

Newspaper Clips  
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HT.COM ND 16.07.2015  
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## Prez miffed over IIT director resignation

**NEW DELHI:** An RTI has revealed that President Mukherjee was displeased over the government's last-minute request to approve the resignation of former IIT Delhi director **RK Shevgaonkar**, who quit last year amid allegations that the Centre was meddling in premier institutions. In March, nuclear scientist Anil Kakodkar quit as chairman of IIT Bombay's governing body due to differences with Irani over selection of IIT directors. **PTI**

Times of India ND 16/07/2015 P-17

# Only 2 of 73 expelled IIT-R students considered 'weak'

## 'Most Of Them Are From ST Category'

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**Mumbai:** Getting into the IITs after cracking the grueling JEE may be tough. Even tougher is passing from the tech schools.

Anyone with a JEE rank that takes him past the IIT gates is no middling student. Yet, among the 73 candidates who had to leave IIT-Roorkee for not passing muster after their freshman year is JEE rank 1641 (General) who went on to join electrical engineering, a couple of students from

## Expelled IITians can reappear, says HC

In a development that brought some relief to a few of the expelled students from IIT Roorkee, the Uttarakhand high court on Wednesday permitted them to appear for re-examination scheduled on Thursday. Giving the order, the HC bench also ordered the IIT Roorkee administration to file a reply by July 20 to the students' petition challenging the expulsion order. **TNN**

the computer science department, and many others in the middle and lower ranks ranging from 3500 to 7000 (Common Merit List). Merely two of them are from the preparatory course, the bridge programme to help quota students lagging

## An engineering seat for just 5 marks

A score as low as 5 out of 75 at the Goa common entrance test (GCET) guarantees a seat. The reason: Over the last two years the state has seen its engineering seats increase by 400. Every student who answers GCET for a professional degree seat is allotted a rank in the merit list, irrespective of score, which at times has been as low as 3 out of 75. **TNN**

behind in the JEE race.

The preparatory course is a year-long special coaching programme in physics, mathematics and chemistry, for reserved category candidates who fail to make the cut in the entrance. Numbers of stu-

dents admitted to preparatory courses are not more than 10 in most institutes; in the older the numbers may sometimes go up to 20. To pick students for the preparatory course, IITs lower the qualifying score—which is lowered for reserved category students at the time of admission in any case—further.

While the institute does not want to look at these expelled students in terms of caste, reports suggest that most belong to the Scheduled Tribes. "There is no caste-based distinction made once these students enter the campus. There are students from all departments who did not score the minimum marks and they had to be asked to leave," IIT-Roorkee director Pradipta Banerji told TOI.

For the full report, log on to [www.timesofindia.com](http://www.timesofindia.com)

Economic Times ND 16/07/2015 P-8

# Except Hyderabad, No New IITs Click with Top 1,000 Candidates

**FINDING NO TAKERS** Only IIT-Hyderabad was able to admit 20 top-ranking students; coaching institutes say old IITs are candidates' first choice, followed by established NITs

## Lagging Behind

IIT Indore, IIT Ropar, IIT Mandi, IIT Gandhinagar, IIT Hyderabad are among 10 new institutes started in or after 2008

Among top 2,000 ranks, 5 new IITs have a total of 29 students joining them; remaining five have none

Among new IITs, Hyderabad is the top favourite

NITs get preference over new IITs because of better faculty, infrastructure, says Maninder Agrawal, IIT Kanpur's Dean of faculty affairs



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**New Delhi:** If further proof is needed of how top-ranking candidates are shunning the new IITs, here's some data to consider: of the top 1,000 rank holders in the qualifying exam, only 20 have been roped in and all of them by IIT Hyderabad. "There's not much difference over

the last few years in the ranking of JEE Advanced and the choice of the institutes by the students," said Adrijit Goswami, chairman of the Joint Entrance Examination (Advanced) at the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur. Some directors feel the newer institutes, which started in 2008 or later, still have a long way to go before they can be compared with the older IITs. "They will take

at least four to five years to be able to compete with the old IITs," said Pradipta Banerji, director of IIT Roorkee. However, he added that the students' preference was clearly driven by coaching institutes.

"These ranks are not a fair measure to judge the popularity of any IIT," Banerji said. Among the top 2,000 rank holders, 29 students have opted for five new IITs. The remain-

ing five IITs attracted none. After IIT Hyderabad, the institute at Indore is the most popular with 15 of the top 2,000 rank holders, while IIT Ropar got 11 and those at Mandi and Gandhinagar and the Indian School of Mines Dhanbad got one each.

"Our students prefer the old IITs and then the established NITs (National Institutes of Technology) to the new IITs," said Akash Chaudhry, director of Aakash Education Services, a coaching institute that trains students for the JEE and other engineering entrance exams. The JEE (Advanced) is taken by can-

didates seeking admission to the IITs, while the JEE (Main) is for entry into the NITs, which were earlier known as the Regional Engineering Colleges, and other technical institutions funded by the central and state governments.

According to Manindra Agrawal, IIT Kanpur's dean of faculty affairs, students prefer to go with the NITs rather than any new IIT because of the faculty, infrastructure and better track record of placements.

"The new IITs need more time for anyone to judge them. Institutes take decades and even centuries to become globally established," said IIT Ropar director Sarit K Das.

Mint ND 16/07/2015 P-9

## CAMPUS RECRUITMENT

# IIT Bombay targets 'Make in India' firms for placement season

BY BIDYA SAPAM  
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MUMBAI

Banking on the government's 'Make in India' initiative, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay has sent out invites for campus recruitment to over 100 foreign companies that are planning to invest in the country.

"We have focused on big companies from abroad in the past as well, but this time our attention and focus has shifted to companies which are trying to enter the Indian market in response to the government's 'Make in India' initiative," said Rahul Soni, placement manager, IIT Bombay.

The institute's placement team has sent out invites to around 120 companies from Germany, France and other countries listed under the Make in India campaign.

"Those that have shown interest in entering India would definitely have plans to hire employees in India," Soni said, explaining the logic.

The institute is hopeful that a few of these companies will turn up for the upcoming campus recruitment, though a large number of them might not be able to enter the country this year. As per Make in India's official website, over 200 companies from abroad are listed as foreign

investors across various sectors, including automobiles, defence manufacturing, aviation and construction.

In 2014-15, around 380 companies participated in IIT Bombay's campus recruitment.

Placement cells of most IITs have started preparing for the upcoming recruitment season that starts in December this year.

There are 16 IITs in the country.

The placement cell at IIT Kanpur is also gearing up for recruitment. While the institute has not sent out invites to companies listed under the Make in India campaign, it might consider doing so, according to a person who is part of the placement process at the institute.

"It is a cool idea to chase those planning to invest in India. We might think about it," the person said.

IIT Madras is currently inviting past recruiters and does not plan to sort out firms based on the Make in India campaign, though the core sector is a big focus for the institute.

"We have always made sure that at least 60-70% of the recruitment happens from the core sector. At the same time, people with core functional skills have always been in demand even in information technology companies," said Babu Vishwanathan, placement advisor, IIT Madras.

## IIM-Indore overhauls curriculum based on corp feedback

fe Bureau

**New Delhi, July 15:** Based on the feedback from the corporate sector benchmarking against globally top-ranked MBA programmes and insights from recent studies on the effectiveness of MBA programmes, IIM-Indore is launching a new PGP (MBA) programme design from its 2015-17 batch.

Feedback from corporate recruiters suggests that in terms of conceptual learning, there is not much difference across the top business schools in India. But what makes a difference is the ability of graduating students to apply their learning quickly and effectively once they are a part of the workforce.

**Feedback from recruiters suggests that in terms of conceptual learning, there is not much difference across the top business schools in India**

IIM Indore's new PGP programme design introduces skill development courses in communication, leadership, spreadsheet modeling, entrepreneurial orientation, innovation and design thinking, and sustainability.

Taught in a workshop-based format, these courses are graded on an absolute scale and students have to obtain a prescribed minimum percentage that displays their minimum competence in the skill in order to clear the course.

"To help students perform better in their internships, we have introduced a few electives into our first-year curriculum. These electives include supply chain management, retail and corporate banking, marketing research, and sales and distribution management, covering some of the main areas in which students usually get summer projects.

The second year of the new curriculum will feature a large number of domain concentrations that will enable students to get in-depth exposure to a particular vertical or sector. These concentrations will consist of both regular courses taught by industry faculty and workshop courses taught by industry practitioners.

# Indian Institutes of Trouble

Are teachers, parents, govts, academicians and society trying to break down a 65-year old institution?



## OUT OF THE BLUE

ANJALI BHARGAVA

As one reads about the plight of students who make it to the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT), those who fail to do so and those who make it through the system once in, one can't help but wonder whether this was what was intended.

Let me start with one big question: are the IITs actually for training and

producing engineers? Most IIT-ians I know — and this is a fair number — are not pursuing engineering. They are bankers, consultants, angel investors, senior level executives or even heads of non-governmental organisations. I don't know a single civil, mechanical or electrical engineer for that matter. The engineers India produces are primarily from the regional engineering colleges. So if the idea is to churn out good, capable managers, do they really need an IIT-education?

A few weeks ago, I was following the story on an IIT Mumbai student who took his own life, unable to cope with the stress of the system. Television channels put out statistics that revealed that suicide rates among IIT students are quite high — again something unheard of in the 1980s and 1990s.

Then last week, IIT Roorkee identified and asked 73 students who could

not cope with the curriculum or were evidently disinterested in it (one student quit to join acting classes) to leave. Without going into the rights and wrongs of the issue, I presume if the institute took such a drastic decision it must have had valid reasons.

I know a few students who failed the dreaded Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) and some who made it. And they have an important point to make. The moment a child shows some interest or aptitude in the sciences, parents start talking of the JEE examination at home. Teachers add to the decibel level. Before the student fully realises what he is signing on for — or whether he actually wants a career in engineering at all — he is brain-washed into enrolling for the classes. Others around you seem to be in the same boat, so peer pressure builds up. It's a *fait accompli* for those demonstrating aptitude in math

and science. Career choices are made ridiculously early.

Students at ages 14-15 start attending these classes. They are in a sort of pressure cooker situation for at least four years before they actually take the test. Thankfully, several — probably not cut out for it anyway — fall by the wayside.

But some who finally do make it find it a bit of an anti climax. Exhausted or burnt out, many begin to question whether this is what they wanted in the first place. Older and wiser, some begin to question why engineering. Yet the pressure of performance — and the IIT curriculum — continues to build. Semesters seem to merge into one another and one examination follows the next. Far too many crack under the pressure. As one student I know put it "you are on a treadmill that refuses to stop" but there's no time to do anything about it.

Then there are those who are disappointed with what they find once in. A post by a former student who passed out in 2014 talks of the "academic void" his IIT education left in him. He found himself surrounded by people who were more interested in the "job" and the "package" post an IIT stint rather than evolving into a better professional. He says that he enjoyed everything about being at an IIT except the academics.

Academic standards at almost all the IITs have dropped steadily through the years (IITs have been slipping in QS World University Rankings every year). So if Pradipta Banerji, director of IIT Roorkee, managed to cull out the students who failed to cope or were not interested in learning, we need someone across the IIT system to cull out those who failed to teach or were not interested in teaching.

Instead of quibbling with student bodies, Human Resource Development Minister Smriti Irani should look at some of these real problems plaguing the IITs and save this 65-year old institution from virtual collapse.

## Smriti's 'model' plea to veto IIMs

Basant Kumar Mohanty

[http://www.telegraphindia.com/1150715/jsp/nation/story\\_31674.jsp#.VadEj5elhWU](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1150715/jsp/nation/story_31674.jsp#.VadEj5elhWU)

**New Delhi, July 14:** Nixing IIM proposals is nothing new for Smriti Irani but she has found a new reason this time.

The human resource development minister has rejected three IIMs' shortlists for the posts of their directors - vacant for over a year - and also scrapped the search panels.

The official reason: the panels violated the electoral model code of conduct by holding meetings around poll time last year. The ministry didn't cite specifics, and a veteran poll panel official laughed off its explanation.

The recommendations from the IIMs in Lucknow and Ranchi were dismissed sometime ago while those from the B-school in Kozhikode were spurned last month. All three institutes have formed fresh search panels and Lucknow has sent a fresh shortlist.

It was in early 2014, before the general election was announced, that the IIMs set up the first search panels. They sent their recommendations to the new government.

"The argument of model code violation is flimsy," a former poll panel official said. "These are institutional and administrative exercises. It's not like floating a tender."

An IIM teacher too said the model code nowhere debars search panels from holding meetings.

## Business Line ND 16/07/2015 P-19

# Indore IIM, IIT to co-host event for start-ups

SANGEETHA CHENGAPPA

Bengaluru, July 15

To provide funding access to budding entrepreneurs in emerging Tier 2 cities, IIM Indore and IIT Indore are co-hosting Venture-I, an angel funding competition for start-ups.

A part of the two-day 15 entrepreneurship summit that is scheduled to be hosted at the IIM Indore campus on August 22 and 23, Venture-I is open to all start-ups that are less than two years old and have not raised more than ₹50 lakh. Those with a business idea are also eligible to participate in the competition, provided they have a full time team and a ready prototype.

### Venture-I

"At Venture-I, entrepreneurs can raise ₹15 lakh of angel investment just by selling a minority stake of 5 per cent of

their start-ups to investors. For this, 15 finalists will be chosen to make a 7 minute pitch to investors followed by a 3 minute Q&A session. The finalists who clinch the funding will be guided, mentored and stewarded by the investors on their onward journey" Soumyadeep Chakraborty, Overall Coordinator, 15 Summit (IIM Indore), told *BusinessLine*. "We have received 500 applications from Mumbai, Pune, Delhi, Indore, Bhopal and Lucknow and expect many more by July end" added Chakraborty.

Some of the participating investors at Venture-I are Dr Srikanth Sundararajan, Helion Venture Partners; Digvijay Gagneja, Matrix Partners; Neeraj Gutgutia, founder CEO, Guts Unlimited and Vivek Bajaj, Director, Kredent Enterprises.

"While start-up fever has gripped the country, this region, despite having the poten-

tial, has not seen any successful start-ups, as it is not on the funding map. Venture-I should change, this. IIM Indore has many plans for entrepreneurs including setting up an incubator, virtual mentoring for those who don't need physical space, small business and start-up clinic to help entrepreneurs who get stuck" said Professor Rishiksha T Krishnan, Director, IIM Indore.

### Key speakers

The two-day event will have Dr Ganesh Natarajan, CEO of Zensar Technologies delivering the keynote address followed by other speakers - Ronnie Screwala, founder, UTV/Swades/Unilazer; Raghunandan G, co-founder TaxiForSure; Kunal Shah, co-founder Freecharge; Phanindra Sama, co-founder Red Bus, among others.

Time has been set aside for a

'Walk with the Entrepreneurs' where participants get to interact more closely with successful entrepreneurs as they walk around the sprawling campus: Participants will get to walk with Greg Moran, co-founder, Zoomcar; Pankhuri Shrivastava, co-founder Grabhouse.com; Anubhav Sonthalia, co-founder Sokrati Inc; Amitt Sharma, co-founder Futech, to name a few.

## Visva-Bharati V-C's case against HRD ministry dismissed

Hindustan Times (Kolkata)

**BOLPUR:** Visva-Bharati vicechancellor Sushanta Duttagupta received another blow on Wednesday when the Calcutta High Court dismissed his case against the Union human resource development ministry (MHRD).

Duttagupta had raised questions about the jurisdiction of the MHRD and whether it could form a fact-finding committee against him that would probe the alleged irregularities and corrupt acts committed by him. In his plea, Duttagupta also appealed that the proceedings against him be stopped.

Court sources said that Justice Tapabrata Chakraborty of Calcutta High Court hardly took any time to pronounce the verdict. Justice Chakraborty dismissed the case saying that a show-cause notice had already been issued to Duttagupta and he could explain his conduct vis-a-vis the allegations of financial corruption against him.

On June 24, Duttagupta had submitted a petition before the court challenging the jurisdiction of the three-member factfinding committee comprising former Allahabad High Court judge Sakharam Singh Yadav, the chairman of Aurobindo Institute of Indian Culture, Shillong, BB Dutta, and Cambridge University professor Dilip Chakraborty.

In his submission before the court, Duttagupta's lawyer pointed out that Visva-Bharati is an autonomous body and therefore the fact-finding committee has no jurisdiction to initiate any proceedings against the V-C. The court, however, dismissed this argument.

Dismissing Duttagupta's petition, the Calcutta High Court said the committee had already filed its report and a show-cause notice was served on the vice-chancellor on its basis.

After Wednesday's verdict, Duttagupta has to submit his answer to the show-cause letter to MHRD by July 21. If the HRD ministry is dissatisfied with his answer, the president of India, who is also the visitor of this prestigious university, can advise the ministry to apply Section 16 of General Close Act to remove Duttagupta from the post.

If Duttagupta is removed, it will be a first in the history of Visva-Bharati.

The show-cause from MHRD, too, was a first in V-B's history as no vice-chancellor has faced this ignominy before him.

# Indian firms account for 91,000 jobs, \$15-bn investments in US: Report

## CII- Grant Thornton report shows businesses moving beyond metros

BS REPORTER  
New Delhi, 15 July

A hundred Indian companies employed 91,000 people and had invested \$15 billion across the United States as of 2014, according to a report issued on Wednesday by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Grant Thornton, an independent audit, tax and advisory firm. Most companies are also gunning for further investments and hiring more hands in the US.

The report came as immigration and visa issues keep dogging Indian business interests in that country. Last month, the US labour department had launched investigations into possible visa rule violations against India's top two information technology (IT) services companies, Tata Consultancy Services and Infosys.

Based on a survey of 100 Indian companies, the report

in its fourth annual edition provides the amounts of tangible foreign direct investments, employment generation, future expansion plan, etc, by such companies in 2014.

The study shows states having historically large populations of Indian-Americans, such as those on the eastern coast like New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, as well as California and Texas, lead. It maintains that Indian companies have operational presence in all 50 states and the federal capital, pointing to growing Indian presence Montana, Colorado and Kansas.

Together, the 100 Indian companies have made tangible investments in excess of \$15 billion in 35 states. About half of these states have received over \$100 million each in collective investment from Indian companies. The states that received more than \$1 billion from Indian companies include Texas (\$3.85 bil-

lion), Pennsylvania (\$3.56 billion), Minnesota (\$1.8 billion), New York (\$1.01 billion) and New Jersey (\$1 billion).

The earlier survey in 2013 had shown collective investments amounting to \$17 billion and the total number of jobs created at 81,000. However, the sample size had been different, with 68 companies having been surveyed.

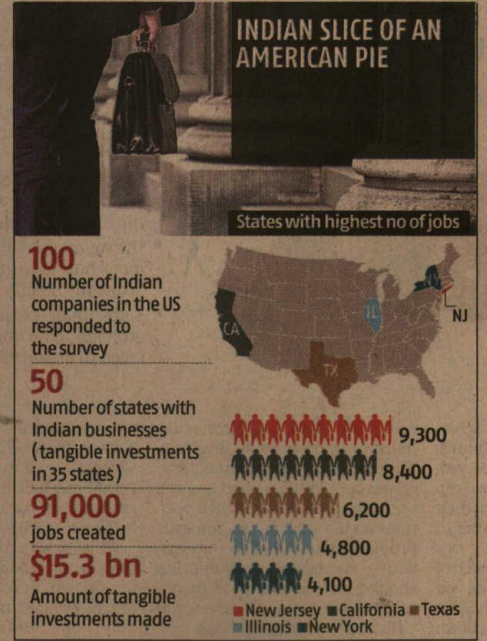
According to Reserve Bank of India data, the US features among the top five destinations for foreign direct investment from India. Corroborating this, 84 per cent of Indian companies responding to the survey indicated plans for more investment in the country over the next five years, while 90 per cent planned on hiring more employees locally over the period.

A state-by-state breakdown showed the concentration of Indian companies to be highest in New Jersey (9,278 jobs), California (8,937

jobs), Texas (6,230 jobs), Illinois (4,779 jobs) and New York (4,134 jobs) all of which have historically been home to most Indian-Americans.

The report is upbeat in its growth forecast for Indian companies with 84.5 per cent of companies planning to invest more. The report also points out rising sectoral diversification although the IT and IT-enabled sectors still dominate with 40 per cent of surveyed companies working in the fields. Other industries like life sciences, pharmaceuticals, mining, design, engineering and construction are also growing.

The report suggests the emergence of a significant number of companies in life sciences, manufacturing and automotive sectors to be major contributors to job creation. It adds that more companies operating in financial services space is indicative of surging demand from the large and economically strong Indian diaspora.



Millenium Post ND 16/07/2015 P-5

# India should emerge as global HR capital: PM

Says India has potential to provide workforce of 4 crore to world

## OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI:** India should emerge as the 'human resource capital' of the world as China has become a global 'manufacturing factory', Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday while launching the ambitious 'Skill India' Mission as part of the government's "war against poverty".

Modi said India has the potential to provide a workforce of about 4 to 5 crore to the world if the capabilities of the countrymen are honed through proper and dynamic training in skills and added that the government is focussed on this aspect.

Noting that the world and technology is changing fast, he said, "We need to have futuristic vision and prepare plans for the next 10 years" and advocated the need for regular interaction between industry and technology experts.

"If China is like a 'manufacturing factory' of the world, India should become the 'human resource capital' of the world. That should be our target and we should lay emphasis on that," Modi said addressing an event here to launch the 'Skill India' Mission which was attended by several union ministers and Chief Ministers of various states.

Observing that there are several developed nations which have wealth but not human resources, he said India, in the near future, will be the



Prime Minister Narendra Modi felicitates worldskills Oceania winners at the launch of the Skill India campaign in New Delhi on Wednesday

only country that can cater to this requirement if proper skills are developed here.

"People of India have huge capabilities and this has been recognised the world over since centuries. We have forgotten the skills. We have to regain those," he said, adding the training institutes in India need to be dynamic.

"We have 65 per cent of the population below 35 years of age, how will they face the challenges if they are not skilled? If they can't face challenges, they themselves will become a challenge for us, India's 1st priority is to generate employment opportunities", PM Modi said, adding, "Poor don't have high ambitions of buying a bungalow or expensive cars, they just want their children to be self-

dependent. We want to work in this direction in a structured & organized way, taking States along, with a new start."

Asserting that there is no reason for unemployment and poverty in the country, he said "the foremost priority of the government is to create jobs. For this, we have to create proper structures and this mission is an effort in that direction."

He said while the Indian IITs made a name for themselves globally in the last century, it is the turn of ITIs (Industrial Training Institutes) to do the same this century.

Government will bring in a legislation in Parliament to establish Skill Universities in every state, as a part of its efforts to create a large pool of skilled

workforce in the country, Union Minister Rajiv Pratap Rudy said on the occasion.

"... Prime Minister had directed that to achieve this objective (skill development) we will have to set up Skill Universities and work with states to achieve the goal. We are confident that in the coming days we will bring in a legislation in Parliament to make an attempt to establish a Skill University in every state," Rudy said.

Data from the Census 2011 and 68th round of the National Sample Survey revealed that an estimated 10.4 crore fresh workers would enter the labour market and require skill training by 2022, and 29.8 crore of the existing workforce will require additional skill training over the same time period.



## IIT Delhi alumnus builds ‘Ola-like’ cab service for inter-city travel

<http://yourstory.com/2015/07/ola-like-wiwigo/>

The online taxi-booking business in India has two segments. One is intra-city, where customers travel from one point to another within the same city. The other is inter-city where customers travel from one city to a different city.

The intra-city online taxi-booking market in India is picking up pace. But the inter-city cab-booking market is overcrowded with tourist taxis and round trip vendors, and is therefore, described as unorganized and fragmented.



When Sunil Chaula, an alumnus of IIT Delhi, could not book a train ticket to Chandigarh, where he had a family function to attend, he had to book a cab. The vendor charged him for a round trip, as he would otherwise not receive the return fare. During the journey, Sunil talked to this driver, and formed a clear picture of how the taxi market functions. And that triggered the idea of starting Wiwigo.com. This was September 2014. He publicly launched his venture in April 2015.

Sunil Chaula, Founder & CEO, Wiwigo Technologies, says, “In the inter-city cab-booking market, customers face frequent issues with transparency, quality of service, and driver behaviour.”

Wiwigo Technologies recently rolled out an outstation cab booking platform called wiwigo.com, where one can enjoy one Chandigarh at half price as compared to services available in the market.

Chaula avers, “If someone were to travel from Delhi to Chandigarh, other vendors would charge Rs 6000, whereas we charge only Rs 2499 for a sedan.”

## Pursuing the entrepreneurial dream

Chauhan has a BTech in Electrical Engineering from IIT Delhi, and graduated in 1997. Following this, he has 17 years' international experience in product creation, technology, and team management. He spent 10 years in United Kingdom working for companies like Phillips Semiconductors and ST-Ericsson Mobile Platforms. Prior to founding Wiwigo, he headed product engineering division for Cadence Design Systems, India.

He started Wiwigo with seed capital of Rs. 5 lakh. The greatest challenge he faced during the initial days was leaving his corporate career and starting from scratch as an entrepreneur. His family and friends pressured him to continue his 9-5 job and discard the entrepreneurial dream.

Recalling his days of struggle, he says, "It took a lot of persuasion for my family and friends to align with me. Some still think that I am crazy, but I am okay with that."

As of now, Wiwigo.com is a self-funded venture. Fortunately, it has started receiving a lot of inbound VC interest. Having gained substantial traction in the market, Wiwigo is now in talks with a few unnamed angel investors.

## Hurdles in the path to growth

Service quality and customer satisfaction are two of the major issues that plague the tourist cab market. The main challenge lies in educating customers to become more mindful of the whole experience, rather than just the price point.

Chaula, to an extent, has validated its idea by partnering with a pool of vendors who have established a huge territorial area by leveraging the platform of Wiwigo.

Chaula states, "We see tremendous growth potential in inter-city, one-way travel. This space is yet to see the emergence of any credible player. In our view, the market is wide open. At the same time, this space is big enough for many large players to co-exist."

## How does Wiwigo.com work?

Basically, they call it a simple three-step process — search, select and book. All one needs to do is to select their destination city and date of travel. They can then avail of a number of options, after looking into price details.

Expressing happiness over the success of his venture, Chaula says, "People simply love our one-way pricing service, which saves them up to 50% of normal cab rental costs. The pricing is all inclusive of state tax, toll, and parking charges. This is different from the norm in the outstation cab rental market, where prices are quoted on a rupees-per-kilometre basis, and state tax, toll and parking charges are extra."

The crucial advantage that adds value propositions to its services is that customers get updated through emails, SMS or phone calls at each and every point.

## Building a profitable business proposition

It is too early for the venture, which is only three months old, to discuss its revenue generation model— but, in terms of number, Wiwigo is receiving around 400-600 bookings per month. Presently, with 400 cabs in place, it is serving in 20 cities and wants to expand to 100 cities by the end of this year. For the upcoming fiscal year, Wiwigo has set out to earn gross revenue of Rs 15 crore.

“Nevertheless, Wiwigo is always on its toes when it comes to innovating in technology and marketing. We are using various innovative growth hacking techniques to make our mark in the industry,” concludes Chaula.

## IIT-B, Nehru Science Centre to bring internet to rural schools across state

**The initiative is being launched as part of ‘Techfest’, the annual science and technology festival of IIT Bombay.**

To provide hands-on internet experience to students in rural schools, IIT Bombay is collaborating with the Nehru Science Centre in which volunteers trained by the students and faculty of IIT Bombay will show how content can be accessed with a click. The “internet for all” project, which is being piloted at 26 rural schools in Nashik district and was launched Tuesday, will be a facility incorporated in Nehru Science Centre’s mobile science exhibition bus and will cover a distance of 650 km. The aim is to literally take internet to the doorsteps of students studying in remote parts of the state.

“Conventional education is extremely rigid with little scope for creative thinking. Such outside syllabus exposure is the need of the day to motivate students. We need to tell students, who have no idea about the internet, that there’s something called connectivity and web pages, how the net works, how browser works. Digital divide, in my opinion, could be worse than social divide,” said IIT Bombay Professor D B Phatak.

The initiative is being launched as part of ‘Techfest’, the annual science and technology festival of IIT Bombay, which is scheduled to be held in December this year. Phatak also said that by year-end, an executable plan for scaling up the project will be ready, which can include net capsules in multiple languages. “As connectivity progresses to villages, we should already have children who know how to use the internet,” he added.

According to Professor Phatak, after accessing Marathi sites with interesting content, the latter was downloaded on a single server, which can simulate several servers.

Each bus will have three volunteers, a laptop with Wi-Fi connectivity and five Aakash tablets. “All tablets will be connected to the laptop and students will be able to access meaningful content in Marathi. They will first see the science exhibits on the bus and subsequently experience the internet. Taking a cue from this project, we are planning to scale it up. We can have 20 such buses, 20 laptops, 100 Aakash tablets and internet capsules or content can be created in multiple local languages. The only bottleneck could be selection and training of volunteers for the project,” he said.

The mobile science exhibition is an exhibition on wheels in which 20 theme-based models are mounted on a specially designed bus and was started in 1965. It is the flagship rural outreach science education programme of the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM). Currently, NCSM has a fleet of 20 such buses, attached to various science centres across India.

The exhibition remains on tours for six to seven months in a year in two phases and covers upto 50 sites in each phase. The idea is to enthuse students to take up careers in science and technology and the bus remains in a rural school for two days at each site.

“The bus will travel to rural areas fully equipped with equipments and infrastructure. Besides giving hands-on internet experience, volunteers will be responsible for educating rural school students about the power of the internet in delivering services in areas like health, education, agriculture, banking etc in rural areas,” said Shivaprasad Khened, Nehru Science Centre director.