Newspaper Clips
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Deccan Herald ND 03/02/2015 P-6

IISc is top institute for research in physics

The research in condensed matter physics at IISc is rated the best in the country. DH FILE PHOTO

Prashanth G N

BENGALURU: The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, has emerged as the country's forerunner in Physics research with the highest number of PhDs in Physics awarded and enrolled for.

The research in condensed matter physics at IISc is rated the best in the country. Scientists from the Institute have been active in their theoretical contributions to the discovery of the Higgs Boson.

Prof Chandan Dasgupta told Deccan Herald, "We are ahead of all the IITs in the number of PhD students who pass out every year from the Physics department as well as in enrolment. The quality of faculty and students is among the best in the country. The specialisations are cutting-edge and scholarship is sharp. My impression is that we have maintained consistency over time."

In the footsteps of the Physics legend and Nobel Laureate Sir C V Raman who set up the department in 1933, the focus is on strong basics and concepts of physics theory. This is why the work here in condensed matter physics is highly reputed. This focus on concepts is also the reason behind IISc's strength in high energy physics, with the department making theoretical contributions to the discovery of the Higgs Boson at CERN, Geneva, the world's largest particle physics laboratory.

The discovery of the Higgs Boson explained mass, one of the fundamental aspects of existence.

IISc scientists have been visiting the CERN lab frequently, as part of many theory groups. Prof Rohini Godbole is one of the prominent academicians from IISc who represents India in these groups at CERN.

Dasgupta says experimentalists are also doing well, but can do far more if complex facilities for experiments are made available. This, he says, requires large scale funding. The plea is fair as the construction of the CERN laboratory for instance required nearly 10 billion US dollars. Indian institutions will need smaller versions of the CERN lab, and a big one that is to come up in Chitradurga district in the State. An additional experimental facility has been planned under the Niligiri mountains.

Senior faculty Prof Arnab Rai Choudhuri says the department must focus on improving its international profile. "In major surveys, IISc Physics should be a prominent name. Our faculty are part of reputed international teams, but the international institutional profile has to be better." There is an expectation that IISc Physics should be ranked within the top 100 physics departments in the world.

The IISc Physics department churns out 15 to 20 doctorates every year, while the IITs –Madras, Mumbai and Delhi– award only five PhDs. As many as 150 students have enrolled for PhD in Physics at the Institute, far ahead of the IITs which have an average enrolment of 25 to 30 students.

DH News Service

Two-day vice-chancellors' conference at Rashtrapati Bhavan from February 4

http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/two-day-vice-chancellors-conference-at-rashtrapati-bhavan-from-february-4/articleshow/46095372.cms

NEW DELHI: President Pranab Mukherjee will host a two-day conference of vice-chancellors of 39 central universities from February 4.

Mukherjee has convened the conference for deliberating on action on previous recommendations; steps to create an eco-system for research and innovation with participation of industry and research institutions; capacity development of faculty, creating international and national networks, adoption of choice based credit system etc, a statement from Rashtrapati Bhavan said.

The President is a visitor to these universities. This is the third such conference of central university VCs.

Mukherjee has also been convening regularly conferences of Directors of NITs, IITs, IISERs and IISC, it said.

Union Minister of Human Resource Development Smriti Irani, Ministers of State for Human Resource Development; Chairman, University Grants Commission and Vice Chancellors of 39 Central Universities will attend the conference.

Alumni associations of IIT Kanpur and Roorkee organise their annual reunion in Lucknow

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/events/lucknow/Alumni-associations-of-IIT-Kanpur-and-Roorkee-organise-their-annual-reunion-in-Lucknow/articleshow/46097265.cms

A NOSTALGIC LOT: The Lucknow chapters of the alumni associations of IIT-Kanpur and Roorkee organised their annual reunion recently in the city.

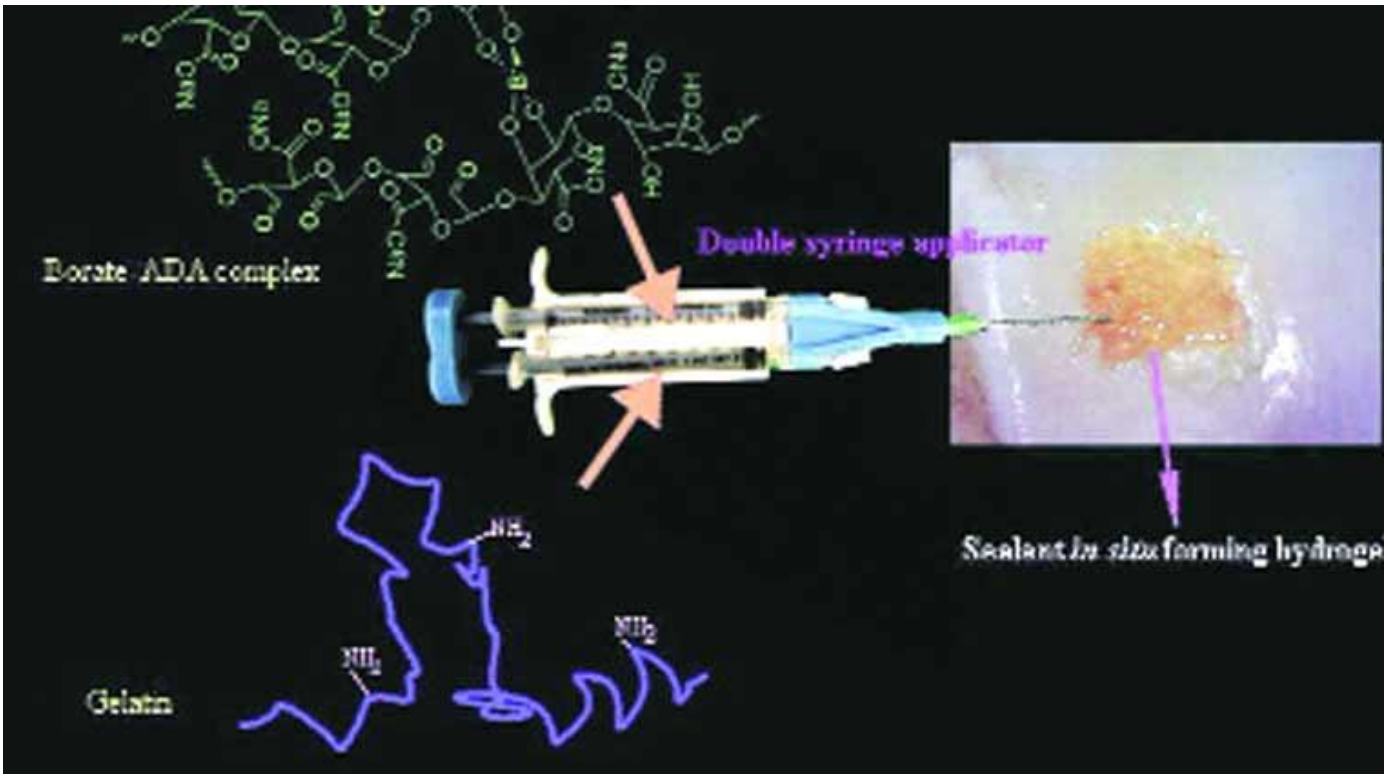
Held at a prominent club in the city, the evening saw IITians reminiscing about their college days and sharing anecdotes with their non-IIT friends, who were also a part of the gathering.

A MUSICAL DELIGHT: The musical evening titled *Sham-e-Ghazal*, the do saw Kanpur-based singer Gopal enthralling the gathering with his renditions of famous *ghazals*. Starting with a few Mehdi Hasan and Jagjit Singh ghazals, the singer then went on to sing Ghulam Ali's *Chupke Chupke Raat Din*, which received a lot of applause from the audience. The last segment saw the audience putting on their dancing shoes and waltzing to some Mohd Rafi and Kishore Kumar numbers.

PERFECT HOSTS: Ajay Jain, secretary of the Lucknow Chapter of IIT-Kanpur's Alumni Association, was the host for the evening and enthralled the audience with his shayari. Sanjay Ayyangar and Neeraj Agarwal were seen greeting the guests along with their spouses.

IIT team offers a cheap, painless treatment for osteoarthritis

http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/iit-team-offers-a-cheap-painless-treatment-for-osteoarthritis/



A team from IIT-Bombay has developed a technology for minimally invasive and inexpensive treatment for osteoarthritis, one which also reduces pain and disease progression.

Osteoarthritis is a condition in which the material that cushions the joints, called cartilage, breaks down, ultimately leading to loss of joint movement.

The research, which has been going on for three years, focused on cartilage regeneration technique.

According to Dr Rinti Banerjee, project guide and professor, Department of Biosciences & Bioengineering at IIT Bombay, the technology does not involve any kind of surgical implant. Instead, a liquid material is injected into the joints, which then forms a gel like meshwork and allows the cartilage cells to grow and remains in place for a long period of time.

The team said that the liquid material technique developed by them addresses the root cause of the condition by tackling cartilage damage and working on the cartilage itself to regenerate it.

The findings have been published in the internationally peer-reviewed journal Acta Biomaterialia.

“Osteoarthritis is a progressive musculo-skeletal disorder, affecting around 10 per cent of the population globally above the age of 60 years, and causing gradual degeneration of bone joints. Cartilages are flexible soft tissues that cover the ends of bone in a joint. Over the passage of time, with the breakdown of cartilages, bones start to rub against each other causing stiffness, pain and loss of joint movement,” Banerjee said.

“Our team has been working on cartilage regeneration using naturally occurring biopolymers. Biopolymer development was in collaboration with Dr Jayakrishnan from IIT Madras. Biopolymers are polymers of natural

origin and form hydrogels, which promote tissue growth. Hydrogels are networks that can absorb water, but are prevented from dissolving due to their cross-linked structure," said Banerjee.

According to experts, a polymer is a large molecule and play an essential role in our daily lives. It comprises both synthetic polymers and natural polymers like DNA and proteins, which are critical to biological functions.

Department of Science and Technology (DST) young scientist Dr Biji Balakrishnan, under Banerjee's mentorship, has developed an "in-situ gelling biopolymeric hydrogel system" that can be injected to the site of the injury as a liquid, which solidifies after about 25 seconds, assuming the shape of the cartilage defect.

According to standard protocol, any new technology first undergoes animal trials followed by toxicology testing. Subsequently, regulatory approval for clinical trials is sought from Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In this research, preliminary animal trials have been conducted in collaboration with National Toxicology Centre, Pune, while some others are ongoing. Further, the team said, though this approach has been investigated for cartilage regeneration, it is not limited to it and can be extended for regeneration of other tissues.

IIT-B may lose 41,539 sqm land set aside for expansion

Hindustan Times (Mumbai)

MUMBAI: The Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-B) is likely to lose a plot admeasuring 41,539 sqm reserved for its expansion.

The additional collector, Mumbai suburban district, has returned the institute's proposal to acquire the land.

According to an affidavit filed by sub-divisional officer Dattaprasad Nade before the Bombay high court, the proposal has been returned primarily because the IIT-B failed to deposit, with the special land acquisition officer, two-third of the total cost of acquisition — amounting to Rs118.38 crore — as advance.

It also failed to furnish an undertaking that it was willing to acquire the land on 'as is where it is' basis, the affidavit said.

Assistant government pleader Bharat Mehta submitted the affidavit in high court last week in response to a petition filed by IIT-B, urging the court to save the plot from getting dereserved.

The IIT-B also sought direction to the state government to acquire the land, shown in the city's development plan (DP) as space reserved for the institute's expansion.

According to the petition, the land was reserved in 1993-94. IITB, however, came to know about it only in 1999 and immediately sent letters to the Maharashtra urban development department and the collector, Mumbai suburban district, requesting them to take steps to acquire the property.

On March 8, 2002, the institute received a response from the revenue officials stating the price of the land was fixed at Rs11,600 a sqm — aggregating to Rs50.13 crore for the entire plot.

T he i nstitute, however, expressed inability to pay the huge acquisition cost and urged the district collector to take into consideration that IIT-B was an educational institute and requested the state government to hand over the private property free of cost.

Three years later, the institute received another letter from the collector's office disclosing the new rate fixed for acquisition — Rs28,500 a sqm, which would require IIT to pay Rs118.38 crore as the acquisition cost.

The institute approached the high court last year, after a private developer issued purchase notice under Section 127 of the Maharashtra Regional and Town Planning (MRTP) Act, 1966, to the civic body, calling upon it to acquire the property at the earliest.

IIT-B contended the private owners can obtain a court order declaring that the reservation lapsed because of failure on part of the authorities to acquire the property despite issuing the purchase notice.

Section 127 of the MRTP Act provides that the reservation shown in any DP shall be deemed to have lapsed, if no steps are taken to acquire the land for 10 years after approval of the final plan and within one year of the issuance of purchase notice by the owner of the land.

1 Comment(s)

FoolishPerspectives of Srikanth G

03 February 2015
08:20

IIT Bombay formed in 1958 had originally about 550 acres of land - then a remote outskirt of Bombay. Today it is in the middle of a concrete and vehicle muddle with large parts of its land given off to NITIE, SAMEER, and Road-Expansion.

While its land had shrunk, IIT Bombay continuously expands its departments, students, specialty laboratories and facilities. Consequently, It is one of the crowded and badly organized maze of buildings and research labs.

The quality of buildings in IIT Bombay are worthy of criticism. They are built with 1960s' concepts and expectations.

IIT BOMBAY should consider trading all its remaining land to one of the high-valued realty developer and take a state-of-art campus of 1000 acres at the Navi Mumbai outskirts.

It is good for the growth of the Institute and for the protection of the academic environment and culture!

Can someone examine fairly?

Hello, Start-ups. IIT-Bombay's Take on Silicon Valley

http://www.ndtv.com/cities/hello-start-ups-iit-bombays-take-on-silicon-valley-736505

Mumbai: It was sixty lakhs in sixty minutes. At IIT Bombay, eight start-ups pitched ideas in 10 minutes each to a group of investors. Six of the teams landed 10 lakhs as seed capital.

Among the winners at Sunday's competition was a team of students from the institute. Another team of grad students from IIT Delhi also made the cut.

There was an age bar - nobody older than 30 could pitch for funds.

This was the first time that IIT Bombay decided to organize what it has termed the '10 minute million' as part of its annual Entrepreneurship Summit.

"Our idea was that, you take 10 months, we believe it can be done in 10 minutes. I would have been happy even if I had got a fraction of the response. Right from the entrepreneurs, to the investors to the audience, this is an absolutely outstanding response", said Ajit Khurana, CEO, Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, IIT Bombay.

Out of a total of 250 applications, eight were allowed to present their ideas to investors. The investors then had two minutes to huddle, and decide if they wanted to invest in the project.

"This is much more about getting into a company early as a mentor, much more so than the money. I'm very realistic that the 10 lakhs is a great starter amount for them to prototype more, do some market research but what we're here for, is to help them get to the next level", said Ravi Gururaj, one of the Investors at the summit.

The most popular pitch at the summit, was Faaya, an online custom clothing platform where you can design your own clothes, manufacture them to your measurements and get them delivered to your doorstep. It managed to raise over half a crore, however, the rules of the '10 minute million' cap limits the maximum investment at 10 lakh, which is what they finally got.

"It's not just about the money that's been raised but also about the brains who are investing their mentorship in the startup. It's going to be exciting to see how all of us can work together", said Mridang, founder of Faaya.

Another project that stood out was Leaf.

"Our product is a women security customizable module so you can wear it as a watch, necklace, helmet anything and whenever you're in danger, you activate it by a button push and it sends alerts to your friends, family, police and the nearby community", said Chirag, Leaf's Co-founder.

6 Startups Raise Minimum INR 1M Each at IIT Bombay's Entrepreneurship Summit

http://www.iamwire.com/2015/02/6-startups-raise-minimum-inr-1m-iit-bombays-entrepreneurship-summit/109119

On Sunday, IIT Bombay's Entrepreneurship Cell hosted an on-the-spot funding event "The 10-Minute Million" in which 6 startups raised around INR 1 million funding each against a 4 percent equity to the investors. The 6 startups were shortlisted among 260 entries to pitch in front of angel investors (5 min pitch and 5 min Q&A) and get an on-the-spot decision on funding amount of USD 1 million.

Also Read: IIT Delhi's Startup Showcase Competition Invites Startups to Pitch for INR 10L in Funding

Here are the 6 startups which received funding during the E-summit event:

InstaBounce: InstaBounce is an Indian only marketplace to Discover and Book events at the last minute. Users can browse through a curated list of events happening in the city, and book the event they like. Through this app, users can find events varying from a wine and food pairing event to a cocktail tasting, clubbing, live gigs, stand up comedy, karaoke and many more. It has raised funding from VC Karthik, Aniruddha Malpani and Ajeet Khurana.

Faaya: It is an online platform where users can design their outfits which is then tailor made for them. User can pick designs and change/add elements from the scratch. The firm has received funding from investors Ajay Pandey, Anil Chokhani, Aniruddha Malpani, Bharat Banka, VC Karthik, Ravi Gururaj, Suneel Bandhu, Sunil Kalra, Taha Nabee, Vijay Talreja and Ajeet Khurana.

CleverSharks: CleverSharks is an initiative for providing a reliable and authentic platform to engineers for framing opinions about different work opportunities. The firm's aims to create a smarter student community, equipped with correct resources and tools, where everyone takes an informed decision. It has secured funding from Vijay Talreja, Sunil Kalra, Vikram Chachra.

Chloroplast Foods: It is an online healthy snack ordering platform which offers different snack options to choose from. The startup claims to manufacture and deliver healthy, nutritious and tasty snacks directly to user address. The firm has raised funding from Ajeet Khurana, Taha Nabee, VC Kathik and Ravi Gururaj.

Dealwithus: It helps people to find better cashback offers among 300+ e-commerce websites. The website's features include automated link building, cashback meter, android app, mobile website and is able to provide customers to use it in minimum time and can get their cash back. It also works in collaboration with NGOs and allows the users to donate their cashback for social causes. The firm has secured funding from Ajeet Khurana, Ravi Gururaj, VC Karthik, Sunil Kalra, Vijay Talreja, Vikram Chachra and Suneel Bandhu.

Leaf: It is a wearable technology company which aims at creating wearables using imagination, innovation and technology. Its product Guardian works upon the auto-sensing principle which measures stress, anxiety, fear and sends instant alerts to user's friends, family, the police and the volunteers of the guardian community in the proximity to inform them about their location.

Prompt notifications are received by the concerned on their mobile phones and user location can be easily tracked by the Guardian mobile application that traces Guardian's locale and immediately guides the aide to you.

Leaf raised funding from Ajeet Khurana, Anirudha Malpani, Taha Nabee, Anil Chakahni, Sunil Kalra, Ajay Pandey and Vijay Talreja.

आईआईटियन ने नेपाल में शुरू कराया बीटेक

http://inextlive.jagran.com/40th-reunion-in-iit-kanpur-58811

-आईआईटी के 40वें री यूनियन में शिरकत करने पहुंचे एलुमिनाइज ने बांट अुनभव

- नेपाल की पोखर यूनिवर्सिटी की सीनेट मेंबर टिमिला ने नेपाल में इंजीनियरिंग को दी एक नई दिशा

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KANPUR: नेपाल में 70 के दशक तक एक भी इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेज नहीं था. डिप्लोमा लेकर स्टूडेंट्स ओवरसियर बन जाते थे. आईआईटी से इलेक्ट्रिकल इंजीनियरिंग की डिग्री लेकर मैं नेपाल पहुंची और इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेज खुलवाने की कवायद शुरू कर दी. भ् साल की मेहनत के बाद त्रिभुवन यूनिवर्सिटी में इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेज खोलने में सफलता मिली. कॉलेज को खोलने में वर्ल्ड बैंक की मदद भी लेनी पड़ी. हालांकि अब नेपाल में इंजीनियरिंग व मेडिकल कॉलेज की कमी नहीं है. नेपाल की एजुकेशन को डेवलप करने में इंडिया ने काफी मदद की है. आईआईटी के ब्0वें रीयूनियन में शिरकत करने पहुंची एल्युमिनाई टिमिला यमी थापा ने यह इंफॉर्मेशन शेयर की.

इंडिया में भी दिया अहम योगदान

नेपाल की रहने वाली टिमिला यमी ने आईआईटी से इलेक्ट्रिकल इंजीनियरिंग में बीटेक की डिग्री इयर क्97भ् में ली थी. इसके बाद वह अपने को साकार करने के लिए जॉब के ऑफर को ठुकराकर नेपाल वापस पहुंचकर त्रिभुवन यूनिवर्सिटी में प्रोफेसर बन गई. हालांकि इंडिया में एजुकेशन की फील्ड में भी उनका अहम योगदान है. वह यूजीसी की मेंबर रहीं. इसके अलावा एकेडमिक काउंसिल की भी मेंबर रही हैं.

कानपुर में पढ़ीं, नेपाल में बनीं मिनिस्टर

टिमिला ने बताया कि मां की डेथ के बाद छोटी बहन शीला यमी को वह आईआईटी ले आईं और सेंट्रल स्कूल में एडमिशन करा दिया. जहां पर उन्होंने एजुकेशन ली. बाद में शीला नेपाल की फिजिकल वर्क्स एण्ड प्लानिंग मिनिस्टर भी बनीं. शीला यमी नेपाल के पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री डॉ. बीआर भटराई की पत्नी हैं.

क्8 नए कोर्स शुरू कराए

एजुकेशन की फील्ड में अहम रोल निभा चुकी टिमिला यमी थापा ने बताया कि उनके टाइम पर नेपाल में 8 मास्टर प्रोग्राम चल रहे थे. उन्होंने इनकी संख्या क्8 तक पहुंचा दी. इस समय नेपाल में ब्भ् इंजीनियंिरग कॉलेज और करीब ख्0 मेडिकल कॉलेज चल रहे हैं. जिसमें इंडिया का काफी योगदान रहा है.

हरिप्रसाद ने बढ़ाई 'रौनक'

अहमदाबाद के रहने वाले रौनक हरिप्रसाद ने बताया कि क्97भ् में केमिकल से बीटेक की डिग्री लेकर उन्होंने अमेरिका की फ्लाइट पकड़ ली थी. उनका सुझाव है कि 7वीं क्लास तक किसी भी बच्चे का एग्जाम न लिया जाए. बच्चे को कम से कम तीन भाषाओं की शिक्षा देनी चाहिए. वोकेशनल ट्रेनिंग वाली एजुकेशन पर फोकस करना चाहिए. रौनक ने आईआईटी के बीटेक फर्स्ट और सेकेंड इयर के स्टूडेंट्स के लिए दो गोल्ड मेडल व भ्क् हजार रुपए कैश प्राइज देने का प्रपोजल आईआईटी एडमिनिस्ट्रेशन को दिया. स्टूडेंट को स्लम एरिया में रहने वालों के लिए ऐसा प्रोजेक्ट बनाएं जिससे वह अर्निंग कर सकें.

पीना तो दूर नहाने लायक भी नहीं बची गंगा

पटना के रहने वाले बिभास कुमार ने क्97भ् में सिविल इंजीनियरिंग की डिग्री ली थी. इसके बाद वह सेन्ट्रल वाटर कमीशन में जॉब करने चले गए.अक्टूबर ख्0क्फ् में कमीशन के चेयरमैन पद से वह रिटायर हो गए. गंगा की सफाई पर उनका कहना था कि यह बहुत बड़ा मुद्दा है. जब दस साल तक पूरी मेहनत के साथ काम किया जाएगा तभी गंगा की सफाई संभव है. कई जगह गंगा का फ्लो टूट गया है. वहां पर कृतिम फ्लो देने की जरूरत है. कुछ स्थानों पर तो गंगा का पानी नहाने लायक भी नहीं बचा है.

अब सीमेंट प्लांट में नो पॉल्यूशन

केमिकल से बीटेक करने वाले मुंबई के यतीन्द्रनाथ काशीनाथ नादकर्णी ने बताया कि सीमेंट व पॉवर प्लांट का प्रदूषण रोकने की टेक्नोलॉजी डेवलप की है. कई सीमेंट कंपनियों को डेली भ् से म् टन सीमेंट का फायदा उनकी टेक्नोलॉजी से हो रहा है. उन्होंने प्लांट में कई प्वाइंट पर फिल्टर लगाए हैं ताकि प्रदूषण को रोका जा सके. जिसमें वह कामयाब भी हो गए हैं. जेपी ग्रुप, अल्ट्राटेक, जेके , बिरला ग्रुप को वह अपनी टेक्नोलॉजी दे चुके हैं. इंदौर के पास ग्रासिम नगदा पॉवर प्लांट में इस टेक्नोलॉजी का यूज किया है.

Times Of India ND 03/02/2015 P-17

Come 2016, place your ad in space

Washington: Researchers in Belgium have joined hands with European Space Agency (ESA) to launch the first ever billboard to space in 2016.

The billboard being developed at KU Leuven University in Belgium will include personal messages and ads from well-known companies such as Microsoft. The billboard will be outside of a CubeSat — a small satellite that's a cheaper and faster alternative to traditional satellites. The CubeSat will be about the size of a milk carton. The billboard will be around 8x8cm big and will have 400 squares available for purchase.

The billboard will be orbiting the Earth 15 times a day for 10 years.

© Philip Corbluth/Illustration

The 8x8cm billboard to be launched by ESA will also carry personal messages

Although the billboard will not be seen from Earth, anyone can go to the billboard website and see the messages or logos that are on the actual satellite, New York Daily News reported.

Companies are not the only ones who can put a message on the billboard. Anyone can write a message which costs 1 euro a character.

Tjorven Delabie, lead researcher and PhD student in space engineering and his friends Maarten Decat and Jeroen Vandewalle - also PhD students - have partnered with ESA, which will oversee all of their work until launch in January 2016 from Alcantara, Brazil.

The CubeSat carrying the billboard will focus on global warming research once it is in space.

The money sponsors invested on the billboard will be used to expand research on small satellites at the KU Leuven University. PTI

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'Big Data Embedded into Marketing Curriculum'

ET Q&A

Niraj Dawar is a marketing strategy expert and a professor of marketing at Ivey Business School at Western University in London, Ontario, Canada. Dawar's book, 'Tilt: Shifting Your Strategy from Products to Customers', recently topped Forbes' and strategy+business's list of noteworthy books of 2014. In an interview with **Anumeha Chaturvedi**, Dawar spoke about the shift in marketing strategies of professionals, the changing marketing curriculum in business schools, and what companies should do to engage customers better.

Very few companies are using big data. There's a lot of room for somebody who understands data analysis to add value by asking the right questions

What is the thought behind 'Tilt' and what are the lessons for marketers?

For the past 250 years, the factory has been the centre of the business in our world.

The factory, raw materials, supply chain, volume of products sold, approach is the upstream approach. But in the past 15-20 years, in industry after industry, there is a shift where the fixed costs are also in customer acquisition, retention and satisfaction. Bulk of the costs are shifting downstream, towards this approach. The questions we need to ask now is what else do my customers want, how deep is our engagement with customers, and that shift is what I have tried to capture in 'Tilt'. Sources of competitive advantage have shifted as they also reside downstream in interactions with customers. 'Tilt' is about what you need to do differently to engage customers.

Do you see Indian companies adopting the downstream approach to engage customers?

I see a lot of more of that today than a decade ago. There's a much more sophisticated understanding of data, brand building segmentation. Social media has made it easier to reach customers and know which customers you're reaching.

Is the marketing curriculum in B-schools taking into account the new approaches of engaging customers?

Marketing curriculum in B-schools is being infused with elements of change in understanding big data. The internet has created a lot of information about customer behaviour, what influences them, an understanding of the stages of consumer behaviour and what happens at each stage. All of that is creating new opportunities for marketers. We are designing our courses to reflect those changes.

What can companies and marketing professionals do to understand their customers better?

As a marketer, through big data, you have access to multiple geographies and can use this for arbitrage. Marketers can also influence behaviour by benchmarking customers.

Very few companies are using big data. You can make predictions by gauging people's past behaviour. There's a lot of room for somebody who understands data analysis to add value by asking the right questions. People who have it are highly priced.

Housing.com Fires Off Big Hiring Drive

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Mumbai: Flush with funds after its latest Softbank-led $90 million investment round, realty portal Housing.com is embarking upon what is arguably one of the biggest tech hiring drives by a less-than-three-year-old startup.

The Mumbai-based company is planning to add some 500 hires to its 100-strong tech team over the next three months as it focuses on using technology for a much bigger play in the real estate space. Leading engineering colleges including the IITs and NITs and lateral hiring apart, the company is also planning to tap the likes of MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and Stanford University School of Engineering.

Most of the hiring will be done for the mobile platform which is the major focus area and talent will be hired for both the back-end and the front-end. About 40% of those brought on board will be freshers, and the balance will be lateral hires.

"Technology has changed the face of almost every industry, but in Indian real estate so far, it hasn't has that much of an impact," says Advitiya Sharma, co-founder, Housing.com. "We want to get the best people who are excited about coming in and changing the trajectory of real estate through technology," he told ET.

GOING ALL OUT

The startup plans to add 500 hires to its 100-strong tech team over three months from top institutes across the world

Housing.com, a first-day recruiter at IIT placements, has already made 110-plus offers at their campuses including Delhi, Mumbai and Madras. It will soon head to NITs and other leading engineering colleges to make more offers. Salaries being offered at the entry-level are upwards of Rs 18 lakh.

In February, a core team from the portal will also head to top campuses such as MIT and Stanford in the US to attend campus fairs. "From our initial talks, we have found that many people are extremely excited about the Indian startup space, particularly the product side," says Sharma. "Initially we were planning to send a two to three-member team, but now we are preparing to send more people across various functions," he added.

New hires, says Sharma, will get the opportunity to work on cutting-edge products. "We are looking at such areas as virtual reality and algorithms that will calculate the valuations of homes," he says.

Launched in 2012 by a group of IIT Bombay graduates, Housing.com has raised more than $121 million in five rounds of funding. According to a recent statement by The SoftBank Group, Housing.com plans to use the latest round of funds to map over 40 million homes across 300 cities in India in the next one to two years. It has been increasing the services offered to consumers by adding rental agreement documents; home loans and even tied up with Tata Value Homes to exclusively sell homes online through its website.

Currently, Housing.com has around 1,500 employees, about 500 of whom are in the data collection team.