

Newspaper Clips

March 11, 2011

Publication: The Times Of India Delhi; Date: Mar 11, 2011; Section: Green Cover; Page: 19;



Hybrid dreams and renewable nightmares

So we learn from the Budget presentation of the finance minister that India is planning to launch a National Mission for Hybrid and Electric Vehicles "to provide green and clean transportation for the masses". There are no further details at this point but the minister's speech did propose favourable excise and/or customs duties for fuel-cell vehicles and selected components of electric and hybrid cars (complementing existing policies for some parts and vehicles in these categories). The intention seems to be to promote sales of these vehicles and their domestic production. But is this the best use of funds to promote 'green and clean' transportation for the masses?

Subsidizing the early deployment of a new and more expensive technology is fine if it leads to a substantial penetration into the market, so that over time, it begins to become much more affordable and disseminated widely. That can happen only if the subsidy significantly eliminates the cost difference so that there is extra incentive for the early adopters and then the market penetration allows further cost reductions. But in this case, it is highly improbable since these vehicles are much more expensive than conventional cars (and not just in India). The Toyota Prius, for example, costs about Rs 27 lakh in India. Focusing on fuel-cell vehicles at this point is even more strange – currently, there is no fuel-cell vehicle commercially available anywhere in the world. (Even the Honda FCX Clarity has had a very limited release in the US and Japan.) So these policy steps are not likely to create a major market for these cars.

Furthermore, they are unlikely to significantly spur the domestic development of these advanced automotive technologies for another reason: the limited domestic R&D capabilities for the components and systems for these cars. As the minister's speech rightly mentioned, there are enormous resources being invested



SEE, DON'T BUY: Giving subsidy where it doesn't matter, slashing budget where it does

worldwide in these (and related) areas – Toyota spent more than \$8 billion (yes, billion) on R&D in FY2010. In comparison, Mahindra and Mahindra spent Rs 665 crore (\$130 million), and Tata Motors

Rs 1170 crore (\$230 million), over the same period. These numbers are nothing to sneeze at but they do highlight the gap between R&D investments by world leaders and at home. In any case, if our manufacturers want to develop these technologies, it makes sense for them to take advantage of the market subsidies being offered in richer countries.

While the government is subsidizing technologies that will benefit a few citizens (and rich ones, at that), it is reducing the R&D on renewable, which can benefit a far greater number of people (and poorer ones, at that). The allocation of funds for R&D to the ministry of new and renewable energy was reduced by almost a third, down to Rs 77.5 crore (or about \$17 million). This

at a time when we are being told that exploitation of renewable energy sources will receive a special emphasis in the 12th five-year Plan and the government is launching ambitious programs like the Solar Mission. Notably, the rest of the world is ramping up investments in renewable technology, seeing it as the next set of technologies that will be key to meeting environmental and energy challenges, while enhancing economic competitiveness. Industrialized country governments altogether spent about \$1.85 billion (yes, billion) on renewable energy R&D in 2008.

We somehow seem to believe subsidizing deployment of emerging green or clean technologies will lead to success in large-scale implementation and development of dynamic industries. If only it was that easy! If we are serious about these (or any) technologies, then we have to give serious consideration to crafting policies to achieve these goals. Otherwise it's just money (or dreams) down the drain!

(The author is professor of policy studies at IIT, Delhi)



INDIA SHINING
BY AMBUJ SAGAR

Hindustan Times ND
11/03/2011 p14

Govt denies more powers to IIM-B

STRUCK DOWN HRD ministry says
can't end control as it is public institution

Charu Sudan Kasturi

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NEW DELHI: The Human Resource Development ministry has rejected key amendments proposed by the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore to its fundamental statute book aimed at loosening government control on the premier B-school.

The HRD ministry has called seven proposed amendments to its memorandum of agreement (MoA) with the IIM "not acceptable" since the IIMs are public institutions, documents available with the HT show. The IIM had submitted its proposed MoA amendments to the HRD ministry in January.

The ministry's move has triggered concern at other IIMs since they too are seeking similar amendments to their MoAs. Unlike his predecessors Arjun Singh and Murli Manohar Joshi, HRD minister Kapil Sibal has encouraged the IIMs to seek greater autonomy. "We too have similar amendment proposals and hope the government will reconsider its position," an IIM Director said. But the government has reservations about some of the proposed amendments, which could change the 'fundamental character' of the IIMs as public institutions.

The IIM-B proposals struck down include ending the government's power to "take over the administration and assets of the institute" if dissatisfied with its functioning, and making it mandatory for government to obtain approval of Board to probe irregularities.

The ministry has also rejected a proposal to delete a clause that allowed the government a role in deciding the IIM's mandate. The ministry in its response to the IIM has also pointed out that contrary to its proposal, the institute cannot

FICCI may lobby to alter rules

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has spoken out in support of private business schools opposing controversial new government rules that they argue could kill the future of the management education.

FICCI may lobby with the HRD ministry over the new All-India Council for Technical Education admission and fee norms which the B-schools are opposing. "Yes, we at FICCI are concerned," FICCI Director General Rajiv Kumar said adding that FICCI and the institutions would soon release reports supporting their concerns. The institutions have moved Supreme Court where the case will be heard on March 15.

HTC, NDELHI

award degrees as it is neither a deemed university nor established under a legislation.

The ministry has rejected a proposal to end government role in deciding the fate of assets and property bought from government money, and a proposal to end the IIM's responsibility towards improving management education in south. It has asked the IIM to put on hold a proposal to allow the IIM Board to pick institute director without any government role.



Times of India ND 11/03/2011 p-4

Teachers hold classes in VC lawn

Manash Pratim Gohain | TNN

New Delhi: Delhi University teachers on Thursday protested against implementation of the semester system in undergraduate courses by holding classes in the open. Teachers from St Stephen's, Hindu, Miranda House, Kirori Mal and Ramjas took classes for English, mathematics, history and economics in the lawns in front of the vice-chancellor's office — the Viceregal Lodge — even as the course committee meeting at the department of sociology failed to take a decision on the revision of the semester syllabus, which has been delayed by over a week now.

Joint Action Body (JAB), a forum of teachers from across colleges, is opposing the implementation of semester system in a unique way by organizing two-day protest where classes — maintaining

usual schedule from 8.40am to 3.30pm with an hour's lunch break — are held in the open.

Head of mathematics at St Stephen's, Nandita Narain, faculty members of Stephen's English department, Karen Gabriel and Giti Chandra, Hindu faculty, P K Vijayan, Vineeta Chandra and Mukul Manglik from Ramjas, history faculty of Kirori Mal, Sahana, English faculty from Kirori Mal, Rudrakshi Chakraborty, and economics faculty of Miranda House, Nandini Dutta, among others, taught students under the open sky.

"If the exams are conducted in November, even our best students will suffer. Imagine what will happen to students from reserved categories whose admissions continue till October. I know if I have to prepare my students for the next three years, I can teach just 10% of the course till November as we have to create

a foundation for higher education. Instead of forcing the semester on us, why is the administration not reviewing the internal assessment system?" said Narain.

Speaking on specifics, Gabriel said, "If I speak about my subject, English, there is no syllabus. The technical paper on language and communication is being forcefully taught with the help of ad-hoc teachers who can't say no. Literature is not even a semester subject. By introducing semesters we will finally turn the BA English (H), which is a literature course, to a simple language course in future."

At the department of sociology, Faculty of Arts, a course committee meeting was called for a discussion on the new syllabus where VC Dinesh Singh was present. According to sources, no consensus was reached on the preparation of the semester syllabus.

Times of India ND 11/03/2011 p-19

Soon, universal blood as perfect match

Transfusions Will Be Easier As There Will Be No Need To Match Groups

Washington: Scientists have taken an 'important step' toward the development of a universal blood product that would eliminate the need to 'type' blood to match donor and recipient before transfusions.

"Immunocamouflage" technique hides the blood cells from antibodies that could trigger a potentially fatal immune reaction that occurs when blood types do not match.

Maryam Tabrizian and her colleagues note that the blood transfusions require a correct match between a donor and the recipient's blood.



FREE FOR ALL

This can be a tricky proposition given that there are some 29 different red blood cells types, which include the familiar ABO and Rh types.

The wrong blood type can provoke serious immune reactions that result in organ failure or death, so scientists have long sought a way to create an all-purpose red blood cell for transfusions that doesn't rely on costly blood typing or donations of a specific blood type.

To develop this "universal" red blood cell, the scientists discovered a way to encase living, individual red blood cells within a

multilayered polymer shell.

The shell serves as a cloaking device, they found, making the cell invisible to a person's immune system and able to evade detection and rejection.

Oxygen can still penetrate the polymer shell, however, so the red blood cells can carry on their main business of supplying oxygen to the body.

"The results of this study mark an important step toward the production of universal RBCs," the authors of the study said in a statement. The report appears in the ACS journal, Biomacromolecules. ANI

Times of India ND p-19
11/03/2011

'Magic cap' reads mind, spells words

Washington: How great would it be if you could do away with a keyboard forever and simply type using your mind? Now, that's possible using *intendiX* – a device that spells words based on brain waves.

Developed by Austrian company Guger Technologies, it's essentially a skullcap, covered in electroencephalographic (EEG) electrodes, with a computer interface, reports *Discovery News*. The wearer stares at a computer screen, which flashes highlights over different rows in a matrix of letters and symbols set up like a keyboard on the screen. s

Simply by paying attention to the desired letter for a few seconds, the program can determine what the user intended to pick.

The 'magic cap' could be a blessing for those with spinal injuries or other conditions that impair use of the arms or vocal cords. According to Guger Technologies, most people be-



@SPEED OF THOUGHT: Simply by paying attention to the desired letter for a few seconds, the program can determine what the user intends to pick

come competent thought-communicators after 10 minutes of training on the system and are able to spell out five to 10 characters a minute.

The user can make it read the message out loud, print the text, or send it in email or via another electronic messaging system. ANI

Times of India ND p-19
11/03/2011

Are you an apple or a pear? Key protein decides body shape

London: Ever wondered why some people are apple-shaped while others look like pears? It's because of a protein which determines your body shape, say scientists. Researchers at the Edinburgh University identified the protein, known as 11Be-taHSD1, which plays a part in how and where fat is stored in the body — around the hips or on the tummy.

The findings, the researchers said, shed light on how the protein works, which could help development of medicines to treat obesity. Levels of 11Be-taHSD1 are higher when an unhealthy type of body fat is

stored around the torso. This is typical of overweight people whose “apple-shaped” bodies put them at greater risk of heart disease, the researchers said.

But lower levels of the protein are found when healthier fat is stored around the hips — typical of “pear-shaped” people — and used more safely as a source of energy, they said.

According to scientists, fat packed around the organs in the abdomen is more dangerous than fat on the hips because it's “metabolically active”, releasing more of the acids that raise heart disease risk. PTI

CLUE TO FAT FIGHT

IIM Grads Now Have a Business in Hand Before Jobs

New breed of 'campuspreneurs' graduates with startup in tow as B-schools push entrepreneurship

PEERZADA ABRAR
BANGALORE

Only 23, Abhishek Humbad is the founder of clean-technology start-up NextGen — it earns revenues of ₹1.5 crore from marquee clients like the Reserve Bank of India, chip-maker Intel, and software services majors Infosys and MindTree. He is not just a young entrepreneur; he is still a student and will graduate from Indian Institute of Management-Bangalore (IIM-B) this month. He built his business while still studying.

Humbad is a flag-bearer of the new

breed of 'campuspreneurs' — ET tracked down half-a-dozen like him who are graduating from B-schools this year, not just with a degree, but also with a start-up business in tow.

The start-ups range from the conventional to the unusual. One start-up is already guiding 150 students in the North-East to carve out careers outside medicine and engineering; another, which is targeting revenues of ₹1 crore this year, helps consumers get information about any product by scanning it under a cellphone; a third is setting up a chain of coffee shops. And yet another is helping resorts to

create butterfly habitats.

A year or two ago, very few bright young minds graduating from B-schools would dare to turn down a placement offer to start off a business of their own. But this graduation season, many students are walking a new path — spurning the comfort of a job, and yet avoiding the risk of chasing a nebulous new idea. Welcome to the era of 'start-up while you learn'. It's no longer a tough road to navigate — the entrepreneurial challenge comes with glamour, money and a built-in safety net.

"It is glamorous to be an entrepreneur," says IIM-Kozhikode graduate

Amit Kourav, who plans to launch a chain of coffee shops.

Campuses have spawned an entrepreneurial ecosystem over the past two-to-three years, spurring many students to take the entrepreneurial path. Incubators at IIM-Ahmedabad (IIM-A), IIT-Bombay and IIT-Madras have given them access to early-stage funding through grants from the government departments of science and technology and biotechnology. Besides, venture capitalists are hunting for the next big ideas within college incubators.

Mentoring, Safety Net Big Draws ►► 26



SALAM

Pay packets to IIM-C graduates grow fatter 15-20%

BS REPORTER
Kolkata, 10 March

Salaries offered to Indian Institute of Management-Calcutta (IIM-C) graduates have increased 15-20 per cent compared to last year, during the recently concluded final placements, with more than 70 students bagging international postings.

The slot-0 salary packages from finance firms during final placements that took place in the first week of March range from Rs 30-40 lakh for Indian and 40-60 lakhs for foreign locations; about Rs 2-25 lakh for consulting firms and between Rs10 and 15 lakh for marketing companies.

The post graduate diploma in business management (PGDBM) batch of 2009-2011 that participated in the process of placement comprised 383 students, all of whom have



been placed. In terms of placement by sector, finance contributed 31.3 per cent, consulting 23.7 per cent, followed by marketing sector's 21.6 per cent.

"The highest salary offer last year stood at Rs 1.6 crore. This will be matched if not upstaged this year. While final details remain unavailable even as students await

offer letters, we are sure that overall we have matched if not done better than even pre-recession standards," said IIM-C Placement Coordinator Prithish Gandhi. The current batch would also match the previous one despite the fact that the size of the batch has gone up by 38 per cent. The average salary offer for last year's batch was Rs 15.6 lakh.

Deferred placements

Responding to the need of introducing diversity in the careers chosen by graduates, IIM-C has introduced the concept of deferred placements for the first time in its history. Four students from the current batch have opted for deferred placements. According to the policy, students could opt for placements any time over three years. IIM-Bangalore (IIM-B) also has a deferred placements programme.



Mr Kapil Sibal.

Sibal confident higher education reform Bills will be passed soon

Our Bureau

New Delhi, March 10

Key pieces of legislation to usher in higher education reforms, some of which have already been tabled in Parliament, will hopefully be passed this year, Mr Kapil Sibal, the Union Human Resource Development Minister, said here on Thursday.

At present, the crucial legislation being looked into by the Parliamentary Standing Committee include the Foreign Education Bill and the Prohibition of Unfair Practices Bill.

While the Parliamentary panel's reports are still awaited on some of these Bills, there are reports that some other legislation such as the Copyright (Amendment) Bill have already been presented to the House, Mr Sibal told newsmen on the sidelines of a function.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Earlier, inaugurating the Emerging Directions in Global Education 2011 (EDGE) conference on 'Shaping the Future of Higher Education', a non-profit body consisting of vice-chancellors, presidents, directors and entrepreneurs, Mr Sibal said there were plans to connect major educational institutions across the country through optical fibre network in the next five years.

The connection would cover 26,000 colleges and 600 universities.

Honouring scientist Prof C.N.R. Rao as the best education personality of the year, Mr Sibal stressed the need to give primacy to the teaching community.

"The best minds of the country must move away from being IAS, MBAs and engineers into the teaching profession," he said.

Lauding the Dubai and Singapore models, the Minister said we need "pooling of ideas, not marketing of ideas."

Business Standard ND 11/03/2011

p-14

PREFERENCE RISES FOR INDIAN B-SCHOOLS

BS REPORTER
Mumbai, 10 March

Between 2006 and 2010, the proportion of Indian students preferring management institutes in India over those in the US has risen, according to a survey by the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC).

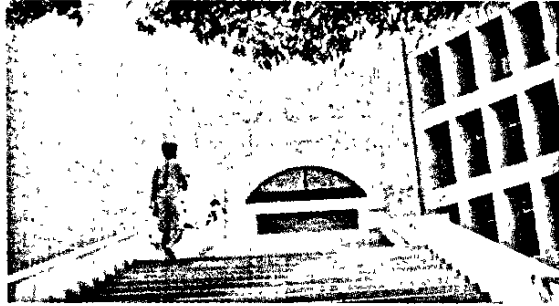
And, the percentage preferring a US B-school over an Indian one has fallen significantly.

The Asian Geographic Trend survey report released by GMAC says while the number of Indian students applying to US institutes through GMAT scores fell from 71 per cent in 2006 to 55 per cent in 2010, Indian students sending their GMAT scores to institutes in India rose from 9 per cent to 14 per cent.

GMAC is an association of leading global business schools and owns the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT). Four Indian B-schools, including Indian School of Business, Hyderabad, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, SP Jain Institute of Management and Research, Mumbai and Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, are members of GMAC.

"One of the primary reasons for Indian students opting for Indian B-schools is that more number of institutes are starting one-year management programmes. The numbers could go up further, with institutes increasing the sizes of their batches in the future," said Samir Barua, director, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM-A). IIM-A runs a one-year post graduate programme in management for executives, with a batch size of around 100 students. "The institute may look at increasing the batch size in the future, as the programme establishes itself," Barua said.

In the last five years, the number of institutions in India using GMAT scores to select management graduates has in-



Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad

creased by 207 per cent. As of January 2011, GMAT scores were accepted by 43 Indian institutions, representing 96 programmes.

The survey also points out the number of GMAT exams taken by Indian students fell by 13 per cent in 2010, compared to 2009. However, despite the decline, India received the highest number of GMAT scores from students in Asia. The number of Asians appearing for GMAT exams rose from 58 per cent in 2006 to 77 per cent in 2010.

Mint ND 11/03/2011

p-4

PRIVATE PARTICIPATION

Spending on higher education to cross ₹2.32 trillion by 2020

BY PRASHANT K. NANDA
prashant.n@livemint.com

NEW DELHI

Spending on higher education in India will grow at an average 18% a year to cross ₹232,000 crore by 2020, according to a study by consulting company Ernst and Young (E&Y).

The growth in spending will be fuelled by increasing private participation in the sector, said Kapil Sibal, human resource development minister, while releasing the report on Thursday.

India currently spends around ₹46,200 crore on higher education. The number of students pursuing higher education in India has almost doubled to 16 million in the past decade. The government aims to add 25 million more students in the next 10 years.

"This sector needs academic freedom," Sibal said, encouraging private participation. "We want best minds to come to education as it will help economy grow faster."

The number of universities has been rising at 5% annually since 1950, said the E&Y report. Growth in the number of colleges rose to 8% a year after 1990, compared with 6% annually in 1950-90. There are nearly 26,000 colleges and 527 uni-

versities in the country today.

"Despite having such a large number of institutes, India's gross enrolment ratio (GER) still lags at 12%, which is less than half of the global average," said Amitabh Jhingan, partner, E&Y.

GER is the number of enrolled students compared with the number of students eligible for enrolment.

"The government has set a target of achieving 30% GER by 2020, which translates into more than 40 million students in higher education. This challenge requires radical new thought process and innovative solutions," Jhingan added.

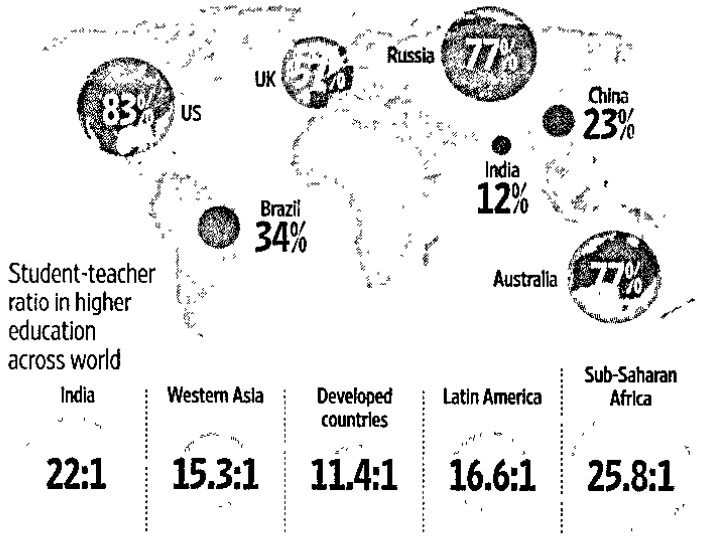
The report said higher education institutes also need to improve their quality, with only 11% universities and colleges qualifying for Grade A rating by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, an autonomous body under the ministry of human resource development.

Sibal said the government is keen to usher in reforms to improve higher education, and hoped a number of draft education laws would get Parliament's nod this year.

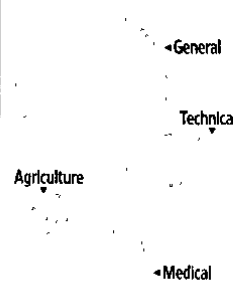
The number of private unaided colleges is growing fast and their share in higher education spending is now 67%, said the E&Y report.

LEARNING CURVE

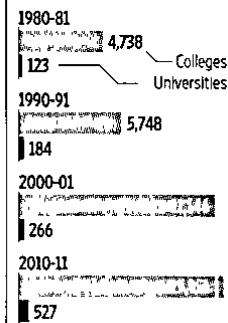
Gross enrolment ratio in higher education (reference year 2009)



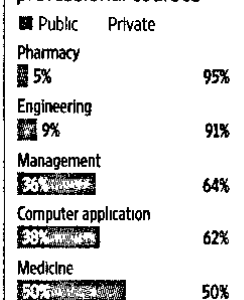
Central government spending on higher education



Colleges and universities (India)



Share of public and private institutes in professional courses



Source: E&Y Higher Education Report

SANDEEP BHATNAGAR/MINT

Parthenon Group LLC, an education consultancy, released a report that said the government should promote education loans to help poor students enrol in higher education. Less than 5% students are availing an education loan today; offering subsidies on interest, increasing awareness and urging banks to be more flexible in issuing education

loans would help increase the number of loan takers, and thereby enrolment, said Karan Khemka, partner at Parthenon.

Sivaramkrishnan V. president of distributed learning at Manipal Education, which runs several institutes offering vocational courses, said that while encouraging enrolment is good, the government should focus on employability.

Hindu ND 11/03/2011 P-20

IIM-C bags highest number of Slot Zero offers

Staff Reporter

KOLKATA: The Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta on Thursday claimed that students of the institution have bagged the highest number of offers during the final placement 'Slot Zero' among all IIMs this year.

Two hundred offers, including 139 final placement offers and 61 pre-placement offers, were made during 'Slot Zero.'

With a record 383 students participating in the placement process, the IIM-C authorities stated that the finance sector made the lion's share of offers with 31.3 per cent and was closely followed by the consulting (23.7 per cent) and marketing (21.6 per cent) sectors.

Remuneration offered by the 'Slot Zero' finance companies are Rs.30 lakh to Rs.40 lakh for Indian locations and Rs.40 lakh to Rs.60 lakh for foreign locations.

While Slot Zero consulting firms offered Rs.20 lakh to Rs.25 lakh for Indian locations, the marketing firms offered Rs.15 lakh to Rs.20 lakh for the same.

The IIM-C authorities said that lateral placement too

- 200 offers made during Slot Zero

- IIM-C introduces 'deferred placement'

saw a 57.6 per cent increase compared to last year -- from 92 to 145 offers.

The first day of the placement witnessed global investment banks like UBS, Morgan Stanley, Citigroup, Deutsche Bank, HSBC and Bank of America-Merrill Lynch hiring students for their desks across the globe.

McKinsey & Co, Procter & Gamble, Hindustan Unilever, ICICI Securities, Standard Chartered, Dabur, Cadbury, CRISIL, KPMG, Vodafone and Asian Paints also participated.

The IIM-C had introduced a new concept of 'deferred placement' according to which students who do not prefer to take up a corporate job immediately after the completion of their courses can sit for placement process in the next three years.

Five students signed up for deferred placement this year, said the IIM-C authorities.

Mail Today ND 11/03/2011 P-12

'Open' lectures in protest

DU teachers make their case in peace

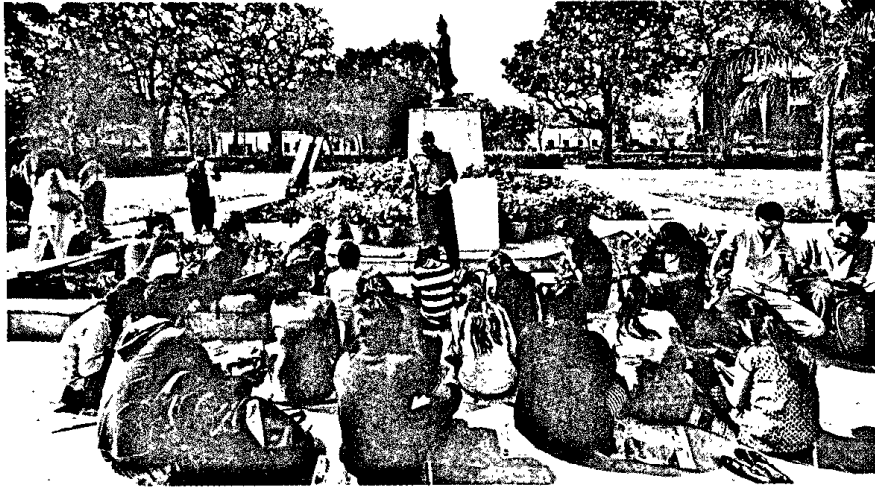
By **Ritika Chopra**
in New Delhi

IT'S 10.30 in the morning. P.K. Vijayan, dressed in an olive green checked shirt, is in the middle of dispensing a lesson on Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* to his second year students of Hindu College.

As the senior professor of English reads from the British poet's mock epic, a group of 20-odd first year students of St. Stephen's College answer their roll call for a class in "Analysis" by their mathematics professor Nandita Narain.

Located opposite each other in North Campus, the two colleges have a road dividing them. On Thursday, however, the two classes were being held right next to each other in front of the vice-chancellor's office in North Campus.

This is the newest chapter of the



Hindu College professor P.K. Vijayan takes a class at the lawns right outside the V-C's office.

longest agitation by teachers in Delhi University's (DU) history.

Though still against the semesterisation of the remaining undergraduate arts and commerce programmes of DU, college teachers have now agreed upon a peaceful way of registering their protest — public teaching. Thursday marked the first day of such a protest this year.

Symbolic of widespread resent-

ment, these public lectures (holding classes in the open), which will also continue on Friday, are also a tool for teachers to mobilise student support for their cause.

So, sitting around the statue of Buddha situated right in the middle of the lawns just outside the V-C's office, teachers from Kirori Mal College, Ramjas College, Miranda House, Hindu College and St. Stephen's College held a maximum of three classes at one time between 8.40 am and 3.30 pm on Thursday.

At the end of each class, students were informally told of the "ongoing struggle" and this was followed by a tacit request for their support. Sloganeering was present, albeit just on posters and placards hung from the trees in the lawn.

"The university has been success-

ful in maligning the teachers. We did not want to go on strike but that was the best option available to make ourselves heard. Now, we are going to take lessons, but outside the classrooms to achieve the same purpose," Professor Rudrashish Chakraborty of Kirori Mal College just after dismissing his class with third year students on literary theory, said.

"Mobilising student support is the biggest problem we have had. This is because the current batch of first, second and third year stu-

Public lectures a tool to garner student support

dents are not directly affected by the semester system which will be introduced for the fresh batch joining in July," Vijayan, who took two classes in the open on Thursday, on why teachers are resorting to public teaching, said.

This, however, is not the first time that public lectures are being organised to drum up support for an issue in DU. In 1987, teachers had held classes in the open to mark protest against their pay revision. Eventually, they were able to mobilise a large number of students supporting their cause.

“If our teachers have certain problems with it (the semester system) they should be heard”



— Swarnima
Bhattacharya, 2nd year, BA
English, Hindu College

“In an annual system, we can take time to strengthen our concepts, but the semester system will not allow such flexibility”



— Tvisha Gupta,
1st year, Mathematics,
St Stephen's College

“I think this is a great way as teachers can register their protest even while they take classes”



— Swarnima
Bhattacharya,
1st year, Mathematics,
St Stephen's College

Indian Express, ND 11-Mar-11 p-2

Despite V-C presence, Sociology dept rejects semester idea

DU cannot operate under two systems, says V-C; No groundwork laid for overhaul, say teachers

DEEPU SEBASTIAN EDMOND
NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

DESPITE Vice-Chancellor Dinesh Singh's appeal, the Sociology department of the Delhi University on Thursday said no to implementing the semester system at the undergraduate level for the academic year 2011-2012.

V-C Singh attended the meeting of department's Undergraduate Committee of Courses (UCC) and unsuccessfully attempted to convince those present to green-lighting the semester system for the BA (Hons) Sociology course. The V-C had sought permission from the UCC members to attend the meeting.

Like the UCC of the History department that rejected the semester system on Wednesday, the UCC of Sociology has cited time constraints. The university administration had set March 3 — later postponed to March 10 — as the deadline for preparation of the semesterised syllabi. Departments have now been asked to be ready with syllabi on April 15.

The DU plans to semesterise all its undergraduate courses, except the 13 science courses that had already adopted the semes-

ter system last year.

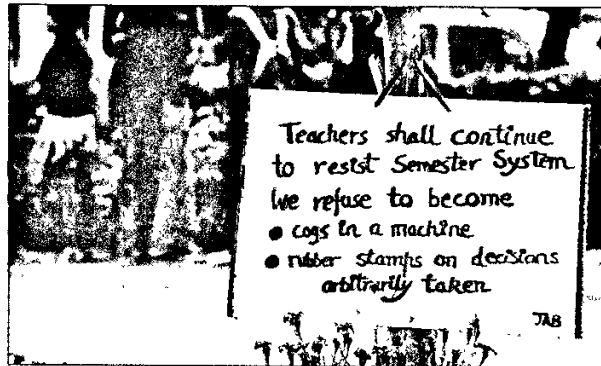
"The committee felt that the time left to overhaul the syllabus is too short. A good majority — about 80 per cent of the 25-odd teachers present — felt the semester system cannot be readied for the coming academic session," said a teacher who attended the meeting.

Head of the department of Sociology Nandini Sundar declined to comment.

Apart from UCC members, professors of the university's postgraduate department too attended the meeting. As per the statutes of the Delhi University, the UCC is the body that initiates syllabus revision. It comprises both undergraduate and postgraduate teachers of the subject.

One of the teachers who attended the meeting said V-C Singh could not provide satisfactory answers to questions posed by teachers. "The other reason why the committee decided to go against the semester system was because the university has not spelled out the modalities of implementing it," said the teacher.

Teachers have pointed out that the university is going for a major overhaul without doing the groundwork. The proposed se-



mester structure needs changes, interdisciplinarity will take a beating, and the current infrastructure will not be sufficient, they have argued.

V-C Singh is learnt to have put forward two main arguments — that the university cannot operate with two academic systems, and that departments can go for revisions in the future if the current structure is not found to be good enough. "The V-C said since 13 science courses had already moved to the semester mode, it was imperative that other courses do the same. Some teachers, however, pointed out that the semesterised science courses were not doing too well, and the V-C should consider re-

converting them into the annual mode," said a teacher.

Singh also suggested the department implement the semester system and test its effectiveness over 2-3 years. "A number of those present were of the view that it was not right to experiment with students' lives," said a teacher.

Indications, however, are that the university administration is not likely to give up. Unless the department goes back to the UCC with a revised semester implementation plan soon, it will have to circumvent statutory procedures to prepare the revised syllabus.

V-C Singh has repeatedly insisted that he would resist from using his Emergency Powers to implement the semester system.

SEMESTERS THE STORY SO FAR

BA (HONS) ENGLISH

Departmental Council, comprising professors in the University's postgraduate department, has called for a general body meeting, where all teachers handling the course will be welcome. GBM date yet to be announced.

BA (HONS) HISTORY

GBM on February 26 and UCC on March 9 rejected the semester system.

BA (HONS) ECONOMICS

Teachers in-charge from colleges walked out of a meeting called by the Head of the Department on February 28, demanding a general body meeting.

BA (HONS) PHILOSOPHY

A February-24 GBM rejected the semester system.

BA (HONS) POL SCIENCE

A March-1 GBM agreed to implement the semester system starting the 2011-2012 academic session.

BSC (HONS) MATHEMATICS:

V-C Dinesh Singh's parent department. No GBM or UCC held yet. Uploaded the proposed syllabus in www.du.maths.ac.in on February 21. Suggestions were invited, with March 2 as deadline.

BA (HONS) SOCIOLOGY:

UCC said no to semester system on March 10.

Tribune, ND 11-Mar-11 p-10

Higher education

Ensure quality, check substandard institutions

THERE is a crisis in higher education in India, both with the quality of education being delivered to students as well as in the inadequacy of institutions of higher learning in the nation. Only 12.4 per cent of Indian students go in for higher education, and it is now clear that the government alone cannot handle the task of providing 800 more universities and an estimated 10,000 colleges in the next 10 years. It is in this context that the public-private partnership model is being envisaged, and indeed, encouraged.

We have it on the authority of the HRD Minister Kapil Sibal that most of the private technical institutions in the country are not up to the mark, and indeed lack both the required infrastructure as well as qualified staff. The Minister, however, is not just expected to state the problem; he is empowered to provide a solution. Instead, in Parliament, recently, he lamented that a World-Bank funded Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme had failed to take off since none of the 130 proposals submitted by technical institutions fulfilled the criteria laid down for allocation of funds. Thus, these 130 institutions were not even of a basic level, where they would qualify for a programme that would help them attain excellence.

With the economy growing steadily, more jobs are available. However, there are not enough institutions to educate students and train them. Many of the new institutions are inadequate. Students of such institutions find it difficult to get good jobs and this leads to discontentment. The HRD Minister must make the effort to monitor both government and private education institutions to ensure that they conform to the norms. Citizens have a right to not only education, but also, by implication, to higher education. It is the duty of the state to provide and adequately monitor institutions of higher education.

Tribune, ND 11-Mar-11 p-13

IRREGULARITIES IN IIT-JEE

Protect IIT whistleblower, top SC lawyer urges Sibal

ADITI TANDON/TNS

NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

A month after the Central Information Commission (CIC) directed the West Bengal police to provide security to the IIT Kharagpur professor who blew the lid on widespread irregularities in JEE selections, a top Supreme Court lawyer today joined the issue, seeking Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal's intervention in the matter.

In a letter to HRD Minister Kapil Sibal (also Chairman of the IIT Council) and the chairman of IIT Kharagpur's Board of Governors, Prashant Bhushan, petitioner in the IIT-JEE irregularity PIL pending before the Supreme Court, today sought an end to the harassment and victimisation of IIT Kharagpur professor Rajeev Kumar, the

GIVING COVER

■ The government had on August 26 last year introduced in the Lok Sabha a Bill to expand the definition of whistleblowers to cover anyone who makes a disclosure of public interest. Hitherto, only a public servant could be a whistleblower.

■ This Bill was introduced after the murder of environmentalist Amit Jethava, who had been campaigning to protect Gujarat's Gir lion reserve from the mining mafia. Since the Bill was introduced, several whistleblowers have lost their lives.

■ In January, Vitthal Geeta of Aurangabad was killed for exposing major irregularities in private schools of Maharashtra. In February last year, RTE activist Arun Sawant was killed in Thane while RTI applicant Shashidhar Mishra was shot dead in Begusarai.

whistleblower in the case.

Kumar had used the Right to Information Act to expose several hitherto concealed details of the IIT-JEE system of evaluation and marking. He had earlier approached the CIC for protection alleging

threat and victimisation from the top IIT guns.

"I urge you that Professor Rajeev Kumar is not harassed since he is the whistleblower otherwise I would be constrained to raise the matter before the Supreme Court

where the case is pending," Prashant Bhushan said today in his letter.

The Commission, in its protection order for Kumar, said: "The appellant has informed us that he has been threatened, harassed and victimised by the director, deans and the registrar of IIT Kharagpur since he is filing RTI applications and exposing certain wrong doings. We direct the Kharagpur ASP to ensure that proper security is provided to Professor Rajeev Kumar after making assessment of the threats he has been receiving. If any physical harm comes to him, the police will be held responsible of not having performed its duty."

Now Bhushan, also head of the PIL Centre here, has backed Kumar on the issue, which involves the protection of whistleblowers.

Political & Business Daily ND P-8
11/03/2011

Discovery lands after final voyage

IRENE KLOTZ

The space shuttle Discovery capped a successful construction mission with a smooth landing in Florida on Wednesday, ending a 27-year flying career for NASA's most-traveled spaceship as the agency faces an uncertain future.

Discovery commander Steven Lindsey circled his ship through clear, sunny skies over the Kennedy Space Center to burn off speed, then bee-lined toward the marsh-surrounded runway a few miles from where the shuttle blasted off for its final space flight on February 24.

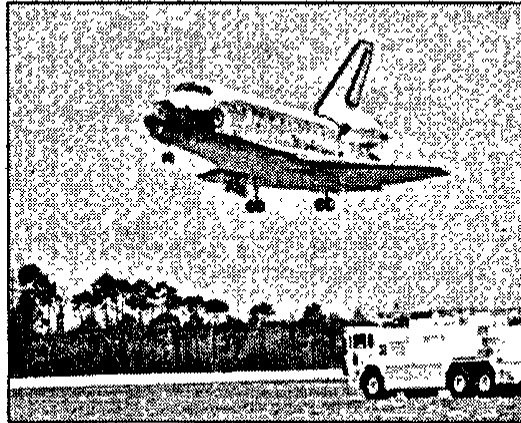
Discovery touched down at 11:57 a.m. EST to wrap up a cargo run and construction mission at the International Space Station. The shuttle accumulated 365 days in orbit over 39 missions, racking up more than 148 million miles (238 million km).

It will now be prepared for display at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum. "Houston, Discovery. For the final time, wheels stop," Lindsey radioed to Mission Control in Houston, as the shuttle came to a standstill on the runway.

"Great job by you and your crew," replied astronaut Charlie Hobaugh from Mission Control.

"That was an awesome mission that you all had. You were able to take Discovery up to a full 365 days of actual time on orbit. I think that you'd call that a fleet leader, and a leader of any manned vehicle for time in orbit. So, job well done," Hobaugh said.

The United States is ending the 30-year-old shuttle program because of its high operating costs to free up funds to begin work on new spaceships that can travel to the moon, asteroids and other destinations



beyond the space station's 220-mile-high (350-km-high) orbit. Congress has, however, not yet allocated funds to start new programs.

"It's a pretty bittersweet moment for all of us," Lindsey said after landing. "As the minutes pass, I'm getting sadder and sadder about this being the last flight."

Sister ships Endeavour and Atlantis will have their finales in April and June, respectively, delivering the \$2 billion Alpha Magnetic Spectrometer particle detector and a year's worth of supplies to the station.

The \$100 billion research station is a project of 16 nations and has been under construction since 1998.

During its final mission, Discovery delivered a combination storage room-research lab to the station, as well as an external platform to house large spare parts.

It also carried tons of supplies and science gear, including a prototype humanoid robot built in partnership with General Motors. Astronauts Stephen Bowen and Alvin Drew made two spacewalks to help prepare the station for operations after shuttle retirement. NASA has turned over station crew transport to the Russians, though it hopes U.S. commercial companies will develop space taxis so it can obtain flight services domestically. — Reuters