

Newspaper Clips

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Collars trendy? US regrets comment

Sachin Parashar | TNN

New Delhi: An angry India on Tuesday forced the US to express "deep regret" over remarks made by a US official in India on the plight of the Tri Valley University students who have been forced to wear radio tags.

A public affairs officer with the American consulate in Hyderabad, Juliet Wurr, had described the radio collars as trendy and said the only other option these students had was to wear jump suits and remain in prison.

MEA sources said on Tuesday that deputy chief of mission Donald Lu, in the absence of US ambassador Timothy Roemer, had been spoken to and they had expressed deep regret over the remarks by Wurr. "Apart from expressing deep regret, they have also conveyed to us that they will issue a corrective statement soon. The remarks made by the official based in Hyderabad were highly insensitive and unfortunate," said an official.

In complete disregard for sensitivities involved, the official had said the tags were modern and trendy "just like Hollywood stars". "Let me tell you they are very hip and

2 Indian students sent to detention

Two Indian students of Tri Valley University were on Tuesday sent to a detention centre in the United States after they complained about the movement monitoring device tied to their legs. The two students, whose identities are not yet known, would be released only after they furnish a bond of \$8,000 to 20,000, according to information reaching New Delhi. ¶¶

happening because many of our movie stars and celebrities choose the anklets rather than sitting in a red jumpsuit in prison," she told a news channel. "It's funny people getting upset about this. I don't know about your servants ... but my servant has big heavy silver anklets... that look a heck of a lot more uncomfortable and binding," she added. The US embassy had said that use of ankle monitors was widespread across US, and did not necessarily imply guilt or suspicion of criminal activity.

Times of India ND 02-Feb-11 p-23

Blind man drives car, paves way for others to take to roads soon

New York: A blind man in the US is said to have created history by driving a car around a race track in a test which could one day lead to all visually impaired people taking to the roads, a media report said.

Mark Riccobono, 34, successfully navigated his way round the Daytona International Speedway in Florida, overtaking a van and dodging some cardboard boxes thrown in his way, the Daily Mail online reported.

His SUV was fitted with laser sensors that passed data to his hands and sent vibrating signals telling him how much to turn. The cushion on his seat was also wired into the same system and vibrated telling him to brake or accelerate. The car was modified by students from Virginia Tech University with a "non-visual interface for a car that can convey real-time information about driving conditions to the blind".

The test was the culmination of a decade-long project to build a car that could allow blind people to one day drive on normal streets like those without any visual impairment, the report said. "This project is an example that when you dream big and put your heart and resources into it, you get to unimagined places.



ROADBLOCKS REMOVED: The SUV was fitted with laser sensors that passed data to Mark Riccobono's hands and sent vibrating signals telling him how much to turn

There are still psychological barriers to overcome before people accepted the idea of blind drivers on the roads with everyone else," Riccobono said. ¶¶

Now, a pill that repairs damage after heart attack

London: Recovering from a cardiac attack could soon be a simple affair, as British scientists claimed to have inched closer to developing a pill that can seamlessly mend a damaged heart. Researchers funded by the British Heart Foundation (BHF) said they are hoping to replicate in a drug the amazing regenerative ability of animals such as the zebrafish which can easily mend its damaged heart.

If successful, it could revolutionise the treatments administered to patients after a heart attack. Professor Peter Weissberg, medical director at the BHF, said: "Scientifically, mending human hearts is an achievable goal and we really could make recovering from a heart attack as simple as getting over a broken leg. It could revolutionise the quality of life people whose lives are ruined by their heart's incapacity."

It is hoped that the first clinical trials will take place in the next decade.

As the heart is unable to mend itself after a heart attack, it leaves many unable to perform the smallest tasks without getting out of breath. ❧

Times of India ND 02-Feb-11 p-23

Coming: Train that's as fast as jet

Model Developed In China Has Top Speed Of 1,200Kmph

New Delhi: Scientists have successfully developed a model Maglev train that can travel as fast as a plane in a laboratory in southwest China. But putting the technology to use is still a long way away, an official from the lab told the Global Times.

Under research conducted by the Traction Power State Key Laboratory at the Southwest Jiaotong University, the vacuum magnetic suspension train model was able to run at between 600 and 1,200 kilometres per hour, equal to speed of a plane, according to Shuai Bin, vice dean of the university's Traffic School.

The new technology is expected to be put into operation within 10 years and promoted across China in 2030, the Shanghai-based Science Pic-

The new technology is expected to be put into operation within 10 years. The technology would use just a tenth of the fuel that a plane does and also emit almost zero noise

torial reported. "It's just an experimental success. Its actual value is slim as there's a great gulf in adopting it for practical use," Bin said.

The technology, now being researched in just two other countries - the US and Switzerland - theoretically allows trains to run in

vacuum tubes at speeds of up to 20,000 kilometres per hour, according to Science Pictorial.

The Global Times report cited a number of other advantages: the technology would use just one-tenth of the fuel that a plane does, and emit almost zero noise.

"All those advantages are just bubbles before a new transport system of vacuum tubes is built across the country, and the cost would be astronomical," Bin said, adding that the cost for 1km of vacuum tube would be several times higher than that of a subway, which costs \$30 million. The technology only has an experimental significance and is not currently feasible due to its high costs, he said. ANI

Times of India ND 02-Feb-11 p-6

Semester ghost haunts DU

Teachers Ask VC To Roll It Back, Students Vent Their Woes

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The anti-semester protest resurfaced at Delhi University on Tuesday as teachers from across colleges and streams asked the V-C of Delhi University, Dinesh Singh, to rollback implementation of the semester system.

The teachers made the request on the second day of the interaction that the VC is holding with the university community. While students on Monday highlighted infrastructure problems and teachers' absenteeism, teachers came up with their own set of problems. In particular, they showed displeasure at alleged "imposition" of the semester system on them.

Singh started his address to the 1,500-odd teachers and principals by introducing his



RAISING QUESTIONS: About 1,500 teachers turned up for V-C address

new team which and then thanked teachers for helping the university in declaring the semester results on time. Speaking about the interaction the VC said: "The whole process of meeting is to learn, understand better and re-

spond in a better fashion."

Singh said teachers and university administration should collectively address the concerns of the students, as "an institution cannot run as per an individual's whims and fancy". While seeking support

of the teachers at all levels, the VC said: "I seek your support and help to make this institution move forward. I assure you there is no desire to violate any institutional process. Take part in the semester system and give us your suggestion. I assure you no workload will be affected, but even then we are open to suggestions."

But once the floor was opened for questions, from the first to the last question taken, majority were related to the semester system at undergraduate level. A teacher and an alumni Harish Khanna said: "Teachers also want to contribute to the university, but taking decisions without consulting them is wrong. Teachers are still against semester system. Teachers will support your efforts, but don't impose anything on them."

Cleaning mess of deemed varsities

Arun Nigavekar



CROSS PURPOSES: In our open country, nothing remains a secret and everybody connected with the education system and also the media came to know about the tug-of-war between the MHRD and UGC

EXACTLY a year-and-a-half ago, minister Kapil Sibal, disturbed by the public display of capitation fee payments in the electronic media, took up the task of disciplining the deemed-to-be-universities in the hands of ministry of human resource development (MHRD) itself. In June 2009, MHRD asked the University Grants Commission (UGC) to keep in abeyance all the proposals that are with it and also asked for a review of the functioning of all the existing deemed-to-be universities. Interestingly, in July 2009, MHRD also appointed a committee under the chairmanship of P N Tandon, with three other eminent people — Govardhan Mehta, M Anandkrishnan and Mrinal Miri as other members to review the functioning of all the deemed universities. In October, this committee came up with recommendations and suggested allowing 38 universities to continue, asked 44 to remove deficiencies in three years and asked MHRD to cancel the deemed university status of 44 institutions. While this process was on, in parallel, UGC went ahead with inspection of deemed universities as per the order of the MHRD. UGC took up the task on a war footing and by September, completed inspection of about 60 universities. These universities had all three types of universities that were grouped by the MHRD's committee. The UGC's expert committee's reports on all universities inspected by them were positive. Suddenly, the MHRD realised the dichotomy that would be created by diametrically opposite reports of the two committees and it asked the UGC to provide a more critical analysis of the reports of the expert committee. It also as-

ked the UGC to provide information on names and qualifications of all experts who were members of the committee. Probably, it feared that the members may be the same members, who in first place, recommended the deemed university status to the institutions that were under a cloud. Indeed, at one point of time, the MHRD asked UGC not to place the reports of their expert committee before the commission.

But, it seems the UGC went ahead and placed the expert committee's reports before the commission, which endorsed the recommendations. It is interesting to note that out of five existing mem-

bers of the commission, there are three vacancies that have not been filled for the past one year; three representing deemed universities. In our highly open country, nothing remains a secret and everybody connected with the education system and also the media came to know about all these information from the tug-of-war between two important entities, namely the MHRD and UGC.

Once the MHRD committee's report was announced, it created a turmoil. Simultaneously, the media reported on the UGC's expert committee's recommendations. The most perturbed were all those students who were studying in the

44 universities, whose status were to be cancelled. The parents never understood, and this is perfectly legitimate because they do not know the intricacies of the roles and powers of the MHRD and UGC. The only worry they had was about the validity of the degrees. The management of all affected universities was very vocal as anticipated. Indeed, I am certain, they were very happy about the way MHRD shabbily and without giving serious thoughts to various actions it initiated, went ahead with a pre-formed opinion that every deemed university was involved in unethical practices. The manner in which the UGC knowingly (and one never kn-

ows, may be, under the pressure from the commission members) took advantage of the various loopholes in the decisions and actions of the MHRD is shocking. They had a strong case, and as expected, they took a legal course of action. They hired the services of best of the best (and most expensive) Supreme Court lawyers. The arguments were based on three aspects; firstly, the appointment of the expert committee by MHRD itself has no legal base and such an action does not fall in its purview; secondly, the committee conducted the entire process very hurriedly, and thirdly, there is a 180-degrees difference between the reports of the MHRD and UGC's expert committees. The Supreme Court did give a stay order on the MHRD's report and asked the MHRD to file an affidavit providing further clarifications to its actions.

To strengthen its argument, the MHRD hurriedly brought out the Deemed Universities Regulations and asked UGC just to endorse it, which it did. Only recently, the Supreme Court came up with an order asking the MHRD to give a second chance to all affected universities to present their case and also asked for additional time to be given to deemed-to-be universities to address the deficiencies as pointed out by the MHRD's expert committee.

It is abundantly clear that this entire episode is one of classic mismanagement based on some wrong advice given to the minister, who handled the entire process in a clumsy and loose way. The MHRD and UGC worked at cross purposes. The mute question, is that are we looking for reforms or just beating around the bush?

(The writer is a former chairman of UGC and former VC of University of Pune)

Indian Express, ND 02/02/2011 p-2

Semester issue boils over at DU V-C's session with teachers

Complaints on 'forced' implementation inundate interaction; open to suggestions, says Singh

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

IF DELHI University Vice-Chancellor (V-C) Dinesh Singh's Monday session with students was one for plans and promises, Tuesday's was for problems and complaints.

Singh, who met with the teachers in-charge of all constituent colleges of the university on Tuesday, was inundated with complaints during the interactive session. Most of them were about the semester system.

Teachers of English led the charge. "What is the unholy haste in implementing the semester system? Why don't you take our views to the government, instead of taking our views to us?" asked Neenu Kumar, the English in-charge of Aditi Mahavidyalaya. She was backed by P K Vijayan, Hindi's English department representative.

V-C Singh chose not to answer the question. Neither did he answer the question posed by Pankaj Kumar Jha, the History in-charge of Lady Shri Ram College: "Are you open to reversing the semester process?"

While the format of the programme was similar in spirit to that of Monday's — the V-C delivered a 25-minute speech, after which he took questions — Tuesday's meeting was a gulf apart. Singh, who had addressed the students in Hindi, switched to English. He also took questions for about an hour, compared to Monday's 30 minutes. In a significant change from the meeting a day earlier, where he had answered every question, Singh chose not to answer a good number of queries on Tuesday.

In his speech, the V-C took the implementation of the semester



DU teachers at the interaction with Dinesh Singh (below) on Tuesday.

PRAVEEN KHANNA



system at the undergraduate level head-on. On Monday, he had opened the topic only when students raised questions. "I want to assure you that there is no desire to violate any institutional process. We will follow each and every regulation, so that these activities take place in a manner that is most beneficial to the institution, to the students," he said, adding that he was open to suggestions about changes in the way the implementation would be done.

Teachers were, however, in no mood to buy the argument. "I take about two months to teach Methodology to my class of 60. Ninety per cent of my students take their exams in Hindi, while 95 per cent of the study materials are in English," said Shama Mitra Chenoy from Shivaji College's History department, pointing out that the semester system is unsuitable for the prevailing state of affairs at DU. An English teacher argued that when 5,000 teachers protest at the MHRD office against the semester system, it means that an overwhelming majority is against it, and that the university should consider putting the process on hold.

"I wish we (teachers and students) could have been here together, but there isn't enough room, there isn't scope. But it would have been far more advantageous if all of us could have

met together as one big family," the V-C said. The divide in the family was, however, clear: while the students were all for revising syllabi and implementing the semester system, not even one teacher spoke in support of it.

V-C Singh also repeated most of the plans he had announced on Monday. He elaborated on the fund to support Innovation Programmes. "Each proposed scheme should be centred around a well-defined project, in which there must be more than one department of the college involved. There must be at least three faculty members, and at least 10 students. We will fund travel, symposiums, equipment purchase. We will create an independent body which will assess all applications," he said, adding that the university has sufficient funds to support 25 such schemes.

COMPLAINTS & SUGGESTIONS

PUT THE process of semesterisation on hold; roll back implementation of semester system at the undergraduate level

BRING IN uniformity in the courses already semesterised. A teacher pointed out that while BSc (Hons) Chemistry students have practical exams after each semester, BSc (Hons) Physics students have annual practical exams.

MOST STUDY materials are in English; they need to be translated to Hindi

THE SOFTWARE used to calculate internal

assessment marks is outdated, and should be replaced.

MORE NON-TEACHING staff, mostly lab assistants, must be recruited to keep up with the OBC expansion

A PROGRAMME to encourage sportspersons, a transparent system to ensure that the best talent from colleges are recruited to the university teams

DEEKSHA TEWARI, representing 13 of the 18 teachers in-charge of Dyal Singh (Morning) College, submitted a memorandum against Principal I S Bakshi.

GEETA BHATT, from the Bhaskaracharya College of Applied Sciences, appealed for the revision of the syllabus of the B.A.Sc (H) Instrumentation course, which is 20 years old.

FACILITATE GARGI College to offer a BSc (Hons) Mathematics course, a long-standing demand of the Mathematics teachers of the college.

This university doesn't know grammar, but that's the least of its problems

Being probed for visa fraud, Tri-Valley University blames 2 Indian staffers

CHINKI SINHA

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

"We believe that ICE agents have committed adultery with the real criminal and misled by the vicious wrong accusation by the two criminals to conduct such a 'Sham' act."

THIS is the response Dr Susan Su, president of Tri-Valley University, sent to email queries by *The Indian Express* on her institution finding itself at

the centre of allegations of massive immigration fraud, with tens of Indian students caught in the middle.

If the barely comprehensible reply hardly inspires confidence that her university wasn't just a front to allow students looking to immigrate an easy access to the US, consider another startling point she makes in her e-mail. The director concedes the university offered 15 per cent of "each course fee bonus" to students who brought family members to join since it

treated "students as partners".

According to her, the reason the university is in such a mess is none other than two of its Indian staff members.

The California-based Tri-Valley University, being probed by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), also admits it was not mandatory for students, including those on F1 visa (non-immigrant visa that does not allow full-time work), to attend classes on campus — this is likely to be construed a violation of visa rules.

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ANCHOR**

Tri-Valley University

"TVU is able to grow successfully and exponentially is mainly because TVU live TV broadcasting capability, allow students to attend class in live remotely. Many students call for admission first question asked is: "Do I have to be forced to come to the Pleasanton campus for class or not". And we answer them: "You are welcome to, but you do not need to. You will see everything in your computer as here projected on the wall," the TVU chief stated in her email response.

TVU, which was shut down last month, said it was not responsible for duping students, including 1,555 foreign students, mostly Indians.

Susan Su accused staff members Anji Reddy and Ram Krista Karra of asking students to make tuition payments in Karra's personal account in exchange for I-20 forms and Curricular Practical Training (CPT) approval. Su claimed that Reddy worked in the administration office and was a student assistant while Karra was another student who also ran a consultancy in the region.

"TVU had fired these two individuals. After the firing, these two people spread viscous rumor among students. They continue to threaten TVU student. TVU file a police report. In the fear of a fate that they deserved, to be frozen bank account and departed from US, those two individuals continue their vicious attack effort and spread rumor, also went to SF ICE office to make same false, wrong statements about the University administration," stated the email titled "Defend material".

But the university also admitted it gave 15 per cent of "each course fee bonus" to students who brought their family members to join the university as they treated their "students as partners".

Since its inception in March 2008 when it operated out of Su's home, student intake had increased to around 5,000. "Many housewife stu-

'TAGGING HIP, HAPPENING'

HYDERABAD: Juliet Wurr, Public Affairs Officer at the US Consulate in Hyderabad, on Tuesday called the tagging of Indian students in California "hip and happening". "Those anklets are used when you have somebody who might flee... The anklets are very hip and happening. Many of our movie stars caught in drunken driving or else choose the anklets than sitting in a prison," said Wurr. Soon after her comments appeared on TV channels, Jawed Ashraf, Joint Secretary (Americas) in the External Affairs Ministry, called up US Deputy Chief of Mission Donald Lu and complained. Wurr later expressed regret.

Meanwhile, reports said two of the Indian students who complained about the radio anklets were sent to a detention centre in the US. — ENS

dents project the class meeting in live in their home, and family member and friend are all watching and then all join together," the email said. The university also admitted that its "growing students body only partially are international F1 students... Among 5000 TVU students, only 1555 are active international students, and only 140 students applied a VISA with TVU's I 20."

I-20 is a form issued by a US university to international students admitted to its programme, on the basis of which they apply for a student visa.

The TVU email said the university was considering a lawsuit against the ICE and SEVP (Student and Exchange Visitor Program) against the "sham" allegation. "Within two weeks, with this investigation, and twisted news blow out of per position, every single day average \$300,000 of student claim refund... The Fed shall apologize for such a serious "Sham" mistake, repay for the damage done to the University and the founder Dr. Susan Su's name and reputation," the email stated.

Economic Times ND

2/02/2011 P-1

B-school pay set to shed filthy-rich tag



IIM-A System To Focus On Assured Pay, To Segregate Fringe Benefits

Avinash Nair & Parag Dave
AHMEDABAD

CRORE-PLUS salaries offered on B-school campuses will soon lose currency as the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, puts in place a new system that proposes to segregate guaranteed pay from fringe benefits, making pay packages appear slimmer and more realistic.

IIM-A's placement standards will do away with performance-linked compensation such as variable pay and annual bonus and fringe benefits like employee stock options and club memberships while reporting final salaries. The institute also plans to appoint an auditor to independently assess packages on offer and compare domestic and foreign salary packages by using the scale of purchasing power parity instead of the currency exchange rates. Also, salaries of different students will be equated on the basis of roles offered, sectors and locations.

IIM-A will announce the new system this week and implement it for its placement season starting February 12. It will also seek consensus among other IIMs and B-schools to set a new benchmark for B-school placements.

"Our average salaries will be lowered, but we are ready to take the hit," said Saral Mukherjee, chairperson of IIM-A's placement committee. "We will ensure that a genuine picture is projected at the end of our placement process." Mukherjee has prepared the draft along with his colleague, Biju Varkkey and two students. "Salaries will significantly come down (by up to 40%) and corporates will be forced to restructure packages," said Sunil Goel, Director of Delhi-based executive search firm GlobalHunt.

► More realistic figures: P 26

MONA MOURSHED/MCKINSEY AND CO

India needs to minimize variations in education quality

By PRASHANT K. NANDA
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NEW DELHI

India has one of the largest school systems in the world, where 220 million students are pursuing primary and secondary education. A recent survey by McKinsey and Co. says Madhya Pradesh has one of the most improved school systems across the globe. Mona Mourshed, partner, global education practice, at the consultancy firm and one of the authors of the survey, spoke about school education in India and ways to improve it. Mourshed was recently in Delhi and said in an interview that vocational education is the key to bridge the mismatch between education and employment in India. Edited excerpts:

You have conducted a survey on improved school systems across the globe. How do you rate the state of school education in the world vis-à-vis India?

When we look at school education reform globally, there has been tremendous investment in this sector in the last few decades. But in outcome parameters, not much has been moved. Within this valley of tragedy, there are a handful of school systems which have actually moved the needle. There are certain systems which have moved from poor to fair to good to excellent. That is what one of our reports focused on, in which we talked about 20 improving systems, including the school system in

min INTERVIEW

Madhya Pradesh.

Among the improved systems, there are mainly five points—scripted lesson plans, classroom assessment, teacher coaches, enrolment and incentives for school teachers. Free school meals and bicycles to students have helped in bringing students to schools and (a) focus on learning. These are some of the steps that school systems across the world have taken, and Madhya Pradesh is one among them.

What are the three things India needs to improve upon?

The first thing that needs to be done is minimize variations (in education quality among different states). And that requires raising teachers' quality to principals' quality; so it's a combination of support and accountability. The second point is student enrolment, and attendance in particular. The third thing is teachers. We have to see how teaching can be treated as a prestigious profession and how we support the teachers. This will ensure quality people entering the profession.

To improve school systems in the states, there is (a) need for a transformation programme with a mandate from the state leadership. Targeted sort of intervention in a critical mass of schools can be rolled out; a top-down mandate with bottom-up pilot that can be scaled up. Something similar is going on in Mumbai



Course correction: Mourshed says raising the quality of teachers and principals, focusing on student enrolment, and treating teaching as a prestigious profession can improve education in India.

among 1,400 schools.

Indian higher education is reforming, but the balance between education and employment is an issue.

What's your view?

Some of the Indian higher educational institutes like (the) IITs (Indian Institutes of Technology) and IIMs (Indian Institutes of Management) are excellent. On the other hand, there is an issue of quality in sections of the higher education sector. What we need to see is how higher educational institutes are meeting the needs of the employers. Literally, all emerging markets in the world are grappling with the same problem. If there is a blast

of accountant, financial and IT (information technology) people, then the market cannot absorb them. Balancing education with employment should be the focus of the higher education sector. It's very important to work with employers across the spectrum, what they are looking for—vocational education or university education, hard skills or soft skills.

India aspires to be a global knowledge hub. How far is this from the reality?

Only the government cannot do everything in any country to solve the education-employment gap... Employers, too, have

to get involved, students need to be much more realistic on what is the reality of the job market. Even parents should not just think of education of their children in general, but about the future of their children. Multiple segments of society have to work together. The skilling is not about just finding a job immediately. Nowadays, the number of jobs a person has in her lifetime is increasing. For example, a person in the US used to have two-three jobs in the entire career, but these days, it is almost 10 jobs. So, the emphasis on soft skills has become disproportionately important.

Is there a need for vocational education in India vis-à-vis the world scenario?

In developed countries, 80% of the students are in vocational education, which is a few years of education in post-secondary vocational institutes, and the rest 20% in the university system. It is an inverse pyramid (in India). In a developing country like India, there is significant need for vocational skills. The skill gap is huge, and the government understands this. Some four million are completing vocational education (in India), but the requirement is 45-50 million that is often talked about. If we look at the graduates coming out of colleges, professional or otherwise, then the employability level is less than what it should be. On the vocational side, the whole chain of employer linkage is missing. Vocational education is important. Look at the US. Over the next 10 years, there will be eight million jobs. Of those in the top 30 professions, only seven will need the four-year university education; everything else is vocational. That means everything from Web designers to lab technicians to nurse assistants. Vocational education has been an absolute thriller in countries like Australia, Germany, Ireland, Singapore. Even in countries like Jordan and Morocco, it is becoming very important. IT companies in Jordan are actually creating vocational training programmes. This is going to be all the more in emerging economies.

HINDU ND 02/02/2011 P-3

V-C discusses semester system with teachers

Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI: A number of questions regarding the semester system were raised during an interaction held between Delhi University Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dinesh Singh and university teachers on Tuesday.

The semester system has been implemented in 13 science courses and will be applicable for the remaining under-graduate courses from July onwards.

Teachers voiced their concerns regarding the validity of the semester system given the large number of students, diversity in student and teacher profiles as well as infrastructure deficits at the college and the university level. A common complaint by many teachers was the haste in implementing the semester system.

Teachers who attended the interaction were of the opinion that if the V-C was seriously considering feedback given by them, he should apprise the Government of the

viewpoint of the teachers. Another common refrain was the desire to initiate a process of dialogue and discussion prior to implementation of the semester system.

Special fund

Regarding implementation of the semester system, Prof. Singh sought to assure the teachers no "institutional process" or "regulations" would be violated. He added that suggestions on the manner of implementation could be given. Prof. Singh urged the teachers to cooperate in the implementation of the semester system and also the overall development of the university. Prof. Singh in his speech announced the establishing of a fund to enable teachers to attend and organise conferences and symposiums and also spoke about the setting up of a task force to introduce innovation in colleges and courses.

While there was appreciation for Prof. Singh's gesture to interact with teachers, there were some complaints

later of the venue not being accessible enough for teachers with disabilities.

In a lengthy question-answer session following his address to the teachers, the V-C fielded a number of questions, while he answered many; he chose not to respond to some. A number of administrative problems were also brought up.

In his address to students on Monday, the V-C outlined a number of initiatives which the university is poised to undertake for instance establishing its presence on Facebook, setting up a single number call centre with multiple lines, provision of an upcoming under-graduate girls' hostel for 1,500 students and innovation programmes. Existing facilities such as the placement cell, radio station, website, the Institute of Life Long Learning and provisions for persons with disabilities would be strengthened while the efforts to improve the security situation would also be made, Prof. Singh said.

HINDU ND 02/02/2011 P-22

High-level committee calls for stricter mobile radiation norms

Sandeep Joshi

NEW DELHI: Expressing serious concern over high-level of electromagnetic radiation from mobile towers and handsets, a high-level inter-ministerial committee has called for revision of radiation norms to suit to Indian conditions and environment. The committee has called for imposing strict restrictions on installation of mobile towers near high-density residential areas, schools, playgrounds and hospitals.

"The hot tropical climate of the country [India], low body mass index [BMI], low fat

content of an average Indian as compared to European countries and high environmental concentration of radio frequency radiation may place Indians under high risk of radio frequency radiation effect and the level of susceptibility of an average Indian may be different. Hence, revision of radiation norms may be considered for adoption in

India keeping in view the possible health concern," said the committee report.

Stating that the radio frequency exposure limits in India may be lowered to 1/10th of the existing level, the report said: "There is a need to evolve the alternative means to deploy mobile telecom network based on best international practices. Low-power

- **Use of Bluetooth handsets and ear phone suggested**
- **Low-power cellular base station require a smaller exclusion zone than existing cells**

cellular base station would require a much smaller exclusion zone than existing cells and use of such transmitters inside cities will decrease the amount of radiated power."

"For the future expansion of telecom network in the country use low-power micro cell transmitters with in-built solutions in place of the present trend of using high-power transmission over mobile towers or high-rise buildings," it said.

The report has also recommended the use of hands-free and ear phone technologies such as Bluetooth handsets and ear phone so as to min-

imise the contact of head with mobile phone.

"WHO reported that considering the very low exposure levels and research results collected, there is no convincing scientific evidence that the weak radio frequency signals from cellular phone towers and wireless networks cause adverse health effects," the committee report said.

However, a number of studies have reported the link between exposure to radio frequency radiation and occurrence of disorders in cells, DNA, immune system, hormones, and reproduction.

Hindustan Times, ND 02-Feb-11 p-11

Mission unclear: Study abroad, at your own risk

SHAKY Not only do students have to dodge shady agents, embassies too unable to help

Charu Sudan Kasturi

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NEW DELHI: Panipat-based Rohit Kalra remembers the day his friends and he approached the Indian High Commission in Canberra, Australia to complain about how a flying training academy had duped them with false claims.

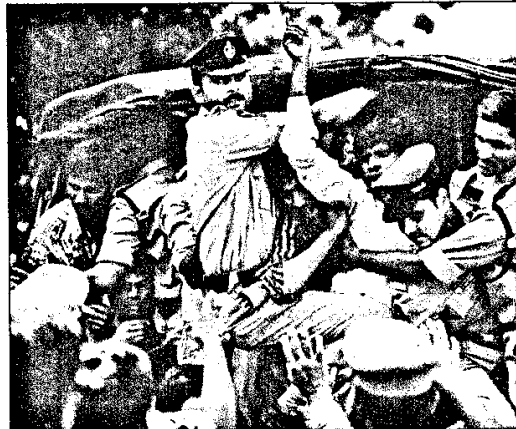
The students eventually received assistance from the High Commission, but only after hours of explanation and verification. "The officials wanted to help but appeared clueless. They needed help before they could help us," Kalra recalled.

In Canberra and in cities across the globe, Indian embassy officials are working practically blindfolded as they attempt to help students, because of the absence of any details of the country's students studying in each country.

A Bill, the government is now planning to introduce in Parliament, punishes cheat education agents, but at present, students are at the mercy of such agents — with no mechanism to sieve out the good ones from the fraudulent agents.

The absence of the data — which is available with each individual country because it issues student visas — prevents them from proactively assisting Indian students abroad, officials across several embassies and consulates have complained to IT.

We conduct interaction programmes with students and report based on anecdotal information, but cannot contact our own students unless they reach out to us," an official at one of consulates of the Indian High Commission in the US said, speaking strictly on condition



■ Police detain members of a students' group demonstrating against the California-based Tri-Valley University near the US Consulate in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

AFP PHOTO

of anonymity. In effect, the Indian embassies are left waiting for a crisis to erupt and students to approach them, the official said.

"Had such information — names, contact details, institutions they are to study in — been available, we in the embassy would ourselves have been able to alert students of fraud in at least some cases," said an official involved with the Indian High Commission in Australia in 2009 when several Indian students faced race attacks and fraud from educational institutions.

"Much of what happened in Australia and what has now happened in California could have been avoided," the official added.

Students at present invariably turn to the education agents who helped them reach abroad, when they are in trouble, even though the agents may have contributed to the fraud, officials said.

'Radio-collars like Indian anklets'

As the government entrusted foreign secretary Nirupama Rao to discuss issues in education sector with US, an American diplomat compared radio-collaring to silver anklets Indian women wear.

"They are very hep because many of our movie stars and celebrities choose the anklets than sitting in a red jumpsuit in prison." Juliet Wurr, who handles public affairs at US Consulate Hyderabad, said.

She also compared the radio collars to the anklets that Indian women wear. Wurr was asked to retract her statement.

HTC, DELHI

Welingkar Institute wins best business school project award

BS REPORTERS
Mumbai, 1 February

This morning, the five finalist B-school teams waited anxiously to present their projects to the jury. With topics ranging from human resource to tackling corruption in the country, the students had made the final cut from 154 entries. The occasion: *Business Standard's* Best B-school project award. The chief guest was Union Minister of Water Resources Salman Khurshid.

Ashwini Vasudevan, a student of Mumbai-based L N Welingkar Institute Of Management Development and Research bagged the first position.

Vasudevan's project was titled, 'Music, Memes & Me' where she explored the idea of how music and memes can help employees perform better and increase their motivational level from 15 per cent to 40 per cent.

The award is a national level competition where a B-school nominates the best B-school project work by its students during the academic year, as part of their curriculum.

The process, which started in September 2010 across the country, had shortlisted 15 teams. Only five were selected in the final round after the students made presentations before the jury.

The panel included Chief Commercial Officer of Reliance Retail Madhavan Ganesan; VP Power Systems (Asia) Crompton Greaves Jayant Kulkarni; Chairman of Accel Media and Director of BCCL A P Parigi; Gupta Leader of Enterprise Application, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India Joydeep Datta and Executive Vice President, Head Marketing and Direct Channels, HDFC Life Sanjay Tripathy.

A team from Deloitte and Touche Consulting short-listed the five projects from the 154 entries. "Shortlisting 15 projects from an entry of 154 projects was an interesting experience. But the five of the 15 were short-listed because of their intellectual firepower, and how they managed to tailor their content to a set of senior industry audience," said Satish Raghavendran, vice president, Deloitte Research.

The teams were evaluated on four parameters — rigour, innovative approach, structure of the content and final presentation. The final five projects that were selected appealed to the jury as they dealt with macro issues and came up with meaningful solutions.

"The winner clearly touched a softer subject that falls under the human resource purview but was one of the biggest issues for corporate India today. Issues related to employees stress is an important dynamic that the industry is facing," said Jayant Kulkarni, vice president of Power Systems (Asia),

Crompton Greaves.

Vidhyasagari Sundaram and Hitesh Jain, of Great Lakes Institute of Management and Research, Chennai won the second position. Sundaram and Jain's project was about data development models for selecting supplier-bids in an E-procurement situation.

Harpreet Singh, a student of Faculty of Management Studies, University of Delhi, won the third prize. Singh's project provided a Roadmap

for Franchisee Development to JRG Securities, a brokerage firm.

According to Sanjay Tripathy, executive vice-president marketing and direct channels, HDFC Life: "The key is how students can concise their presentation and make it detailed but also crisp at the same time. Also, how original is the idea, is also important. It is interesting to know what the new generation thinks and the kind of ideas they are coming up with."

The other two presentations short-listed were beverage wholesale activation by Samir Khandelwal of Institute Of Management Indore and evaluation of a corruption-free India (Indian Institute of Politics and Anti Corruption Helpline) by Daniel De Luna, Nikhil Mudaliar, Ravi Yadav, Saurabh Singh, Shantanu Shekhar and Udit Kumar Goyal of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. IIM-A won the consolation prize.

Business Line ND 02/02/2011

P-7

HR teams reap 'good' harvest in campus

IT sector continues to be the top career preference

Anjali Prayag
Bangalore, Feb. 1

It's that time of the year again when students shed their old blue jeans for blazers and ties and the company HR teams are in a frenzy to harvest the best talent from colleges.

"This year was especially good, as we have achieved almost 98 per cent placement, our best year to date in campus hiring," says Prof K.S. Sridhar, Dean, Training and Placement, PESIT, a Bangalore-based engineering college.

Mr Priti Rajora, Global Head, Talent Acquisition, Wipro, says it has been an extremely hectic season for most campus recruiters. Also, IT sector continues to be the top career preference and is considered as an industry with a 'bright future'.

While students and placement officers at tech colleges are sighing with relief at the fag end of the campus hiring process, companies too are happy with the talent booty that they have garnered. IT companies were the largest hirers with the top ones already reaching the target hiring numbers.

The acceptance rate of offers this year ranged between 70 per cent and 75 per cent, a notch below last year when the economy was still shaky, said placement sources.

TCS has already made 35,000 offers from visits to 310 colleges so far, Infosys extending 25,000 offers so far.



ON HIRING MODE

Infosys

To hire **27,000** (25,000 offers have been made) from **400-450** campuses

Wipro

To visit **100** campuses

TCS

To recruit **37,000** (35,000 offers have been made) from **370** campuses

Wipro visits the top 100 engineering colleges in the country every year.

The number of fresher hiring this year has jumped 50-75 per cent, while the salary range has remained unchanged: between Rs 3 lakh and Rs 3.5 lakh, across all companies.

DAY ZERO SLOT

Mr Amit Bansal, Co-Founder and CEO, Purple Leap, a company involved in building workplace ready professionals, says that the top ten companies would hire one lakh students from 1,100 campuses.

"I think most of these companies would also do about 30 per cent just-in-time hiring later this year." According to industry estimates, around 600,000 engineers are expected to graduate from about 3,000 campuses this year.

The trend this year is of multiple companies vying for the Day Zero slot in all the top colleges. Infosys has also clarified that it has turned down visits to several colleges where it has been denied the Day Zero slot.

"We do not want to visit colleges where we do not get the Day Zero slot," Mr Mohandas Pai, Member of the Board and Director, HR, Education, Research and Administration, had said during the Q3 results last month.

QUALITY OF STUDENTS

Mr Ajoy Mukherjee, Global HR Head, Tata Consultancy Services, said that the interaction the company has been having with the academia has yielded some visible results in the quality of students that graduate, but 'communication skills is still not up to the mark.'

"There are some excep-

tional students, but we need to do some handholding in our training programmes," he said.

Infosys too has been keenly studying the performance parameters and quality of students over the years.

"We focus on those colleges that provide us with better quality students to meet the growing competitive needs of the market and industry. The corporate-academia relationship is one of the contributing factors for this," said an Infosys spokesperson.

Wipro has actively been taking part in curriculum development where it uses its technology expertise to shape future technology professional, says Ms Rajora.

"We have seen a noticeable enhancement in students who get covered in some of our drives to be very well prepared to face the campus-to-career transition."