

## Newspaper Clips

February 7, 2012

Hindustan ND 7/02/2012 P-9

# आईआईटी एंट्रेंस पर टकराव के आसार

नई दिल्ली | विशेष संवाददाता

आईआईटी और अन्य इंजीनियरिंग संस्थानों में प्रवेश के लिए प्रस्तावित सिंगल एंट्रेंस टेस्ट में शामिल होने के लिए न्यूनतम अंक सीमा में बढ़ोतरी होने के आसार हैं। लेकिन इस मुद्दे पर केंद्र के लिए राह आसान नहीं होगी, क्योंकि राज्य अंक सीमा कम किए जाने की मांग कर रहे हैं।

18 फरवरी को इस मुद्दे पर केंद्र ने राज्यों के शिक्षा मंत्रियों की बैठक बुलाई है, जिसमें सिंगल एंट्रेंस टेस्ट के स्वरूप

## अंक सीमा मामला

- आचार्य समिति ने की है इसे 60 फीसदी से बढ़ाने की सिफारिश
- राज्य चाहते हैं कि बढ़ाने की बजाय कम की जाए अंक सीमा

पर फैसला किया जाएगा। मंत्रालय के सूत्रों के अनुसार आईआईटीजेईई और एआईईईई जैसे मौजूदा एंट्रेंस टेस्ट को खत्म कर उसकी जगह एक नया टेस्ट शुरू करने पर सहमति पूर्व में ही बन चुकी

है। लेकिन टेस्ट का स्वरूप कैसा हो, यह अभी तय होना है। टेस्ट में यह बदलाव आईआईटी समेत चुनिंदा इंजीनियरिंग संस्थानों में प्रतिभाशाली छात्रों को मौका देने तथा कोचिंग वाले छात्रों को हतोत्साहित करने के लिए हो रहा है। लेकिन इसमें कुछ मुद्दों पर राज्यों की सहमति मुश्किल नजर आ रही है।

आईआईटी परीक्षा में बैठने के लिए 12वीं में अंक सीमा 60 फीसदी है। एआईईईई में 12वीं में सीमा 60 फीसदी है जबकि अन्य संस्थानों के लिए यह 45 फीसदी कर दी गई है।

Economic Times ND 7/02/2012 P-3

# Nair Misleading Nation, Got a Hearing: PMO

Govt says former Isro chief was given a fair hearing and it's a normal practice to bar an officer from his job while probes are underway

OUR POLITICAL BUREAU  
NEW DELHI

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on Monday hit back at former Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) chief G Madhavan Nair, who had accused the government of selectively releasing the Antrix-Devas probe report, saying that he was misleading the nation by complaining about not being heard during the investigation.

The minister of state in PMO V Narayanasamy said the probe panel led by Pratyush Sinha had given Nair an opportunity to put forward his version.

"The committee report clearly mentions that there was a personal hearing of Madhavan Nair and that he was heard. Therefore, the principle of natural justice has been followed in his case. The

other scientists were also given the questionnaire and they have replied," said Narayanasamy.

The minister's comments came after Nair trashed the Isro report on Sunday, accusing the space agency of being selective in revealing facts. "Whatever bits and pieces are being released show that they don't want to reveal the full facts...the portions which are quoted from Pratyush Sinha committee are inaccurate and inconsistent... Most of the meetings were attended only by secretary of Devas and chairman of the panel," he said.

Congress too came down upon the scientist for challenging the government's decision. "The government did not ban him in a knee-jerk reaction. The matter was considered at length and the government acted on the basis of an enquiry re-

port that is in the public domain," said party spokesperson Abhishek Manu Singhvi. He added that Nair was free to challenge the decision-making process in the court if he disagreed with it. "It is

**Congress says Nair is free to challenge government decision in court**

wrong to criticise the decision without testing it in court and also because the reasons behind the decision are in the public domain," Singhvi said.

The five-member committee, set up last year to study the controversial contract between Isro's commercial arm Antrix and private firm Devas for sale of the scarce S-band spectrum, had indicted Nair and others in Isro and found "procedural lapses" in the deal.

The committee's report, made public

on Saturday night, however, said the deal did not result in any loss to the exchequer. It further said that the deal "seems to be lacking in transparency and due diligence". The committee further recommended action against Nair and scientists A Bhaskaranarayana, KR Sridhara Murthi and KN Shankara, all of whom have since retired. The four have been blacklisted by the government from holding any official position over their alleged role in the Antrix-Devas deal.

Even as Nair cried foul over the ban, PMO sources pointed out that it is a normal practice for government officers to be barred from their jobs while probes are underway against them. "It is only because senior scientists are involved here that this matter is being played out in the media," said a PMO official.



FAIR PLAY: G Madhavan Nair

HindustanTimes

Title : Some rules were broken, says Nair

Author : Zia Haq zia.haq@hindustantimes.com

Location : NEW DELHI

Article Date : 02/07/2012

# Some rules were broken, says Nair

**ANTRIX SCAM** Former Isro chief claims govt didn't lose money on satellite deal

Zia Haq

■ zia.haq@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Former Isro chief G Madhavan Nair said on Monday that some rules might have been ignored in the 2005 Antrix-Devas satellite deal — prompting the ban on any government role for him — but insisted that he had done no wrong.

Nair's views, ironically, could come as a boost for the government getting flak for punishing some of India's brightest scientists — allegedly without proper investigation.

On January 13, the government barred Nair and three other top scientists — all have superannuated — from taking up government roles for letting private sector Devas buy satellite transponders and spectrum from state-owned Antrix Corporation without a proper bidding process, among other things.

Antrix is the commercial arm

## CRASH-LANDING

- Antrix, the commercial arm of India's national space agency, signs an agreement with the privately held Devas Multimedia in 2005 to sell spectrum for 12 years along with satellite transponders
- The deal was to give India a handheld telecom technology few countries have
- In 2011, six years later, allegations of irregularities crop up, such as failure to set up a proper bid
- The government revokes the deal in Feb 2011, orders two high-level probes
- On Jan 13, it bans Nair and four scientists from future govt roles

of Isro — then headed by Nair — while Deutsche Telekom is an investor in Devas.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 6**

**HindustanTimes**

**Title : SOME RULES WERE BROKEN...**

**Author :**

**Location : NEW DELHI:**

**Article Date : 02/07/2012**

## SOME RULES WERE BROKEN...

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

**NEW DELHI:** Nair, who was on a day trip to the capital on Monday, told HT that he agreed with the findings of the first of the two high-level probes, which pointed out procedural lapses, but ruled out any financial loss to the government on account of the deal.

But he differed with the findings of a subsequent probe ordered by the Prime Minister - who oversees the Department of Space - since its findings and recommendations were clearly different from the first one.

He said he agreed to one of the main charges that whole details of the deal were not explicitly stated before the government, hinting that this wasn't mandatory at the time. "The details were implicit," he said without explaining. "You can't apply rules retrospectively."

Still awaiting a response from the Prime Minister to his appeal for revoking the ban on him, Nair said he could seek "legal recourse to restore his credibility".

CLAIMING INNOCENCE?

## CAG lifts lid off Nair's Devas lapses

**Report Points Out Opaque System, Shortcomings, Conflict Of Interest In Deal**

***TIMES NEWS NETWORK***

New Delhi: The CAG has severely indicted ex-Isro chief G Madhavan Nair and other senior officials of the space agency and Antrix Corporation for their role in the Sband deal with Devas Multimedia. The CAG report is expected to be tabled in Parliament's Budget session.

"A transparent, objective and documented system was not in place to carry out functions such as allocation of transponders, finalization of Insat contracts, and frequency management. Critical decisions were being made by only two or three officers of department of space/Isro. The multiple responsibilities of officials in Isro and Antrix resulted in conflict of interest and in the present case their decision making proved disadvantageous to their parent organization," the CAG said.

According to details of the CAG report available with Times Now channel, the most critical failure was that Nair played five key roles that led to severe lapses, shortcomings and conflict of interest.

"As chairman of Isro, Nair appointed Dr Shankara Committee to examine the proposals submitted by M/s Forge Advisors, US, in April 2004 proposing therein to introduce Devas service in the country. He mandated Dr Shankara Committee to finalise the financial aspects of the proposal but the committee did not have any financial members. The committee submitted its report in January 2005, in the very same month Antrix-Devas deal was signed," the CAG report said.

As chairman of Antrix, Nair allowed Isro's commercial arm to sign "transponder lease agreement against a stipulation of SATCOM policy. He authorized executive director Antrix to sign Antrix-Devas deal, the terms of which were heavily loaded in favour of Devas," the report said.

As secretary, DoS, Nair "put up a Cabinet note seeking financial sanction for the design, development and launch of GSAT-6 satellite, wherein the fact that it was being realized for a specific customer was concealed". The Cabinet was given the impression that several firms had submitted Expression of Interest "when in reality DoS had already prior to approaching the Cabinet inked the deal with Devas," the report added.

In his role as chairman, Space Commission, Nair "chaired the 104th meeting in 2005 and 114th meeting in 2009 in which the proposal seeking financial sanction was approved by Space Commission for GSAT-6 and 6A satellites respectively. In both these meetings the position that these two satellites were being specifically developed for Devas was not brought to the notice of the commission", the report said.

As chairman, ICC, Nair "did not convene a single meeting of ICC after 2004. Thus the views/concerns/interests of stakeholders represented through secretaries of ministries and departments concerned were effectively blocked off."

## Chaturvedi panel faults Nair for financial, commercial weakness

*TIMES NEWS NETWORK*

New Delhi: A clean chit by the B K Chaturvedi-Rodham Narsimha committee to blacklisted top space scientist Madhavan Nair on the charge of giving space band spectrum cheap may be poor consolation as he has been slammed for “major financial and commercial weaknesses”.

The Chaturvedi report offers some relief to Nair and three other former Isro scientists as it rejects any revenue loss implications and says leasing of transponders to private firm Devas was not a policy violation. And, despite holding Nair responsible for several lapses, it does not recommend disciplinary action.

In contrast, the committee headed by former central vigilance commissioner Pratyush Sinha has called for action against Nair and his colleagues under pension rules and called for an investigation into “non-legitimate” financial and pecuniary interests.

Nair has hit out at the Sinha committee saying the recommendation to bar him and others from government assignments was a “witch hunt” and suggested the report’s “inconsistencies and inaccuracies” might have something to do with his successor at Isro, K Radhakrishnan, being on the panel.

The former Isro chief, hailed as India’s moon mission man, has however been held responsible for omissions ranging from committing Indian satellites for untested [technologies](#), keeping defence implications of the Devas deal from the Cabinet and Space Commission and agreeing to terms heavily loaded in favour of the firm.

Devas, a firm based in Bangalore with substantial overseas investors, was given use of 60Mhz of S-band airwaves for hybrid operations involving multi-media services to vehicles and cellphones. The Chaturvedi panel’s clean chit seems to reflect the government’s concerns over another “spectrum scam” soon after the 2G fiddle while Sinha panel points to financial implications.

Yet, while the Chaturvedi committee says concerns over “short selling of spectrum are not substantiated”, in the same paragraph it holds Nair squarely culpable of agreeing to a deal with “major financial and commercial weaknesses” as chairman of Antrix — Isro’s commercial arm.

Even as it absolves Isro under Nair of causing a loss to government, the panel says it is not clear why such a large segment of S-band spectrum was given to Devas when similar services in Japan, Korea and US do not require more than 20-25Mhz. So spectrum being “gifted” is not ruled out.

The report does dwell on an estimated internal rate of return but the calculations appended as annexure have not been released by Isro. The rate is pegged at 13%, which would be reduced in view of charges Devas would pay to the telecom ministry for licences.

The charge that Isro did not inform the Cabinet and Space Commission of the Devas deal, merely referring to use of satellites on “appropriate commercial terms for multi-media and information services”, is serious. Antrix simply hid the information of its agreement giving Devas 90% transponder capacity for 20 years.

## Sibal moots 5-point agenda to boost social science research

*Manash Pratim Gohain TNN*

New Delhi: In an attempt to rejuvenate social [science](#) research, HRD minister Kapil [Sibal](#) on Monday proposed a five-point agenda, including [instituting](#) 10 annual awards and introducing National Social [Science](#) Research Innovation Centre and ICSSR fellowship schemes to attract talent.



To be called Amartya Sen Awards in the line of Bhatnagar Awards, Sibal said that unlike science, there is no comparative recognition to quality studies in social sciences. "We propose to institute 10 annual awards to recognize advancement of knowledge in social sciences." said Sibal.

Stating that social science is crucial for sound policy decisions, the minister proposed a research innovation centre to be established by Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR) to identify innovative research methodologies in frontier areas of knowledge and assist in building a network for carrying forward the research interests of institutions, scholars and teachers.

## **HindustanTimes**

**Title : Amartya Sen Award for social scientists announced**

**Author :**

**Location : NEW DELHI:**

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### **Amartya Sen Award for social scientists announced**

**NEW DELHI:** HRD minister Kapil Sibal announced an award for social scientists in name of Nobel laureate Amartya Sen. The award will be given to 10 top social scientists every year. The announcement was made as part of five point agenda to rejuvenate social science in India crucial for sound policy decisions. "Unless we are able to lift the quality of research in India in social sciences, we will not be able to get the kind of data which is fundamental for policy makers to take Decisions," Sibal said.

Indian Express ND 07/02/2012 P-3

## **HAT'S OFF**

NEARLY two years back, the then environment minister Jairam Ramesh had termed convocation gowns and hats as remains of a barbaric colonial legacy and had urged institutes to switch to traditional wear for the event. The Gujarat Technical University was one of the first to take his advice seriously and junked the gowns to don kurta-pyjamas instead. Many other institutes had also supported Jairam's idea. Not the students at the new IIT at Patna, though. When the Board of Governors of IIT Patna recently approved a proposal to bring in traditional wear for convocation ceremony, the students protested. They wanted nothing but the famed gown and hat. The administration could do little but bow down to the sentiments of the students.



# Where are the PhDs?

The private sector must hire top maths and science talent for future growth

**A**n article in the Sunday edition of this paper points out how, over the last 20 years, India has steadily lost quality mathematicians working in the country. In the last two years, the Infosys Science Foundation has not been able to present its annual mathematics prize to an Indian working in India: in both years, the awardees are people who work in the US. Over the last 10 years, India ranks 14th in terms of producing research papers globally. It falls to 22nd place in terms of the number of citations in peer-reviewed journals and to 67th rank in terms of citations per paper. Unsurprisingly, America tops the tables in two out of the three rankings. There can be many reasons for this, including the shoddy way the subject is taught in schools, but one big reason, surely, is the unwillingness of Indian employers to hire quality PhDs in maths and the sciences. So, bright kids leave India after graduation, complete their doctorates in US universities, and without much chance of getting academic jobs in India, stay on to work in American companies or campuses. This has to change.

The government can start new colleges and universities to accommodate returning PhDs, but the main effort has to come from the private sector. Since Independence, industry has relied on protection to get by. Over the last 20 years, as entry barriers fell but the government capped foreign direct investment in many sectors, Indian companies formed joint ventures with foreign companies. This gave them access to some new technology, others were purchased off the shelf, with no thought given to original research. Now, companies need to see beyond their noses and think of long-term growth. Despite its recent problems, America continues to lead the world in generating intellectual capital and deploying it wisely. Government organisations like Nasa create breakthroughs that are adopted by private companies. The private sector invests hugely in R&D. It is time for Indian companies to go this way, too. People with management degrees will only get companies so far; boffins in lab coats will help build tomorrow's breakthrough products.

Hindustan Times ND 7/02/2012 P-17

## SKILL DEVELOPMENT

# Sibal to launch national vocational training plan

**NEW DELHI:** HRD minister Kapil Sibal will unveil National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF) that will allow seeking a degree from a school or a college while working.

The new framework to be jointly adopted by the CBSE and AICTE will help school students who are unable to complete higher education or the students who are not academically bright but have other skills.

The 10 level vocational training programme will start for students who have class VIII degree and would be up to graduation level. AICTE chairperson SS Mantha said that a stu-

dent will get up to two years to complete a level. The first level will be equivalent to secondary and the last to graduation.

The students will have flexibility to enter or exit the programme after obtaining a certificate for higher secondary level. The government plans to run the programme in 25 per cent secondary schools and half of the technical education institutions in India with the help of private sector.

The AICTE has already tied up with automobile, hospitability and media industry to conduct vocational training in these educational institutes.

**HTC**

**Business Line ND 7/02/2012 P-7**

# Sibal proposes to use Aakash, Aadhaar in tandem to fight graft

**Our Bureau**

*Bangalore, Feb 6*

In order to fight corruption and eliminate middlemen, the Union Cabinet Minister for HRD, Communications and IT, Mr Kapil Sibal, said that the Unique Identification Authority of India's Aadhaar and the Aakash tablet could be used together.

"Aakash and Aadhaar can be used to resolve many of the issues. Apart from a law, we need an ecosystem to reduce the possibilities of corruption," he said while delivering a speech at the India Semiconductor Association's Vision Summit.

He said the Centre was asking States to indicate the services that could be delivered publicly and said that the deadline was five years, which meant that all services would be available across the country within this time.

"Can a country wait for 10-20 years for the brick and mortar to be developed to deliver services like healthcare



**Mr Kapil Sibal**

and education?" he asked.

While the Aakash cost around Rs 2,276 to manufacture today, Mr Sibal said that this would be reduced to around Rs 1,500 in the future as volumes picked up. Of this, 50 per cent would be subsidised by the Government, while the remaining would be subsidised by the educational institution, thereby ensuring that it was given free to

around 220 million students in the country.

Talking about electronic systems design and manufacturing (ESDM), Mr Sibal said the country needed a strong policy because if it didn't get one, it would be forced to import \$300-billion worth of electronics by 2020, which is higher than the imports on crude oil.

"ESDM is also a meta resource and is used by auto, Defence, aviation and other industries, and accounts for 30 per cent of the bill of materials of electronic goods," he said.

## **ELECTRONICS DEVELOPMENT**

In order to encourage electronics in the country, Mr Sibal said that the Government wanted to setup semiconductor wafer fabs, give preferential market access to local players without flouting WTO norms, and setup electronic manufacturing clusters.

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# Varsity students to get Aakash tablet free

## Decision to deliver e-learning experience to all, says Kapil Sibal

**BANGALORE:** It's good news for students in colleges and universities across the country as the Union government plans to give the low cost "Aakash" tablet to them across institutions for free.

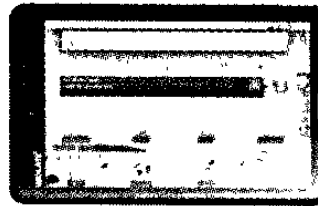
"We are planning to distribute Aakash tablets to students free of cost to deliver e-learning experience to one and all," HRD and Communications & IT Minister Kapil Sibal said at a summit organised by Indian Semiconductor Association in Bangalore.

Sibal clarified that the tablet, costing Rs 1,500 would get a government subsidy of Rs 750. The balance Rs 750 rest would be borne by respective educational institutions, making it literally free for students.

The minister also said that the government has plans to create an ecosystem for the end-to-end production of the tablet in the country. For other buyers Aakash tablet will cost Rs 2,500, as was planned earlier.

"Our country needs to improve in the manufacturing field and we are taking initiatives to set it right and give it a better foothold," Sibal said.

The low cost tablet, set to change the Indian digital landscape, was unveiled in October 2011 and was available for online booking only in December. The minister had then said that the rich have access to the digital world, the poor and ordinary have been excluded. Aakash will end that digital di-



### Good news for students

vide. However, the tablet, manufactured by the Canadian firm Datawind, received intense criticism when it failed compliance tests by the Indian Institute of technology, Rajasthan, which showed certain glitches. Thus the government's plan to acquire 1 lakh such gadgets had come to a halt. As result, the delivery schedule, which was to begin on February 2012, is getting delayed.

Meanwhile, the government of Andhra Pradesh has reportedly sent a proposal to Sibal for buying 10,000 such tablets. It was decided by the Andhra Pradesh government that those tablets would be provided to the state universities, engineering and polytechnic colleges.

Even the University of Mumbai has reportedly received about 25,000 booking requests for the tablet. According to news reports, the requests have come from its 90 colleges and departments.

This scheme to avail of these tablets was extended by the Centre and was extended by the HRD ministry for all the universities.

**DH News Service**

# Business Standard ND

## 07-Feb-12 P16

# Aakash 2 may get made-in-India tag

**BS REPORTER**

Bangalore, 6 February

The government is planning to give the made-in-India tag to the next version of the low cost tablet PC Aakash rather than diversifying its production base. This is expected to create significant opportunities for R&D organisations, developers and manufacturing companies, Union Minister for IT, Communications and HRD Kapil Sibal said here on Monday.

"We are now going to diversify the production base and make Aakash tablet indigenously. We are planning to create ecosystem for end-to-end development of Aakash in India," Sibal said addressing the annual event of the India Semiconductor

Association. He added that the government was going to soon launch the Aakash 2, which will be much faster and efficient than its predecessor.

Asked if the next tender will have 'made in India' clause in it, Sibal said, "We want to make sure that it is 100 per cent done locally." At present, several components including the processor are procured from outside the country.

The Android-based tablet computer is now being produced by British company DataWind. At present, the device is available to students at a subsidised price of ₹1,100.

The government is planning to issue fresh tenders for Aakash 2 which will be open to other manufacturers apart from the existing vendor, DataWind.

# UNDER SCRUTINY

## Google removes offensive content

**FB Says It Doesn't Control, Operate Servers**

*TIMES NEWS NETWORK*

New Delhi: Google India on Monday told a trial court that it has removed certain webpages from the Internet in compliance with the court's order, which directed Google and 21 other websites to remove the objectionable content in the form of photographs, videos or texts which might hurt religious sentiments.

Facebook India, which also filed its compliance report before additional civil judge Praveen Singh, told the court that it does not control or operate the servers that host the website available at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com), which are located in the United States.

The compliance reports were filed in response to the court's December 24, 2011 order directing them and 21 other social network websites to give replies on a civil case filed by a man who has sought removal of certain "anti-religious" or "anti-social" content in the form of photographs, videos or texts which might hurt religious sentiments.

While Facebook and Google India filed their compliance reports, Yahoo! and Microsoft filed applications for deletion of their names from the civil complaint stating that there was no allegation against them of webcasting any objectionable content. After the hearing, the court directed the accused to file compliance report within 15 days from the date of the order while fixing the matter for further arguments on March 1.

The judge also posed a query to the counsel appearing for petitioner Mufti Aijaz Arshad Qasmi as to whether the blog service-providing companies can be made a party to the case for any content posted by the users on the blogs.

During the hearing, Facebook also filed a separate application seeking deletion of its name from the array of the parties, saying, "The content of the suit are wrong and that it is neither a necessary nor a proper party to it." It said it has been implicated under incorrect description i.e. Facebook as there is no legal entity by this name. "The correct name of Defendant no.1 is Facebook India Online Services Pvt Ltd and not Facebook," it submitted.

## Networking Urge Harder To Resist As It Is Considered 'Not Too Costly'

(TOI)

Washington: Cannot resist your urge to tweet or check emails? Don't get surprised, as a new study has found that checking email and social media is more addictive than cigarettes and alcohol. US researchers who carried out an experiment to test the will power of 205 people, aged 18 to 85, in the German city of Wurtzburg found that most of them were more likely to give in to urge to tweet or check email than other cravings like drinking or smoking.

"Desires for media may be comparatively harder to resist because of their high availability and also because it feels like it does not 'cost much' to engage in these activities, even though one wants to resist," said lead researcher Wilhelm Hofmann at Chicago [University's](#) Booth Business School. In the experiment using BlackBerry devices, participants were asked seven times a day over the course of a week to identify desires they were experiencing and the strength of said

desires.

The team sifted through thousands of responses and came up with some telling results. Thankfully, the study showed we're all not slaves to vice and distraction, as the need for sleep and leisure topped the list. However, next on the list of "self-control failure rates" was checking in with social media, email and work — ahead of the urge to have a Camel Light, while sipping on that glass of 12-year single malt scotch. "With cigarettes and alcohol there are more costs — long-term as well as monetary — and the opportunity may not always be right one," Hofmann said. "So, even though giving in to media desires is certainly less consequential, the frequent use may still 'steal' a lot of people's time," he added. PTI

Economic Times ND 7/02/2012

P-6

# Cos Revisit Campus Pitch

**TALK TIME:** Senior executives go to B-school campuses as brand ambassadors, and meetings with students take place in informal settings. This way, companies hope to get an extra edge during placements

## New Methods of Engagement



**ALUMNI** hold one-on-ones with students in hostels, canteens



**COMPANIES** move to specialised hiring, send vertical heads for campus placements

### HOW IT HELPS

**ALUMNI** help recruiter to see through the candidate's resume

**COMPANIES** can make bigger inroads into colleges in a hyper-competitive market

**RETENTION** is better as the alumnus becomes a mentor for the new recruit

**COMPANIES** get better slots during placements

### WHAT COS ARE DOING

#### Wipro

**GMs** and other senior executives will be brand ambassadors on campuses

**THEY** will engage with students throughout the year

#### Tesco HSC

**IN** the past six months, Tesco has started a student-industry interface

**MANAGERS** speak about the industry and work done by Tesco HSC

**TWO** of the six managers went back to their alma mater

**COMPANY** plans to create a line of brand ambassadors

**COLLEGES** visited: IIM Bangalore, Indian Institute of Science

#### Mahindra Satyam

**PREFERS** those who have graduated in the past 2-3 years to go back to colleges

**COMPANY** sends those who understand the faculty and have a connect with their colleges

#### Cognizant and Mphasis

**SEND** their top brass and vertical heads during placements

**Hiring does not happen blindly. Having alumni connections helps us get better slots during placements. It improves retention as well.**

**R ELANGO, HR Head, Mphasis**

**DEVINA SENGUPTA AND SHRUTI SABHARWAL**  
BANGALORE

**W**ipro, one of the largest campus recruiters in India, will not rely on its usual HR team to net students this year. Instead, its entourage will include several general managers who will represent the company in their respective alma maters. The top brass from this year onwards has been given the responsibility of adopting their colleges, engaging with students throughout the year and being "brand ambassadors" for the company.

Wipro started this initiative in 2011 end to make better inroads into colleges in a hyper-competitive market. "It will help us focus better and understand issues the institute has," says Saurabh Govil, VP, HR. The company hopes to have an edge during the placement season when it has to pick up a large number of students from a limited talent pool. Wipro hires over 5,000 employees every quarter, of which 60-70% are freshers and its competitors Infosys, TCS, Cognizant will also be hiring a similar number in the same time.

While Wipro sends its top brass for placements, Mahindra Satyam prefers to send freshers — those who have graduated in the past two to three years — because they know the faculty and some of the students, and are still emotionally attached to their colleges. This, it hopes will help them build a better connect with students.

With the economy on a see-saw, having dedicated line managers as ambassadors helps companies hire the most appropriate set of employees who will stay for a longer tenure. As a one-point contact with the candidate, an alumnus can see through his or her resume, knows the professors and can gauge the quality of projects done, says an executive of an MNC who has been shortlisted to

go to his alma mater, IIM Ahmedabad, over the past two years by his firm. "You can eliminate the wrong candidate, and it increases retention as well. You become a pseudo-mentor who will be approached by the newcomer with queries on processes and the company culture," says the executive, who does not wish to be named.

An industry academia interface is common with multinational firms, but Indian firms have are going a step further in asking their executives to dedicate time to this. "Some of our alumni who travel from abroad to cities like Bangalore have been asked by their companies to halt in Mumbai for a day. They are expected to visit the campus, talk to students about the company and career opportunities,"

**Alumni who are still emotionally attached to their colleges are seen building a better connect with students**

Discussions now take place in hostels, over dinner and coffee rather than scheduled classroom lectures. "Companies like Wipro, which have taken this step, will benefit during placements as there will be a top-of-mind recall for students when competition is high," says Sinha.

Companies like Wipro have been mass hirers but in the past two years, institutes have noticed that students prefer to join companies that have profiles concentrating on a core specialisation. If the IT company gets its division heads to talk to students on their core areas, it will work in their favour, says BS Satyanarayana, principal of Bangalore-based RV College of Engineering. The technical work done by different divisions would then be high-

lighted. "It also helps in providing a clear sense of 'what's in it for me' for the candidates," says Priti Rajora, VP and global head — talent acquisition, Wipro Technologies.

The Indian captive unit of retail giant Tesco has decided to get its 60 senior leaders to engage with colleges in the past six months. Around half-a-dozen of these interactions have taken place between the Tesco Hindustan Service Centre (HSC) managers and students of institutes like IIM Bangalore, Indian Institute of Science, among others. Two of the six managers went to their alma mater, and the company says it will try to get more alumni act as ambassadors.

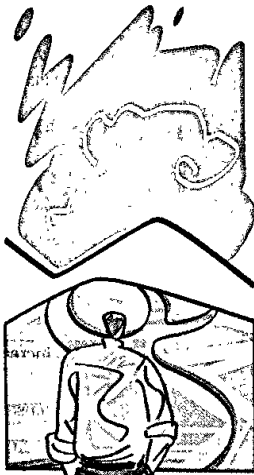
"In a competitive market, having an alumni as a manager helps to speed up the placement process. More students become aware of work done at Tesco and we get to know their expectations as well," says Dayanand Allapurkar, HR head of Tesco (HSC). With employability a concern in the retail sector, a student-industry interface will help students understand opportunities in the sector, the work done by different companies and the specialised work that gets done at Tesco, he adds.

Some record first-time placements, salary-wise, have also taken place because of the alumni connection. Last year, NIIT Warangal placed a student at Facebook for Rs 45 lakh, which was one of the highest the institute has seen. It was the first time the social networking bellwether visited the campus and part of the credit goes to an alumnus who wanted to pick up a student from his alma mater.

Cognizant and Mphasis' top brass 'goes back' to college as well. "Hiring does not happen blindly. Having alumni connections in colleges help us get better slots during placements," says R Elango, HR head.

For most of these companies and students, a campus isn't a place they forget once the hiring is done.

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ARINDAM



# Indian think tanks: time to look within

What kind of policy research institutions do we need to shape the intellectual foundation on which government policy should rest?

SONALDE DESAI

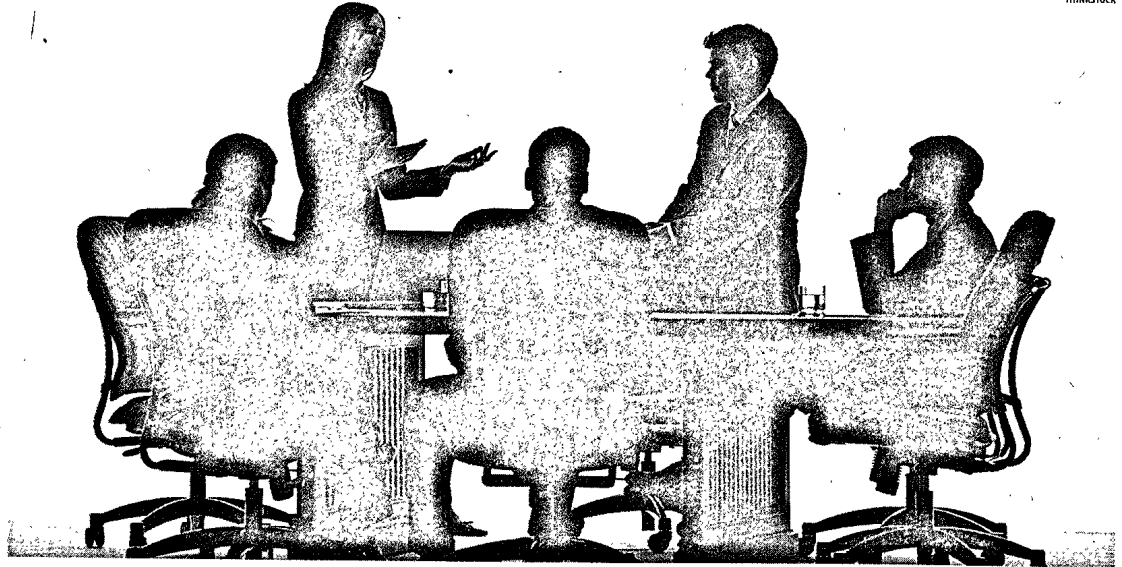
THINKSTOCK

Recent rankings of global think tanks by University of Pennsylvania have prompted much handwringing. How can only one Indian research organisation be ranked in the top 50? That is a silly question; almost like asking why so few Bharatnatyam dancers are found in Japan. The concept of a think tank was born and nurtured in the US and, not surprisingly, American think tanks lead the list.

I am glad, though, that the question is being asked. It allows for space to discuss the kind of institutions a country like India needs to help shape the intellectual foundation on which its public discourse and public policies rest. History documents that there has never been a dearth of ideas in India. Dadabhai Naoroji's ideas on poverty fuelled the economic ideology of the early Independence movement; B S Ambedkar's razor-sharp vision of social inequality helped shape the Constitution; P C Mahalanobis' commitment to data laid the foundation of statistical systems underlying the planning process in Independent India. Whether modern India is full of people with intellect is not the question. What is at stake is the question: do we need institutions that serve to crystallise these ideas and create synergies that go beyond brilliant but solo thinkers?

I am rather fond of maverick thinkers who rarely manage to find groupthink congenial. Even in the US, the home of top-ranking think tanks, few Nobel Prize winning economists did their seminal work in these think tanks. For that we need to look at University of Chicago, UC Berkeley and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. So if we are looking for another John Nash, James Heckman or Amartya Sen in their early days, there's no reason to worry. I doubt they would thrive in any think tank, including Brookings that heads the list of global think tanks.

In an article written more than 30 years ago, Myron Weiner noted that in India, public policy is made within a political process and implemented by bureaucrats within an administrative process that has an uneasy relationship with this world of ideas. In recent years, the growth of civil society institutions has further complicated this relationship by creating a powerful force that relies on the same ideas to confront the policy process. No wonder otherwise obscure puzzles such as stubborn mal-



nutrition in the face of rising prosperity or growing divergence between National Accounts and National Sample Survey assume so much importance. Empirical evidence to examine diverse viewpoints is often sketchy and the expertise to interpret the evidence is lacking. This is where policy research institutions have an important role to play as translators, crystallisers and provocateurs. A good policy research institute within an environment like this must learn to synthesise ideas from diverse sources, be able to talk to diverse audiences and, most importantly, must have the intellectual and institutional capacity to both provide rapid response to new policy challenges and to anticipate and prepare for these challenges.

In recent years, several commentators have noted that lack of committed core funding and an excessive reliance on specific projects funded by the government or donor agencies reduces the ability of Indian think tanks to develop these capacities. No doubt there is some truth to this. But an even greater challenge lies in identifying institutional mission and internal processes that are commensurate with this mission. In modern India, what should be the mission of a good policy research

institution?

First, it must focus on well-defined substantive areas. "Jack of all and master of none" is certainly not the way to gain excellence. Today, most policy research institutions have such broad mandates that it is hard to know what they do "not" do.

Second, it must decide if its expertise lies in original research or synthesis. As I noted earlier, path-breaking, innovative and highly risky basic research will probably always be the domain of academic institutions in which a professor pays his or her dues through teaching and is free to experiment or "play" with risky ideas without having to justify himself to funders or institute directors. But good policy research institutions conduct both original research - often involving new data collection - and synthesis of work by others. The expertise and institutional structures that go into building these two capacities tend to differ. In the first, tremendous investments in internal human capital are required, in the second, it is possible to co-opt external expertise as needed.

Third, it must decide who its audi-

ence is and for what purpose. Historically, all roads have led to Delhi with policymakers as the ultimate object of affection. But increasingly the growth of civil society institutions offers new opportunities for partnership. However, balancing partnerships with the government and civil society groups and managing the inherent contradictions has been difficult for think tanks. And civil society groups have been so starved of data and analyses that some - like SEWA and Pratham - have begun to set up their own research units. Forging constructive ways of developing these partnerships may widen the reach of policy research.

#### Good policy research institutions conduct both original research and synthesis of work by others

Fourth, it must decide how to interact with the private sector. Many issues that think tanks address have tremendous private-sector implications - fertiliser subsidies, telecom regulations and infrastructure development, to name a few. The increasing emphasis on public-private partnerships has added a whole new layer of complexity, bringing health and education sectors in this nexus. Retaining independence and credibility while addressing issues of

private sector importance is a major challenge.

Finally, it must decide on whether its job is to present evidence or to go a step further by taking a stand on some issues. In the US, some think tanks are self-consciously conservative (Heritage Foundation), others are liberal (Center for American Progress) while still others do not have clearly specified political leanings (The RAND Corporation). On a related note, when an opinion is expressed, whether that opinion represents institutional point of view or whether it is the opinion of a specific researcher also has tremendous significance. Where an opinion reflects the views of individual researchers, plurality of viewpoints is easier to accommodate than a setting in which all opinions carry institutional imprimatur.

Though funding constraints may limit the options and flexibility institutions have, without self-conscious decisions about some of these issues, no amount of money will build good policy research institutions that serve the needs of modern India.

*The author is a Senior Fellow at NCAER and Professor of Sociology at University of Maryland. These views are personal*

Economic Times ND 7/02/2012 P-12

# Knowledge Hubs for Tomorrow

Create education clusters that promote innovation and application to raise our scholastic standards



**KIRAN KARNIK**  
INDEPENDENT POLICY &  
STRATEGY ANALYST

The importance of education is continually emphasised in public discourse. We hear — and mouth — endless repetitions about India as a knowledge power, of how education will empower and will help us to magnify the demographic dividend.

In this context, recent news items are like a slap in the face: hopefully, a wake-up call to all those concerned. First, there was the report of India being ranked 73 out of 74 countries on the basis of a global survey (PISA) of the educational capabilities of students of class V in maths, science and reading. Second, the poor academic standard of our school students was re-emphasised in the findings of the independent yearly study (ASER) done by Pratham.

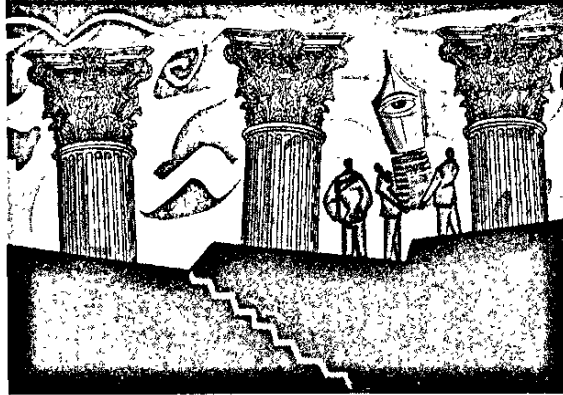
Then, at the university level, our standing — based on the rankings by standard global surveys — continues to be dismal, with but a few stray institutions finding their way into the top 100 (or even 500). Finally, in a recent survey of think tanks, so crucial in the formulation of public policies and in conducting research studies, there is but one Indian organi-

sation in the global top 50.

There are many valid questions regarding the criteria that determine these rankings. Some may even infer bias. Yet, few will deny that there is a great degree of truth regarding the poor quality of our education and research system, at least in relative terms. Other indices related to patents and publications in respected journals point to the same conclusion.

It is time for new thinking and quick action. Much needs to be done in schools; that is not discussed here. On higher education, supporting and improving existing institutions is an obvious necessity. However, more than doubling the present number of students (to reach the target of 30% GER) will require vast expansion of infrastructure. This presents an opportunity to take new initiatives that enable growth while simultaneously meeting other objectives like quality, excellence, research and innovation.

One such initiative, long suggested but yet to happen, is the creation of designated areas where a vibrant educational ecosystem can take root. These learning, education and research nodes (LEARN) would be centres that promote learning, innovation and application. The learning institutions will be of varied disciplines as innovation flowers best when there is interaction between, and at the intersection of, different disciplines. Research centres or labs will be next door and there will be a strong industry or user inter-



ARINDAM

face. The last will ensure translation of research into concrete applications, the scaling of these and — where appropriate — their 'monetisation' for money or social gain.

Institutions selected to operate in these areas should be given far greater freedom than what is presently constrained by the stifling regulatory framework of UGC, AICTE and other bodies. Specifically, there is need for autonomy in selecting curriculum and courses; qualifications, recruitment and terms and conditions (including compensation) for faculty and staff; and the method of selection of students. On the last, there could be stipulations regarding a clearly defined, publicly announced and transparent process, with 20% of the students getting full waiver of all fees and hostel charges.

LEARNs will provide land for selected schools. In these schools, preference in admissions will be given to the chil-

dren of faculty members and professionals from institutions in the zone. This is an important factor for attracting and retaining key faculty and top-notch professionals.

R&D institutions — both governmental and corporate — will be incentivised to be in the LEARNs. In some cases, existing R&D facilities will serve as the nucleus; in others, existing institutions may serve as the nucleus. Industries linked to the core discipline of the R&D institution will be encouraged to set up facilities in the zone, facilitating interaction amongst industry, R&D and academia.

Thus, one is looking at a cluster or agglomeration of universities, research labs or national research institutions, incubation facilities, start-up and established companies. Imagine a cluster that has institutions like Tata Institute of Social Sciences, an IIT, an IIM, a large multi-disciplinary central university with emphasis

on the humanities and creative arts, large national research institutes like the CSIR labs, an incubation centre with start-up companies and some established industries.

This will serve to kick-start innovation by creating a conducive ecosystem. Other ingredients like angel or venture funding, mentoring and networking will also be needed to ensure that ideas and innovation are translated to marketable products or services. In Silicon Valley, for example, such ecosystems have evolved and grown organically. The challenge is to create this through active intervention. If successful, this will give rise to high-quality educational institutions and stimulate innovations that are market- and need-based.

Such a model provides a broad framework which can be adapted for different contexts. It does not prescribe the discipline, organisational form or focus of educational institutions or R&D facilities; nor does it pick any specific industry sector for incentives. Thus, it respects and benefits from India's diversity.

There would be many questions and sceptics for any such idea, and opposition on many grounds. A practical way around much of this would be to begin this as a pilot project, limited to three or four locations, and expand while learning from this experience. The dire educational and research scenario needs prompt and bold action: LEARNs are one of the possible ways forward; we need many more.

Times of India, ND 7/02/2012

P-19

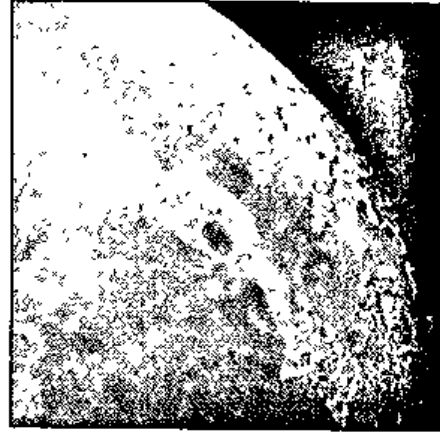
# China releases Moon images of 'highest resolution'

**Beijing:** China on Monday released a set of "world's highest resolution" lunar images taken by its second moon orbiter, Chang'e-2, as it braces to launch its next mission to land a rover to explore its surface. China's state administration of science, technology and industry for national defence (SASTIND) on Monday published a set of full coverage map of the Moon and its images with a resolution of seven meters captured by Chang'e-2.

The map and images are the world's highest-resolution lunar images ever published that cover all of the moon, state runs Xinhua news agency quoted Liu Dongkui, deputy chief commander of China's lunar probe project. The images were photographed by a charge-coupled device (CCD) stereo camera on Chang'e-2 from the heights of 100 km and 15 km over the lunar surface between October 2010 and May 2011, the SASTIND statement said.

The resolution of the images obtained from Chang'e-2 is 17 times finer

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**CLOSE SHOT**

than those taken by the its predecessor Chang'e-1.

If there were airports and harbors on the moon, the Chang'e-1 could just identify them while Chang'e-2 could detect the planes or ships in them, Tong Qingxi, academician with the Institute of Remote Sensing Applications of the Chinese Academy of Sciences said. The scientists also made some adjustments to the original data to more accurately reflect the topographic and geomorphologic features of the moon, a statement by SASTIND said. The scientists have produced 746 moon pictures with the resolution of seven meters, the statement said. PTI

# Overall student performance dips in Gujarat, Bengal: Study

**Chetan Chauhan**

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**NEW DELHI:** India's school education success story has been marred — the overall student aptitude has fallen in four states, Gujarat, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Tripura.

The National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) tested the ability of over 10,000 students studying in class II, V and VIII across India for languages, mathematics, and environment sciences. The students were tested for 40 topics in each subject in the schools, as compared to homes done by an NGO Pratham, which released its report a fortnight ago.

The national average performance of students in the three subjects ranged between 40 to 70%, better than the results of a similar NCERT study done a few years ago, said a presentation made to HRD ministry last week. The best performance was in languages and worst in mathematics, which saw a slight fall in learning levels.

Only four non-Congress ruled states Gujarat, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Tripura witnessed a fall in performance of

## THE NCERT TESTED OVER 10,000 STUDENTS FOR LANGUAGES, ENVIRONMENT SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS

students in three subjects tested by the body under the HRD ministry.

But, findings on Gujarat came as a surprise as the state is considered economically and educationally forward. The biggest fall in performance was recorded in environment sciences of 3.18% followed by mathematics (-2.44%) and languages (-0.75).

The Gujarat government appears to know what was in offing and is planning to revamp the school curriculum. "An exercise has been undertaken by the State Council for Education Research and Training (SCERT) and we can hope better results in the next round," an official said.

The Naxal-affected Jharkhand saw the maximum dip of about 6% in the learning ability. Students there were among the worst performers in mathematics and environment sciences. But, girls performed better than boys in mathematics.

**Hindustan Times**

**Title : FB, Yahoo question prosecution move**

**Author :**

**Location : NEW DELHI**

**Article Date : 02/07/2012**

# FB, Yahoo question prosecution move

**IN THE NET** Google India compliance report says they have removed objectionable content

## CASE FILE

- Facebook and Google India filed the compliance reports in response to the court's December 24, 2011 order
- In the order, the court had summoned 22 social networking sites asking them to remove "anti-religious" or "anti-social" content, in the form of photographs, videos or texts, which may hurt religious sentiments
- Order had come amid a raging controversy over monitoring content on Internet after IT minister Kapil Sibal had asked the social networking websites to "screen" the contents.

## HT Correspondent

■ letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Leading social networking sites Facebook, Yahoo India and Microsoft on Monday questioned before a Delhi court the move to prosecute them for hosting objectionable contents on their websites.

There is no cause of action, lawyers representing the websites told Additional Civil Judge Praveen Singh challenging the summons for March 13.

Facebook in its affidavit told the court it does not control or operate the servers that host the website available at www.facebook.com, which are located in the United States while Google India, in its com-

pliance report, said it has removed certain objectionable contents.

"We have removed certain URLs or webpages from the Internet", its lawyer said. The court had on December 24, 2011 sought explanation from Facebook, Google and 20 other social network websites on "objectionable contents in the form of photographs, videos or texts which might hurt religious sentiments".

While Facebook and Google India filed their compliance reports, Yahoo and Microsoft filed applications for deletion of their names from the civil complaint stating that there was no allegation against them of web-casting any objectionable con-

tents.

The court directed all 22 sites to file written statements within 15 days. Yahoo and Microsoft India Pvt Ltd sought rejection of the petition saying there is "not even a whisper of allegation against it in the entire plaint" and no cause for action is disclosed against it.

On a day when the websites battled it out in the court, MoS for communication and IT Sachin Pilot made the central government's stand clear. "Whether it's social media websites or any company for that matter, they all have to operate within the laws of the country. And what we have said is there must be responsible behaviour on both sides."