Newspaper Clips
February 17, 2015

HT.Com ND 17.02.2015 P-6

IIT consortium introduces online courses in agriculture

Press Trust of India

Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK) along with other institutes has announced the launch of a Massive Open Online Courses in the agriculture sector known as Ag(MOOC)s.

The members of the consortium are Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Indian Institute of Management-Calcutta (IIMC) and the University of Agricultural Sciences Raichur (UASR), IITK said.

The consortium is supported by NPTEL (National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning), a project of the Human Resources Development Ministry. NPTEL is among the largest publishers of open educational resources in the world. A spokesperson for the NPTEL said "Massive Open Online Courses enable thousands of aspiring learners to avail a course in a single offering. The scale is a major advantage in MOOCs. They can be developed fast by institutions with advanced expertise," IITK said.

The consortium will offer MOOCs mainly targeting professionals in agriculture, including students in state agricultural universities, teachers serving there and specialists or any interested and aspiring learner.

The first course of the AgMOOCs consortium will be launched on March 17, 2015.

The courses will include specialised sections on farm machinery and power, land and water resource management, food process engineering and aquacultural engineering which is a quality management system for cultivating fish in a biology lab.

THE ONLINE OPEN COURSES WILL COVER FARM MACHINERY AND MANAGEMENT, FOOD PROCESS ENGINEERING, AQUACULTURE AND WATER AND LAND MANAGEMENT

There are also plans to translate courses and make them available in languages like Tamil, Punjabi and Bengali. But it remains to be seen how soon and how efficiently this plan is put in place.

IIT Kanpur has been spearheading research in Agriculture for many decades now. In 2009 a project mentored by Professor Jayantha Chatterjee lead to the creation of Agropedia – an online database of information related to agriculture in India. The aim of Agropedia is to empower farmers by providing them information.

Agropedia which is now backed by both the Government of India and the United Nations World Food Programme is a collaborative model built along the lines of wikipedia, made available in multiple languages. Currently Agropedia is working on gathering weekly alerts from scientists on different crops which can then be disseminated to farmers across the country through an SMS.

IIT to design how you live tomorrow

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/IIT-to-design-how-you-live-tomorrow/articleshow/46267957.cms

KHARAGPUR: Quicker, easier, smarter... if that's how you want life in Kolkata to be, IIT-Kharagpur can show the way.

The premier tech institute has bagged a massive project that could transform life and lifestyle in urban areas across the country, starting with Kolkata. IIT-Kgp professors are already working on traffic and drinking water solutions for Kolkata.

Funded entirel by the HRD ministry, the project aims to use technology to make some of the most congested cities of the country more livable and sustainable. The mega project is aptly named 'Future of Cities' and IIT-Kgp has already been granted Rs 25 crore for it. As many as 59 faculty members, across disciplines, are putting their heads together to make life better for you.

The areas of concern are already marked out. Specific zones in the city have been identified to run pilot projects. In transport, for instance, a 20-km radius has been earmarked to test innovative solutions.

The stretch from Central Avenue to SP Mukherjee Road (between Shyambazar and Jadavpur) will be the field lab for traffic solutions as it is represents the backbone of Kolkata with its maze of crossings and heavy traffic density, said a source.

The IIT-Kgp faculty is working in tandem with the transport department to identify the gaps in the existing state run services.

"Kolkata is a unique case where state operators supply buses but there is no uniformity in quality of buses or the frequency. What is immediately required is standardization of services and that is what we aim to bring about," said Bhargav Maitra, principal coordinator of the project and IIT-Kgp faculty. The transport department is providing data for the study.

Urban planners welcome the project but say this was long overdue. "It should have been done long ago, as the urban sprawl has already gone out of proportion. A lot of innovation is required for capacity building of fringe areas as the

population growth in these regions is higher than that of the city core," said well known city architect and former JU professor Monideep Chatterjee.

"Kolkata, thanks to its limited road space, needs a lot of technological innovation to deal with its ever increasing automobile population. At the same time, ensuring pedestrian safety is important. If an institution like IIT-Kgp come up with technology based solution for both traffic management and road-space utilization, it would be great," said former chief traffic and transportation engineer B K Sadhu.

K Sudhakar Reddy, an IIT-Kgp civil engineering faculty, says a holistic approach is required. "It is not enough to just re-work traffic signals. We must point out the flaws in the way our roads are built if we have to improve speed. We cannot increase road space simply by widening. We need to do away with undulations that mark Kolkata's main thoroughfares," said Reddy, member of the module that is looking into mastic asphalt roads.

Supply of purified drinking water to the city round-the-clock is a target that has eluded Kolkata Municipal Corporation for years. IIT-Kgp's civil engineering department and school of water resources are jointly trying to tackle a range of issues — from cutting down water wastage to augmenting capacity of pumping stations. "We will introduce our plan in Jamshedpur, because of its lower population, and see how it is working, before implementing it in a city like Kolkata," said D J Sen of the school of water resources.

Financial Chronicle ND 17/02/2015 P-11

India's entry into a global academic initiative

Arun Nigavekar

BRIDGING KNOWLEDGE GAP: The UGC did a good job in the early nineties in connecting all universities and subscribing to every e-journal across the world on their behalf —AP

DE MONTFORT University (DMU) in the UK has recently announced a groundbreaking initiative to offer the majority of its students an international experience and has called for the UK government, higher education sector and business communities to seek rapid progress in preparing graduates to meet business needs in a fiercely competitive global marketplace. What was the reason for such a dramatic change?

First, companies across the globe are looking for experts who understand the landscape of industries in every nation. Industry experts know that the thought process and consumer psychology of citizens vary from nation to nation. Secondly, the game of business does change if one does careful analysis of how the business in a true sense has become a global entity. Thus, the domain of education is quickly undergoing metamorphosis in all global universities. It is not only effective to use online processes like face-to-face deliveries but this provides a feel about different living cultures and working approaches in various countries.

Modern economy demands such linkages between various international universities and undergoing real life experiences in other nations. Hence, students travelling overseas as part of their degrees have to be an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Professor Dominic Shellard, vice chancellor of De Montfort University, says, "We applaud the recent announcement that the UK students will be encouraged to broaden their horizons by travelling overseas to gain international experience. The government-backed outward student mobility strategy being developed by the UK higher education international unit will undoubtedly bring benefits to British students and businesses in the years ahead. We believe that immersion in other cultures, the learning of different languages, the gaining of new networks of friends and contacts, and the development of independence and resilience will add to students' personal enrichment and also ensure that they may meet the needs of businesses now and in the future."

What UK has done is also being replicated by Canada and the USA. India is also moving fast to become a part of the global collaborative environment. This became apparent when the Union government gave its approval for signing a joint declaration between the ministry of human resource development (MHRD) of India and the National Science Foundation (NSF) of the United States of America, to initiate a new programme entitled the global initiative of academic networks (GIAN) in higher education. GIAN would focus on tapping the talent pool of scientists and entrepreneurs to engage with the institutes of higher education in India, augment the country's existing academic resources, accelerate the pace of quality reforms and further strengthen India's scientific and technological capabilities.

This India-US cooperation is expected to be beneficial for adoption of newer methods of pedagogy; infusing of creativity, innovation-driven learning and professional rigour at a relatively lower cost; boosting research in cutting edge technologies and building stronger academic networks between both countries. What is more interesting is that the faculty would undertake teaching at Indian universities and trigger networked research initiatives in topics of mutual interest. Further, it would focus on the development of international entrepreneurship programmes by making the curriculum more industry oriented for better employability.

The proposal envisages the creation of a channel for academics in science, technology, engineering and mathematics to spend part of their time teaching in academic and research institutions across India. To start with, the programme would include inviting up to 1,000 faculty every year from amongst the best institutions in the US, who will be deputed to identified institutions in India. Thus, one can foresee the Indian higher education process undergoing a sea change by becoming the part of GIAN.

The triggering of GIAN in our education system is a most complex and difficult task. We have a large number of universities and their geographical locations vary from state to state. The universities are in rural and semi-rural areas, small cities, big cities and metropolises and the infrastructure as well as the standards of the faculty are entirely questionable. Creating national level gigabytes connectivity was an idea that was considered a few years ago. The activity was undertaken at IITs (which already had huge broadband connectivity) as well as a few major central universities. These institutions are working for the last five years and what they have produced is useful for engineering programmes. Several state universities on their campus have established broadband connectivity. The UGC did a good job in the early nineties in connecting all universities and subscribing to every e-journal across the world on their behalf. The quality of research and research publications have certainly gone up. But we have to make drastic changes. We should see that all the colleges and universities have terabyte connectivity and make the teaching community 'fall in love' witvh the infrastructural marvels. The MHRD can certainly make technological innovations, but the larger challenge is to reactivate the educators' mindsets. This is not an impossible task. The government now needs to make bold moves, and to make them fast.

(The writer is former chairman of UGC, former vice-chancellor of University of Pune and founder director of NAAC)

Indian Express ND 17/02/2015 P-4

Andhra CM takes experts' view on revamping higher education

SREENIVAS JANYALA
HYDERABAD, FEB 16

ACADEMIC experts and vice-chancellors from across the country Monday had a discussion with Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu through video-conference on revamping higher education in the state. The CM has sought experts' views in order to frame a policy framework for higher education in the state.

Speaking at the session, Pankaj Jalote, Director, IIT-Delhi, said a 3-tier system of including research universities with vocational courses was required. While B N Jain, V-C of BITS Pilani said, "The state government should address land acquisition issues and work with AICTE and UGC to excel in research."

Former V-C of Manipal Global Education Services, Anand Sudarshan, pointed out that the state requires not only a quantitative and qualitative approach but also a diverse approach towards higher education.

N CHANDRABABU NAIDU

"The new policy should envisage diversity in courses, diversity in cultures, diversity in levels of education ranging from under graduation to research. The government should also focus on encouraging education entrepreneurship and grant autonomy to universities for collaborations," he said.

Meanwhile, Ajit Rangnekar, Dean of Indian School of Business, said that the government has to look at strengthening primary education before thinking about higher education. "We can't create miracles in higher education if we have a weak primary education system," he said, adding we need good quality institutions that will make our students employable for their skills.

Leena Srivatsava, V-C of TERI, stressed on the need of collaboration between Indian institutes with international universities, student-exchange programs and creation of innovation hubs. Dileep Ranjekar, CEO of Azim Premji Foundation, said that the state needs a sustainable, long-term education policy. "Execution is the key," he added.

In order to make AP a hub for best private universities, Rishikesha Krishnan, director of IIM Indore, suggested that a concept of ready-made infrastructure or shared infrastructure should be explored. "Vice-chancellors' selection shouldn't be political. Their salaries or grading should be given based on their performance," he added.

During the session, the CM also requested the experts to come up with solutions to upgrade existing universities in the state and suggest new models of education for new/upcoming universities.

Times of India ND 17/02/2015 P-15

LHC to kick off hunt for supersymmetry particle

Discovery Could Be Milestone In Quest Of Invisible Dark Matter

Steve Connor

A sub-atomic particle even more stunning that the Higgs boson could be discovered this year, according to scientists working on the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at Cern.

The particle accelerator, which has been shut for maintenance, will restart this spring following an upgrade that will allow it to work at even higher energies than those that were used for the discovery of the Higgs boson, a fundamental sub-atomic particle that accounts for gravitational attraction.

Cern scientists said that the higher energies mean they stand a good chance of discovering supersymmetry, the sub-atomic particles that are symmetrical "twins" of the particles which form the basis of matter.

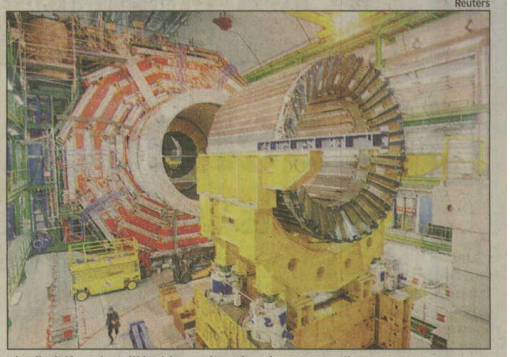
The first supersymmetry particle is likely to be something called a gluino, the symmetric twin of a gluon particle. If the discovery is made, it would represent a milestone in the search for the so-called "dark matter" of the Universe, which cannot be seen but is felt by its gravitational force.

"It could be as early as this year. Summer may be a bit hard but late summer maybe, if we're really lucky," said professor Beate Heinemann of the University of California at Berkeley, who works on the the Atlas experiment, one of the large particle detectors attached to the Large Hadron Collider.

"This would rock the world... For me, it's more exciting than the Higgs," she told reporters at the American Association for the Advancement of Science in San Jose. Much of the Universe is composed of invisible dark matter. Scientists believe it consists of sub-atomic particles that have so far defied detection, and are excited about the possibility of discovering a missing universe of sub-atomic particles if the theoretical prediction of supersymmetry is confirmed by experiments.

"We know that there is more than what meets the eye. Just 5% (of the Universe) is visible, with the rest being Dark Matter and Dark Energy," said Heinemann. THE INDEPENDENT

Reuters



The find, if made, will be bigger than the Higgs Boson discovery, say experts

Deccan Herald ND 17/02/2015 P-12

New particle find in physics likely

SAN JOSÉ, UNITED STATES: **The world's largest atom-smasher could help physicists understand mysterious dark matter in the universe, and later this year it may offer a discovery even more fascinating than the Higgs-Boson, researchers say.**

The Large Hadron Collider, built by the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN), which has undergone major upgrades this year will begin its second, three-year run.

CERN says that after a two-year break for upgrades, the LHC will be twice as powerful this time.

The collider is already credited with helping physicists discover the elusive Higgs boson, which helps explain how objects have mass, and which led to the award of the 2013 Nobel Prize for physics.

This year, the atom-smasher will restart at a beam energy that is substantially higher, with the goal of better understanding why nature prefers matter to antimatter.

A new discovery "could be as early as this year... if we are really lucky," said Beate Heinemann, professor of physics at the University of California, Berkeley, during a talk on Saturday at the American Association for the Advancement of Science annual meeting.

Heinemann is a member of the ATLAS research team at the LHC.

"Maybe we will find now supersymmetric matter," she added.

"For me it is more exciting than the Higgs."

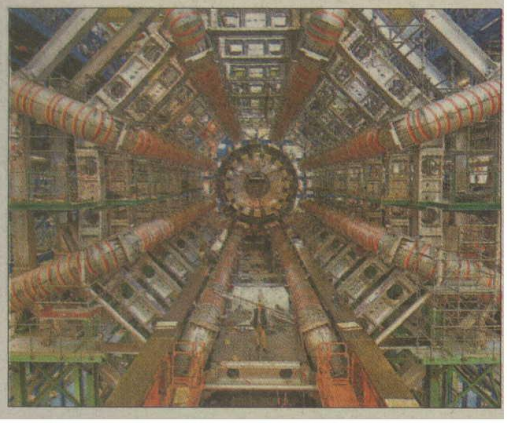
Supersymmetry is an extension of the standard model of physics that aims to fill in some big gaps regarding how scientists understand matter.

According to the theory of supersymmetry, all particles have a counterpart that is heavier, and experts believe that if these partner particles are there, the LHC should be able to find them.

Since the standard model of physics cannot explain the existence of dark matter, which is thought to hold galaxies together and account for most of the matter in the universe, supersymmetry aims to offer "a more comprehensive picture of our world," according to the CERN website.

The first of eight steps toward getting the LHC started again began on December 9, and is expected to take several months.

AFP



M Naik reappointed chairman of IIMA BoG

http://www.ahmedabadmirror.com/ahmedabad/others/AM-Naik-reappointed-chairman-of-IIMA-BoG/articleshow/46267687.cms

AM Naik has been reappointed as the chairman of Board of Governors (BoG) at Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad and IIMA Society. With his reappointment for three years, starting from March 29, the L&T chief has become the second person to get a second term. Keshub Mahindra, former chairman of Mahindra Group, is the other person to have served twice as the chairman of the BoG, said officials.

Mahindra served two terms - each of five years - from 1973. Chief Administration Officer at IIMA Manoj Bhatt confirmed that the institute has received confirmation from Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD) for Naik's re-appointment as chairman. Mirror had reported earlier that a proposal was kept before the BoG in December to seek Naik's re-appointment. Later, they had sent the proposal to the MHRD.

Naik succeeded Raymond's chairman emeritus Vijaypath Singhania who completed five-year term in March 2012. Naik, in fact, is the first Gujarati to head IIMA BoG and IIMA Society as the chairman in the past 12 years. Preceding Naik's appointment in 2012, it was for the first time that a three-member search panel was formed to shortlist three candidates for IIMA chairman's post. Naik was appointed by MHRD from shortlisted candidates by the panel headed by Arvind Lalbhai in 2012.

Dainik Bhaskar ND 17/02/2015 P-11

आईआईटी गोवा का पहला सेशन इसी साल

गोवा में प्रस्तावित आईआईटी इस वर्ष से काम शुरू कर देगा। पहले एकेडेमिक सेशन में 100 स्टूडेंट्स रहेंगे। मानव संसाधन और विकास मंत्रालय ने इसके लिए मंजूरी दे दी है। जब तक खुद का परिसर नहीं बन जाता आईआईटी गोवा अस्थायी रूप से गोवा इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेज (जीईसी) परिसर में काम करेगा। यहां प्रवेश आईआईटी-जेईई एडवांस्ड टेस्ट - 2015 के आधार पर दिया जाएगा। गोवा सरकार और मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय ने इसके लिए तैयारियां शुरू कर दी हैं।

92 CSIR trainee scientists shown the door, protest

Hindustan Times (Chandigarh)

NEW DELHI: As many as 92 trainee scientists recruited by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) labs across the country have been shown the door after two years of training. The aggrieved scientists believe that this was in gross violation of rule made by the previous government and they staged a protest at Jantar Mantar on Monday.

आईआईटी प्रोफेसर पर छात्रा के शोषण का आरोप

http://naidunia.jagran.com/national-allegation-on-iit-professor-for-exploiting-girl-308902

रुड़की। भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान (आईआईटी) में पीएचडी कर रही एक शोधार्थी ने संस्थान के असिस्टेंट प्रोफेसर पर शारीरिक शोषण का आरोप लगाया है। शोधार्थी ने इसकी शिकायत उत्तराखंड अल्पसंख्यक आयोग से की है।

एक साल पुराने इस मामले में आयोग ने एसडीएम मोहम्मद नासिर को जांच के निर्देश दिए हैं। सोमवार को एसडीएम को आयोग का पत्र प्राप्त हुआ। एसडीएम मोहम्मद नासिर ने बताया कि मामला एक साल पुराना है। तब पीड़ित छात्रा ने संस्थान के असिस्टेंट प्रोफेसर पर आरोप लगाते हुए उत्तराखंड अल्पसंख्यक आयोग से शिकायत की थी।

एसडीएम ने बताया कि अल्पसंख्यक आयोग में दोनों पक्षों की सुनवाई भी हुई, लेकिन स्थिति स्पष्ट नहीं हो सकी। इसके बाद आयोग ने मामले की जांच करने के आदेश दिए हैं। एसडीएम के अनुसार मामला गंभीर है, इसलिए दोनों पक्षों से जानकारी जुटाई जाएगी।

Senior IAS officer appointed as Secretary to Kejriwal

http://www.indiatvnews.com/news/india/senior-ias-officer-appointed-as-secretary-to-kejriwal-47618.html

New Delhi: Senior IAS officer Rajendra Kumar was today appointed as the Secretary of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

A 1989 batch IAS officer, who was also Secretary to Kejriwal during his previous sting as CM, is an IIT, Delhi, alumnus like Kejriwal. He was also Secretary in Urban Development Department and handled various departments including Power and Transport.

Another IAS officer Vasantha Kumar N was appointed Additional Secretary to Kejriwal.

Kumar, who is a 2004 batch IAS officer, was Director of NRHM and held several other posts.

Apart from Vasantha Kumar N, Narendra Kumar, a 1988 batch IAS officer will hold the additional charge of Principal Secretary in Urban Development department and OSD (Swachh Bharat Abhiyan)