

# Newspaper Clips

## February 28, 2013

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# HRD Ministry to ask IIT to reinstate whistleblower

ANUBHUTI VISHNOI

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 27

BASED on the advice of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), the Human Resource Development Ministry has decided to recommend that the suspension of whistleblower IIT Kharagpur professor Rajeev Kumar be revoked. He was suspended on May 13, 2011 based on a range of allegations, including maligning and misrepresenting the institute.

Kumar, who works with the computer science department of the institute, had questioned the marks system of students appearing for the IIT-JEE. He used the RTI Act to expose the alleged fake institute that was operating from within the Kharagpur campus. He had also alleged that admission of wards of senior functionaries of the IIT was being facilitated.

The courts have lauded his effort to bring transparency into the IIT system using the

RTI Act. The Supreme Court once termed him as one of the many “unsung heroes who helped improve the system”.

On CVC advice, the Central Vigilance Officer of HRD Ministry, Amit Khare, recommended that the suspension orders against Kumar be revoked. The CVO order will now be sent to IIT Kharagpur, which has been resisting any move to give relief to Kumar.

Though initially the ministry had kept away from the issue citing the autonomy of IITs, it wrote to IIT Kharagpur last month asking it to review Kumar’s suspension order and place the matter for review before the Visitor, President of India. When the institute refused, the ministry sought the advice of CVC.

Last week, the Delhi HC had sought a report from the Centre, IIT Kharagpur and the CVC on a plea filed by Kumar seeking interim relief. He had alleged the enquiry against him by the IIT was biased.

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# Minority report: Oxford accused of racial bias

Kounteya Sinha | TNN

London: Oxford University — one of the world's most iconic university — has now been accused of racial bias.

Figures obtained by the Guardian through the Freedom of Information Act has found that the university has shown “institutional bias” against black and ethnic minority students. Figures have revealed that white applicants are twice as likely to get a place on some of the most competitive courses than others even when they get the same A-level grades, according to the Guardian.

The figures show that 25.7% of white applicants received an offer to attend the university, compared with 17.2% of students from ethnic minorities. White students were more than twice as likely to receive an offer to study medicine than those from ethnic minorities.

The effect persisted for the most able students: 43% of white students who went on to receive three or more A\* grades at A-level got offers, compared with just 22.1% of minority students.

For economics and management, 19.1% of white applicants received offers, compared with 9.3% for ethnic minorities. Among the most able, these success rates increased to 44.4% and 29.5% respectively.

## ‘Indian lay dead for days after suicide’

A 22-year-old Indian-origin student in the UK, who committed suicide last year lay dead and undiscovered in his bedroom for days, an inquest has heard. Vivek Ajit Shah, electronic engineering student at Manchester Metropolitan University, lived in a shared house near the university campus but despite not being seen for three days, flatmates at the house had not realized he was lying dead on his bed, an inquest heard this week. An alarm was raised only when he failed to arrive for a family gathering in London in June last year. A post-mortem was unable to determine exactly how long he had been lying dead. Court recorded a verdict of suicide this week, with the causes of death identified as asphyxiation and gas inhalation. ❧

The University however rejected the allegation and cast away fears that discrepancies in application success rates for different ethnic groups were a result of discrimination. “Oxford University is committed to selecting the very best students, regardless of race, ethnicity, or any other factor,” a spokeswoman said. “This is not only the right thing to do but it is in our own interests.”

HT New Delhi

**REDDYSPEAK**

# Plan on anvil to draw best of Indian scientists abroad

**Vanita Srivastava**

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**NEW DELHI:** In an effort to tap the best of global talent, India has decided to draw a roadmap to attract the best of Indian-origin scientists and even foreign scientists who have settled abroad.

Union science and technology minister Jaipal Reddy said there were many Indian scientists, who would want to come back.

The Department of Science and Technology, plan panel and the HRD ministry will come up with plan to attract recognised Indian-origin scientists.

“I am also trying to attract non-Indian scientists, including Nobel prize winners. We can give them sufficient flexibility. For instance, if the concerned scientist cannot stay continuously in India for three years, they may be given the flexibility wherein they can take three semesters with considerable

**I am trying to attract non-Indian scientists also. Will give them sufficient flexibility**

**JAIPAL REDDY**  
Union science and technology minister

breaks,” Reddy told HT, ahead of the Science Day on Thursday.

Maintaining that the flexibility could be applicable to Indian-origin women scientists also, he said everything would ultimately depend on the plan finalised.

Emphasising on the growing need of international collaborations, he said both the collaborations with LIGO laboratory to create a world-class gravitational-wave detector in India and that with the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN) had put India on the global scientific map.

# PM's research blueprint opposed

**Charu Sudan Kasturi**

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**NEW DELHI:** The Prime Minister's plan to propel India's research output by setting up 14 new universities dedicated to innovations has come up against a wall of criticism. A key Parliamentary panel, government ministries and the Planning Commission voiced

concerns that it may end up hurting the country's higher education ambitions.

The parliamentary standing committee on HRD, headed by Congress MP Oscar Fernandes slammed the government in a report. It said the human resource development (HRD) ministry had not carried out adequate consultations with important stakeholders.

HT Patna

## Low-cost artificial heart set to get throbbing

**Partha Pratim Roy**

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**PATNA:** A professor at IIT Kharagpur has prepared an artificial heart that will take only 45 minutes to install into a human body and will cost a fraction of around ₹60 lakh quoted for the ones made in the US and Europe.

"I have already constructed a sample heart. It has been implanted in a goat. Its initial results have been very encouraging," said Dr

Sujoy Kumar Guha, noted scientist and professor of biomedical engineering at IIT, Kharagpur.

"It will, however, take some more time before I can declare it fit for human beings," Guha told HT on the sidelines of a national seminar on the 'Role of nanotechnology in the development of Bihar', organised by the Aryabhata Knowledge University, here last week.

Interestingly, Guha's "heart-on-trial" has been shaped by the heart

of a cockroach, a hardy creature which predates human beings and may be expected to outlast them.

"There are 10 chambers in the heart of a cockroach. But, I decided to give a five-chamber shape to the human heart that I have constructed," he said.

Guha said he believes the artificial heart would last four-five years. "But I would not advise my artificial heart recipients to wait for that long to get it replaced. Ideally, it should be replaced

after three years," he said.

The heart implant would be a "simple" process, akin to the gall-bladder operation", he added.

The professor said the French inspired him to build an artificial heart. "At a function in France I saw people replacing working bulbs. When asked why they are replacing them, they said they change such items before they stopped functioning. "This sounded interesting and I immediately warmed up to the idea," Guha said.

HT Chennai

# Exim Bank, IIT-M research park to handhold fledgling firms

**Our Bureau**

Chennai, Feb. 27

The Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) and the Rural Technology and Business Incubator (RTBI) cell of IIT Madras Research Park have come together to evaluate and support companies during their nascent stage. A memorandum of cooperation was signed on Tuesday to this effect.

According to T.C.A. Rangathan, Chairman and Managing Director of Exim Bank, companies which the bank seeks to support should be fo-

cused on socially-relevant technology to improve rural livelihoods along with having a promising export potential.

Speaking on the occasion, he said the bank, after a detailed study, found out that the import of high-tech goods is a major reason for the ever-increasing current account deficit. Last year, India imported \$90-billion worth high-tech goods, which accounts for almost 25 per cent of the country's total import. To plug this, India needs to encourage and facilitate global majors setting up their technology-

based manufacturing units in India and also encourage and support technology innovations by domestic entrepreneurs.

Elaborating on the incubator cell, Ashok Jhunjhunwala, Co-Chairman of RTBI, said the not-for-profit organisation is IIT-M's incubator, facilitating rural-inclusive technology and business innovation in India. The partners of RTBI include the TeNet Group, INfoDev, IFMR Trust, LIRNEasia, Tata Teleservices Ltd and Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council.

However, on a standalone basis, these projects are unable to get working capital funding from banks given the size and the age of the companies. And now, Exim Bank's pact with RTBI will open up a new avenue for the companies which need necessary handholding in their initial stages. With RTBI facilitating the due diligence process and monitoring the companies, Exim Bank will support these companies to grow, Jhunjhunwala said.

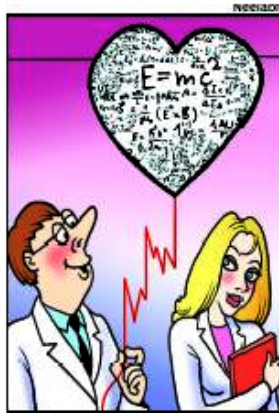
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## Scientist floors GF with physics paper-like proposal

Melbourne: It could well be the geekiest marriage proposal when an Australian physicist got down on his knees to propose to his scientist girlfriend, pulling out a scientific report rather than a ring.

Christie Nelan revealed online how Brendan McMonigal asked her the all-important question in the form of a proposal that had, like any university paper, an introduction, results, difficult lingo such as "principle bodies" and even a graph, according to news.com.au. Nelan, who said 'yes' to the unusual proposal,



published a link to a digital copy of the 'report' that went viral, viewed over 1.7 million times with unpteen Facebook shares and dozens of news articles. Interestingly, the graph in the proposal plots their future happiness if they spent the rest of their lives together.

The couple, who now plan to tie the knot next month, said they met as first-year science students at the University of Sydney. "We got to know each other pretty quickly since we had a lot of common classes, both doing advanced maths and advanced physics,"

McMonigal said. Seven years later, Nelan who returned from a work trip received the 'scientific proposal', a plan McMonigal was working on for some time and who "knew it would be perfect".

Nelan didn't notice that he had gone down on his knees when he handed her the report and she put it away to read after dinner. "I hesitated because it was only one page, which is very short for your average physics paper, and then I realized Brendan was giving me a very odd look. So I looked at the paper more care-

fully and realized Brendan was the author," Nelan said. The report titled "Two Body Interactions: A Longitudinal Study", examined the couple's attraction over an extended period of time, including their love for hydrometeors, the effects of a two-week break up and homemade cooking.

"... I read the abstract and conclusion first, which means it was a proposal before reading the whole thing," she said. It "projected happiness with high confidence" if she accepted his proposal that the "study goes on indefinitely". ■

HT Jaipur

# 'British PM's announcement gives me confidence'

## Indian students in the UK still need clarity on the visa announcements, but hope to 'contribute' to the country

**Vandana Ramnani**

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During his recent visit to India, British Prime Minister David Cameron announced that there would be no cap on the number of visas for Indian students wanting to pursue studies in the UK. He also said that Indian students could stay on in the country in graduate-level jobs after finishing their studies.

Under the changes introduced last year, foreign students will only be able to remain in the UK after graduating if they get a graduate-level job with a salary of at least £20,000 from an accredited employer. Critics have said this has contributed to a fall in the number of Indians and other foreign students applying to education institutions in the UK.

HT Education spoke to two students on the verge of completing their studies in the UK about the impact of the



**British PM  
David  
Cameron**

announcement. Shanti Shankar, pursuing her PhD in psychology at Bangor University, was among the last batch of students who came to the UK on a working visa. "As my research comes to an end in 2015, I am wondering how long can I stay on, how much money I will require etc," she says.

There have also been rumours doing the rounds that students will not be allowed to stay here for long; the maximum they can stay is three years. "As an Indian student in the UK, I had always looked forward to contributing to UK and also collaborating with India as a scientist. However, having the visa issue at the back of one's mind was

definitely a deterrent."

"The prime minister's announcement gives me some confidence that when I complete my studies, I can at least look for opportunities to continue my research work and teaching here," she adds.

The announcement will help her give her best to science and academics in the UK. "Being positive I will be able to continue my endeavour without time issues. Especially when applying for grants in UK and across the world, having the visa to work in the future is essential as a scientist/researcher," she says.

Asked if in the present economic scenario she will be able to land herself a well-paying job in the UK, Shankar says, "If you're good, definitely yes. This ensures you look for jobs with your specialisation and interest rather than take any job, which will impact the local people."

"I believe if I am to continue to be in the UK, I would like to continue in a field of my interest and specialisation, which will pay me well. Having said that, if I do not get a job in six months, then I think it is definitely better to go back to my country to work there and gain experience. There is no point in staying here and doing odd jobs. Also, I would hope if I have sufficient balance to live here, then I should have a chance to continue being here."

### 'It's a positive step'

V Shankar has a BCom from the University of Mumbai and is a qualified chartered accountant. He came to the UK on a tier 4 dependant visa (valid until the end of January 2012). Thereafter, he is on a tier 1 (post-study) dependant visa.

*Continued on page 04*

## No limit on student visas: Cameron

### British premier says anyone who qualifies for a seat in a UK varsity is 'welcome to come'

**HT Education Correspondent**

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International students completing courses from British universities can stay back to work for as long as they wish, said Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron during his visit to India last week.

After finishing their university courses there, they are allowed to stay on and work in the United Kingdom, provided they

find a graduate-level job, Cameron said. "And again there's no real limit on the length of time you can stay and work in the United Kingdom," he added.

There is no bar on the number of student visas either. "So in terms of university students we have a very clear message here in India this week, which is there's no limit on the number of Indian students that can come and study in British universities. They obviously need an English language qualification and a place, but there's no limit on the numbers. So as many of you who can get places at our great universities are welcome to come."

The premier also said

that his country was looking at partnering India in providing higher education to 40 million new students.

"There's also an opportunity for our universities to share expertise with your universities, and to help provide these 40 million extra university places that your government is planning.

"I think I'm right that there are 500,000 Indians under the age of 25; that one of the biggest challenges for your country is how you educate all those people. We want to be your partners as we do that. Obviously, some coming to Britain but many more studying here, but hopefully with courses that we've helped you to write."

# A PM and a star come calling

Equality, creativity, future plans... Janki Devi Memorial College students have their questions ready as David Cameron and Aamir Khan visit

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So what happens when a prime minister comes calling? Students of Janki Devi Memorial College were made to feel like VVIPs when the British prime minister dropped in for a visit, bringing along star celebrity Aamir Khan along with him

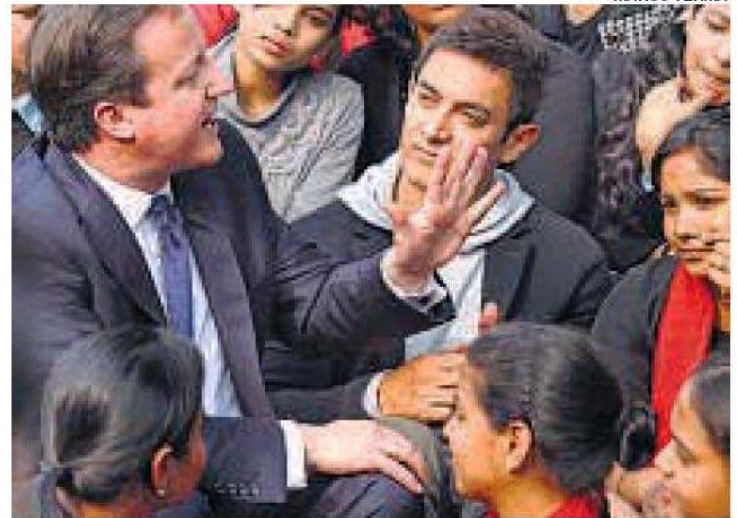
Despite the faculty warning the excited youngsters to maintain “your decorum”, excited chatter gave way to a happy roar as the name of the celebrity accompanying Cameron was revealed.

“Aamir Khan will be coming in, but do not move from your position, do not shout, do not try to touch him, do not go wild,” the teachers warned repeatedly. “He is coming in as an ambassador for malnutrition (the film star is the UNICEF brand ambassador for malnutrition) and not as a film star, remember that. He will not be talking about his movies,” the teachers said.

They need not have worried. The young ladies were

excited, but perfectly well-behaved and full of questions when Cameron and Khan came in. Sadly, the media could not catch a word of what was said because, as we heard, tight security meant no mikes were to be used as the two VIPs went from group to group and chatted with them.

What was the prime minister quizzed on? Talking to the media later, Khan said most of the queries were related to women’s issues. The young students were concerned about inequality in society, they were worried about their careers, about studying abroad and needed to know what kind of future existed for them in this country or in an alien land. “Inequality was a big issue, and the research we did for our serial Satyamev Jayate (a television talk show Khan anchored) revealed that somewhere the root cause is our patriarchal way of thinking... that men are stronger, better, superior with special privileges,” Khan said. “We as a society need to stop killing the girl child, stop



**British PM David Cameron (L) with Bollywood actor and brand Ambassador of UNICEF to promote child nutrition in India, Aamir Khan, interact with students at a women’s college in New Delhi**

treating her differently, feed her, educate her and provide her better health care like we do our sons. We should, mentally, emotionally, physically, treat them at par with the boys. It’s only by empowering the women will we strengthen the nation,” he added.

On other issues, creativity was big on the agenda for Nim Tshering, a BA English honours student. “I asked Mr Cameron about how seriously the creative field was taken in the UK. In India it is not taken as seriously as academics.” The premier assured her of there being a host of excit-

ing creative opportunities in his country. Pratibha, a BCom honours student told Cameron she came from a middle-class family. “I asked him about study opportunities in the UK and the prime minister told me about the various scholarship offers,” she said. “I told him about inequality over here — in jobs, in the way women are treated,” she added. Asha, an English honours student and a member of the Shakespearean Society, wanted to know about co-curricular activities in UK universities.

MANOJ VERMA