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shortstories

NO FINAL CALL ON JEE COMMON COUNSELLING

NEW DELHI: Speculation about whether there will be 'common counselling' for admission to the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and the National Institutes of Technology (NITs) this year has still not been put to rest. The possibility of whether a 'common counselling' can be implemented in 2014 was discussed at a meeting attended by representatives from the human resource development (HRD) ministry, the JEE Advanced Committee, IITs, NITs, the CBSE (which conducts JEE Main) and the National Informatics Centre (that develops the software for the counselling) last week. Sources in the HRD ministry told HT Education that a final call is yet to be taken on the issue. "During the meeting, the NIC experts said that the logic applied in the NIT counselling can be extended to the IITs for common counselling. However, some IIT professors pointed out some anamolies in the software developed by NIC. This is why there may not be common counselling this time but a final call on this is yet to be taken by the secretary, department of higher education. NIC has been asked to revert with a solution. There could be sequential counselling too, where the IITs conduct the first two rounds and NITs conduct the rest; or there could be a joint counselling, where both parties will be coordinating the efforts. The idea of common counselling is to reduce those vacancies where people tend to occupy two seats. There are cases of students who bag seats in not-so-popular courses at the IITs, and they also get seats in NITs in sought-after courses. Such students hold on to both seats and give up one only later, leaving vacant seats," says an HRD ministry official.

Single test for IIT-JEE

The Human Resource Ministry of India has planned to introduce a joint entrance test for JEE (Mains) and Advanced from 2015. There are many pros and cons of this but students shouldn't lose hope and give it their best, says AAKASH CHAUDHARY

The story of the merger of the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Mains and JEE Advanced has created ripples in the engineering sector and a fair bit of confusion amongst the students and parents. The Human Resource ministry has now decided to merge the two separate selection procedures for the engineering students into one for the year 2015. At present, the scores of JEE Mains are counted for admissions into the Government funded technical schools and the top scorers in this exam aspiring for Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) appear for JEE Advanced. According to the latest admission format given by the Government, all engineering colleges will have to conduct common counselling for students in 2014. Common counselling means a student will receive only one offer from the IITs and National Institutes of Technology (NITs). A second option will be given only if the candidate rejects the first offer.

This is a step taken by the Government in order to ensure all seats in these institutes are fully utilised and aren't left vacant. As per the current admission policy, the candidates get offers from both IITs and NITS, admission process in the IITs start early so the students get into any course even if it's not of their choice. But if they get the course they want at one of the NITs, they may give up the IIT seat and by this time it's too late for the IITs to offer this seat to the next student in the list. This is how there are many vacant seats which get wasted every year.

PREPARATION STRATEGY

The joint exam decision can prove to be an important step towards the betterment of JEE aspirants and help them to get their dream jobs. But at the same time, a student needs to prepare comprehensively with focus on a single JEE examination. Since JEE is one of the toughest engineering entrance examinations of the country, it has always demanded streamlining the preparation strategy in a positive direction. Now as a single exam is being planned for IITs and NITs, every single student looking for an engineering seat should build a strong foundation of concepts, comprehensive study and develop skills to tackle typical/twisted numerical problems that need calculations as well as a good aptitude. Therefore, one needs to be thorough with theory pertaining to each topic, test the understanding of the theory by solving short answers and assertion reason based questions.

Although it's going to be a single exam, the aspirant should be able to solve a good number of subjective type problems as well.

This would help in developing even deeper understanding of the subject. A student must practice MCQs to build up speed and accuracy.

PROS OF A SINGLE EXAM

- A single exam will reduce pressure and will increase focus.
- The two tier system had a major drawback as students had to perform exceptionally well in board exams and also in JEE Mains and Advanced.

We have examples of students getting 90 per cent or more marks in a particular board but not being able to make it to the advanced qualifier's list.

- Many seats went vacant in the last session just because students hold one seat and wait for another. The single exam will reduce the chances of such an occurrence.

As a single exam is being planned for IITs and NITs, every student should build a strong foundation of concepts, through study and develop skills to tackle twisted numerical problems that need calculations as well as a good aptitude

CONS OF A SINGLE EXAM

- If exams will be set as per the pattern of All India Engineering Entrance Examination (AIEEE), then it'll make students free form variable pattern of IIT-JEE (this will be good for a student looking for AIEEE but not for a JEE aspirant). If exams will be set as per the pattern of IIT-JEE, then it will create more pressure on students. In short, variable patterns of IIT-JEE will not be good for student of AIEEE.
- In a single entrance system for so many seats, the consistent quality and implementation of an error free system is highly questionable.
- IIT is an internationally renowned institute and it must extract the best of talent but this will not be possible on a single platform.
- If IITs maintain the toughness of paper then those universities which are low lying in ranking get all students with negative marks. This will pose questions on the university maintaining its morale in placement of students.
- A single test heightens the psychological burden of students because any mistake or mishap will waste their entire year.
- Students must be perfect in each and every topic, sub-topic and all concepts in the entire two years because if questions are from his/her weak areas, it will affect his/her whole academic career and upcoming life.

A common exam can create more pressure on students as now he/she must perform her best in one go. If for any reason, it does not go well as per the expectation, then the student will not have any alternative for the year. Earlier the student had many opportunities of writing the entrance tests. The chances of getting a seat were high in their desirable engineering college. If a student lost out in one exam, there was hope. This is no cause to feel disheartened. With proper coaching, timely preparation and being armed with a determined zeal to excel, students stand a fair chance to crack the JEE at one shot.

The writer is Aakash Chaudhry, Director Aakash Educational Services Ltd.

India and New Zealand pledge NZ$500,000 each for research

study abroad

GREAT BRITAIN

Harini Sriram
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New Zealand is more than just its willowing mountains and captivating landscape. And if you have been dreaming of studying in the country, after watching the Lord Of The Rings trilogy on loop, read on.

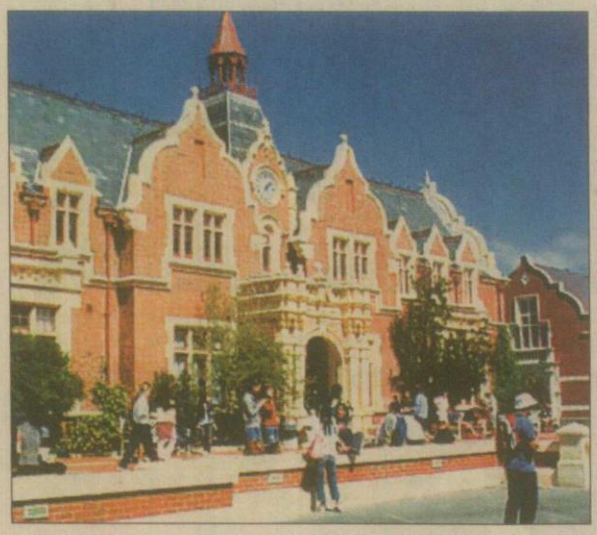
To encourage education ties between India and New Zealand, a joint call for research proposals for Indian and New Zealand academics has been made by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and Education New Zealand (ENZ), a government agency that promotes education in New Zealand.

This is the first time that ENZ is working on a joint research grant. Under the India New Zealand Education Council (INZEC) framework, both countries have agreed to commit NZ$500,000 (over ₹25 crore) each.

The announcement made on the occasion of Waitangi Day, New Zealand's national day that was celebrated recently, seeks to increase research collaboration across a range of areas including food security and agriculture, community development and innovation, health, environment and sustainability, to name a few.

> I'M DELIGHTED THAT THIS NEW INITIATIVE WILL BRING KIWI AND INDIAN RESEARCHERS TOGETHER AND HELP IN KNOWLEDGE CREATION
>
> MICHAEL APPLETON, new zealand's acting high commissioner to india

Applications are open to research students and academic staff employed in a tertiary education institution or recognised centre of academic research in New Zealand, and all public education institutions in India which are eligible to be funded by UGC. The maximum funding available for each project from each funding body is the equivalent of NZ$50,000 and this may cover expenses for project-related consumables (up to a maximum of 15% of the total project budget), equipment (up to a maximum of NZ$2000), travel, accommodation, etc.



The grant seeks to increase research collaboration across a range of areas including food security, agriculture and environment

Applications should be submitted on or before 5pm, March 28, 2014. Send an email attachment to india@enz.govt.nz and ugcic2@gmail.com. The project starting date must be on or before June 1, 2014 and the project must be completed within 18 months.

As Ziena Jalil, regional director, ENZ, points out, "This call for proposals is part of the activity we undertake in India through the INZEC initiative which was announced by both our prime ministers in 2011. All New Zealand universities feature in the top 500 globally, and as a country, we are highly regarded internationally in areas such as agriculture and food processing, tourism, etc."

New Zealand is emerging as a much sought-after higher education destination and India is the second largest contributor of international students to New Zealand (after China) with more than 11,000 students from India studying in New Zealand. Student visas issued to Indian nationals seeking to study in New Zealand increased by more than 10% last year, and more than doubled in the month of December 2013, making India one of the fastest growing student markets for New Zealand. It is also not an expensive option, with the cost of living for students around NZ$15,000 a year.

Michael Appleton, New Zealand's acting high commissioner to India, says, "Education is a growing and exciting component of our bilateral relationship, with the number of Indian students in New Zealand increasing almost 200% since 2007. I'm delighted that this new initiative will see Kiwi and Indian researchers working side-by-side and contributing to knowledge creation in both our countries."

In order to encourage more Indian students, New Zealand has also made changes to its work and visa policies for international students. According to Nathanael Mackay, area manager, Immigration New Zealand, "We have increased the number of work hours our international students are entitled to. All tertiary level international students enrolled in a course with at least one academic year will be allowed to work up to 20 hours per week during each semester break/vacation."

For more details on research proposals, visit http://www.victoria.ac.nz/hppi/centres/new-zealand-india-research-institute or http://www.ugc.ac.in/ugc_ic.aspx

INDIAN ACADEMICIANS ON TOP

CLUB Academicians of Indian-origin are taking up key roles in some of world's best universities

Vanita Srivastava

The club of Indian-origin academicians taking up key roles in the best international institutes is getting bigger and Sanjeev Kulkarni, an Indian-American, recently appointed as dean of the Princeton University Graduate School is its latest member.

Last month, Indian-American professor Rakesh Khurana joined the prestigious club after being appointed dean of Harvard College.

In 2010, Nitin Nohria made the country proud after he became the first Indian-origin head of the prestigious Harvard business school. In the same year, University of Chicago's Booth School of Business named Sunil Kumar as its dean.

"This is a natural consequence of the inflow of Indian-origin academicians in the US universities some 20-25 years ago. Their progression in their respective institutes is now reflected in their career growth," Kumar told HT.

Sri Zaheer, dean at the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management believes the US provides a meritocratic environment that has helped immigrants from different nationalities to rise up to leadership positions. "I hope that in this process all of us who have a soft spot for our home countries can act as bridges, particularly in India where lot needs to be done in the education space," Zaheer said.

■ Sanjeev Kulkarni (2nd from left), an Indian-American who was recently appointed as dean of the Princeton University Graduate School FILE PHOTO

Soumitra Dutta, who took over as the dean of Cornell University's management school in 2012, takes pride in being an IITian. Although opening a campus in India does not figure in his immediate plans, he wants to build stronger links with researchers and thinkers in India in future.

"This trend has born because Indians are skilled, hard working and are becoming increasingly global and America is a country that judges you by your skills, not your background," Dutta said.

"Some of the best Indian students come to the US for higher education, particularly for research. India needs to have more research universities, says Narayanamurti Venkatesh, who became the dean of School of Engineering and Applied Sciences in 1998 and dean of Physical Sciences at Harvard in 2003.

TOP TEACHERS

- In 2010, Nitin Nohria became the first Indian-origin head of the prestigious Harvard business school
- Indian-American professor Rakesh Khurana was appointed dean of Harvard College
- In 2010, University of Chicago's Booth School of Business named Sunil Kumar as its dean
- Narayanamurti Venkatesh became the dean of School of Engineering and Applied Sciences in 1998 and dean of Physical Sciences at Harvard in 2003

Scholarships on demand

STATING THAT the money allocated fore ducational scholarships is going unutilised, Planning Commission's Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia on Sunday said the scholarships should be made demand driven.

"Scholarships should be demand determined so that those who rightfully need the help get it," Ahluwalia said at a seminar here today.

He said ministries often tell the plan panel about funds allocated for scholarships going unclaimed, and hence, there is a need to look into the issue.

The ministries have in the past asked the planning commission to adopt various approaches, including a community focused one, so that resources reach the beneficiaries.

External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid, who also spoke at the seminar, said there is a need to extend the sops given to the minority-concentrated districts to towns with heavy composition of notified minority communities elsewhere. Ahluwalia conceded that there is no such scheme at present and said the panel will seriously look into matter. PTI

Business Line ND 12.02.2014 p-20

SCIENCE

Now, listen in to your bacteria

A chip that monitors bacteria signals could have medical applications

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New York, February 11

Here comes a chip that can be used for a most unusual application – the study of signalling in bacterial colonies.

Researchers at Columbia University have developed a chip based on complementary metal-oxide-semiconductor (CMOS) technology that enables them to electrochemically image the signalling molecules from bacteria.

In effect, they have developed chips that 'listen' to bacteria.

"This is an exciting new application for CMOS technology that would provide new insights into how biofilms are formed," said Ken Shepard, professor of electrical engineering and biomedical engineering at Columbia Engineering, Columbia University.

To cut infection rates

"Disrupting biofilm formation has important implications in public health in reducing infection rates," said Shepard.

This is the first time integrated circuits have been used for such an application – imaging small molecules electrochemically in a multicellular structure.

'Active' glass slide

The team made an integrated circuit, a chip that is an 'active' glass slide – a slide that not only forms a solid-support for the bacterial colony but also 'listens' to the bacteria as they talk to each other.

According to Lars Dietrich, assistant professor of biological sciences at Columbia University, cells mediate their physiological activities using secreted molecules.

The team looked specifically at phenazines, which are secreted metabolites that control gene expression.

They found that the bacterial colonies produced a phenazine gradient that is likely to be of physiological significance.

May be fitted in catheters

A potential application of this would be to integrate such chips into medical devices that are common sites of biofilm formation, such as catheters, and then use the chips to limit bacterial colonisation.

The next step is to develop a larger chip that would enable larger bacterial colonies to be imaged at higher resolutions, added the study published in the journal *Nature Communications*.

Publication: The Times Of India Delhi;Date: Feb 12, 2014;Section: Times Global;Page: 30;

'Indian students feel unwelcome in Britain'

62% Of Desi PhD Candidates Echo Sentiments Of Other Foreign Pupils, According To A Survey

Kounteya Sinha | TNN

London: A majority of Indian students have admitted to feeling highly unwelcome in the United Kingdom.

A study of the attitudes of 3,100 international students by the National Union of Students (NUS) has revealed almost 50% feel the UK government was either "not welcoming" or "not welcoming at all towards overseas students". The NUS is a confederation of students' unions in the UK.

The UK earns £7.9 billion a year from international students. By 2024, one in every three outbound higher education students across the globe is expected to be from India and China.

Figures revealed on Tuesday showed the non-welcoming attitude was most pronounced for PhD students. Almost 62% of Indian students doing their PhD in the UK felt unwanted, besides 64.5% from Japan and 63% from Nigeria.

Students from India, Pakistan and Nigeria have also admitted advising their friends not to study in the UK.

Asked what bothered them the most, 40% cited moves to get landlords to check on their legal status, while 74% said introducing a National Health Service levy would make it impossible to study in the UK.

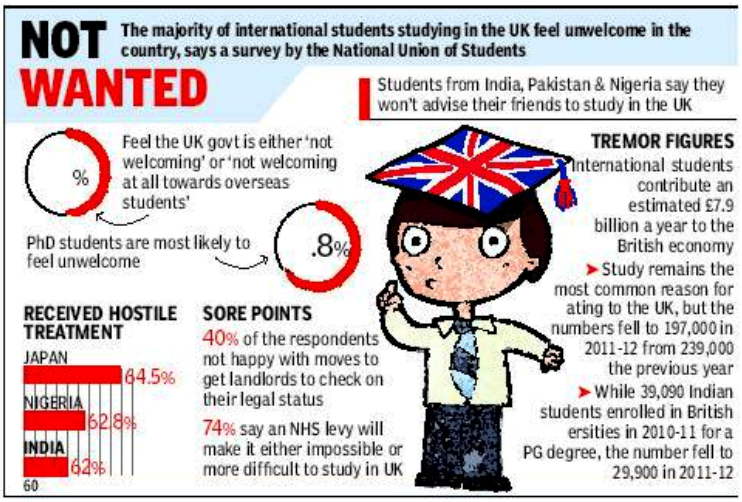
England is already witnessing a sharp tumble in the number of Indian students visiting its universities for higher education.

Latest data shows between 2010-11 and 2011-12, over 10,000 fewer Indian students travelled to English shores to pursue a post-graduation degree. In percentage points, there was a nearly 25% fall in the number of Indian students studying a postgraduate course. While 39,090 Indian students enrolled in British universities in 2010-11 for a PG degree, the number fell to 29,900 in 2011-12.

Even after the drop, Indian and Chinese students make up almost 35% of all non-EU domicile students in the UK.

Prime minister David Cameron and home secretary Theresa May have pledged to reduce net migration to below 100,000 before the next election in 2015.

Study remains the most common reason for migrating to the UK, but the numbers fell to 197,000 from 239,000 the previous year.

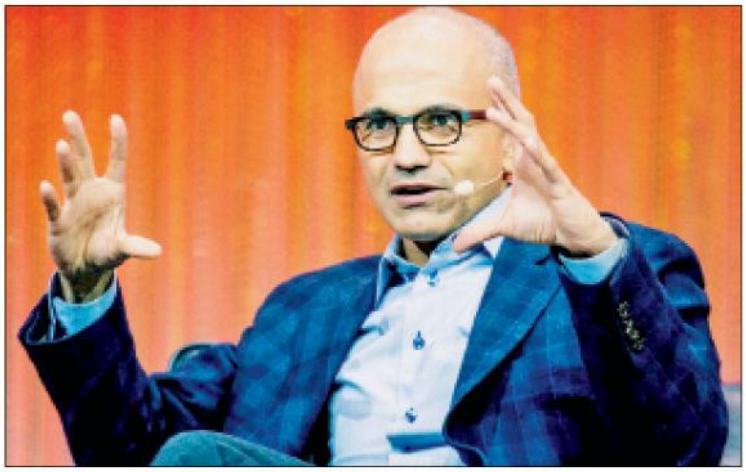


कैसे रचें आविष्कार की संस्कृति

दुनिया में अपने झंडे गाड़ रहे भारत के तकनीकी सूरमा यहां अपना जौहर नहीं दिखा पाते

मिलिंद देवड़ा / प्रवीण चक्रवर्ती

PTI



भारत छोड़ अमेरिका की क्यों हो जाती हैं सत्य नडेला जैसी प्रतिभाएं

भारत के सत्य नडेला का दुनिया की टॉप टेक्नोलॉजी कंपनियों में गिनी जाने वाली माइक्रोसॉफ्ट का सीईओ चुना जाना हम सबके लिए, खासकर सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्री होने के नाते मेरे लिए, गर्व की बात है। नडेला का माइक्रोसॉफ्ट का पहला प्रफेशनल सीईओ बनना एक उपलब्धि तो है ही, साथ ही इससे इस बात की तस्दीक भी होती है कि भारत दुनिया में सबसे अच्छे तकनीकी दिमाग पैदा करता है। लेकिन, वजह क्या है कि ये प्रतिभाएं भारत में नहीं, देश के बाहर ही फलती-फूलती हैं? क्यों हमारे प्रौद्योगिकी विशेषज्ञों को अपनी

> सिलिकॉन वैली में जोखिम उठाने की प्रवृत्ति बहुतायत से पाई जाती है। इसके चलते ही वहां अनूठे आविष्कार सामने आते हैं

प्रतिभा निखारने और कामयाबी हासिल करने के लिए देश छोड़ना पड़ता है?

हमारे यहां इन्फोसिस, विप्रो, टीसीएस जैसी शानदार आईटी सर्विस कंपनियां हैं, लेकिन नई खोजें करने वाली दुनिया की एक भी अग्रणी कंपनी खड़ी करने में हम अब तक कामयाब नहीं हुए। आविष्कार की संस्कृति पनपने के लिए आखिर किस चीज की जरूरत होती है? ऐसा क्या है जो हमारे युवाओं में कुछ एकदम नया कर गुजरने का जज्बा भर सकता है?

दो नजरियों का फर्क

सच पूछें तो आविष्कार और जोखिम एक ही सिक्के के दो पहलू हैं। आविष्कार, यानी नई राह खोलना और आगे-आगे चलना। आमतौर पर नई शुरुआत का अर्थ ही है बेहिसाब जोखिम। बनी-बनाई लीक पर चलने के मुकाबले नई राह बनाने में जोखिम स्वाभाविक रूप से जुड़े होते हैं। और जोखिम जितना बड़ा होता है, नाकाम होने के खतरे भी उतने ही बड़े होते हैं। ऐसे में अहम सवाल यह है कि कोई देश और समाज नाकामी को किस तरह देखता है। इसे वहां नीची नजर से देखा जाता है, या इसके साथ जुड़ी कोशिश करने की भावना को अहमियत दी जाती है। यही वह बिंदु है जहां पश्चिमी समाजों का नजरिया हमारे नजरिए से बिल्कुल अलग है।

भारत में हम किसी को नतीजों की परवाह किए बिना जोखिम उठाने के लिए प्रोत्साहित नहीं करते। हमारे यहां माता-पिता अपने बच्चों के लिए सुरक्षित, सफल जिंदगी चाहते हैं। वे नहीं चाहते कि उनके बच्चे किसी ऐसे काम में हाथ डालने की सोचें, जिसमें आज तक किसी ने हाथ न आजमाया हो। उन्हें डर होता है कि ऐसा करके उनके बच्चे असफल लोगों की श्रेणी में खड़े हो सकते हैं। उनके बच्चों ने जोखिम उठाया, इसमें उन्हें गर्व करने लायक कोई बात नहीं दिखती। नतीजा यह कि बच्चों में भी रिस्क उठाने की प्रवृत्ति कम ही देखने को मिलती है। इसके विपरीत दुनिया में तकनीकी आविष्कारों का गढ़ कही जाने वाली अमेरिका की सिलिकॉन वैली में जोखिम उठाने की प्रवृत्ति बहुतायत से पाई जाती है।

वहां नाकामी को भी स्वीकार्य माना जाता है, जिसके चलते अनूठे आविष्कार सामने आते हैं। रिपोर्टें बताती हैं कि हर सफल प्रौद्योगिकी कंपनी के पीछे कम से कम 15 कंपनियां ऐसी हैं, जिन्होंने कोशिश की और नाकाम हुईं। वहां किसी का यह कहना कि मैं एक नाकाम उद्यमी हूं, गुनाह नहीं माना जाता ।

हमें एक पूरा परिवेश बनाना होगा जो दुनिया बदल देने वाली नई खोजों का साथ देता हो। जोखिम और नाकामी की स्वीकार्यता इस परिवेश के महत्वपूर्ण अंग हैं, लेकिन यह तो महज शुरुआत है। नए विचार और विलक्षण तकनीकी कौशल वाले एक इंजीनियर के लिए सबसे पहली बाधा हार के डर को पार करना है। इसके बाद ऐसे उद्यमी को पूंजी उपलब्ध कराने का रिस्क लेने को तैयार निवेशकों की जरूरत होती है। विचार और पूंजी के इस उद्यमी को अपने जैसी ही सोच-समझ वाले सक्षम लोगों की एक टीम चाहिए होती है। प्रतिभाशाली लोगों को आरामदेह नौकरी छोड़कर एक नए सपने से जुड़ने के लिए राजी करना बहुत मुश्किल है। फ्लिपकार्ट, इनमोबी जैसी कंपनियों की कामयाबी के उदाहरण से धीरे-धीरे स्थिति बदल सकती है। लेकिन हमें अभी ऐसी बहुत सी कहानियों की जरूरत है।

जरूरत इस बात की भी है कि सिर्फ नतीजों को न देखा जाए बल्कि इन उद्यमियों के समूचे सफर को लोगों की नजर में लाया जाए। उदाहरण के लिए इनमोबी ने, जो कि दुनिया की दूसरी सबसे बड़ी मोबाइल ऐड कंपनी है, 2006 में मुंबई में एक छोटे से कान्फ्रेंस रूम से अपनी शुरुआत की थी। उसके पास एक समय अपने कर्मचारियों को वेतन देने के लिए भी पैसे नहीं थे। यह तालाबंदी के बहुत करीब पहुंच गई थी, लेकिन इसके संचालकों की दृढ़ता और सकारात्मक सोच ने इसे चालू रखा।

जरूरत इस यात्रा का यशगान करने की है, न कि सिर्फ यह बताने की कि यह विश्व पटल पर एक कामयाब कंपनी है।

बस, जरा सा बदलाव

हमारे देश में तो सहज आविष्कारी प्रतिभा है। अपनी आजादी की लड़ाई भी हमने ऐसे अनोखे ढंग से लड़ी, जो मनुष्यता के इतिहास में बिल्कुल नई बात थी। गांधीजी ने बड़ी ही खूबसूरती से पूरी दुनिया को दिखाया कि राजनीतिक आंदोलन, पार्टियां और सरकार भी सृजनात्मक हो सकते हैं और अपने मकसद को हासिल करने के लिए नए तरीके अपना सकते हैं। हमें अपने रुख में बस जरा सा बदलाव करना है। सिर्फ जोखिम उठाने का जज्बा विकसित कर लें तो हम कमाल कर सकते हैं।

(मिलिंद देवड़ा सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी, संचार और जहाजरानी मंत्री हैं।
प्रवीण चक्रवर्ती इनमोबी के संस्थापक सदस्य और मुंबई एंजेल्स के सह-संस्थापक हैं)

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IIT-Kharagpur sanctions Rs.1.45 crore for green technology

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Kolkata, Feb 11 (IANS) In a bid to encourage its students to develop green technologies for the campus, the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur has sanctioned Rs.1.45 crore under its Innovation Challenge Grant.

The grant is a research initiative under the Vision 2020 programme of the institute. Both undergraduate and post-graduate students will participate in the venture that will be funded in phases.

"The students will come up with new green technology solutions for the campus and successful ideas will be implemented...total funding amourt is Rs.1.45 crore," Anirban Dhar, assistant professor Department of Civil Engineering at IIT-Kharagpur, told ANS Tuesday.

"It is expected that the students will come up with innovative and implementable technological solutions for water, energy, environment-related problems of our campus within reasonable time period," he said.

Only successful ideas will be given further funding to move forward with their projects to prototype level. In the final stage, selected successful projects will be funded for field implementation.

The students are expected to flag-off their green solution projects by the end of February.