Newspaper Clips

July 29, 2011

Mint ND 29-Jul-11 P31

A.H. Zaidi/Mint

NAME
PRAMOD MAHESHWARI
OCCUPATION
CMD, CAREER POINT INFOSYSTEMS
FATHER'S NAME
GULAB CHAND MAHESHWARI
OCCUPATION
COMMODITY BROKER

Making education a career

The year was 1993. Kota was a far cry from the educational hub it has now transformed into when a fresh graduate from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi, returned to his hometown, clutching on to two tempting job offers and a desire to pursue higher studies.

"My American dream disappeared as soon as my mother told me that she won't be alive by the time I return to Kota after 25 years (from the US)," says Pramod Maheshwari, chairman and managing director, Career Point Infosystems.

Spurning the job offers, he hoisted a board announcing Career Point outside a tyre godown that belonged to his father and began teaching physics to local IIT aspirants. His elder brother Om jumped into the Career Point bandwagon a few months later. Soon, the experiment began eliciting welcome response and the enrolments at the institute began to swell.

"Imagine the happiness that a 21-year-old boy would feel when students ask him for his blessings and their parents shower blessings on him," he says. "This respect from society spurred me on."

What began with ₹25,000 borrowed from his father has now ballooned into the first tutorial provider to be listed on the National Stock Exchange and the Bombay Stock Exchange with a market capitalization of ₹583 crore. The institute now imparts tutorial services to almost 16,000 students every year at the last count.

Maheshwari prides himself on the individual attention that the institute tries to extend to each student, in addition to the scientific and result-oriented teaching methodology practised there. Career Point also provides scholarships to meritorious students whose financial limitations pose an obstacle in their educational dreams. Statistics tell the tale: 7,000 students placed in different IITs and over 3,000 at medical institutes, at a success percentage of 14% and 27%, respectively.

"I now wish to transform Career Point from a tutorial services provider to a learning services provider," Maheshwari informs. Apart from the test preparation that it has come to be identified with, Career Point has now begun making inroads into formal and vocational education. Two private universities, located in Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan, and a couple of technology campuses elsewhere are already in the works.

"Students remain my primary concern," Maheshwari concludes. "Through vocational courses, I wish to bring college dropouts and others into the mainstream."

Kota has come a long way from the dusty little town it used to be, filled with examples like Maheshwari, 41, whose success story has paralleled the burgeoning development of the tier II town.

Anupam Kant Verma

Comment at views@livemint.com

DECCAN HERALD Bangalore 28.07.2011
P-8

Two Indians win Magsaysay Award

MANILA: Two Indians, Neelima Mishra and Harish Hande, are among the five individuals and one organisation cited for the Magsaysay Award, 2011.

Nileema Mishra, 39, was recognised for "her purpose-driven zeal to work tirelessly with villagers in Maharashtra, organising them to successfully address both their aspirations and their adversities through collective action and heightened confidence in their potential to improve their own lives".

Harish Hande, 44, won the award for "his passionate and pragmatic efforts to put solar power technology in the hands of the poor, through a social enterprise that brings customised, affordable, and sustainable electricity to vast rural populace, encouraging the poor to become asset creators".

Neelima Mishra PTI

The awards, considered the Asian version of the Nobel Prize, were announced by the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation on Wednesday.

Mishra has a Masters degree in Clinical Psychology from the University of Pune. She is the founder of the Bhagini Nivedita Gramin Vigyan Niketan in the village of Bahadarpur in Maharashtra.

Hande has a PhD in energy engineering from the University of Massachusetts. He previously studied at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kharagpur.

He is the managing director and the co-founder of the SELCO Solar Light Private Ltd in Bangalore.

The other awardees are Alternative Indigenous Development Foundation, Inc (AIDFI) from the Philippines, Hasanain Juaini from Indonesia, Koul Panha from Cambodia and Tri Mumpuni from Indonesia.

Established in 1957, the Magsaysay Award celebrates the memory and leadership of the third Philippine president, and is given every year to individuals or organisations in Asia who manifest the same sense of selfless service of the late Filipino leader.

Foundation president Carmencita T Abella said the awardees of 2011 were "five remarkable individuals and an exceptional organisation", all deeply involved in harnessing technologies that can "genuinely empower their countrymen and create waves of progressive change" in Asia.

The six awardees will each receive a certificate, a medallion bearing the likeness of the late president, and a cash prize.

They will be formally conferred the award during a ceremony to be held August 31 in Manila.

Agencies

Financial Chronicle ND 29/07/2011 p-10

Gaming the GRE test in China, with a little online help

REUTERS
Beijing

WHEN 21-year-old Zhang, an average student in college, got set for the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) in Beijing this year, she felt so unprepared that she skipped the exam entirely.

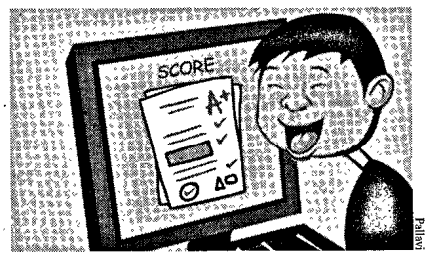
Forty days later, she flew to Vietnam and nailed a near-perfect score in the test, which is taken by candidates applying to graduate school in the US.

The secret to her sudden stroke of brilliance?

Before the second exam, Zhang — not her real name — tapped into an online network of former test-takers who pool questions and answers to gain an edge in the computerised test, which is not offered in China.

"I heard from my friends that it is easier to get better grades in the computer-based exam," said Xu, another Chinese student who flew to the Philippines and came back with a score of 1420 out of 1600. "Now I think it was money well-spent."

The coordinated cheating on the computerised GRE poses a challenge for the Princeton, New Jersey-based Educational Testing Service (ETS), which develops and administers the exam.



Pallava

The stakes are high. On August 6, the computerised GRE will return to China after a nine-year hiatus, after ETS launches a revised GRE worldwide. That will allow much greater numbers of Chinese students to tap into online cheating networks if the revised GRE fails to curb their methods.

For Chinese, post-graduate study at a US school is the ticket to prestige, adventure, and possibly higher wages.

"ETS's Office of Testing Integrity closely monitors testing, investigates security issues and assures score validity worldwide for all ETS testing programs," Christine Betaneli, ETS spokeswomen for the GRE tests, wrote in an e-mail to Reuters.

"ETS takes test security very seriously and has a number of processes and procedures in place to ensure the highest standard of validity in testing. Some of our protocols are shared with the public, while some methods remain confidential."

The protocols outlined by Betaneli — handwriting samples, photographs and voice matching — would help deter one person from taking the test on behalf of someone else, but they would do little against the coordinated online cheating system.

ETS has instituted new security measures for the revised GRE. Betaneli did not elaborate, saying they were confidential.

In a well-coordinated global effort, Chinese students who have just taken the computerised GRE load as many questions and answers as they can remember on to online chatrooms.

They call it "ji jing" or "computer experience". It capitalises on a weakness in the testing system, namely that test organisers cannot introduce new questions fast enough to keep test-takers from finding out the questions in advance.

The online system is more than just simple sharing. Blogs and forums on the Chinese search engine Baidu point potential test-takers toward chatrooms, staffed by volunteer organisers.

The organiser collates the contribution and posts an "officially edited version" of the questions with answers and analysis by the end of the day.

Economic Times Kolkata 28.07.2011 P-4

Bringing a Sea Change in Fuel for the Future

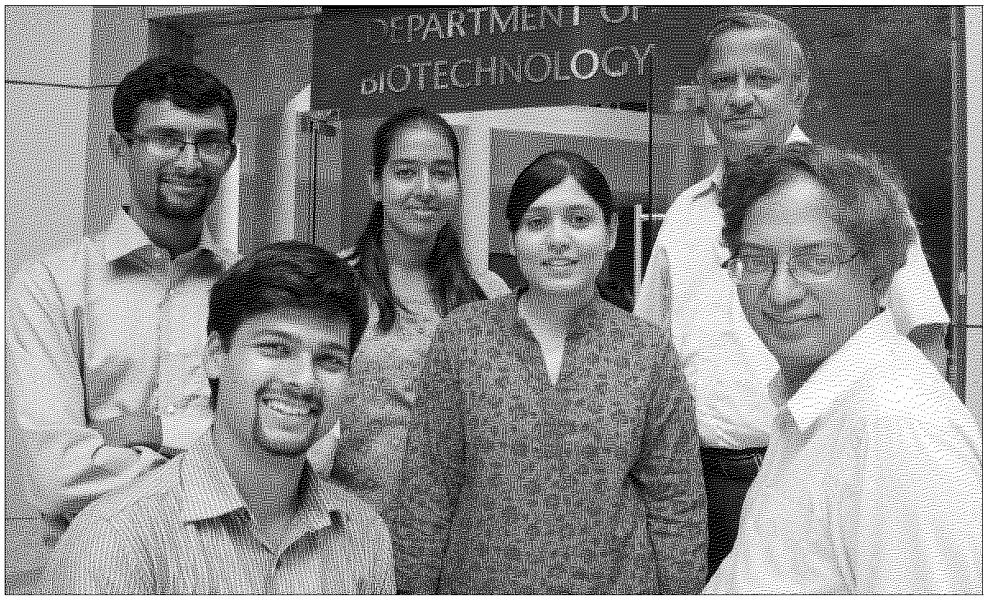
How a Chennai startup is using macroalgae, commonly called seaweed, to drive India's biofuel thrust

HARI PULAKKAT
BANGALORE

The breakthrough idea came after two years of work. Sea6 Energy founders were convinced till then that microalgae held the secrets to a clean energy future. So did thousands of other entrepreneurs, researchers and investors around the world. Algae could produce many times more oil per unit area than any plant in the world. But two years into the project, and some serious calculations later, four students and their professor at IIT Madras were convinced that microalgae economics just wouldn't work for some time. Renewable energy isn't anyway economical at the moment without subsidies, but algal biofuels seemed hopelessly uneconomical. It was then that they thought of macroalgae.

Macroalgae is a technical term for seaweed. It seemed an extremely attractive proposition as an oil source even at first look. Seaweed grows in the shallow ocean waters and doesn't need land. Technology for its cultivation is well-established: it is being grown in the Tamil Nadu coast as a raw material for some cosmetics. Seaweed does not need external nutrients for growth: the sea is the ultimate nutrient reservoir. It grows quickly, is cheap and easy to harvest.

Microalgae on the other hand needed fresh water, large nutrient inputs and plenty of land. "We were preparing to abandon the project when we realised that we were chasing the wrong idea," says Sea6 Energy chairman Shrikumar Suryanarayan. Suryanarayan was for two decades the head of R&D at Biocon. He had left his job there in 2008 and was teaching at IIT Madras when some students sought his help to enter the



THE SEA6 TEAM (from left): Nelson Vadassery, Sayash Kumar, Sailaja Nori, Sowmyalaskshmi Balendiran, KB Ramachandran and Shrikumar Suryanarayan at the IITMadras' Jyothi and Bhubat Mehta School of Biosciences

> **We were preparing to abandon the project (microalgae) when we realised that we were chasing the wrong idea**
> **SHRIKUMAR SURYANARAYAN**
> *Chairman, Sea6 Energy*

prestigious iGEM competition at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the US. They were denied a visa but still won a prize after making a video presentation.

Shrikumar then got them interested in biofuels. "We went to algal biofuel conferences and realised that we were at the same level as others," says Sayash Kumar, one of the students. Two years later, when they had finished their master's degree and were beginning to disperse, somebody thought of seaweed.

Only three other organisations then worked on macroalgal biofuel: Bio Architecture Labs based in San Franscisco, the Korean Institute of Industrial Technology and the Philippines government. The microalgal biofuels landscape was littered with startups, but with no commercial breakthrough in sight, many of them were no longer able to raise money. Yet the sector has seen some of the biggest investments in renewable energy.

Silicon-Valley-based Synthetic Genomics got $300 million from Exxon-Mobil, and San-Diego-based Sapphire Energy has so far raised $100 million. Pike Research has predicted the global biofuels market to reach $247 billion by the year 2020. It was a good business in the long term.

Sea6 Energy was formed in July 2010. Shrikumar and a few IIT alumni chipped in with about Rs 1 crore to get the company going. Their first challenge was to tackle the seaweed cultivation itself. Pepsi had got together people in coastal Tamil Nadu to cultivate seaweed for its food products. The price of seaweed is now Rs 20 a kg. To be viable as a biofuel input, its price has to come down to Rs 5 a kg.

Since the entire cost of cultivation was in labour, mechanisation was the only way to bring it down. Farmers cultivate seaweed on floating bamboo rafts in calm waters. Biofuel demands its cultivation on a very large scale, and in rough waters around most of the country's shores.

So the first job of Sea6 Energy was to create a strong framework to anchor the seaweed, which is heavier than water and sinks to the sea bottom. It was not a trivial problem but not impossible either.

The sea is a hostile environment but marine engineers had been working with several good materials. Sea6 realised that bamboo rafts break because they were rigid structures. A mesh structure that can move at the vertices would absorb the stress quite easily. The company developed an offshore farming system, based on a marine plastics polymer, within six months of incorporation. It has also filed a provisional patent application. The founders are tackling the next steps, of finding a biological method to break down the plant into sugars and then converting the sugars into alcohol.

Unlike plants, seaweed contains no lignin and is easier to break down. Sea6 needs a microorganism that works in sea water. It has found a few. Converting the sugars into alcohol or other fuels is the easiest task. "Once you have sugars," says KB Ramachandran, professor of biotechnology at IIT Madras, who is incubating the company now, "we can make any petrochemical product."

Microalgae work a bit differently as they produce oil directly. When compared to plants and microalgae, the economics and technology are loaded heavily in favour of seaweed. Sugarcane has the highest productivity among plants, but you can get only 30 tonnes of it in a hectare. A similar area can produce 100 tonnes of seaweed. Simple calculations will show that you need an area roughly the size of Punjab to produce all the oil that the country needs using seaweed.

"At the moment, from a technology point of view, seaweed is superior to microalgae," says Syed Yazdani, synthetic biologist and scientist at the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) at Delhi. Sea6 Energy would need Rs 50-60 crore over the next four years to develop a farm of one sq km with a demonstration plant that produces ethanol and other petrochemical products.

By then the rest of the world would have also made substantial progress, judging from the increasing interest on seaweed. By then we should know whether large-scale seaweed cultivation brings up unforeseen environmental problems.

For feedback, write to us at et.technology@indiatimes.com

Major Biofuel Startups

COMPANY	PRODUCT	INVESTMENTS	CURRENT STATUS
Synthetic Genomics	Algal biofuel	**$300 million** from Exxon, other investments not disclosed	Developed some science, outdoor test facility to come up soon
Sapphire Energy	Algal biofuel	More than **$100 million**	Has produced synthetic crude from algae, volumes and economics not disclosed
Solazyme	Oil from algae using plant feedstock	More than **$200 million,** went public in May this year	Claims to have developed algae with more than 80% oil content
Coskata	Ethanol using heat, chemicals and biological processing	Not disclosed	Pilot plant for cellulosic ethanol to be ready soon
Amyris Biotechnologies	Petrol-like oil using genetically modified yeast, using plant feedstock like sugarcane	**$120 million**	Producing renewable chemicals, building fuel plant in Brazil
LS9	Oil using genetically modified E coli	**$75 million**	Developing production plant in Brazil

Tribune ND 29/07/2011
P-10

Need for education reform panel

VIPUL Grover has written a timely, meaningful and analytical piece, "Coaching industry: A parallel education system" (July 27). It is sad that for IAS, state civil services, IITs, IIMs, AIEEE, AIIMS, NDA, one requires the coaching of private tuition shops. It is a matter of concern that the Ministry of HRD has not yet given a serious thought to this issue.

Of course, this menace warrants a multifaceted strategy to be adopted by the UGC and other autonomous bodies.

To tackle the problem at the macro-level, there should be changes in curricula, pattern of entrance tests, and above all, the mindset of students. Why can't universities, colleges and secondary schools introduce counselling of students? We have to start from somewhere to check the growth of teaching shops. The Ministry of HRD should constitute an education reforms commission. The terms of reference of this commission should be restricted to coaching industry in India.

Dr VK ANAND, Bathinda

Amar Ujala ND 29/07/2011
P-7

कैट से होंगे आईआईटी में दाखिले

नोएडा। आईआईएम दाखिलों के लिए होने वाले कॉमन एडमिशन टेस्ट (कैट) में बैठने वाले छात्रों के लिए अच्छी खबर है। कैट के जरिए भी अब आईआईटी का दरवाजा खुलेगा। आईआईटी में एमबीए प्रोग्राम के एडमिशन कैट के आधार पर होंगे। देश के छह आईआईटी और आईआईएससी में एमबीए प्रोग्राम के एडमिशन के लिए होने वाले ज्वाइंट मैनेजमेंट एंट्रेंस टेस्ट (जेमैट) को समाप्त करने जा रही हैं।

पिछले कुछ सालों में जेमैट में छात्रों के आवेदन कम होने के कारण आईआईटी इस प्रवेश परीक्षा को समाप्त करने और कैट को प्राथमिकता देने जा रही हैं। पिछले साल देश भर अलग-अलग आईआईटी में कैट के स्कोर को 2012 सत्र के दाखिलों के लिए मान्य कर लिया गया है। दरअसल, गत वर्ष जेमैट परीक्षा के लिए देश भर से सिर्फ 29 हजार छात्रों ने आवेदन किया। आईआईटी की सीनेट्स का मानना है कि राष्ट्रीय स्तर

● एमबीए प्रोग्राम में नई व्यवस्था, जेमैट की जगह लेगा कैट स्कोर

की परीक्षा में इतनी कम संख्या पर संसाधनों का इस्तेमाल ठीक नहीं हैं।

इस बारे में आईआईटी कानुपर के इंडस्ट्रियल मैनेजमेंट इंजीनियरिंग के विभागाध्यक्ष प्रोफेसर जयंत चैटर्जी ने अमर उजाला को बताया कि जेमैट को समाप्त करने की योजना है, हालांकि इसका अंतिम निर्णय अगले कुछ दिनों में होने वाली सीनेट की बैठक में होगा।

यदि जेमैट इस साल के लिए जारी भी रहा तब भी, आईआईटी कानपुर में कैट के स्कोर पर भी दाखिले होंगे। दूसरी ओर, सभी ने जेमैट समाप्त करने पर अपनी मोहर लगा दी तो कैट की कटऑफ सभी संस्थानों के लिए अलग-अलग होगी।