# Newspaper Clips

## July 6, 2011

INDIAN EXPRESS ND 6/07/2011 p-7

# AICTE lowers cut-off for engg courses to 45%

### Relaxation mandatory for all states, eliminates disparities among students: AICTE chairman

CHINKI SINHA & MIHIKA BASU
NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, JULY 5

THE All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has lowered the eligibility criteria for engineering courses from 50 per cent in Class 12 (in physics, chemistry and math or PCM) to 45 per cent for general category candidates and 40 per cent for reserved category candidates.

S S Mantha, chairman of AICTE, told *The Indian Express* that the relaxation is mandatory for states to follow and it eliminates disparities. He added that it also has been relaxed in view of demographics. "Some children go to good schools and some go to not so good ones but they are talented," he said. "This way they will get admission."

With regards to empty seats, which was being seen as a reason for the move, the AICTE chairman said it is mostly in streams that are not so popular or in rural areas. "Overall we have 10 per cent vacant seats and they are not evenly distributed."

> "We have to ultimately relax the norms because the demand is huge. It all depends on market"
> KAPIL SIBAL, Union HRD Minister

Union Minister for Human Resource Development Kapil Sibal said the relaxation in the norms by the advisory body follows an upsurge in the demand for the same. "We have to ultimately relax the norms because the demand is huge. It all depends on the market. For instance, this year, people have moved to mechanical engineering courses," he said. "Seats in colleges are vacant due to poor standards. We have to address the demand issue."

Following the AICTE decision, which was taken a couple of days ago, the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) in Maharashtra on Tuesday released a notification which stated the revised basic eligibility rules.

Maharashtra along with Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka contributes around 70 per cent of the country's engineering graduates.

"Candidates should have passed the Std XII examination...and secured minimum 45% marks, that is, not less than 135 marks out of 300 marks (and minimum 40% marks, that is, not less than 120 marks out of 300 marks in case of candidates of backward class categories) in physics, chemistry and mathematics added together," said the notification.

"All those candidates who are now eligible due to change in eligibility are required to submit and confirm the online application form. Those candidates who were not eligible (previously) and submitted and confirmed the online application form and now become eligible due to change in eligibility, are required to take the fresh receipt-cum-acknowledgement," the Directorate of Technical Education notification said.

Business Standard ND 06/07/2011 P8

# Columbia prof Chandran gets $1.5-mn Gates award

KARTIK Chandran, an associate professor of earth and environmental engineering at Columbia Engineering, has been awarded $1.5 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for his project to develop a revolutionary new model in water, sanitation, and energy.

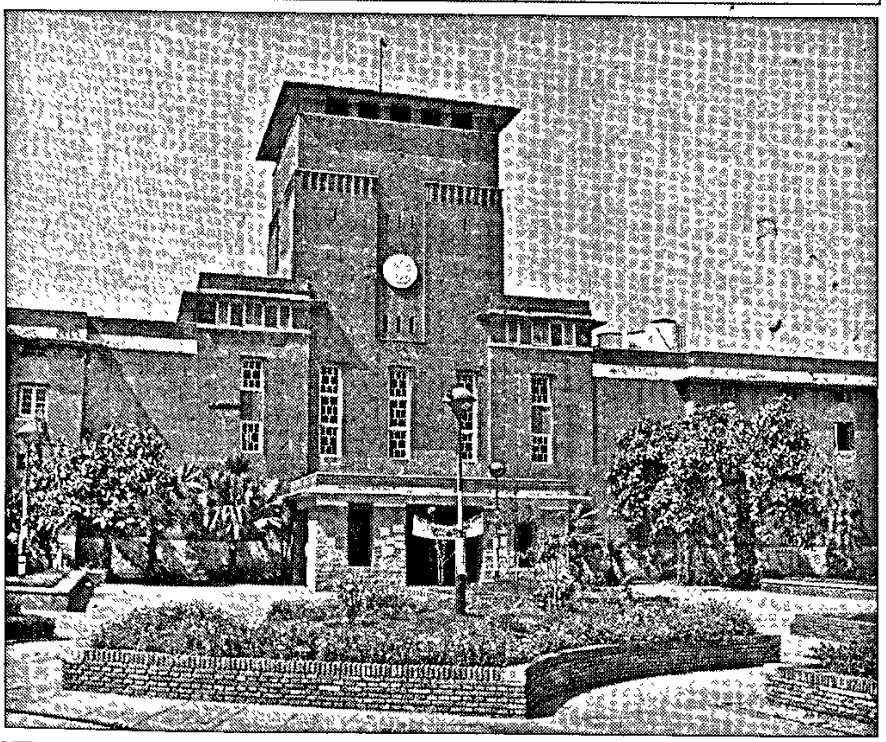
Chandran and his partners are developing a technology to transform a fecal sludge into biodiesel and create the "next-generation urban sanitation facility" in Accra, Ghana. They aim to develop a bioprocess technology to convert the organic compounds present in fecal sludge to biodiesel and methane, two potent sources of energy, and thus convert a waste-processing facility into a biorefinery. The biorefinery would not only be an economical source of fuel, but, by minimising the discharge of a fecal sludge into local water bodies, it would also contribute to improved human health and sanitation.

Chandran says the potential outcome of his work would also include integrating the bioprocess technology component into a social enterprise business model that would further promote the widespread implementation of this approach and technology across the globe, especially in developing economies.

Financial Chronicle ND 06/07/2011 P11

# Lessons from US education crisis

Arun Nigavekar



**NEW PERSPECTIVE:** American employers say they cannot find the right people to fill jobs. India is also facing issues of enhancing access, making education affordable and creating graduates who are employable

DURING my recent visit to the US, a senior professor, said, "America is in crisis." Well, I knew their economy is passing through a difficult phase. Job opportunities are bleak, inflation is on the rise and the cost of living, thus, is on the rise. The problem is severe in real estate. Prices of homes have collapsed and that is a pinch to all those who have borrowed for buying a house. Hence, when I asked the professor to elaborate on his statement, he said, "My statement is truer for our education system. Paradoxically, employers say they cannot find the right people to fill jobs even though the country is facing its highest unemployment rates in a generation. Competition with a rising China and India and their vast populations lend urgency to the need for the country as a whole to do a better job of educating its citizens." Such remarks, I found, are now very common when one starts discussing the present status of American education with academicians. It is felt that many American university's prestige came not from being best at educating, but from being the best at research and from being selective and accepting the best and brightest from all over the world.

These universities went on enhancing academic infrastructure and other facilities that made education more expensive. Thus, elite private universities, like Harvard, Stanford, MIT and so on, were accessible primarily to those with the best academic credentials and the ability to afford very high tuition. Of course, the full cost was not passed on to students because the universities were able to subsidise tuition through alumni donations, earnings from endowment investments and government funding.

The next level universities in the US are state universities, like the University of Utah and California State University. The admission standards and tuition typically make them more accessible to a larger population of students. The junior and community colleges cost less and have open admission policies. There are now online universities for rural areas and working adults. The new entrants are for-profit universities, like the University of Phoenix and Walden University. For all these institutions, the need is to address issues like making a quality post-secondary education affordable. The challenge confronting the US mandates a new definition of quality from the perspective of students. Education should be valuable to them and that through it, they can improve their lives and improve the country's fortunes.

I came across statements like there is no need to follow blindly the elite universities, their charter is different and they are more global in nature. In present circumstances, what America needs is post-secondary education that is fundamentally affordable — meaning lower in cost, not just price — and this would answer the question of how to extend access by enabling students to afford higher education.

It is quite obvious that education in the US is undergoing a big transformation. They are talking of developing a strategy focus and also a correct business model that reduces the cost and makes education affordable. They would like few universities to be elite in research and few to become the best in teaching.

We in India, also, are facing issues of enhancing access, making education affordable and creating graduates who are employable. We face two challenges to remain on the forefront of economic revolution. The first job is to produce good graduates. Demand for graduates increased all over the world in the knowledge industry (basically computer software industry), and our graduates in engineering and computer disciplines got huge opportunities through sheer accident. We never planned for looking at the quality of output and also never carefully analysed the business model. The demand for graduates is now shifting to general graduates who can become the part of knowledge industry. It is good foundation in any subject from any discipline with added skills in specific domains that would be the change maker. This does not mean that professional graduates are not in demand. What is important is universities should concentrate on good teaching — they should prioritise the business of knowledge proliferation. And they should do it at low cost so that students could be charged less. This requires a complete relook at the entire structure and operations of the university from the cost-effectiveness angle. If this is to happen, we must look at a few universities as exclusive teaching universities, doing a good job in teaching.

Indeed, many universities would fit into this role much better if we come out of dual-load policy — teaching and research — neither of which is done properly. However, the other task, the task of creating new knowledge, is also equally important. This requires sound foundations in research. Hence, we need to identify a few universities that would concentrate exclusively on quality research. They would pick the best and the brightest and achieve excellence in knowledge-related research. India needs both exclusive good teaching institutions and globally competitive research institutions.

*(The writer is a former chairman of UGC and former VC of University of Pune)*

Times of India ND 6/07/2011 p-21

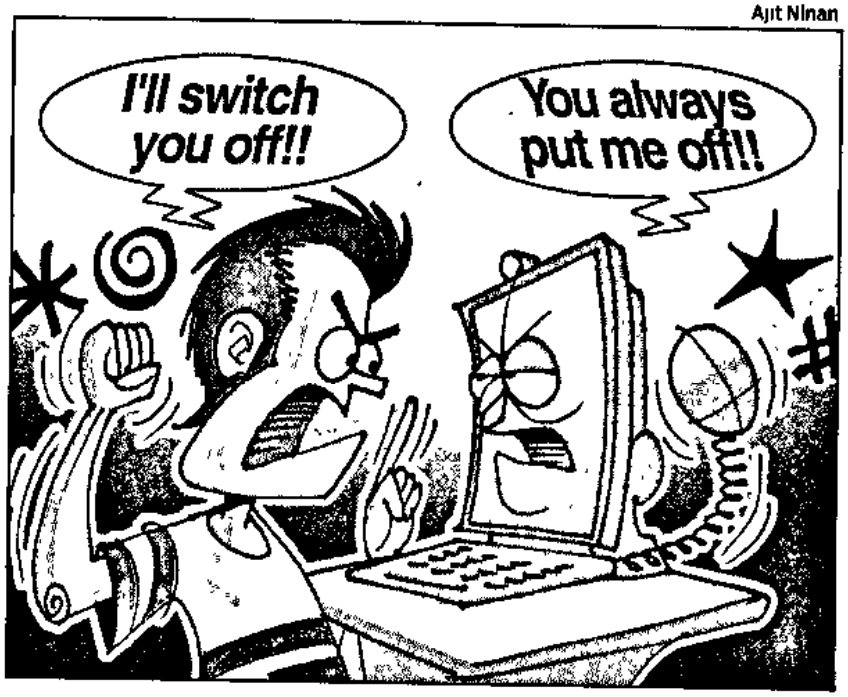
# Mean machine? Soon, your PC may yell back at you

## Artificial Intel To Make Them More Human-Like

**London:** The computer crashes and we respond angrily at the flickering screen. But we may soon risk being shouted at by the machine we've just cursed.

Artificially intelligent machines that can interact and even argue with you are just years away, as scientists have launched a mega project to develop a new technology that will allow devices to talk to the users. The technology equipped with artificial intelligence will help machines become familiar with a user's voice, with the ultimate goal that it can understand, speak and behave like a human.

Ajit Ninan




Although the five-year, £6.2million project is still in its infancy, researchers from the Universities of Edinburgh, Cambridge and Sheffield believe the technology will have many benefits. It could improve voice-activated computers, develop web search engines for audio clips and create voice-controlled devices that could help older people stay independent at home for longer, the Daily Mail reported.

"We are working to develop technologies that can recognize and generate natural-sounding speech," said Steve Renals of Edinburgh University's School of Informatics. "This could open the door to computer speech technology becoming commonplace throughout our lives - at home, at work, and in our leisure time."

Besides recognizing the users' voice and becoming familiar with their vocabulary, accent and vocal expressions, the technology could also be able to follow the flow of a conversation and to gloss over changes in background noise.

Thomas Hain, of the University of Sheffield's department of computer science, added: "Speech technology is clearly on its way into the mainstream, but the key to its success is human-like performance. "We are working on the foundations of technology that will bring speech to new users and exciting new applications, from clinical assistive technology to robotics, from schools to board rooms." AGENCIES

Times of India ND 6/07/2011 P-21

# 'First person who will live till 150 already born'

## Stem Cell & Gene Therapies To 'Cure' Aging Will Ensure Humans Reach 1000 Yrs: Expert

**London:** If Aubrey de Grey's predictions are right, the first person who will live to see their 150th birthday has already been born.

And the first person to live for 1,000 years could be less than 20 years younger. A biomedical gerontologist and chief scientist of a foundation dedicated to longevity research, de Grey reckons that within his lifetime doctors could have all the tools they need to "cure" aging banishing diseases that come with it and extending life indefinitely.

"I'd say we have a 50/50 chance of bringing aging under what I'd call a decisive level of medical control within the next 25 years or so," de Grey said in an interview before delivering a lecture at Britain's Royal Institution academy of science.

"And what I mean by decisive is the same sort of medical control that we have over most infectious diseases today." De Grey sees a time when people will go to their doctors for regular "maintenance", which by then will include gene therapies, stem cell therapies, immune stimulation and a range of other advanced medical techniques to keep them in good shape.

De Grey lives near Cambridge University where he won his doctorate in 2000 and is chief scientific officer of the non-profit California-based SENS (Strategies for Engineered Negligible Senescence) Foundation, which he co-founded in 2009. He describes aging as the lifelong accumulation of various types of molecular and cellular damage throughout the body.

"The idea is to engage in what you might call preventative geriatrics, where you go in to periodically repair that molecular and cellular damage before it gets to the level of abundance that is pathogenic," he explained.

Exactly how far and how fast life expectancy will increase in the future is a subject of some debate, but the trend is clear. An average of three months is being added to life expectancy every year and experts estimate there could be a million centenarians across world by 2030. To date, world's longest-living person on record lived to 122 and in Japan alone there were more than 44,000 centenarians in 2010. Some researchers say, however, that the trend towards longer lifespan may falter due to an epidemic of obesity now spilling over from rich nations into the developing world. REUTERS

Kevin Dodge/Corbis

IMMORTALITY NO LONGER A DREAM?

Business Line ND 6/07/2011 P-22

# Soon, a machine that converses with humans

**Asian News International**

*London, July 5*

Scientists are working on a voice—activated technology involving artificial intelligence, which will soon allow machines to talk to the users.

The technology will help machines become familiar with a user's voice, with the ultimate goal that it can understand, speak and behave like a human.

Although the five-year, £6.2-million project is still in its infancy, the researchers from the Universities of Edinburgh, Cambridge and Sheffield believe the technology will have benefits manifolds.

According to them, it could improve voice-activated computers, develop Web search engines for audio clips and create voice-controlled devices for the home.

**WILL HELP ELDERS**

The voice-controlled devices could be of real help for older people staying independently. "We are working to develop technologies that can recognise and generate natural-sounding speech," the *Daily Mail* quoted Professor Steve Renals, of the University of Edinburgh's School of Informatics as saying.

"This could open the door to computer speech technology becoming commonplace throughout our lives — at home, at work, and in our leisure time," he added.

The technology that responds to speech will be able to recognise an individual's voice and become familiar with their vocabulary, accent and vocal expressions.

It could also be able to follow the flow of a conversation and to gloss over changes in background noise, the researchers believe.

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# Choose Net friends with caution, HC tells engineer

Abhinav Garg | TNN

**New Delhi:** Be cautious while chatting with strangers on social networking sites. This seems to be the warning from the Delhi high court, which has come to the rescue of an engineer who got entangled in a relationship with a woman on the internet that threatened to spoil his real life.

The woman, who is a researcher in IIT Mumbai, threatened to commit suicide if the engineer employed in Gurgaon didn't marry her. Justice Mukta Gupta convinced her to drop her demands and be reasonable. Following an in-camera hearing and HC intervention, the woman gave an undertaking not to trouble the boy, Sandeep Kushwaha. She assured the bench she will not communicate with him again. This prompted Kushwaha to withdraw his complaint against her.

The Mumbai-based woman had allegedly emotionally blackmailed Kushwaha, whom she met online, after he refused to marry her. She informed the court that the couple had developed a close friendship that she saw as love and, therefore, wanted to marry the boy. She appeared before the HC after the court issued a bailable warrant of Rs 10,000 to ensure her presence.

In her statement to Justice Gupta, the woman also alleged that Kushwaha had physical relations with her but was now backing out — a charge hotly denied by Kushwaha. But HC persuaded her to refrain from writing any letter, email or trying to communicate with Kushwaha.

Meanwhile, the woman refused to accept the travel and lodging expenses from the petitioner. Justice Suresh Kait had directed the petitioner to pay for her Mumbai-Delhi trip.

Times of India ND
6/07/2011 P-2

# HRD ministry to DU: Fill up all OBC seats

Akshaya Mukul | TNN

**New Delhi:** In a stern message, the HRD ministry has told Delhi University that the present situation of seats for Other Backward Classes not getting filled is due to the confusion regarding "cutoff" marks and "eligibility".

In a letter to the university vice-chancellor on Monday, the ministry pointed out that the only eligibility for admission in DU undergraduate courses is clearing Class XII board examination. It also asked the university to fill the 27% seats reserved for OBCs without fail.

HRD reiterated its own order of 2008 that was issued after the Supreme Court order and said the instructions were "clear and unambiguous".

VC Dinesh Singh also met HRD minister Kapil Sibal on Tuesday and agreed with the ministry's formulation. Sources said Singh is expected to soon take up the matter with college principals and there could be additional lists in the coming days. So far, four cutoff lists have come out.

The ministry said, "In DU contrary to other universities like JNU, there is no eligibility requirement other than Class XII pass. Since there cannot be any eligibility cutoff, differential — between general and OBC candidates — in case of DU, it has to be interpreted in a way different than other universities in order to give effect to the constitutional mandate for ensuring reservations to deprived classes." In case of DU, HRD said, all Class XII pass non-creamy layer OBC candidates are eligible and the varsity should admit them to fill 27% seats reserved through "inter se merit" (merit among OBCs).

HRD said that "referencing the admission cutoff for OBC to general category cutoff" being done by DU goes against the spirit of Central Educational Institutions Act, 2006. "This would lead to diversion of seats meant for OBCs," HRD said.

Nav Bharat Times ND 06-Jul-11 P20

# कम मार्क्स हैं ? फिर भी दे पाएंगे इंजीनियरिंग एंट्रेंस

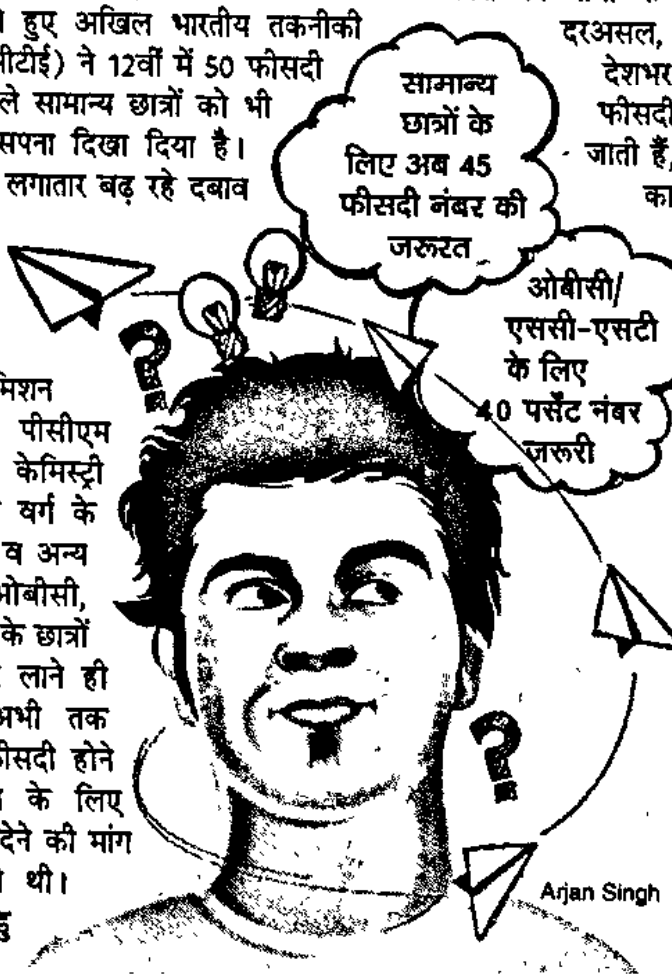
## 5% की छूट एआईसीटीई ने सभी छात्रों को दी

मंजरी चतुर्वेदी ॥ नई दिल्ली

**इंजीनियरिंग एडमिशन** के लिए जरूरी मार्क्स में 5 फीसदी की ढील देते हुए अखिल भारतीय तकनीकी शिक्षा परिषद (एआईसीटीई) ने 12वीं में 50 फीसदी से कम नंबर पाने वाले सामान्य छात्रों को भी इंजीनियर बनने का सपना दिखा दिया है। परिषद ने यह फैसला लगातार बढ़ रहे दबाव के चलते लिया।

एआईसीटीई के नए फैसले के मुताबिक, अब इंजीनियरिंग में एडमिशन के लिए 12वीं में पीसीएम सब्जेक्ट्स (फिजिक्स, केमिस्ट्री व मैथ्स) में सामान्य वर्ग के छात्र को 45 फीसदी व अन्य श्रेणियों (ओबीसी, एससी/एसटी वगैरह) के छात्रों को 40 फीसदी नंबर लाने ही पर्याप्त होंगे, जो अभी तक क्रमशः 50 व 45 फीसदी होने जरूरी हैं। एडमिशन के लिए जरूरी अंकों में ढील देने की मांग लगातार की जा रही थी। यहां तक कि तमिलनाडु के पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री एम. करुणानिधि ने मई में एआईसीटीई के नियमों को दरकिनार करते हुए 5 फीसदी की ढील की घोषणा के साथ ही नई कट ऑफ जारी करा दी थी। हालांकि उन्होंने यह ढील सिर्फ अन्य श्रेणियों को ही दी थी।

सूत्रों के अनुसार, स्टूडेंट्स, इंस्टिट्यूट्स और राज्य सरकारों की मांगों के चलते यह फैसला किया गया। दरअसल, मौजूदा नियमों के चलते हर साल देशभर में इंजीनियरिंग की लगभग 20 फीसदी से भी ज्यादा सीटें खाली रह जाती हैं, इसलिए कॉलेज नियमों में ढील का दबाव बना रहे थे।




### इंजीनियरिंग की मौजूदा तस्वीर

**13,00,000**
कॉलेजों की कुल सीटें

**25,000**
आईआईटी व एनआईटी

**3,350**
कुल इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेज

**20-25%**
हर साल खाली सीटें