

Newspaper Clips

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BUILDING CONSENSUS

Centre calls state education ministers to set reform agenda

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NEW DELHI

The Union government has called a meeting of state education ministers to build consensus around its plans for education reforms before the 12th Five-Year Plan kicks off in a couple of months.

On the agenda for discussion is a proposal to introduce a common entrance exam for all science and engineering colleges and another to start community colleges on the lines of those in the US and Canada.

The meeting called by human resource development (HRD) minister Kapil Sibal on Wednesday will also debate the need to bring skills education in schools as well as the implementation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act across the country, as per ministry documents. *Mint* has reviewed a copy of the discussion agenda.

An HRD ministry official, who did not want to be named, said that while a number of legislative initiatives on education, including the Foreign University Bill and the Education Malpractice Bill, face opposition in Parliament, some reforms can be rolled out through executive decisions and here "taking states into confidence would be of paramount importance."

The Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government "has to take reform measures in the next two years before it starts preparation for the general election due in 2014. With education being a subject that touches mass lives, the ministry would like to put in place some visible reforms," the official said.

An HRD ministry spokesperson confirmed the meeting of state education ministers, but didn't divulge details.

The Union government has come under attack from many states for not consulting them while formulating policies and initiatives, resulting in reforms initiatives being held up.

In that context, meetings such as the one proposed with the education ministers are critical for building consensus, said Yamini Aiyar, director, accountability initiative, at the Centre for Policy Research.

"It's critical to have dialogue with states. The Centre should facilitate, build consensus and set the standard rather than impose," Aiyar said, adding if the Union government takes suggestions from the states in the right spirit, "implementation will be much better."

Several committees set up by the Union government have suggested a common entrance exam for all science and engineering colleges, according to HRD ministry documents.

A plan is being devised to merge the Indian Institute of Technology's Joint Entrance Examinations (IIT-JEE) and the All India Engineering Entrance Examination (AIEEE) conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education, for admissions into 15 IITs, 30 National Insti-



Initiating dialogue: HRD minister Kapil Sibal.

tutes of Technology and other central science and engineering colleges.

Since at least 95% of engineering and science colleges fall under state jurisdiction, any plan to create a common entrance test for these disciplines needs the support of state governments.

India has nearly 8,000 engineering colleges.

"The above methodology does not curtail the autonomy of Universities/Institutions and the States to structure their own admission process but provides for a standardized frame of reference for evaluating inter-merit amongst applicants," the ministry says in its note, adding, "The prevalence of categorization (reservation for castes, sports quota, ex-servicemen quota, etc.) in the admission process can also be continued unhindered..."

The HRD ministry also has plans to introduce some 100 community colleges—industry-oriented institutions with one or more specializations and with a high employment-generating potential.

"...it would be better if Community Colleges are started on a pilot basis (about 100 or so) in 2012-13 and then after evaluation scaled up gradually..."

the ministry says in its note. "Accordingly, in 2012-13, 80 colleges from the UGC list ...and 20 polytechnics in the government system may be identified by UGC-AICTE (University Grants Commission-All India Council for Technical Education) in consultation with the respective state governments for implementing the Community College Programme."

With regard to RTE, the ministry believes that since education is primarily a concern of the states, the Act cannot become a success without their support.

Only 19 states have so far put in place a monitoring mechanism for RTE. States that are yet to put in place an RTE protection authority or state commission for protection of child rights include Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Tripura, Meghalaya and Nagaland.

"States are requested to initiate steps to set up a Grievance Redressal mechanism under the RTE Act," the ministry says in its document.

Meeting will also debate the need to bring skills education in schools as well as the implementation of the RTE Act

HindustanTimes

Title : PM's top adviser in plagiarism row

Author : Charu Sudan Kasturi charu.kasturi@hindustantimes.com

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PM's top adviser in plagiarism row

EMBARRASSING CNR Rao, three others apologise to international journal for lifting lines

Charu Sudan Kasturi

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NEW YORK: CNR Rao, the prime minister's top scientific adviser and one of India's best known scientists, has apologised to an international journal along with three other scientists for plagiarising the work of others, sending shockwaves through the country's scientific community.

Rao and scientists Basant Chitara, LS Panchakarla and SB Krupanidhi apologised to Advanced Materials, one of the world's most prestigious journals in material sciences, for the "reproduction of text from an article" that appeared in another journal, Applied Physics Letters, in 2010.

"The corresponding authors sincerely apologise to the readers, reviewers and editors for this oversight and for any miscommunication," the scientists wrote in their apology. Their article in Advanced Materials appeared in July 2011 and contained at least four lines that were lifted without attribution.

Rao, chairman of the prime

These things will repeatedly happen as long as top scientists don't take responsibility for the actual writing of the research paper.

A department head at IISc

minister's scientific advisory council, is travelling and could not be reached. He is a Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan and the winner of many national and international awards.

The four scientists belong to the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR).

Senior scientists at these Bangalore-based research institutions pointed to a larger malaise in Indian science. "These things will repeatedly happen as long as top scientists don't take responsibility for the actual writing of the research paper," a head of department at IISc said, requesting anonymity.

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A PC that thinks like a man, has an IQ of 150

London: Scientists have created a 'genius' computer, using a mix of logic and 'human-like' thinking, that they claim can score 150 in an IQ test. A team in Sweden says the computer actually works on a programme which uses a mixture of mathematical logic and 'human-like' thinking, enabling it to outperform previous software on IQ tests, the Daily Mail reported.

Even advanced maths programmes usually score below 100. "We're trying to make programmes that can discover the same types of patterns that humans can see," said team leader Claes Strannegard at University of Gothenburg, who says his aim was to make a programme that "thinks" like a person.

IQ tests are based on seeing visual patterns and guessing number sequences. The average score for people is 100, score of 150 is classified as 'genius' intelligence. ❖

Hindustan Times, ND 20/02/2012 P-11

IIT-HRD tussle stalls Aakash tablet distribution

FACE-OFF Educational institutions not ready to take tablets without IIT stamp; only 650 students have got them so far

Chetan Chauhan

■ chetan@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The world's cheapest tablet, Aakash, may have created a buzz but college students—its intended beneficiaries—are yet to receive them, except 650 initial recipients.

Human resource development minister Kapil Sibal had launched the tablet in October, but wrangling between his ministry and the Indian Institute of Technology, Jodhpur, which was to distribute the tablets, has resulted in this situation.

"As per our information, no other student has received a tablet. IIT Jodhpur was supposed to distribute them," said a senior government official.

Confirming the same, a senior IIT Jodhpur official said the ministry has not given them the go-ahead to distribute the faulty tablets. "We have asked the ministry to allow us to distribute the tablets that are flawless," the official said.

The HRD ministry had authorised the IIT to procure one lakh tablets from Montreal-based Datawind.

The company had already supplied around 50,000 tablets to the IIT for testing and distribution.

Around 17% failed the test and the company has not been able to rectify the flaws. But even the remaining 83%, which had no problems, have not been distributed. Educational institutions are not willing to take the tablets without the IIT stamp, an official said.



■ Around 17% of the 50,000 tablets supplied by Datawind failed the test conducted by IIT and the company has not been able to rectify the flaws. But even the remaining 83% have not been distributed so far.

HT FILE

IITs are research organisations and have no clue about handling logistics

GOVT OFFICIAL

Fed up of this tug of war, the HRD ministry has decided that the future distribution of tablets will be done by a public sector company, not an IIT.

"IITs are research organisations and have no clue about

handling logistics," the government official said.

The Indian Telephone Industries, a PSU under the telecom ministry, will handle procurement, testing and distribution of Aakash 2 tablets to be launched in April this year.

For Aakash 2, the ministry has asked three other IITs - Kanpur, Madras and Bombay - apart from Jodhpur, to finalise the specifications to procure the tablet at a price of \$35 to \$50.

At IIMs, E-Comm Cos Turn Job Santas

Expanding Horizons

In a sluggish economy, IIMs are looking for new-age companies and untapped sectors

Intake from traditional companies is lesser than in the past couple of years due to the ongoing economic slowdown. At the same time, IIM batch strengths are bigger



Flush with funds, first-timers in the e-commerce space can afford to go to IIMs for recruitment

Recession-stricken traditional recruiters give elite institutions the go-by

DEVINA SENGUPTA & RADHIKA P NAIR
BANGALORE

In the past, they just ogled as big global banks, consulting firms and consumer goods MNCs strutted around India's top business school campuses. But this placement season, e-commerce companies are recruiting in big numbers at the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), signaling the chutzpah and coming of age of a sector that has cash propelling its ambitions and believers in its potential.

Armed with interesting pitches and money raised from venture capital and private equity firms, these e-commerce firms, many of them barely a couple of years old, are taking the top slots at the IIMs, wading into the space vacated by the more traditional

recruiters weighed down by a slowing economy and adverse markets.

First-timers at IIM campuses, e-commerce firms such as RedBus, Letsbuy, Via, Valyoo Technologies and Snapdeal have picked up freshers and candidates with experience at salaries ranging between ₹8 lakh and ₹16 lakh. Some others, such as Myntra, which had in the past only visited IIM-Bangalore, have this year cast their net wider to include other IIMs.

Bangalore-based online bus ticketing company RedBus, which until now only had summer interns from the IIMs, has this year made two job offers at IIM-Indore and will be heading to Bangalore, Ahmedabad and Kolkata in the coming weeks. "The pre-placement talks have generated interest and we expect slots to be confirmed

soon. The newer IIMs have been after us, but we do not want to go there," said Shankar Prasad, COO of RedBus. The company plans to initially hire the IIM graduates as management trainees and move them into middle-management roles in due course.

The opportunism being displayed by e-commerce firms this year is reminiscent of the 2009 placement season, when state-run banks and other PSU's were big hirers on campuses as their private and foreign counterparts stayed away because of the global economic meltdown. While the economic picture this time around is not as bad as in 2008-09, the placement scene is tepid and IIMs have been tempering hopes of students.

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E-Commerce Alluring

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The IIMs have been prodding students to look beyond traditional recruiters offering high salaries.

The e-commerce industry is alluring to many, with examples such as Facebook's \$100-billion planned IPO and stories of 20-something dollar millionaires at the company dominating the discourse. These companies are finding that their stories and unique business models have takers despite them not being the best paymasters.

The past several months have seen intense news flow in the sector, bringing it high into the public consciousness. A report from Dublin-based research firm Research and Markets earlier this month forecast the Indian e-commerce sector growing at a compounded annual rate of 40% to \$34.2 billion in 2015 from around \$5.9 billion in 2010. The sector is still in a nascent stage, and set to grow exponentially as Internet penetration increases rapidly.

Gurgaon-based group-buying firm Snapdeal's first tryst with the IIMs has seen it make pre-placement offers. The firm has made offers to three students from IIM-Calcutta, two from IIM-Bangalore and three from IIM-Lucknow. The company, which raised \$40 million from Bessemer Venture Partners, Nexus Venture Partners and IndoUS Venture Partners last year, has also picked up an executive MBA from one of the IIMs. "The recruitment has been done to bolster Snapdeal's product, technology and analytics teams. The response was good as the students were aware of e-commerce," said Anupama Beri, Snapdeal's human resources head.

Online consumer electronics retailer Letsbuy, in the news recently for its marriage with Flipkart, plans to hire up to four students from IIM-Lucknow. "This is our first time at IIMs and we prefer to go to the older IIMs," said Hitesh Dhinra, founder & CEO of Letsbuy.com.

Delhi-based Valyoo Technologies, which received \$4 million in venture funding from IDG Ventures in late 2011, got the first-day slot at IIM-Indore and the second day in Lucknow. It has hired 12 students in all. "We have taken candi-

dates for functions across marketing, operations, logistics and supply chain," said Presh Bansal, co-founder and CEO of the two-year-old Valyoo, which operates online retail sites Lenskart.com, Bagskart.com, Watchkart.com and Jewelskart.com.

The students, who have been offered annual salaries between ₹12 lakh and ₹16 lakh, will handle separate verticals such as warehousing and product procurement. Valyoo has hired only laterals with experience of 1-4 years. "We have identified critical areas in the business and will hand it over to an IIM graduate," said Bansal, who is himself an IIM-Bangalore graduate. The company, which is a first-timer at the IIMs, is going to one more IIM in the coming weeks as it wants to hire 3-4 more people.

Bangalore-based online ticketing company Via is awaiting its slot confirmation at IIM-Ahmedabad and IIM-Indore, and plans to hire up to six students, preferably with prior work experience. It plans to offer salaries between ₹12 lakh and ₹15 lakh and hire people for its strategy, finance and corporate functions.

Myntra, on its second trip to the IIM campuses, has made nine offers this year at IIM-Lucknow and the Indian School of Business. The online fashion retailer, which recently raised \$21 million from a slew of venture investors, is offering freshers ₹13-15 lakh along with stock options and other benefits. The next stop is IIM-Ahmedabad, said Pooja Gupta, VP (HR) of the company.

While most e-commerce firms are opting for a mix of freshers and people with prior experience, online travel agency MakeMyTrip, a veteran of many campus placements, is hiring only laterals from IIMs and other top B-schools such as the ISB. "This provides a better return on investment, both from a fit and compensation cost perspective, as well as retention. Experienced candidates have clear career goals, have shorter learning curves, and do not necessarily shop around," said Purva Misra, senior vice-president, HR. The Nasdaq-listed company plans to hire up to 15 students from campuses this year, mostly for product management and online marketing roles.

Times of India ND 20/02/2012 p-13

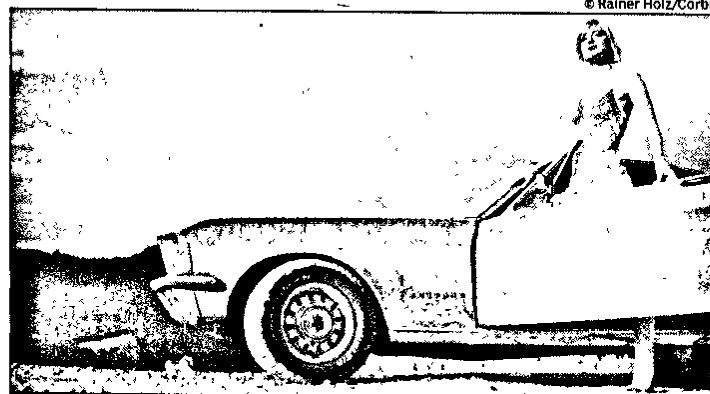
'Artificial leaf' tech to power cars?

Hydrocarbon Produced From 'Twisted Photosynthesis' To Work As Fuel

London: British scientists claim to be working on a project to produce an oil substitute, using photosynthesis, which could power the cars, ships and planes of the future. A team at Glasgow University says the oil substitute is being made using "artificial leaf" technology — it's actually a twisted version of photosynthesis, the method plants use to harness sunlight, but uses electricity to spark the reaction.

Rather than producing organic material from carbon dioxide as plants do, the scientists plan to produce hydrocarbon "fuel" which could be used in petrol engines to power cars and even aeroplanes, the 'Daily Mail' reported.

They hope to prove the technology in the next two years and to develop a small-scale demonstration



FUELLING OUR FUTURE

system within five.

Prof Richard Cogdell, who is leading the team, believes the greater efficiency this achieves could make the technology a ma-

ajor energy source in decades to come. "The big issue at the moment is that most renewable energy sources make electricity. That's fine, but we have not got

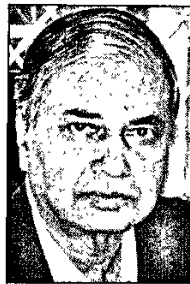
ways of storing electricity, and it's intermittent. What you need is to be able to lock that energy up in some sort of storage fluid available on demand, and that's what fuel is. "To really sustain our way of life after the oil runs out we have to be able to make, renewably and sustainably, dense portable fuels for transport, especially for aeroplanes and ships.

"We're looking at photosynthesis to see whether we can learn to copy it in a more robust and efficient way. What we've realized in just the last couple of months is that we should be able to use electricity to power these reactions," he was quoted as saying.

The scientists envisage power stations containing vats of bacteria churning out large quantities of burnable fuel. □

Master Stroke

LEADERSHIP AT IIM
SHILLONG IS BUILT AROUND
THE SPIRIT OF INNOVATION &
SERVICE AND THIS IS THE
SECRET OF ITS SUCCESS



Prof AK Dutta
Director, IIM Shillong

Since its early days, IIM Shillong has always taken into account the role of information and communication technologies and aimed at identifying essential aspects that must be pursued by the stakeholders (entrepreneurs, government, universities, press and others) involved in promoting the institutional incubation time. We have never been afraid to innovate and bring into play new thoughts, which have helped turn disadvantages such as location par se, into strengths. This has been well recognised

through the Innovation Leadership Award received recently under the aegis of Asia's Best B-School Award ceremony at Suntec Singapore.

Innovation is really how we deal with customers, in our case, the students by creating new exposure or adding new characteristics to existing ones: how we design processes or systems, how we deal with people in the organisation, establish the working relationships, etc. The places where the disciplines and practices of innovation and breakthrough can add a competitive advantage to an organisation are endless. IIM Shillong has been the only IIM to not have undergone mentoring by any of the older IIMs.

Shillong was well known as a centre for excellence in education, which over the years has declined. There have been many critiques during the initial phase of setting up the institute. With IIM Shillong coming in, we have been able to bring about public consciousness through our Annual Golf Cup and other activities. I am positively sure that we have managed quite well this far, and IIM Shillong has travelled a great distance and is definitely at par with the other IIMs.

Our mission to bring in the industry academic interface is also a step in the right direction as industry visits can result in business setups and therefore employment and development of the region as a whole.

I have often stated that leadership here is built around the spirit of innovation and service. This core belief is what distinguishes the success of IIM Shillong. We have pioneered and been consistent in our efforts to bring about alleviation of poverty with an inclusive notion of growth and development within the host region.

IIM Shillong has brought to reality the concept of setting up the Centre for Development of the North Eastern Region, which today has become a sought after entity by various stakeholders in the NEER because of its committed stance and efforts aimed at responding to the local needs.

Apart from its commitment to education, the institute also aims at trying to find solutions to issues which concern the society.

IIM Shillong welcomes you to explore opportunities of inducting summer interns as well as recruiting our students through our placement process which I am sure you will find integral and committed to your organisation's cause and objectives.

IIM SHILLONG IS STEADILY GROWING TO MAKE ITS MARK, NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF PROVIDING WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION BUT IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

INNOVATING TO LEAD

Established in 2008, IIM Shillong was set up to provide excellent management education in North-east India. In a short span of four years, it has scaled heights of success. Its flagship course is the two-year Post-Graduate Diploma in Management Programme (PGDM). In this short span IIM-S has won a multitude of awards at prestigious platforms.

■ **CMO Asia Awards:** The CMO Asia Awards honour the best of business schools, professors from the greatest B-schools of Asia, corporate organisations, chief marketing officers, and HR professionals. The Asian B School Awards are regarded as the most prestigious awards constituted by the industry and the academic world. The jury included eminent personalities like Bhaskar Chatterjee – secretary to the govt of India, Dept of Public Enterprises, Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises and Saugata Mitra, chief people officer and group head HR, Mother Dairy Fruit and Vegetable Pvt Ltd amongst others.

IIM Shillong was awarded two awards at SUNTEC Singapore on July 22, 2011. It was nominated in two categories and won the award in both, namely Innovation in Building Academic & Industry Interface and the Innovation Leadership Award.

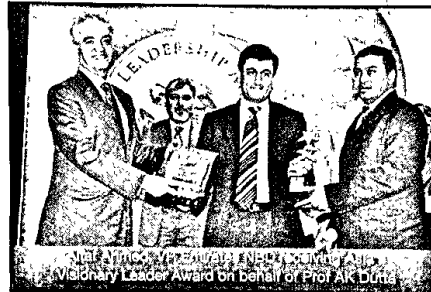
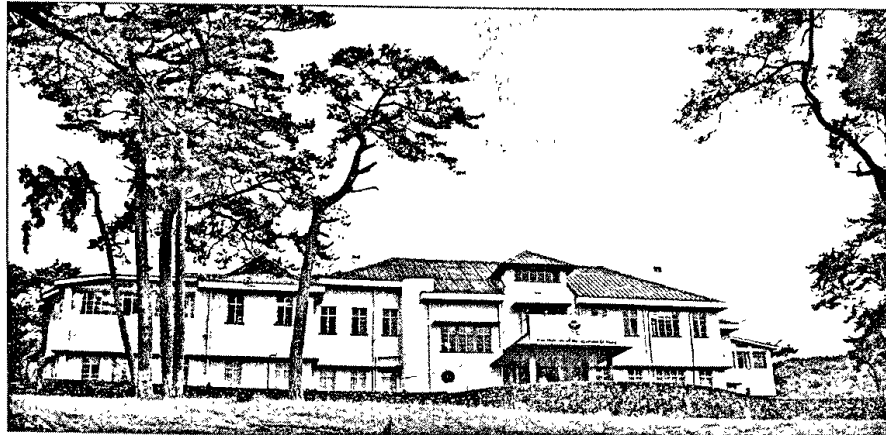
■ **Asian Leadership Awards 2011:** Prof AK Dutta, director IIM Shillong, was conferred with the 'Visionary Leader Award' at the 'Asian Leadership Awards 2011', which took place on September 25, 2011 at Taj Palace Hotel (Dubai). The award recognises the achievements of Prof Dutta as a business leader and his constant encouragement to other entrepreneurs and leaders.

■ **18th Business School Affairs & Dewang Mehta Business School Awards:** The 18th Business School Affairs & Dewang Mehta Business School Awards were announced on November 24, 2010 and IIM Shillong won Business School with Best Academic Input (Syllabus) in Information Technology, Best Teacher in Operations Management to Prof Swapan Kumar Majumdar, the Best Teacher in Logistics to Prof DK Agrawal, Best Placement Brochure Contest Results-3rd Place and the Best Student in Management Award-9th Place to Sumit Rana.

■ **19th Business School Affairs & Dewang Mehta Business School Awards:** IIM-S was awarded the Business School with Best Academic Input Syllabus in Finance and the Best Teacher in Information Technology awarded to Prof Abhishek Tripathi.

IIM-S has tied up with many institutions to participate in collaborative efforts and to discuss pertinent issues. A few collaborations that IIM Shillong has established are:

■ **Sino- Indian Global Reciprocal Advanced Management Programme:** IIM Shillong recently conducted the Sino Indian Global Reciprocal Advanced Management Programme in association with the state govt of Meghalaya and in collaboration with Ocean University, Qingdao, China on "Under-



standing China: Business and Culture" held at Qingdao, China, during January 9-15, 2012.

■ **The Centre for Development of North Eastern Region (CEDNER) at IIM Shillong** has been involved in organising various empowerment programmes. A few examples are Effective Judicial Administration for the Judges under the Administrative control of the Guwahati High Court; Certificate Course on Health and Hospital Management; Management Programme for Local Entrepreneurs and Promoters of Entrepreneurial Activities. The institute has worked with the traffic department of to work on traffic management in Shillong and with the MTDC to improve turnover and profitability; and MCC to improve pro-

ductivity. IIM-S continued the computer literacy programme for all outsourced and contractual staff and their families.

Faculty development workshops have been conducted at the Royal Group of Institutions in Guwahati, and at BIBS in Kolkata. CEDNER and HCL Infosystems Limited endeavour to jointly take some steps to improve the socio-economic conditions of the people in the region by extending the scope of its ICT projects to this part of the country. A round table discussion with the North-east States' Representatives was organised on September 21, 2011 at Brahmputra Ashok Hotel, Guwahati.

CEDNER also organised the Certificate Distribution Ceremony of the six-month certificate course on "Developing Managerial Skills for Entre-

preneurs" on December 19, 2011. The course has been organised with the ministry of development of north eastern region (DoNER), govt of India.

■ **IIM-S through CEDNER organised a half day stakeholders discussion on "Effective Sports Management: A Catalyst for Performance"** on November 4, 2011. Key office bearers from all sports associations in Meghalaya participated in the discussion.

■ **With the formal inauguration of the 6-month certificate course in Tourism and Hospitality Management, IIM-S** with the assistance of NEC sponsorship moved an inch closer towards developing quality human resource, which will help project the NE as a vibrant tourist destination.

■ **IIM-S and NUJS, West Bengal** formally sealed the agreement to start a Post Graduate Executive Diploma in Business Management and Law.

■ **IIM -S is set to become one of the few elite management institutes in the country to establish a Financial Simu-**

lation Laboratory at its campus. This is the outcome of a partnership between IIM & National Stock Exchange.

■ **IIM-S is one of the few IIMs working hard for improving the infrastructure of the country.** It has already trained air officers for understating PPP model in building green field airport in the NE. IIM-S is working hard to improve the health infrastructure in the NE. IIM-S professors are teaching the doctors in sustainable healthcare project, hospital planning and management, leadership and motivation for doctors, management of finance and accounting for doctors with the support of Harvard cases. They also undertake field visits, healthcare research.

■ **IIM-S joined hands with North East Council, Shillong and International Trauma Care (ITC) India** to organise the first ever International meet on Disaster Management from August 20 – 22, 2011 in Shillong.

■ **IIM-S in association with National Rural Health Mission and Dept of Health services, govt of Meghalaya** has offered 30-days intensive training to the medical officers in the area.

IIM-S started a Golf Tournament since its inception as a platform for industry-academia interactions. The first golf tournament organised by any B-school in India, this unparalleled concept is a student driven initiative.

IIM -S also conducted its second annual International Conference on Sustainability – SusCon. The conference covers global perspectives and practices, keeping in view national priorities as well as regional challenges.

IIM-S is the first institute to implement a comprehensive ERP solution on campus. It is also the first institute to webcast its convocation live on its website. IIM Shillong is also a forerunner in coming up with a special postal cover and the first institute to offer a course on sports management.

IIM-S has forged alliances with various industry experts such as:

■ **Prof Aswath Damodaran**, professor of finance at Stern School of Business at New York University.

■ **Vivek Kudva**, currently MD of the India and CEEMEA operations of Franklin Templeton Investments

■ **Milind Yedkar**, marketing director, Asia Pacific region at Dell Inc

■ **Venkat Narayan, MD** – corporate finance at Lazard India and

■ **Jayanta Roy**, senior VP, ICRA.

Dr K Radhakrishnan, chairman, Space Commission, secretary, Department of Space and chairman JSRO visited the campus on July 26, 2011. JV Ramamurthy, president and COO of HCL Info Systems addressed IIM-S students wherein he focussed on the spirit of risk taking. Kari Slym, president and MD, GM India visited IIM Shillong on March 2, 2011. His interaction provided the participants with useful insights into the automotive business.

IIM-S is steadily growing to make its mark, not only in terms of providing world class education but in promoting sustainability and inclusive growth.

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'Today, people have to continue learning throughout life'

Howard Gardner created the theory of Multiple Intelligences, showing people have different ways of learning and expressing diverse information and therefore have many kinds of intelligence, not just one sort. Professor of cognitive psychology at Harvard's Graduate School of Education, Gardner's research impacted education deeply while influencing aspects of leadership, ethics and creativity. Visiting India, Gardner spoke with Tirna Ray about why people differ at certain skills, how teaching and learning must both change as commerce and industry evolve – and how flexible minds could have serious advantages now:

■ What is 'multiple intelligences' about?

Many languages denote intelligence as a 'singular', as if implying that we have a 'single computer' inside our skull. If the computer works well, we're

good at everything. If it's average, we're average. If it works poorly, we're lousy at everything...this is wrong. In our daily lives, we keep finding people who may be very good with language but can't find their way around a building. We find people who can't sing a tune but understand other people perfectly. Intuition suggests people do not necessarily have to be good or bad at everything – but can be good at some things and bad at some things.

Q&A

■ How valid are multiple intelligence tests then that decide an individual has an aptitude for something in particular – and is best suited to that?

I would advise people to not waste money on such tests. I don't believe that people are fixed. People are flexible and the brain keeps changing through-



out life. I would never say that just because you've turned out a certain way in a certain test at a certain time, you should consider that a life sentence.

■ Alongside, with the world changing rapidly, does learning have to be more flexible today?

Different times prioritise different sets of skills. The

times we're living in make life relatively easier for people who are flexible and can switch from skill to skill. It makes things more difficult for people who are averse to risks and prefer going deeper and deeper into one particular thing.

■ You mention diverse skills – what is the difference between inherent and acquired intelligence?

Scientists don't make such divisions anymore. The only sensible way of thinking has to do with a technical term called 'heritability'. Every human ability has a certain heritable component – but that's dependent on the experiences you have, the culture in which you live, resources available and so on. If you have a higher musical heritability than I do, it depends on certain factors. If you live in a culture where people don't care, there isn't much money, there isn't much music around, and I

live in a culture conducive to music, then I will be much more musical than you are.

■ How has the field of learning itself evolved?

Today, people have to continue learning throughout life. No occupation, from the oldest to the most modern, can escape having to change in many ways. You have to acknowledge change and pick up skills to cope. The second big shift can be attributed to digital media. Today, not only can people learn at home with their devices but learning has the scope to be much more individualised. Also, earlier when people went to school, they were taught in one particular way – if they didn't learn, too bad. Now, anyone who says there is only one way to teach is being ridiculous. There are many ways to learn – that is where multiple intelligences opened things up.

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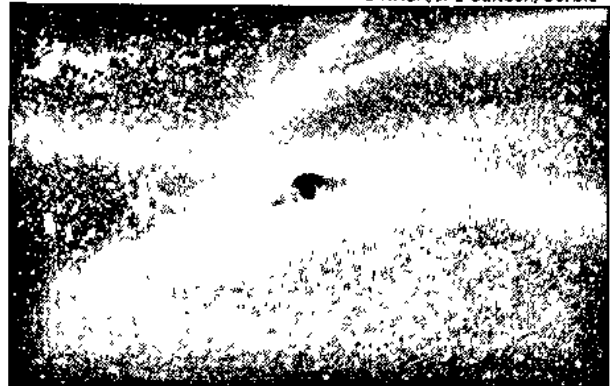
Spotted: A black hole that survived galaxy destruction

Washington: Astronomers have spotted a rare mid-weight black hole some 290 million light-years from Earth which they say offers clues about a now-destroyed galaxy that may once have existed around it.

Researchers at the Sydney Institute for Astronomy in Australia who spotted the black hole using the Hubble Space Telescope think the dwarf galaxy was torn apart by the gravity of a larger host galaxy that it orbited.

The violent encounter they would have stripped away most of the dwarf galaxy's stars, but it also could have compressed the gas around its central black hole, triggering a new wave of star formation, LiveScience reported. The observations suggest that the young stars must be less than 200 million years old, researchers said. "The fact that there's a very young cluster of stars indicates

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STELLAR WONDER

the intermediate-mass black hole may have originated as the central black hole in a very low-mass dwarf galaxy. The dwarf galaxy was then swallowed by the more massive galaxy," lead researcher Sean Farrell said. PTI

Amar Ujala ND 20/02/2012 P-16

आईआईटी छात्रों के हाथ होगी रेलवे की सुरक्षा

● आलोक शर्मा

नई दिल्ली। रेलवे की सुरक्षा का जिम्मा जल्द ही आईआईटी छात्रों के हाथों में होगी। सुरक्षा के लिए जरूरी तकनीकी के विकास के लिए मंत्रालय आईआईटी और दूसरे इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेजों के छात्रों की मदद लेगा।

मंत्रालय के एक शीर्ष अधिकारी के अनुसार रिसर्च डिजाइन एंड स्टैंडर्ड्स आर्गनाइजेशन (आरडीएसओ) हालांकि रेल के लिए जरूरी तकनीकी विकसित करता आ रहा है। लेकिन उसके काम को हल्का करने के उद्देश्य से अब आईआईटी छात्रों की सहायता ली जाएगी। रेलवे अधिकारियों की

● जल्द तैयार होगा
इंजीनियरिंग के छात्रों
को शामिल करने का
रोड मैप

एक टीम जल्द ही देश के तमाम इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेजों के प्रोफेसर्स से विचार-विमर्श कर छात्रों की भागीदारी पर एक रोड मैप तैयार करेगी। इस प्रक्रिया के तहत छात्रों को रेलवे की जरूरतों के बारे में बताया जाएगा। इसके अलावा चर्चा इस मसले पर भी होगी कि मंत्रालय किस प्रकार से इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेजों को आर्थिक सहयोग देगा।