improving. In its latest report – called Cool IT – the environment activist group identifies 21 global IT giants that meet their basic criteria, and then ranks them on the basis of how much they are doing to keep the planet clean and green.

The list, which is topped by Google, has three Indian firms. Wipro is at the 11th spot, HCL is at 16th and TCS at 19th. The last version of the report had only Wipro on the list, and the one before that had no Indian firm.

The Indian firms are seemingly better than IT giants like Facebook and Apple, which Greenpeace has not included in the list because their “efforts do not meet the leaderboard criteria”.

The Cool IT Leaderboard tracks the progress of the world’s largest IT companies towards the achievement of economy-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions of 15% by 2020. Companies are evaluated for leadership in three key areas: Efforts to offer economy-wide technological climate solutions that contribute to global greenhouse gas reductions (40% weightage); initiatives to reduce their own global warming emissions (25% weightage); and active engagement in political advocacy and support for science-based climate and energy policies (35% weightage).

Srimathi Shivashankar, associate VP for diversity & sustainability in HCL Technologies, said: “HCL is excited to be included in the leaderboard for first time this year and for being ranked the highest amongst all the Indian companies in offering climate solutions.”

Google scored 53 points out of 100. Cisco, at second spot, has 49 points. Ericsson and Fujitsu share the third position with 48 points each.

“Technology giants have a real opportunity to use their power and influence to change

ECO-TECH

how we produce and use energy,” said Greenpeace IT analyst Gary Cook. “The IT sector might like to consider itself forward-thinking, but it is keeping far too quiet while the dirty energy industry continues to exert undue influence.”

Wipro scored 5 points out of 40 for IT climate solutions, 17 out of 25 for IT energy impact and 11 for political advocacy. HCL scored 11 points for IT climate solutions, 4 for IT energy impact and 6 for political advocacy. For TCS, the points were 4 for IT climate solutions, 4 for IT energy impact and 3 for political advocacy.

Greenpeace said that its report is part of the group’s wider campaign to challenge the IT industry to use its innovative skills and ingenuity to lead the way to scalable solutions aimed to reduce global emissions.