

# Newspaper Clips

## January 31, 2011

Times of India ND 31-Jan-11 p-1

### Many entered sham US univ to dodge rules

'Diploma Mill' Shady Route To Jobs

Chidnand Rajghatta/TNN

Washington: Hundreds of Indian students conned by a dodgy California-based university had it coming. Tri-Valley University (TVU) had a reputation as a "diploma mill" that offered a spurious route to employment and immigration in the US. Inquiring students and professionals knew about it, discussed it in immigration forums, and warned others about it.

But eager beavers looking for a short cut to emigrate to the US through a questionable academic route ignored the red flags. After US authorities busted the scam, an estimated 1,500 students, some of them gullible victims, some scheming immigrant hopefuls, face financial loss, loss of time, loss of credits, loss of face, and in some cases, even deportation.

Here's how the scam unfolded: India, from among all countries, has been sending the maximum number of students to US colleges in the past decade - up to 15,000 a year. Most aspirants try to get into the top 50 schools, which have stringent qualifying standards, including exams such as GRE and GMAT, besides TOEFL, an English proficiency test. If accepted on the basis of test scores, the university, if accredited and compliant with US rules, sends an I-20 document to the student, which he or she presents to the embassy or consulate in the home country to get an F-1 student visa.

Enrolled knowingly, P 10

### Tagging inhuman, says Krishna

Condemning the radio-tagging of Indian students of California's Tri-Valley University as "unacceptable", external affairs minister S M Krishna demanded action against officials responsible. "Indian students are not criminals. The radio collars should be removed. And the US government should take action against officials responsible for the inhuman act," Krishna said. "There are 100,000 Indian students in the US. It (US) must realize the tremendous stakes involved for both countries in higher education." P 10

But in recent years, several dodgy universities have waived GRE/GMAT requirements as long as students can pay thousands of dollars up front as "fees." They also do not have facilities, from day one of enrolment, optional practical training (OPT) and curricular practical training (CPT), the two routes to jobs at the end of the college degree. In recognized, well-regarded universities, students must be enrolled full-time for a year before receiving CPT/OPT. For lakhs of Indian students who have eventually become US citizens, OPT and CPT are the first steps to employment-based visa (usually H-1B), green card, and citizenship, in that order.

# Radio tags inhuman, unacceptable: Krishna

Says US must realize stakes involved

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bangalore: Condemning the radio-tagging of Indian students in California's Tri-Valley University as "inhuman and unacceptable", external affairs minister S M Krishna on Sunday demanded action against officials responsible for it. "Indian students are not criminals. The radio collars should be removed. And the US government should take action against officials responsible for the inhuman act," Krishna told reporters. Tri-Valley's Indian students were forced to wear radio collars to enable authorities to track them.

"Indian students have been put through a lot of hardship. Their scholastic future is in jeopardy. In the government's view, this was avoidable," the foreign minister said, and added, "there are 1,00,000 Indian students in the US. It must realize the tremendous stakes involved for both the countries in higher education and interaction," Krishna said. Addressing Tri-Valley's Indian students, Krishna further said, "A number of scholars have got transfers from some US universities and there are a number of students who get the necessary visa from a US consulate in India. The sudden closure needs to be looked into by the federal government."

# Most students knowingly enrolled into Tri-Valley

Continued from P1

Tri-Valley University (TVU) and similar schools had a reputation for shortening the process by offering OPT/CPT from day one, which meant "students" could start working even as they began "college". In fact, TVU didn't even have a campus in the traditional sense. It had a sorry-looking building, bought in April 2010, which housed everything from administrative offices to classrooms, from which random lectures were transmitted over the internet to "students" across the US, including those working other jobs. Founded by Susan Xiao-Ping Su and run mainly by Chinese Christians, with a few Indians on the "faculty", the school boasted that its mission "is to make Christian scientists, engineers, business leaders and lawyers for the glory of God, with both solid academic professionalism and Christian faith, therefore to live out Christ-like characters, value and compassion."

If that wasn't enough to set off alarm bells, prospective students could have at least seen the writing on the wall - internet forums - had they bothered to trawl any. In an exchange on an immigration forum that began in April 2010, students, prospective and already committed to TVU, said it offered "hassle free ad-



MAKING A POINT: Police detain students demonstrating against the US-based Tri-Valley University at a recent protest near the US Consulate in Hyderabad

mission, gre, gmat not mandatory, toefl (sic) is pretty much the only requirement for semester fee, OPT, CPT from the day the course starts. No tests, no mandatory online classes, a perfect way to bypass the visa process". In no time, there were red flags galore. "TVU is NOT accredited, so you can NOT get a degree from them. Any 'degree' they issue is worthless," wrote one forum member. "If you use a 'degree' from them for any immigration purpose, it would be fraud. You can also NOT use OPT or CPT from them." Unperturbed, an inquirer wrote back: "the degrees are worthless, but I thought that it's enough to get CPT"

Other immigration forum members, some of them partisan and flaks for TVU, then argued about how if the university was not accredited, it could generate I-20, a document for prospective students that enables them to apply for and get F-1 student visa in their home countries. "You are grasping at straws. Probably because you have signed up with them and now have been told that you got scammed. Scamming victims are often in denial..." wrote a user named Moj24, warning, "I think TVU will eventually get into trouble with authorities... Their 'degrees' are worthless. If you try to use them for an H1 or a GC, you would be

committing fraud. Spend your money with a real university, not these fraudsters." It took till January this year for US authorities to look on to the scam - on to cotton on to the charitably, to spare the manpower for a nationwide crackdown. Although TVU was based in Pleasanton, California, it's "students" were scattered throughout the country, from the East Coast to Midwest to Deep South. Many of them were illegally employed. Although it was allowed only 30 foreign admissions pending accreditation, TVU had managed to work the system to admit more than 1,500 students. Apparently there were companies across the US which

used TVU's F-1 visa-based CPT/OPT to beat H-1B visa requirements, which regulate salary, insist on not replacing American workers, etc. On January 19, after raiding TVU, getting student records, and shutting it down, immigration officials began knocking on the doors of TVU students across the country or leaving NTAs (notice to appear) asking them to get seen touch with the local office. In some cases, officials merely made preliminary inquiries. In others, students were interrogated for up to three hours. Some had their passports taken away if they declined to depart voluntarily. And in rare cases, where officials found egregious violation of visa terms or questionable visas, students were shackled with electronic monitoring devices till further inquiries.

"It was terrifying," said one student who asked not to be named. "Out of the blue, all our dreams came crashing down." But while there is the usual outrage and fire-spitting in India over the radio collar issue, it turns out that not all students are as gullible as was initially made out. Speaking on background, community leaders, attorneys, and even some students acknowledged that the process was questionable. One giveaway: according to representatives of the Telugu Association of North America,

an estimated 85% of the TVU admissions from India were from Andhra Pradesh, a fact that has prompted TANA to arrange legal representation for the students. "They are young kids whose future will be ruined. They are our people after all. We have to help them," says Jayaram Komati of the association. One student said most victims paid up to \$2,800 per semester to Tri-Valley, some of them paying as much as \$16,000 up front for a full course to obtain a shady degree. Two attorneys hired by the association are now working on several cases.

The growing sense among officials and even the Indian community is that many students knew what they were getting into but still risked it. "They know what the rules are. Problem is, they are working within the Indian mentality that rules are made to be avoided and that government is a nuisance," said Nandita Ruchandani, a New York-area immigration attorney who has dealt with such cases.

Jyothi Verma, a Minneapolis-based student told that she found TVU dodgy enough to request a transfer late last year. But she says other schools declined to accept Tri-Valley credits. She has now gone by the advice of US authorities and phoned into the hotline they have established to provide details of her case. But she hasn't heard from them yet.

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# DU puts semester stalemate behind with quick results

Results Of 12 Science Courses Out Within 2 Weeks Of First-Term Exams

Neha Pushkarna/TNN

New Delhi: Delhi University's ailing examination system seems to be showing serious improvement. Though teachers feared that the semester system in colleges may not be feasible as results never came on time, the university has proved them wrong. The first semester results of 12 of the 13 courses were already out by Saturday, that is, within two weeks of the last exams getting over. In the annual mode, the varsity took months to declare the results. Often, students did not get their marks even after the start of the new session and teachers were worried that the semester system might worsen the situation. But results for anthropology, biochemistry, biological sciences, botany, chemistry, electronics, life sciences, geology, microbiology, physical sciences, physics and zoology have already been declared.

Though most teachers were dead against semesters, DU vice-chancellor, professor Dinesh Singh, thinks it's only because of teachers now that the new system is finally running on track and if all

goes well, all courses at the undergraduate level would switch to semesters from the new session. "This time we have declared the results in less than two weeks. It has been possible because of teachers' cooperation and the centralized evaluation. Teachers have been really generous and we have also streamlined our examination system," Singh said. One of the objections of teachers was that they would not be able to start a new semester every few months as DU due to the usual delay in the declaration of results. Nearly 11,000 students had taken the first-ever semester exams in DU this year. "Answer sheets have been corrected and only tabulation of results is left. The answer sheets were evaluated after meticulous planning this time. Teachers were given the exact number of days for finishing a fixed number of copies. They cooperated and finished evaluating scripts for some of the courses in just four days," said a senior official at the examination branch. He added that evaluation of English answer sheets took the longest -

### TESTING TIMES

- Oct 7, 2008 | Academic council members ask for a blueprint for switching to semesters. But DUTA rejects it in its EC meeting
- March 20, 2009 | AC members protest after VC declined to drop the semester issue from agenda
- June 5, 2009 | Semester system at undergraduate level is approved by the academic council
- Dec 15, 2009 | DUTA General Body resolves to oppose the introduction of semester system
- March 16, 2010 | DUTA starts three-day relay hunger strike
- May 11, 2010 | VC Deepak Pental announces that not all courses will switch to semesters from 2010-11
- May 16 | Pental manhandled by protesting teachers at south campus when he arrived to address DU aspirants
- July 21, 2010 | New session

starts with 13 science courses switching to semesters; teachers continue protests

July 27, 2010 | Delhi high court asks DU to consult DUSU to end the row

Sept 23, 2010 | DU issues 'No Work No Pay' missive as teachers continue strike



Oct 25 | Teachers start week-long strike

Oct 29 | New VC, Professor Dinesh Singh, takes over

Nov 15 | HC tells DU that teachers' salary should not be cut if they resume work

Nov 16 | Teachers finally switch to semesters

Jan 4 | First semester exams begin

about 10 days - as this subject was common to all courses and there were at least 10,000 copies to correct. "Teachers were not allowed to take the answer sheets home. The evaluation centre was open from 8am to 8pm. Almost 90% of the teachers teaching the semester course in 31 colleges offering science were involved in the evaluation process. They came to the centre for checking after taking classes," he added.

Though teachers stoutly protested against the introduction of semesters and conducted protest rallies, dharnas and strikes, they are now taking things as they come. The process for framing of new curriculum for humanities and commerce courses has also started. Though the vice-chancellor refused to comment, DU sources said he has already met the head of all departments and has asked them to prepare the course suitable for semesters but "within the rules of the game." "If everything goes according to plan, we will simultaneously introduce semesters in humanities and commerce from July this year," the VC said.

# With just the click of a mouse, students can talk to VC soon

Neha Pushkarna/TNN

New Delhi: Come March and the students and faculty of Delhi University are likely to have the facility to share their ideas and discuss problems with the vice-chancellor face-to-face at the click of a mouse. The university is in the process of acquiring a better bandwidth to keep in regular touch with all stakeholders through video-conferencing. The VC, professor Dinesh Singh, says it's an attempt to reach out to students, teachers and even karmacharis to keep abreast with their problems and know their suggestions. "We are in the process of getting a better bandwidth. Once it is done, I will be able to communicate with students, teachers and the non-teaching staff in different colleges while sitting in my office. We should be able to start it in March after all required procedures are completed," said Singh. He added the system would not need any special installation in colleges as they have already been provided new computers.

DU has provided 80 computers to every college over the last couple of years. Singh further said, "We can interact through webcam in the colleges. I have spoken to students of colleges like Venkateswara, Kamala Nehru and Maitreyi on two occasions before when I was the director of south campus. It was done as an experiment and the response was marvelous."

Colleges too are upbeat about the prospect of keeping in direct touch with the vice-chancellor. Hindu College principal, Vinay Kumar Srivastava, said, "It's a remarkable step which will not only reduce the distance between the university and colleges but also apprise the vice-chancellor of the difficulties at the college level."

The step will give a better chance to off-campus colleges to speak up and get noticed. The VC is also meeting 90 students from each college and also the principals on Monday at the sports stadium on the north campus



Dinesh Singh

**Court to order framing of charges against 14 IM men today:** A Delhi court is likely to pronounce on Monday its order on framing of charges against 14 suspected Indian Mujahideen terrorists who were involved in carrying out the serial blasts in the capital in 2008. ASJ Santosh Snehi Mann had fixed the matter for pronouncement of order for January 31 as counsel for the Delhi Police and on the defence had wrapped up their arguments on the matter.

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# 'The right people are there, now it's a matter of time'

**Anthony James Leggett, professor of physics at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, US, won the Nobel prize for physics in 2003 for his earlier work on superfluidity. Of late, he has done pioneering work in the exciting new field of quantum computing and cryptography exploring the boundary between the strange, counter-intuitive world of elementary particles and the 'classical' world that we perceive with our senses. He spoke to Subodh Varma recently in Kolkata where he was attending a conference on quantum entanglement organised by the S N Bose Institute for Basic Sciences:**

■ **What is your family background?**

Well, on my father's side, my forebears were cobblers in a village in Hampshire, UK. But my paternal grandfather opted to become a greengrocer. My maternal grandmother, who was Irish,

worked as a domestic servant since a young age. Both my father and my mother were the first in their families to get a university education. In fact they met at university. They became schoolteachers in London. I studied in the local school and then got a scholarship to Oxford. I was interested in academics but not in science. I took my first degree in arts from Balliol

## Q&A

College, and then later a second degree in physics at Merton College. I taught in Sussex for some time and then shifted to the US semi-permanently in 1983. I have been at Champaign-Urbana since then.

■ **What is the connection between superfluidity for which you got the Nobel and quantum entanglement?**

It's a rather marginal connection really. In some superconductors and in Fermi superfluids like Helium-3, for instance, a Bose-Einstein condensate is formed be-



tween an entangled pair of particles. I developed an interest in quantum mechanics, especially entanglement in parallel.

■ **What are you working on currently?**

I'm trying to understand low temperature superconductivity as well as quantum computing and topological insulators, although I haven't contributed much to the latter field. There's another project of mine with an Indian collaborator from IIT,

Kharagpur. It is concerned with low-temperature properties of glass, which is a neglected subject, but it is very important.

■ **Is it correct that a new quantum age is beginning?**

Certainly. There are a number of tasks that were earlier impossible to perform using classical means but they are possible now using quantum entanglement. Certain kinds of quantum cryptography are an example. Completely secure cryptography is now possible using quantum entanglement. Admittedly, there are other quantum mechanical schemes that don't involve entanglement but its use is particularly elegant. Even ideas like 'pseudotelepathy' and 'teleportation' are now beginning to take shape in reality, in the sense that people have done experiments and shown that these ideas work. And certainly quantum cryptography works in real life. People have used it to send

election results and I would guess that it is being used quite seriously by the military.

■ **What is your impression of India's role in this field?**

There are individuals in India who have made substantial contributions to quantum mechanics in general and quantum entanglement in particular. Many Indians are working in the field, some on the theoretical front, like Prof Arvind of the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Mohali, and others on the experimental front, like Prof Anil Kumar of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. It is not the kind of field that requires huge resources for experimental equipment. My impression is that the Indian educational system is not that bad in selecting good people and giving them appropriate training. So, we can look forward to more contributions in the future. The right people are there, now it's a matter of time.

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# Soon, a bandage that clots blood

## It Could Help Save Lives On Battlefield And Also Be Widely Used In Civilian Life

**London:** Coming soon: A chemical bandage which would help save lives on the battlefield by instantly helping to clot blood and staunch wounds, say scientists.

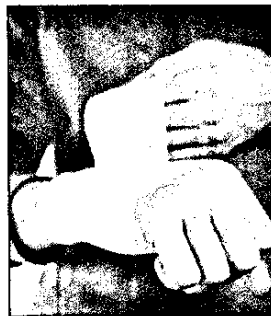
A team at Edinburgh University, which is developing such a bandage, has already discovered a group of polymers — molecules used in the manufacture of plastics — which could accelerate the crucial clotting properties of blood platelets.

The polymers could have significant use in battlefield conditions as they can be sprayed on to bandages and applied directly to an injury to instantly begin coagulation process, say the scientists.

The problem of treating battlefield wounds remains a major challenge with "bleeding out" — the loss of too much blood to sustain pressure and heartbeat — one of the major causes of death after injury.

The polymers could also have a much wider use in civilian life if incorporated into the sticking plasters commonly used to stop blood flow from cuts and other injuries, the Scotsman reported.

Using a new identification technique, the scientists tested huge numbers of polymer combinations for more than 12 months before pinpointing the few types which have the key characteristics needed to



**TIMELY HELP:** The bandage uses a group of polymers that accelerate the crucial clotting properties of blood platelets

kick-start the healing process.

Lead scientist Professor Mark Bradley said the poly-

mers have practical applications in both military and civilian situations.

"Polymers can be processed on to a bandage or even a mesh, similar to that used in a plaster, to stop the gauze adhering to the scab, to start clotting process. Hopefully, you would be able to whip out a packet of bandages that would immediately staunch the blood from the wound," he said.

The team used technology similar to that incorporated in inkjet printers to mix the materials to create the thousands of polymers needed to find the ones with the right qualities.

The new process developed

at the university allows up to 2,000 polymers to be tested as quickly as it took to test five before. The polymers were then sprayed onto glass plates where they were placed in contact with blood platelets.

Professor Bradley said: "We then took this very large number of polymers and added platelets, the materials in our body that coagulate and stop bleeding.

"The idea was that by adding blood, we could identify which of these polymers the platelets were, firstly, binding to, and, secondly, were being activated by — that is to say to start forming the fibres that seal up the wound," professor Bradley added. ■

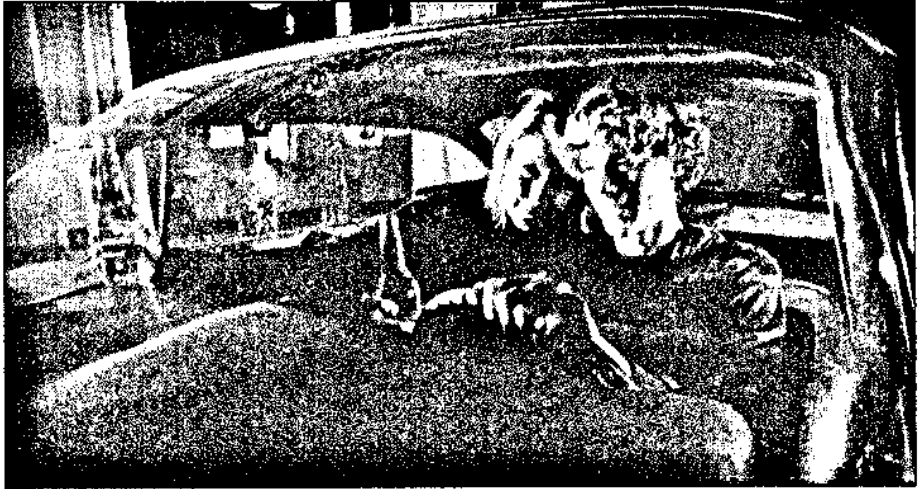
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# This car won't allow drunk driving

**Boston:** Future technology may put the brakes on drunk drivers and save many lives as researchers in Massachusetts are developing a system that will prevent a car from starting if the driver's blood alcohol level is higher than the legal limit.

The new technology, known as the Driver Alcohol Detection Systems for Safety, would use sensors that would measure blood alcohol content of the driver in two possible ways - by analysing a driver's breath or through the skin, using sophisticated touch-based sensors situated in places like steering wheels and door locks. If the system detects the blood alcohol content in a person to be above the legal limit of .08, the vehicle would not start.

The technology, being developed by research and development facility QinetiQ North America Inc in conjunction with companies in



**PUTTING BRAKES ON DUI:** The system will prevent the car from starting if the driver's blood alcohol level is higher than the legal limit

Sweden and New Mexico, would be optional for car manufacturers.

QinetiQ engineers said that unlike court-ordered breath-analyser ignition locks, which require a

driver to blow into a tube and wait a few seconds for the result, their new systems will analyse a driver's blood-alcohol content in less than one second. **PTI**

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# Cellphone offers clue to your personality

**Melbourne:** Believe it or not, mobile phones say quite a lot about their owners, says a new study.

Social analyst David Chalke said a person's mobile phone could give outsiders insight into their attitudes towards work, rest and play.

"Twenty years ago when you said 'your phone', you meant the white Telecom commander on the wall in the kitchen, but it doesn't mean that at all now it means your social accessory. In fact, a research by Roy Morgan revealed most attributes differed between owners of



**OWNER'S CALL:** A person's cellphone gives outsiders insight into her attitudes towards work, rest and play, says a new study

mobile phone brands.

The iPhone users thinks computers give them control over their lives. "iPhone is the Alfa Romeo," Chalke said. SonyEricsson users like a full social life. LG users are women aged 14 to 24. Samsung users tend to be conservative dressers over 50. "Samsung is the Daihatsu." BlackBerry users are high-earners aged 35 to 49. Nokia users are unlikely to be aged 14 to 24 and less likely to have played arcade video games in the past three months, according to him. "Nokia is the security blanket." **PTI**

Times of India ND  
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## Man's arm is short cut to his heart

**London:** Ladies, forget fluttering your eyelashes or flicking your hair. The quickest way for a woman to gain a man's interest is by gently touching his arm, say psychologists. As part of their study, researchers recruited a 20-year-old woman to approach 64 young, single males chosen at random in a bar.

She asked each of them to help her get a key into a key ring. During half the encounters, the woman then touched the man for one or two seconds on his forearm before thanking him and returning to her table.

Researchers found a third of the men who had been touched struck up a conversation with the woman, but that only 16% tried to talk to her if they had no physical contact.

"Numerous researchers have found that such brief non-verbal contact significantly increases compliance," Dr Nicolas Gueguen from the University of South Brittany, who led the study, said. ANI

## A kiosk that scans faces to recommend snacks

A new kiosk developed by Kraft scans your face and according to your gender and age, recommends snack or dinner options. Using anonymous video analytics (AVA), the kiosk categorizes the customer into gender and demographic groups in order to make suggestion, reports Discovery News. So a hungry 16-year-old boy might be suggested a McDonald's burger while a family would be suggested to get a family pasta dinner. And according to Kraft, the kiosk's dinner suggestions are absolutely healthy.

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With changing lifestyles, the darkness is disappearing from our lives. Roughly half of the 22.3 lakh BPO workers in India work the night shift and 10.5 lakh internet users are online between 9 am and midnight TOI-Crest comes to terms with the mutant creatures of the new, interminable day

Shobita Dhar | TNN

**D**ays are light. Nights are dark. Days are white. Nights are black. We thought that was clear. In light we worked. In the dark, we were free to switch off. So we earned a living — most of us, anyway — during the day and rested at night.

Not any longer. Because the darkness has gone out of our lives. In the new urban India, the work culture has changed and the idea of rest has become warped. We live now in a perpetual condition of anxiety. That much-awaited overseas call could come any time. Or, there could be a new file transferred online into your work folder. Or, the competition is so damn tough, you need to put in those extra hours just to stay where you are. Or, simply, there is a movie premiere on TV you don't want to miss. For whatever reason, your nights are suddenly white.

Lata Sharma is a call centre executive based in Gurgaon. And she misses the dark, silent nights of her childhood like a lover. "When I leave for home at 3 am, the roads are flooded with bilious light from halogen lamps, offices, construction sites, malls, the harsh glare of headlights. Sometimes, when I get lucky, I spot a few stars. And more than once, I have confused the yellow 'Polio Raviar' publicity balloon with the moon," says Sharma. She believes the city has killed the quiet romance of the night when, as Neruda said, blue stars shivered in the distance.

Numbers, too, point to an increasingly hyperactive night-time. There are more people working through what was once called the graveyard shift, there are higher number of late hour internet users and larger viewership for past-midnight television.

In the past few years, the power consumption in Gurgaon — a BPO hub in Haryana near Delhi — has increased 20 per cent annually as compared to just seven to nine per cent in the rest of Haryana. In Bangalore, the energy consumption has increased by eight to 10 per cent annually.

### BROKEN BODY CLOCK

The night has become the stage for rapid urbanisation. The unceasing din of traffic, road rollers, drilling machines and tortured sounds of electric saws shatter the quiet of the night. The light and dust from construction sites, where work starts only past midnight, cloud the air with a migraine-and-asthma-in-



**ENDLESS DAY:** Globalisation has dissolved time zones. At night, the other half of the world — accessible through technology — is awake for business and leisure

ducing haze.

Even indoors, be it at home or work, people are talking, texting, typing, reading, writing, counting, ideating, strategising, chasing deadlines even after midnight. Social commentator Shiv Visvanathan says that the traditional eight-hour work-day has become "social fiction." Mumbai's Arun Sharma, a partner in a private equity firm, is usually in bed by 11 pm. Thrice a week, he sets the alarm for 3 am, when he makes a conference call to his counterpart in Sydney.

A report on internet usage, carried out in 2008, revealed that out of 35 million regular net users in India, 32 per cent used it between 9 pm and 12 midnight, and 3 per cent, or 10,50,000, after midnight

ny. After an hour-long conversation, Sharma goes back to sleep, only to wake up at 7 am again.

Says Aarti Kawra, a social anthropologist with the National Institute of Technology, Chennai: "Technology allows interactions across time zones. Earlier, offices would shut down by evening and people would go to bed by 10 or 11 at

night, because there was only that much they could do with each other and tell each other in the course of a 24-hour day. But now there is a whole new world waiting for you to reach out to after night-fall."

### A 24-HOUR WORLD

And then there's the internet which makes no distinction between day and night. "The net never sleeps, and you are never alone in cyberspace," says T. Javed, an avid gamer. Javed, and millions of other net junkies like him, are altering the dynamics of night-time as they align their lives to the timelessness of the World Wide Web. In fact, the net-pundits say that night is the best time to do data-intensive work as downloads are free and fast. Most broadband providers offer unlimited downloads at night.

Film and song libraries that go into terabytes of space are being created thanks to free downloads at night.

Of the total number of internet users in India, some 33 per cent use it to download films and 48 per cent music, says a report by JuxtConsult, a market research firm. A report on internet usage, carried out by JuxtConsult in 2008, revealed that out of 35 million regular internet users in India, 32 per cent used it between 9 pm and 12 midnight, and 3 per cent, or 10.5 lakh, after midnight.

Along with the Internet, late-night television, especially live European soccer matches that start after midnight, is doing its bit to keep people awake.

### A GOOD NIGHT'S WORK

Most soccer enthusiasts give in to sleep by 2 am when matches get over. But Mumbai-based scriptwriter Ishita Moltra would rather pump a little more life into the late hours. Why? "Night gives me a sense of space and freedom. I am

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always ready to give up a bit of my day to get more of night," she says. Visvanathan echoes Moltra's sentiments about night. "Darkness opens up different possibilities for us, it allows democracy," he says. At the same time, he feels that lighting up the dark favours possibilities of an industrial nature that have seamlessly segued into the demands and responses of the digital age.

Nothing substantiates this development more than the rapid growth of the IT and BPO sector in India. According to Nasscom's Strategic Review 2009: "As a proportion of national GDP, sector rev-



enues have grown from 1.2 per cent in financial year 1998 to an estimated 5.8 per cent in 2009." And since the US remains the largest export market for India's IT-BPO sector, it points to a substantial number of call centre executives who stay up all night servicing their US clients. Even though there's no official data to reflect the exact number of night shift workers in the BPO sector, independent sources reveal that close to 2.5 lakh call centre workers do the shift in Bangalore and a slightly smaller number in Delhi's BPO hubs — Gurgaon and Noida.

### 'AFTER HOURS' COMMERCE

The growing population of nocturnal workers presents itself as a business opportunity, especially for the hospitality industry. All-night eateries and restaurants are mushrooming in Delhi and

Mumbai. According to Mumib Birya, co-owner of Zafran, a restaurant in Mumbai that stays open from midnight and remains almost full till four in the morning. "We get both professionals and party-goers looking for a bite before calling it a night as customers." Hotel Marine Plaza, a 5-star property on Marine Drive, Mumbai, offers midnight buffets for just Rs 200 that finds many takers.

### SLEEPLESS ZOMBIES?

Did we miss a decade here, or are we surrounded by 'hybrids' that don't feel tired and thrive on less and less of sleep? A recent survey carried out by Philips in 25 Indian cities showed that a whopping 93 per cent Indians were sleep-deprived — they were not getting the recommended eight hours of sleep. Is natural selection at play here or is there just too much pressure to fit in as much as possible into a 24-hour day?

Maybe humans don't really need all that sleep? Santosh Desai, a social commentator and columnist, tends to agree with the idea. "I find the recommended eight hours of sleep a bit exaggerated. Many of us can do with much less," he says. Interestingly, yogic wisdom too indicates that the four-hour 'dreamless, deep sleep' state — called *sushupti* in Sanskrit — is sufficient to get us through the day. Four or eight hours, some amount of sleep is important for healthy functioning of the mind and body.

Human beings are diurnal organisms. That are active during the day and passive at night. Our bodies are governed by an internal clock — circadian rhythm — which is linked with the light-dark cycle. Darkness signals our body to secrete melatonin, a hormone that is crucial for proper functioning of the circadian rhythm. However, if you are working late into the night, surrounded by artificial light, the body gets confused into believing it is still day and delays the secretion of melatonin.

### A NEW SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The 'disappearing' night is also breaking old bonds and creating new social equations. "With people spending more and more time in offices, the workplace is slowly taking the place of the family. People are bonding more with their colleagues than with their family members," says Rajgopalan. Kawra, on the other hand, feels more optimistic. She takes the example of Scandinavian countries, which are engulfed in darkness for six months and yet have adapted well to the lack of light. The choice of the future rests with people and their circumstances. If you want, you can make the right choice by just turning off the light and saying 'good night'.

(With reports from Shreya Bhandary, Jayashree Nandi, Shalini Umachandran & Amin Ali)

# IIT don pays for harassment

**ht EXCLUSIVE**

**Charu Sudan Kasturi**

■ charu.kasturi@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The central government is set to sack a senior professor at the Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay after an institute panel found him guilty of sexually harassing a female student.

Human resource develop-

ment minister Kapil Sibal is expected to soon approve compulsory retirement for environmental engineering professor SK Gupta, who has claimed innocence, sources privy to the case told HT.

Sibal is chairman of the IIT Council — the highest decision-making body of the 15 IITs. Gupta had appealed to the HRD ministry and to President Pratibha Patil but both were against any deviation from the

IIT recommendation, the sources said. Once sacked, Gupta will earn the dubious distinction of becoming the first IIT professor to be removed from his job for sexual harassment, IIT administrators said.

Documents related to the case, accessed by HT, indicate that a shocked IIT-Bombay conducted an enquiry promptly after the student complained to the institute's women's cell.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 14**

## IIT PROFESSOR

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

The victim, who was allegedly harassed by Gupta for several months, told an IIT counselor, whom she subsequently nominated to represent her before the enquiry panel. "She (the student) did not want to appear before the panel herself," a source said.

The panel concluded that Gupta had sexually harassed the girl, and the IIT-Bombay board of governors recommended compulsory retirement. "We have zero tolerance for such things," said a senior administrator.

Gupta, however, said norms were violated during the probe. "I was not even given a chargesheet," he said. The IIT-Bombay administrator said the probe was conducted according to procedures laid down by the institute.

Hindustan Times ND 31/01/2011 P14

# Sibal's foreign education dreams face test today

**Charu Sudan Kasturi**

■ charu.kasturi@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Kapil Sibal's human resource development ministry faces a tough test on Monday when MPs opposed to a landmark proposed legislation to allow and regulate foreign institutions in India plan to grill the Centre on the Bill.

Interviews with MPs from different political parties represented on the Parliamentary Standing Committee on HRD suggest that not only the Left, but even other parties like the AIADMK, the BSP and the JD(U) may oppose the legislation.

MPs from other parties on the House panel — which on Monday has summoned human resource development ministry officials for discussions on the foreign educational institutions (entry and operations) Bill — told HT that they too may raise concerns.

"We are totally opposed to this legislation. It will lead to the commercialisation of education. We will oppose the Bill,"

## TESTING TIMES

■ Apart from the Left parties, parties like the AIADMK, BSP and the JD(U) may also oppose the legislation

■ But what worry the government most though are concerns that MPs from the Congress itself may criticise the Bill

■ Earlier, Congress MP and general secretary Keshava Rao had launched a scathing criticism of Sibal in the Rajya Sabha, forcing a stalemate on the Educational Tribunals Bill aimed at setting up dedicated tribunals for higher education disputes.

said PK Biju, CPM MP and member of the House panel on HRD. Prasanta Kumar Majumdar of the RSP — a part of the Left Front — is also on the panel.

What worry the government most though, sources said, are concerns that MPs from the Congress itself may criticize the Bill. Congress MP and general

secretary Keshava Rao had launched a scathing criticism of Sibal in the Rajya Sabha, forcing a stalemate on the Educational Tribunals Bill aimed at setting up dedicated tribunals for higher education disputes.

"It is not only us, there are Congress MPs too who are concerned about the Bill," Biju claimed. The AIADMK, BSP and JD(U) — each of which have two MPs on the standing committee — are also uncomfortable with the Bill.

Former cricketer and BJP MP Kirti Azad has said his party had not finalised its stand on the Bill so far. BJP sources said the party would not oppose the entry of foreign universities in India but would raise concerns about the specific parts of the Bill.

"The manner in which the government is bringing legislation after legislation in education, is strange," argued Azad. "What is the point of legislations that may have great intent, if they cannot be implemented," he said.

**Hindustan Times**  
**ND 31/01/2011 P15**  
**Tech hangover**  
**refuses to go away**

Science and technology may no longer come under him, but HRD minister Kapil Sibal remains as keen as ever to utilise technology in education. On Tuesday, he is scheduled to unveil a set of Right to Education kiosks at public offices. The touchscreen kiosks will allow access to all information on the RTE Act.

**Hindustan Times**  
**ND 31/01/2011 P15**  
**The press meet that**  
**was, wasn't ... was?**

Kapil Sibal is usually far from indecisive, but a rap from the Supreme Court may have temporarily unsettled the HRD and telecom minister last week. Sibal's schedule on January 21, the day of a crucial IIT Council meet, initially included a press briefing after the meet, which was called off after the SC rapped him for his dismissal of the CAG report on the 2G spectrum allocation. Within hours, Sibal called a press meet, not on the IIT meet but to clarify his stance on the SC's comments.



# New Mexico geologist says a few dinosaurs survived extinction

**Brian Vastag**

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**WASHINGTON:** And now, another episode of "Dinosaur Survivor." In this show, the question isn't which dinosaur to throw off the island.

Instead, scientists ask whether any of the ancient reptiles survived the cataclysmic strike of a space rock in the Gulf of Mexico some 65 million years ago.

Representing the no team: Pretty much every dinosaur hunter in the world. Representing the yes team: A retired federal geologist from New Mexico, James Fassett.

For 25 years, Fassett has been touting a fossilized femur he found as proof that a pocket of long-necked herbivores called sauropods survived for hundreds of thousands of years after all the other dinosaurs.

"I'm not totally a Lone Ranger," Fassett said of his theory. "But I guess I am still in the minority."

In the latest installment of this long-running series, Fassett and two colleagues report in the journal *Geology* that a new technique dates the femur to 700,000 years

IN EXCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH

**The Washington Post**



Illustration: ABHIMANYU

after the extinction event.

But few experts are buying it. One of Fassett's critics offered a sarcastic response. "Anything is possible," said Spencer Lucas, a paleontologist at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science in Albuquerque. "There could also be a Bigfoot in my back yard."

With the new dating technique, Larry Heaman and

Antonio Simonetti from the University of Alberta in Edmonton vaporized tiny bits of Fassett's fossil with a laser. They then measured the amount of uranium and lead in the resulting dust. Because uranium radioactively decays into lead over millions of years, the process acts as an atomic clock.

If proved, the laser technique could revolutionize fos-

sil dating, said Paul Renne, director of the nonprofit Berkeley Geochronology Center in California. Currently, paleontologists date fossils indirectly, by determining the age of the rocks in which they're found or by hunting for specks of fossilized pollen nearby, which also offer strong age clues. In contrast, the laser blasting method attempts to date fossils directly. However, Renne and several other fossil-dating experts said the technique is too new to be reliable. "Uranium-lead dating is tricky business," said Alan Koenig, a rock-dating expert with the U.S. Geological Survey in Denver.

A primary concern: It is impossible to know when, exactly, uranium leached into the bone. After the sauropod died in what is now northern New Mexico, the calcium in its bones was eventually replaced by harder, longer-lasting minerals, including uranium.

That's the fossilization process. But paleontologists say there is no way to know how long this might take. "It could be 10 years; it could be a million," Renne said.

### India slams US officials for radio-tagging fake univ victims

# DON'T TAG OUR STUDENTS LIKE CRIMINALS!

By Arayind Gowda in Bangalore and A. Srinivasa Rao in Hyderabad

**APPALED** at the GPS radio-tagging of Indian students duped by a sham university in California, India conveyed a stern message to the US authorities on Sunday. The Union government described the action as inhuman and demanded stringent action against those responsible.

The developments were avoidable and added insult to injury. The way some of the students have been treated by the authorities is unacceptable, external affairs minister S.M. Krishna said in Bangalore. "Indian students are not criminals," he added.

The strong reaction by the external affairs ministry brought some cheer for the beleaguered students of the Pleasanton-based Tri-Valley University, whose Great American Dream has turned into a nightmare. They also petitioned the US authorities to let them complete their education.

The students, most of whom are from Andhra Pradesh, said in their petition: "We plead with you not to penalise us or our families. Turn to Page 2

# Krishna calls tags 'inhuman'

continued from Page 1

and bring shame to our entire village and towns we come from by deporting us from the US and causing us loss of funds, reputation, money."

The petition was addressed jointly to the secretary of the US department of homeland security (DHS) and the director of the US immigration and customs enforcement (ICE).

The students said they believed that the university was a bona fide and legitimate institution that had been registered with the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) database. "It seems patently unfair to expect foreign students who are not familiar with the American way of life and its system to be aware of potential irregularities in the university and its set-up, internal fraudulent practices of the owners and other domestic institutions," they said.

"They also suggested that they be allowed a change of visa status, if any such options are available to us" based on an employer or a spouse living in the US.

Demanding that the students be treated properly, Krishna urged the US authorities to take action against those who had put radio collars on the students to track their movement. "If the US must realise the tremendous stakes involved in higher education, in interaction between our two countries, he said.

In New Delhi, the BJP expressed its concern over the plight of the students and demanded that the Union government take up the issue with the US proactively.

"The students are not cattle in a ranch to be given an electronic gadget, to be collared and to be monitored every minute of their stay there," party spokesperson Nirmala Sitharaman said.

In other related developments, the Andhra government set up a call centre with the number 06-232900 for parents and the affected students. The Indian embassy in Washington issued an advisory for the students on its website [www.indianembassy.org](http://www.indianembassy.org). They were asked to write to [mrca@indianemb.org](mailto:mrca@indianemb.org) and [edu@indianemb.org](mailto:edu@indianemb.org) for guidance.

The Indian embassy in Washington has taken up with the US state department the issue of Tri-Valley University in California, to ensure that Indian students are not subjected to any kind of discrimination or victimisation," the advisory said.

Immigration attorneys and Indian-American community leaders in the US, who have been helping these students, said scores of them had been detained and released on bond (or bail) and many had been included with the Intensive Supervision Appearance Programme or radio tags. "Time is fast running out for these students," Ram Mohan Kondra of the American Telugu Association said.

"These students do not know where to go. They are being asked for thousands of dollars in bonds. At the same time, they have to join some university as soon as possible to maintain their visa status and complete their studies," Kondra

Indian students are not criminals. The radio collars should be removed

— S.M. KRISHNA, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER



Radio collars used to track students.



Krishna said the US could have avoided hitting students with tags (below) and wants action against officials.

## Scam sours US dreams of many Indian students

By Tejjinder Singh in Washington

THE TRI-VALLEY Immigration scam has soured the Great American Dream of many Indian students elsewhere in the US.

In fact, the Pleasanton-based university could just be the tip of an iceberg of such sham institutes. It has been found that there are dozens of US universities who don't have proper accreditation to offer international students or award accredited degrees. Yet, there are thousands of Indian students "studying" at these universities.

While some of them wanted to be identified or name their institute, there seemed to be a sense of panic among these students as they contemplate ways to stay on in the US, including transfers to legal universities.

"Most students at my university came to the US after enrolling in well-known institutions. After coming here, we realised we could make good money working full-time. If we applied to this university where attendance is not compulsory and most of the classes are supposed to be online," a student at a Virginia-based institute said.

"Other factors also attracted us to these institutes. One, they encourage us to spread

Many sham institutes offer easy visas

the word among friends and family, offering us incentives such as a 20 per cent refund in tuition fees or future rebates. If someone joins, and it is also easy to procure a visa in India for those who don't have a commendable academic record," he added.

A US education professional cited the case of an Indian software engineering student who was shot dead at a Bridgeport grocery store in Connecticut in July 2010. Arun Kumar Narote, who lived in the store and worked as a part-time employee at the time of his shooting, was enrolled at the Virginia-based Stratford University, nearly 500km away.

The expert said different states have varying rules and procedures to set up colleges and universities, leading to more sham institutions coming up in soft states.

There were cases of more than five students getting ready to appear before immigration judges on Monday in Chicago neighbourhoods, in the state of Illinois.

The treatment being meted out to these students depends on the law of the state. For instance, in California, a large number of them have been installed with radio tags. Jayaram Konari, the president of the Telugu Association of North America, said.

Federal agencies in Washington claimed that the university was not conducting full-time courses and registered students were not doing full-time studies. This had caused the violation of their visa status.

Indian authorities pointed out that the university appeared to have been authorised by the US system to issue at least 120 forms and, in any case, US consulates in India had issued visas for students to study there after their due scrutiny. The students should, therefore, not be victimised in any way they said.

But state department spokesman PJ Crowley had said earlier: "The US is not going to interfere in the ongoing investigations. Since 9/11, we have strengthened the tracking, so that if you come here on a student visa, you have to check in and go to school. That is a requirement of the programme."

With inputs from Mail Today Bureau & agencies in Washington

poised out.

Raj Akula, a Texas-based attorney, said that he knew at least 20 students who had been subjected to detention. While many of them had been released on bail, a few of them were still in the detention centres as they had not been able to furnish the steep bond amount which could be as high as \$25,000 (₹5.18 lakh).

"This is outrageous," Akula said of the bond. "There are ways to get a bond hearing to reduce the bond amount, but that means another three to four weeks of detention for these students," he said.

The students were spread across the US — Ohio, Illinois, Washington and Pennsylvania. Akula said the bond in Illinois and Washington was cheaper than that in Ohio.

Business Standard ND 31/01/2011 P-15

# PLACEMENT REPORTING NORMS COMING SOON

*Ten B-schools join hands with IIM Ahmedabad in the move*

VINAY UMARJI  
Ahmedabad

**B**y 2012, Indian B-schools may report both their final and summer placements in an organised manner like their counterparts in western countries.

The move, called 'Indian Placement Reporting Standards', is being spearheaded by the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM-A) with ten major B-schools in the country joining the process to make reporting of placement data more meticulous and transparent.

B-schools like the Ghaziabad-based Institute of Management and Technology (IMT), Mumbai-based SP Jain Institute of Management and Research (SPJIMR) and other IIMs including IIM Calcutta, IIM Indore and IIM Lucknow have shown interest to be part of the move.

"We need to standardise what we report, when we report and how we report on placements. While this will be a draft proposal which is being prepared by our team of students and faculty, the same will be open for others to suggest modifications. After a specific time-line, we intend to put out the final reporting standards soon," said Saral Mukherjee, placement chairperson at IIM-A.

IIM-A first mooted this idea at a recruiters' conclave held in Mumbai in October 2010. Recruiters who attended the conference include — GE, McKinsey and company, Hindustan Unilever, Procter and Gamble, Wipro, Standard Chartered, Bank of India, and Monitor Group among others. Among B-schools, IIM Calcutta, IIM Indore, IIM Lucknow, IIM Shillong, ISB, SP Jain Institute of Management Research and Institute of Management Technology (IMT), Ghaziabad were present at the conclave.

"In the US, there is a placement reporting standard wherein B-schools



stick to the norms while declaring placement data. There is a need for such standards in India as a lot of ambiguous data gets reported. We are positively inclined towards this idea as it will bring everyone on the same

plain," said Abbas Ali Gabula, faculty in-charge for placements at SPJIMR. Though ISB was a part of the meeting held in Mumbai, it did not voice its views regarding the standards. An email sent to ISB remained

un-answered. Post the conclave IIM-A has been working on a draft proposal which it intends to put out soon for recruiters, B-schools, students and other stakeholders.

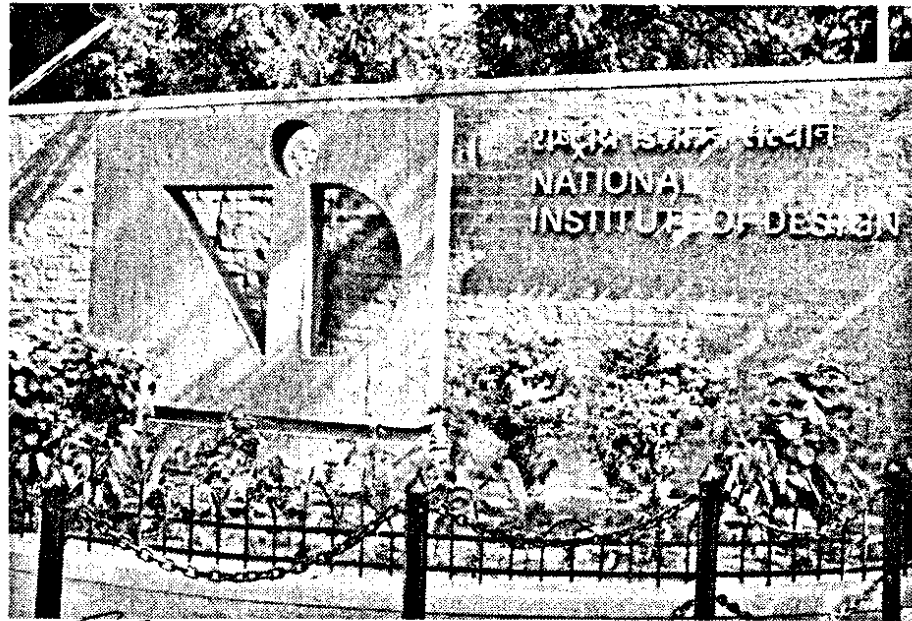
Some of the proposals include the placement data being audited by a third party auditor and reporting of placement data three months after the placement season is over. According to Mukherjee, along with transparency, it will ensure the privacy of students and recruiters alike.

According to Samir Barua, director, IIM-A, the norms may include salary structure, amount of CTC (cost to company), bonuses, relocation expenses, other cash expenses and even the non-cash part of the salary offered to the students. "We welcome the idea of unanimous B-schools placement reporting standards. However, we are in touch with IIM-A regarding the norms. as it is difficult to comment on this a draft is put out by IIM-A," said Prakash Pathak, chairman, corporate relations at IMT Ghaziabad.

Moreover, as part of the standards, recruiters will have to give out information about the offer in a certain format. Hence, IIM-A has already discussed this with recruiters. "The recruiters have agreed to support us. Once the draft proposal of the norms will be made public, it will be up to the recruiters to look at the fine print and come back to us with their suggestions," adds Mukherjee.

The norms will work in two phases. First, when the recruiters are communicating the offers to the institute or the students and secondly, when the institutes are communicating it to the media. Recruiters will have to give information about the offer in a certain format including breaking down the salary components.

## Business Standard ND 31/01/2011 P-15



## NID to revive Northeast textile industry

LAKSHMI AJAY  
Ahmedabad

**Y**ear 1961: The Indian government realised the need for development and growth of small industries in the country and joined hands with Ford Foundation, to sponsor a three month visit of renowned American designers—Charles and Ray Eames.

The visit resulted in setting up of the National Institute of Design (NID) on the lines of industrial design education being imparted in Bauhaus and Ulm in Germany.

Cut to 2011: The Ahmedabad-based institute—which functions as an autonomous body under the department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India—delivers under graduate and post graduate programmes in 17 diverse disciplines in design.

NID was ranked 32nd by Business Week in its list of top 60 European and Asian design programmes in the world. The institute has, over its 50 years of existence, established two more campuses at—Gandhinagar (Post Graduate campus)

and Bangalore (R&D campus).

Director of the institute Pradyumna Vyas says there's more. "We will be starting a full-fledged two year photography PG diploma course from this year. Also, we are looking at expanding the universal design programme and establishing several research chairs based on this. We plan to develop modules for design for craft so that one can create visual, learning materials in schools and colleges," says Vyas.

Taking advantage of its autonomous status, the institute is thinking of further expanding within the country with four new campuses. "We will be setting up campuses in Hyderabad and Jorhat. Whereas, plans of setting up campuses in Madhya Pradesh and Haryana are on the anvil. We will train faculty and create the curriculum development for all the four centres.

While the institute has had enquiries from Middle East countries to set up a campus, at present, it is more focused on having international exchange programmes and pedagogic relationships. "Going overseas is not an option right now. We are looking at consulting opportuni-

ties so that we can add to our corpus of funds for the institute," adds Vyas.

NID has international exchange programmes with around 35 overseas institutions. It has signed 40 memorandum of understanding for knowledge sharing with design institutes across the world out of which 24 MOU's are with European institutions alone.

The talent pool housed in NID is actively involved in live projects and research chairs that promote the cause of traditional design by marrying it to sustainable entrepreneurial ideas. "Our students are working on several projects with Ford Foundation and our incubatee cell Nidus is also supporting interesting innovations started by students and developing their entrepreneurial ideas," adds Vyas.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry invested ₹10 crore in the incubatee cell for venture funds which is called 'design-entrepreneurship'.

NID has now taken up the task of reviving and restoring languishing textiles of traditional craftsmen and artisans through several multi-crore live projects in the North east.

# Finding the right MBA

Taking an MBA is likely to be one of the biggest investments of time and money that you ever make

**T**HE programme fee alone at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania—one of the world's highest-profile business schools—is currently \$107,922 over two years. And there is more than just the fee to consider. If you decide on a full-time programme in Europe you will typically be out of the workplace for at least a year. Opt for a school in North America and this could stretch to two years. Students at Wharton forgo an average basic salary of \$76,193 a year while attending lectures. Making the correct choice of school and programme is thus on a par with selecting the right house, perhaps even spouse.

Indeed, to be successful professionally it is not even given that you need an MBA at all, as many executives and entrepreneurs will testify. Although demand for the qualification has reached unprecedented levels in countries such as India, mostly satisfied by the hundreds of local business schools that now crowd the market, current uncertainty in the job market and an entrepreneurial preference to just roll up your sleeves leaves many in the western world uncertain.

Schools in *The Economist's* ranking of MBA programmes insist that they can help boost students' career opportunities and open new areas of expertise and mobility. Indeed, surely the degree is worth pursuing only if it brings with it a sufficient level of professional advancement and personal development. But can an MBA still be considered a gateway to the top table? Do programmes really produce confident, self-aware graduates who can build exciting careers? What is more, if, as is often claimed, what is taught varies little between schools—if an MBA has become nothing more than a commodity—does it matter where you end up?

The answer is yes: it still matters. The market is tougher, the degree is under scrutiny, but for many professions, getting an MBA from the right school is a way of landing a better job and of accelerating a career.

Getting a degree from the wrong school, however, is not. Finding the right school is not just about looking at rankings, or choosing one considered as 'prestigious'. The key to making the right choice is understanding why you want to take an MBA, and what you expect it to do for you. So let's look at some of the key reasons for going to business school and what direction each might point you in:



## "I want to change career direction"

The great majority of MBA graduates, and certainly the bulk of the most successful ones, use the qualification to build on skills and experience they already have. "Very few employers will recruit you to do something you have never done before, simply because you have three new letters after your name," says Graeme Read of Antal, an executive-recruitment firm. If you are really set on a complete change of direction you will need to aim for one of the very top schools, where organisations are often buying future potential rather than current abilities. However, remember that wherever you study, an MBA will always be just part of a process, not a guaranteed ticket to the boardroom table.

## "I want to set up my own business"

No serious business school will tell you that they can create entrepreneurs out of thin air. But what they can do is develop any entrepreneurial skills that you already have. The schools with the best records in this area tend to have a faculty which combines traditional academics with those from the 'coal face' who have developed their own successful businesses. It's also worth looking for a school that draws students from a wide range of

cultures and nationalities. As Patrice Houdayer, dean of EMLYON in France, puts it: "Start-up businesses can go global almost immediately these days, so it's essential to get first-hand knowledge of how business is conducted in key markets around the globe."

## "I want to earn more money/get a better job/be more mobile"

You'll be hard pressed to find an MBA graduate who actually lost money (or perhaps more accurately, will admit to having lost money) on the business-school experience. However, the days of eye-watering starting salaries and signing-on bonuses are over, or at least on hiatus. The real value of the qualification often only manifests itself over time, so look for a school that is going to help you develop the skills and capabilities you will need in the long run, not just the day after the graduation ceremony. A school's location also matters, so give some serious thought to where you want to be based in the long term. Many schools have strong regional ties with a particular industry or recruiter, but only a handful enjoy a global reputation and influence.

"I want to build a network of contacts"  
Many veteran MBA graduates will tell

you that the most useful thing they got out of business school was an address book. Consider what sort of network will benefit you most. Many of the highly ranked schools have invested heavily in creating diverse classes that will generate contacts around the globe. Great if you are planning an international business career, less useful, however, if you are going to focus on the public sector in your own country.

## Other considerations

It might sound obvious, but a school's location should be a key evaluation, and not just because you might want a job in a particular region. It is no surprise that the business schools at Chicago, New York and London all have excellent reputations in the field of finance. They are right next to the financial markets and can more easily attract guest speakers from financial institutions, or offer a strong network for summer internships and post-MBA careers. Schools on America's west coast can similarly benefit from ties to Silicon Valley, while other regions offer a gateway to areas of expertise, such as aerospace, luxury brand management or bio-tech.

You might also evaluate a school based on specialisation. Beyond the generalist nature of the MBA qualification, schools have carved reputations in certain areas such as entrepreneurship, finance, marketing, nonprofit, real-estate, it management or health care. The schools not only work hand in hand with the related industry, but also have faculty who have developed an area of expertise. They might have an incubator to attract venture capital for entrepreneurial business plans, or offer work-study programmes that give students a hands-on experience of working with NGOs.

So beyond *The Economist's* ranking, think of the criteria that matter to you before drawing up a list of potential MBA programmes. You then may also find that you are not just limited to a handful of schools that dominate the top of the b-school rankings. Research the characteristics of the schools, find out more about the student experience, and how students are achieving their personal and professional goals. Ultimately it is in both schools' and candidates' best interests to find the right fit.

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