

Newspaper Clips

March 12, 2011

**Hindustan
Times, ND
12-Mar-11 p-8**

B-SCHOOLS GET BREATH, BUT KEY CONCERNS STILL PERSIST

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NEW DELHI: The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) on Friday extended an olive branch to private B-schools battling recently introduced controversial norms, by offering them a minor concession. But major demands of the B-schools — for which they have approached the Supreme Court — remain unaddressed.

India's apex technical education regulator has decided that B-schools can choose from the Common Admission Test (CAT), the Management Aptitude Test (MAT) or state government conducted tests to pick students. B-schools can also select students using a combination of these tests.

The state governments, which will manage the admission process, will then offer seats to students in Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) institutions based on the test combination picked by the B-school and rankings of students in that test.

Under a controversial December 30, 2010 AICTE notification, the states were empowered to decide for all institutions in their territory whether to admit students through the CAT, MAT or a state government test.

But the AICTE decision — taken at a meeting of the council here — does not address a number of major concerns raised by the B-schools. The institutions have approached the Supreme Court over these concerns.

Empowering the states to manage the admission process, — including deciding which student is finally admitted to which institute — is an attempt at taking away their autonomy, the institutes are arguing.

They feel that this could lead to greater red-tapism and corruption.

**Hindustan
Times, ND
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IISc IN WORLD LIST OF 100 MOST REPUTED

HT Correspondents

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NEW DELHI: The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore has emerged the only Indian academic institution figuring in the world's 100 most reputed universities, according to the Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings released on Friday.

The first-ever reputation-based THE rankings has predictably found Harvard at the top, followed by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), University of Cambridge and the University of California Berkeley. Two Chinese universities — Tsinghua University (35) and Peking University (43) — also figure on the list.

The rankings are most significant for India because though the IISc is the country's only institution in the list, it's far better than performance-based rankings of Indian institutions in recent years. "This offers us a ray of hope because it suggests while the IISc and other top institutions need to improve performance, marketing that performance may be taken care of already," a Indian education policy maker said.

Times of India ND

12/03/2011 p-10

B-schools can now 'choose' entrance test

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) on Friday made a minor change in its norms related to admission in post-graduate diploma in management and post-graduate certificate in management.

Earlier it was said 50% of seats for admission have to be filled through state-level test for admission in management courses. Many institutes opposed this provision.

However, AICTE has stuck to its ground and not acceded to the other demand of management institutes, which have been clamouring for freedom to conduct their own admission test.

AICTE clarified that institutes will have freedom to choose either Common Admission Test (CAT) or Management Admission Test (MAT) or examination con-

CHANGE IN NORMS

ducted by state for giving admission.

Institutes will have to inform the state government about the test that it has opted for to give admission to students. Then, the state government will allot students on the preferences expressed by the institutions. Minority institutes however shall effect admissions through common entrance test as applicable to them.

Times of India ND 12/03/2011 p-15

Docs must pass 'skills test' to practice

MCI Move To Ensure Internship Is Taken Seriously By MBBS Passouts

Kounteya Sinha | TNN

New Delhi: What an undergraduate medical student learns in one-year compulsory internship after appearing for MBBS examination will now decide whether he or she gets permanent registration to practice.

Medical Council of India (MCI) is making it mandatory for medical students to appear for a new "skills test" after their internship programme. It will test their "skills to analyze patients and diagnose conditions".

At present, students get their provisional MBBS degree after appearing for the examination at the end of



EMPHASIS ON EXPERIENCE

four-and-a-half years. Permanent registration is given after internship.

"Medical education is not about theory but practice.

The new curriculum and post-internship test will prepare new doctors to deal with real patients and diseases," chief of MCI's governing

body Dr S K Sarin told TOI.

Governing body member Dr Sita Naik added, "Now, no tests are in place to see if they take this year-long internship programme seriously. Most of the students use this time to prepare for their post-graduate examination. Since PG is a multiple answer theory paper, they think this clinical experience from internship is a sheer waste of time."

Dr Naik explained that "new skill tests will make an assessment of their clinical acumen. If they fail to pass this, they will be denied their permanent registration to practice".

Governing body member

professor Ranjit Roychoudhury said the crucial meeting to finalise the UG and PG curriculum will be held on March 29. Union health secretary K Chandramouli will chair the meeting, which will be attended by top academicians and vice-chancellors.

"We intend to announce the new curriculum on March 29," Professor Roychoudhury said. According to Prof Roychoudhury, the new curriculum will focus on hands-on teaching. "Passing the MBBS exam will not be enough. They have to pass the skills test, and show that they are ready to take on the real world of medicine and patients," he said.

Publication: The Times Of India Delhi;Date: Mar 12, 2011;Section: Front Page;Page: 1;

What warning system? India's tsunami buoys in a shambles

The visuals of the tsunami in Japan brought back memories of December 26, 2004 — and questions like how good our tsunami alert system is. Thanks to a global network of tsunami monitoring systems, Indian shores may not be caught unawares, but if maintenance of our tsunami buoys are anything to go by, the Indian tsunami alert system is in bad shape. As fishermen continue to vandalize tsunami buoys, all that remains in the Bay of Bengal are two such buoys and one other in the Arabian Sea. These buoys sense tidal variations and send out signals to a satellite that alerts ground stations. Several buoys deployed in the last decade had been vandalized by fishermen who break them open to take away metal parts. An official from National Institute of Ocean Technology said 42 of the 50 meteorological buoys were vandalized. **P 13**

Publication: The Times Of India Delhi;Date: Mar 12, 2011;Section: International;Page: 21;

Coffee can shield women from strokes

London: Ladies, please note — drinking a couple of cups of coffee everyday is good for you, as a new study has claimed the drink reduces one's risk of a stroke.

And, women who don't drink coffee at all may actually be increasing their risk for stroke, the study has warned. Researchers at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden, who carried out the study, have also found evidence that drinking more than a cup of coffee a day can help ward off diabetes and liver cancer in women.

The experts found women who drank more than a cup a day saw their stroke risk fall by between 20 and 25 per cent compared with those who drank little or none. This held true regardless of their weight, smoking and drinking habits, or whether they had a family history of diabetes. The study also revealed drinking coffee lowered the risk of other diseases like diabetes by improving insulin sensitivity and having other beneficial effects. **P 11**

Publication: The Times Of India Delhi;Date: Mar 12, 2011;Section: International;Page: 21;

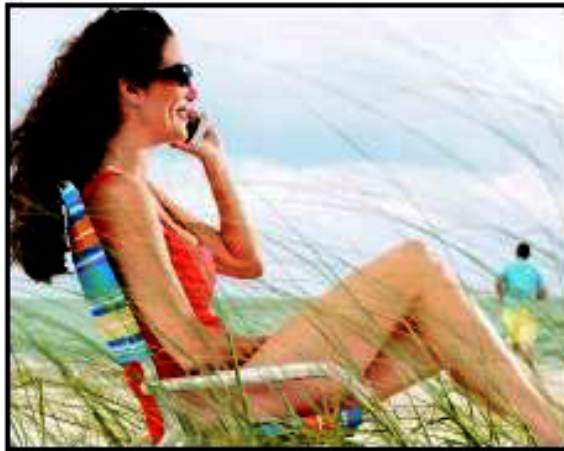
This mobile can run for months on single charge

London: Imagine a mobilephone that runs for months after a single charging. Well, it could soon be a reality as scientists are developing a new battery which they say could be 100 times more powerful than the existing ones.

A team of engineers at the Illinois University are developing the new battery which will have "nanotubes" instead of metal wiring. The scientists believe using nanotubes — carbon tubes 10,000 times smaller than a human hair — the battery's life could be extended by up to 100 times, the Daily Mail reported.

"I think anyone who is dealing with a lot of chargers and plugging things in every night can relate to wanting a cell phone or laptop whose batteries can last for weeks or months," said Eric Pop, of Illinois University's Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology, who led the research.

Pop claimed that their research could one day mean a mobile device like an iPhone could see hugely extended battery life, possibly to the point that it could run by harvesting ther-



HASSLE-FREE: Scientists are developing a new battery which they say can be 100 times more powerful than existing ones

mal or solar energy rather than relying on a battery. It could also prove groundbreaking for devices much larger than mobile phones or portable computers, Pop said. ¶¶

Publication: The Times Of India Delhi;Date: Mar 12, 2011;Section: Times Global;Page: 23;

Harvard is world's top varsity

Washington: Harvard University, which is the oldest institution of higher learning in the United States, has been ranked as the world's top varsity.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology made it to number two, with the University of California Berkeley coming in at number four in the list of top 10 most

highly regarded universities in world.

Britain's prestigious Cambridge University and Oxford University ranked three and

PIPS MIT, ULCA

six respectively, with University of Tokyo in Japan securing eighth place in 'The Times Higher Education'

world reputation rankings.

In total, the US had a massive 45 universities in the top 100, while the UK had 12 and Japan had five. Australia, Germany, Canada and the Netherlands each had four universities in the top 100 rankings based on a survey of 13,388 academics from 131 countries, the 'Daily Mail' online reported. ¶¶

Times of India ND
12/03/2011

p-21

Alert 'trusted pal' on social site if online bullying scares you

London: 'Facebook' users can now tell a "trusted friend" if they feel they are being bullied or harassed online, thanks to a new option introduced by the popular social networking site.

Facebook has said its reporting option allows members to alert someone in their support system, like parents or teachers, to the problem so that online behaviour is linked to "real world consequences". "Often the best way of sorting offensive content is for friends to flag those things to each other. In the real world you have a sense of when you need to escalate something to the right organisation.

"If someone is calling you names, it might not be appropriate to go directly to the police," the Daily Mail quoted Facebook's director of European policy Richard Allan as saying.

However, the social networking site said users would be put in contact with police or suitable organisations in the event of more serious concerns. Screenshots of the new safety options reveal that users could, for ex-



SAFETY NET

ample, select a tick box that says a new photo is "harassing or bullying me".

The user can choose to block the person who posted the offending material but can also "Get help from a trusted friend", with the option to send a message to a friend or person of responsibility. The website also confirmed it was simplifying the language of its safety centre and adding more multimedia material to make the site safer and easier to use. P71

Education & health given core status

By Bureau
New Delhi, Mar 11

To encourage private capital investments in education and health, finance minister Pranab Mukherjee on Fri-



Pranab Mukherjee, finance minister, has raised the MPLADS limit to ₹5 crore

day conferred the coveted infrastructure status on these sectors. With this, investors in educational institutions and hospitals can dip into the various infrastructure funds designed to suit long gestation projects and access low-cost loans.

"There is a need to further accelerate the creation of infrastructure in this (health and education) domain. I am happy to announce that henceforth capital stock in educational institutions and hospitals will be treated as infrastructure sub-sectors," Mukherjee said while replying to a debate on the general budget for 2011-12 in the Lok Sabha. "Capital investment for these sub-sectors will be eligible for the viability gap funding scheme," he said, adding that detailed guidelines would soon be announced.

VGf is a mechanism for providing long-term grants to facilitate public private partnership projects. Granting infrastructure status would increase the availability of banking funds to investors in these sectors. It would also lower their cost of debt by around 200-300 basis points.

Continued on Page 2

Education & health given core status

"This move comes as a major boost for the private health-care players who can now expand into tier II, tier III towns and surrounding rural areas without worrying much about long-term funding," said Pradip Kanakia, leader, healthcare practice, PricewaterhouseCoopers India.

Mukherjee said promoting investment in education and health is high on the government's agenda.

"Although one has to wait for the guidelines to analyse the impact, on the face of it, it appears to be a good step," said, Pervez Ahmed, CEO, Max Healthcare.

Hospitals and educational institutions will now be able to access funds from infrastructure-focused funds such as IIFCL, the India Infrastructure and IL&FS Funding. Additionally, healthcare sector can also make claims for focus funds worth over Rs 4,000 crore. This is today available to core sectors with

priority status. Long-term funding would become much easier and the private hospitals can now negotiate better to access ECBs, leverage forex reserves as also insurance and pension funds.

The finance minister also said a Women's Self Help Groups Development Fund with a corpus of Rs 500 crore would be formed. "The proposed fund will operate through Nabard and will be exclusively utilised for providing refinance on loans given to women's SHGs on soft terms," he said.

The government would also extend the existing Interest subvention scheme to fish farmers and fishermen for providing short-term loans at 7% interest, with additional subvention for timely repayment. Under the interest subvention scheme, the government steps in by picking up a part of the interest burden.

Under fire for the proposal to tax 'high-end' medical ser-

VICES, Mukherjee further said he was examining various suggestions and would respond later. "Since the presentation of the Budget 2011-12, I have received several suggestions and representations, including valuable feedback from members (MPs) on taxation proposals. These are under examination," Mukherjee said.

The minister further said that he would respond to the issues in his reply to the discussion on the Finance Bill 2011 later during this session. Mukherjee is expected to reply during the discussion on the Finance Bill in Lok Sabha on March 22. His proposal to impose a 5% service tax on services provided by centrally air-conditioned hospitals of 25 beds or more evoked sharp reaction from the medical community, with doctors describing the levy as a "misery tax".

Besides, Mukherjee's proposal to levy minimum alter-

nate tax on special economic zone units and developers was criticised by the industry.

Further, in a bonanza for lawmakers, Mukherjee announced that MP's constituency fund will be more than doubled to Rs 5 crore per year from April 1. As many as 797 Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha MPs will get Rs 5 crore under the Member of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLAD) scheme against the current allocation of Rs 2 crore. This would result in an additional allocation of Rs 2,370 crore per year, he said.

Allaying apprehensions that global events like high oil prices may impact growth, the finance minister on Friday exuded confidence that the economy would return to 9% growth in 2011-12. However, he added that fighting unacceptably high inflation is the most important issue that the government needs to address.

Financial Express ND 12/03/2011

P2

AICTE softens stand on PGDM programmes

By Bureau

New Delhi, Mar 11: In what can be called as softening of its stance, the All India Technical Education (AICTE) on Friday revised the guidelines for the post graduate diploma in management (PGDM) programmes.

As per the revised guide-

lines, institutions which are conducting PGDM, PGDM (executive) and PGCM programmes will have the flexibility of opting for either CAT, MAT or common entrance tests (CET) for admitting students.

"The competent authority on admissions shall allot students on the preferences expressed by the institutions

from amongst the common merit list of students that is created," the notification said.

Earlier on December 28, the council had laid out norms to regulate the fees, admissions and curriculum of PGDM programmes. "This is a clarification for those B-schools who thought that the quality of students who get admissions will

get affected if only CETs are considered. Now, they have the flexibility of selecting the entrance exam of their choice. There was no pressure from anyone on doing this," explained S S Mantha, AICTE chairman.

Incidentally, the management institutes have already moved the Supreme Court against the AICTE's norms.

However, the B-schools are not very happy with the revision. "If the AICTE has not looked at the issues related to regulation of fees and admissions, then there is no point of such a revision," said H Chaturvedi, alternate president, Education Promotion Society for India which represents more than 250 B schools.

Economic Times, ND 12-Mar-11 p-5

IIM Placements End with Fatter Pay Cheques this Year

MORE CALORIES Finance firms offer up to ₹ 40 lakh for India postings, ₹60 lakh for jobs abroad

SHREYA BISWAS & MAHIMA PURI
NEW DELHI

Final placements are over at most of the IIMs, bringing relief to scores of students some of who went through a month-long process to get job offers. The number of offers has gone up from last year with an increase in average salary. If IIM-Kozhikode saw the total number of offers go up to 305 from 265 last year (the number of offers per company rose to 3.37 from 2.66 in 2010) IIM-Calcutta saw slot zero offers going up to 139 from last year's 90.

Similarly, IIM Indore, which wrapped up its placements last month, saw number of offers increase to 241 this year, from 235 in the previous year.

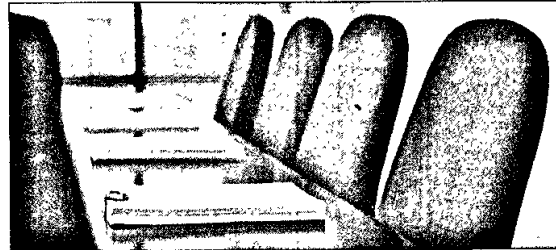
Institutes say it's the overall buoyancy in the Indian economic scenario that has pushed up the number of offers this year. "It's not only that jobs have increased in huge numbers across the industry, but within the industry, some sectors are doing better than others. Sectors that expect to grow faster in the coming years are hiring more people. Similarly, some companies that have ag-

gressive expansion plans in the coming fiscal have in large numbers from the institutes. This has pushed up the overall job offers at the institute," said IIM-C placements chairman Prof Amit Dhi-man.

His claims are supported by the latest findings of some job surveys. The Indian economy is likely to create a large number of jobs this year, as reflected in a study by HR solutions

firm Manpower. The employment outlook for the April-June period revealed one of the strongest intent to hire among Indian employers. According to the survey, more than 50% of the employers expect an increase in their employee headcount in the coming quarter, as compared to 36% during the same period last year.

Firms from the financial services and consulting remained favourites among students, picking up the maximum number of students in these IIMs and offering the best salary packages as well. These include firms like Citi



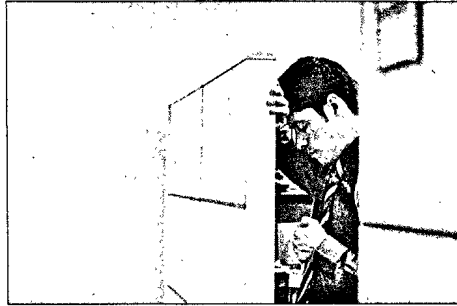
Group, Deutsche Bank, Goldman Sachs, Barclays Capital, JP Morgan, HSBC, McKinsey & Co, BCG, Bain & Co, among others.

Along with job offers, salaries too have gone up at IIMs. At IIM-Kozhikode, firms from the Indian financial sector increased the average pay by 23% at ₹12.52 lakh, followed by IT at 16% and HR at 15%. The highest international package of \$150,000 at the institute came from a commodities trading company while a European Investment Bank offered the domestic highest compensation of ₹32 lakh. Deloitte and ICICI Bank were amongst the largest recruiters with each making a whopping 16 offers.

At IIM-C, while the finance firms offered up to ₹ 40 lakh for job postings within India, for international postings, the salary package was up to ₹60 lakh, with an additional bonus of up to 200%.

BPO major EXL Services too has been a major recruiter across IIM campuses this year. The company's rebound to the growth track has prompted it to increase its presence in IIM campuses. The company which saw a huge de-growth from 2008 at 20% to 5% in 2009 and bounced back to 29% last year, has hired 19 candidates increasing the count from last year's 12, from across IIMs, at a salary of ₹10-15 lakh.

B-School Regulation: Two Steps Back



AMIT KAPOOR

The recent notifications by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) come as a rude shock for the education fraternity of the country. The notification regulates the working of business schools or post-graduate diploma in management (PGDM) institutions in conducting their regular and part-time programmes. Consequentially, their freedom to be innovative and progressive is curtailed. To say the least, the business schools are under attack and soon shall lose their independence to gross misunderstanding of the political masters and regulators of this country.

For a moment, let us accept the decree of AICTE and its underlying ideas that there is a need for regulation. Here, we need to ask a few compelling fundamental questions and analyse the situation deeper.

Need for regulation: Regulation is required to preserve, maintain and protect the rights of the consumer. In addition, regulation needs to look at creating a level playing field and protect the rights of the service providers. We would typically look at a market wherein we have infinite customers and finite providers. Regulating the number of providers presents a fair degree of competition. Regulation looks at an underlying assumption that cut-throat competition would lead to price wars.

What is wrong with AICTE decree?: Regulation tries to create oligopolies wherein there is a restriction on the number of players. These firms can't exist in isolation and they operate around some minimum acceptable standards within the industry.

There is no interdependence between business schools as they exist in isolation. The challenge is to ensure customer service and laying down minimum acceptable standards. The world over, we have had accreditations and certifications for business schools such as The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and The Association of MBAs (Amba) that reflect the quality and degree of standardisation in schools and the processes they follow.

Each player today has unlimited access to the market, and that forces the mechanism of price and service regulation. As the case stands, the AICTE decree will disorient this very nature of competition.

A regulator ensures complete disclosure of information by service providers and then leaves the choice of accepting and rejecting in the hands of the customer. On the other hand, service providers tend to differentiate by creating brands and

interactions at touch points that could have a different impact.

However, this is certainly not the case with business schools, which clearly create differentiation through the quality of students, the syllabi, the placements they achieve and research they undertake.

Now, if AICTE says they would admit students, determine the pricing and the curriculum, it would amount to the idea that AICTE is becoming a service provider and all the business schools in the country would become agents of delivery.

This change certainly compels us to ask a question: is AICTE a regulator or a service provider? In case AICTE does not understand this question — which it would not in all likelihood — let us ask a question pertaining to the telecom industry: does Trai find customers for telecom operators?

Telecom industry is a perfect example of oligopoly wherein the interdependence between the players is high and this ensures the delivery of service and smart regulation has created playing field that is not exploitative for customers and detrimental for service providers. **The final word:** It is absolutely clear that AICTE is trying to do what it is not intended to do. The regulation will not benefit the business schools. It would, though, certainly benefit business schools that are gross underperformers, i.e., schools that can neither find students nor generate revenues. This goes fundamentally against the ethos of capitalism wherein the innovative and fit survive.

The regulation may make top schools reinvent themselves and exit this particular product.

To say the least, the government has taken a regressive step and it would effectively undo what business schools built over decades tediously. If the government doesn't retract the decree, it may be concluded that we would be left with a socialistic society at the lowest level of quality and performance.

In effect, AICTE will resemble the erstwhile monopoly of the Life Insurance Corp of India where the insurer had no competition but intense competition within agents.

(The author is professor of strategy and industrial economics at MDI, Gurgaon, and honorary chairman of the Institute for Competitiveness. Inputs from Prof Mukul Gupta)

Hindu, ND 12-Mar-11 p-7

“Open, distance education can ensure equitable access to all”

Special Correspondent

JAIPUR: Noted Malaysian educationist Professor Anuwar Ali has called for promotion of higher education in developing countries through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode which, he says, can ensure equitable and flexible access to millions of ordinary people to education and enable them to advance their careers and participate in the national economic development.

The Open University Malaysia Vice-Chancellor told *The Hindu* here that higher education, which was “no longer elitist and restrictive”, had become relevant for Asian countries in the light of globalisation. It faces the challenges of digital divide, changing mindsets and demand for quality and accountability.

“The growth of ODL in countries like India, China and Malaysia has been immense and rewarding. The [main] challenge is to ensure that ODL remains relevant and is able to respond to even newer trends,” said Dr. Ali, who was in Rajasthan to attend a two-day international workshop at Vardhaman Mahaveer Open University (VMOU) in Kota.

In an exclusive interview during his brief stopover here on his way back to New Delhi, he said ODL plays a significant role in transforming higher education from an elite privilege to a “democratised opportunity” in Asian countries, in view of economic competition and the global drive towards a knowledge-based society.

He said the institutions offering distance education have made it possible for different kinds of individuals — from marginalised groups to senior citizens, working adults and the physically disadvantaged — to partake in higher education and obtain a university degree. “The affordable access to higher education through ODL caters to the rising demand to mobilise knowledge.”

Dr. Ali, who delivered a keynote address on “Challenges before ODL: Global perspective” at the workshop, said Open University Malaysia would be willing to



DEMOCRATISED OPPORTUNITY: *Open University Malaysia Vice-Chancellor Professor Anuwar Ali during an interview in Jaipur.* — PHOTO: ROHIT JAIN PARAS

enter into a partnership with VMOU to improve the quality of education and enhance openness and accessibility. “Though students’ exchange may not be feasible at this stage, both the institutions can work together on educational technologies.”

Professor Ali was conferred the title “Tan Sri” by the Malaysian Government in 2003 for his contribution to higher education and the country’s industrial and technological development. An economist by training, he was earlier chairman of the Malaysian Examination Council and consultant for industrial master plan and action plan for technology development.

New technologies

As the second Vice-Chancellor at the university established in 2000, Dr. Ali has been instrumental in utilising the latest technologies to improve the delivery system and update the contents of various programmes. The former Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, launched the university officially in 2002 at Jalan Tun Ismail, Kuala Lumpur.

Impressed by the performance of the ODL systems in India, Professor Ali noted that India had one of the most well-established ODL networks in Asia, with a history going back 26 years, and 14 open universities functioning in different parts of the country. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has dabbled in cross-border provision, having established itself in sever-

al countries.

“In terms of technologies, ODL has [much] to gain from new innovations that flood into our everyday space,” he said, pointing out that web applications, social networking, mobile technologies and open educational resources were some of the nascent innovations holding much promise in an ODL setting.

“However, issues such as digital divide and cultural identities can severely impede upon the true potential of ODL delivery in the less developed regions. Whether the use of ubiquitous technologies would protect or destroy cultural identities remains an issue yet to be resolved, while the digital divide is pervasive in poor countries.”

Asked about the strategies for ensuring universal reach of ODL institutions, he said these universities in Asian countries must create means for all, regardless of creed, gender or socio-economic background, to obtain higher education. “ODL institutions must combine flexibility, quality, low cost and high volume for greater access to higher education,” he remarked.

The Vice-Chancellor noted that the Commonwealth of Learning (CoL) had successfully brought together open universities in the Commonwealth nations over the past 20 years to develop and share ODL knowledge, resources and technology with a particular focus on helping poorer countries.

Open University Malaysia’s cumulative student enrolment stands at over 96,000, including international learners from over 20 countries. Albeit a relatively young institution, it has created an international presence in Bahrain, Ghana, the Maldives, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka and Yemen, offering courses in a wide range of disciplines — from IT and engineering to the arts and social sciences, business and science.

During his Rajasthan visit, Professor Ali was accompanied by Shaari A. Hamid, deputy vice-president of the Institute of Teaching and Learning Advancement at the Open University Malaysia.

Hindu, ND 12-Mar-11 p-7

IIT Roorkee hosting tech fest

C. K. Chandramohan

ROORKEE: Cognizance 2011, the three-day technical festival, began at the Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee (IIT-R) here on Friday, with Standard Chartered Bank Technology Group and Operations head David Awcock urging the would-be engineers to make sustainable development their goal, during a lecture on "Integration of technology and finance".

About 2,200 students from different IITs, National Institutes of Technology and deemed universities and the 7,000-odd students of the host institution will participate in over 150 events being conducted by students. Interesting exhibitions have been put up by the Railways, Defence Research and Development Organisation and the Army.

The theme of Cognizance is

"For a better tomorrow" with centre stage events like Smart Cities, where papers will be presented on designing of buildings, transport system, power supply, drainage etc in a model township.

Interesting entries had suggested policies for overcoming the energy crisis and sustainable development, said events convener Kulvaibhav Kaushik and Indradeep Banerjee.

The centre of attraction was the Robotron, where participants competed to complete assembling blocks resembling the Taj Mahal with a mechanical and a line follower robot.

Chris Phillips, popularly known as the invisible man, Nokia 888 designer Tamer Nakisci, Adobe Research India head Shriram Revankar, acclaimed green architect Karan Grover, One Laptop per Child CEO Satish Jha, DC design founder Dilip Chabaria,

among others, will be delivering special lectures, said IIT-R director S.C. Saxena, commending the students for their efforts.

Tata Docomo is the title sponsor and *The Hindu* is the presenting partner for Cognizance 2011.

Indian Express ND 12/03/2011
P-2

AICTE sticks to admission norms

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 11

THE All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), in a meeting on Friday, reiterated that private institutes — offering courses like PGDM, PGDM (executive) and PGCM — will have to specify their preferences

for admitting candidates either through CAT, MAT or through examinations conducted by states to the competent authority of the respective state governments.

AICTE had in its revised admission norms in December last year for institutes offering PGDM courses had

said admission to courses — offering diploma and certificate — would have to be done through common entrance test such as CAT/MAT or examinations conducted by state

The regulator had come out with revised norms in December 2010

governments for all institutes other than those with minority status.

The revised norms were issued in the backdrop of the regulator receiving a large number of complaints on a range of alleged irregularities by some of the institutions.

The AICTE notification had run into controversy with private management schools terming the directive as an 'interference'.

Indian Express ND P-9
12/03/2011

MIT tech magazine to honour 18 Indians

SHOBAV

BANGALORE, MARCH 11

EIGHTEEN Indian innovators under the age of 35 will be honoured later this month by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's *Technology Review* magazine for developing novel solutions to problems in biotechnology, computer engineering, energy, telecommunications and nanotechnology.

The prestigious TR 35 India awards for 2011 will be presented at the EmTech technology conference in Bangalore starting March 22.

The innovations are socially relevant and address real problems. Ajit Narayanan of Invention Labs, Chennai,

named innovator of the year, says, "It's wonderful to be recognised for the technology itself as for its social impact. In India, to tackle problems, we have to look at offering not just products but solutions." He will be awarded for developing AVAZ, a speech synthesiser that helps users with cerebral palsy, autism and aphasia communicate.

AVAZ is a handheld device with text prediction, allowing the user to construct sentences through noticeable motor movements such as a nod of the head or by tapping an option on the screen. It was launched at Vidya Sagar, a Chennai school for children with special needs, last February.

Health, education get core sector tag

THE ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, MARCH 11

IN A major boost to lagging social sectors, finance minister Pranab Mukherjee categorised health and education as infrastructure sub-sectors and made them eligible for capital subsidy through viability gap funding.

"There is a need to further accelerate the creation of infrastructure in this (health and education) domain. I am happy to announce that henceforth capital stock in educational institutions and hospitals will be treated as infrastructure sub-sectors," Mukherjee said on Friday replying to a discussion on Budget 2011-12 in the Lok Sabha.

The measures will open new avenues of funding for the sectors, as the total public spending on these projects is still less than 2 per cent of the GDP.

"Capital investment for these sub-sectors will be eligible for the viability gap funding scheme of the ministry of finance," he said,

THE SECTORS will now be eligible for capital subsidy through VGF, or viability gap funding. VGF is a capital subsidy given by the government to make projects attractive to private players

adding that detailed guidelines would soon be announced.

With an infrastructure tag, the sectors will enjoy benefits like tax sops and priority sector lending from banks. VGF is a capital subsidy given by the government to make projects attractive to private players. Till now it was available only for core infrastructure sectors like highways, shipping and aviation.

Under the existing model, the Centre provides up to 20 per cent of the capital cost of a project which is matched with a same amount by the state government, sponsoring ministry or the project authority. Bidders quoting the least VGF support are awarded the project.

Sources said a similar model would be extended to health and

education as well but the government could also provide an annuity for these projects to make them more viable.

The government has been keen to rope in private investment for these sectors for quite some time. It has already bid out some projects through the public private partnership route, but they are largely on build-operate-transfer mode.

Analysts and industry participants welcomed the move. "Almost 70 per cent of our population lives in villages and have almost no access to healthcare facilities. This will be a big fillip to the industry and open new windows of finance for them. It will bring in more investments to the sector," said Sabahat Azim, managing director Global Healthcare

Systems, a start-up venture that aims to provide healthcare services to the rural poor by setting up low-cost hospitals.

Agreed Amrit Pandurangi, executive director PricewaterhouseCoopers, "It's a long pending decision and is very welcome. It will only bring more funds into the sectors but will also allow for transparent award of projects. But care must be taken to ensure more sensitivity to these ventures as they will be largely used by the poor."

Finance minister also said that he is examining the various suggestions to his tax proposals in Budget 2011-12 and would respond to them later.

"Since the presentation of the Budget 2011-12, I have received several suggestions and representations, including valuable feedback from Members (MPs) on taxation proposals. These are under examination," Mukherjee said. He said that he would respond to the issues in his reply to the discussion on the Finance Bill 2011, later during this session.

: SENTINEL GUWAHATI 10.03.11 p-4

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Language for IITs

Once again there has been gratuitous quibbling over the use of the language for examinations in the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). The Rajya Sabha witnessed an uproar recently over the use of English as the medium of examinations. The real trouble started when Union Minister for Human Resource Development (HRD) Kapil Sibal sought to explain that the IITs being autonomous bodies were free to decide on the language they would use for examination and curriculum. "The government does not impose decisions on IITs," he said. "It is for the IIT's governing council to decide what language to use for conducting the examination," he added. This evoked sharp reaction from both the ruling and Opposition parties. Opposition MPs of the Rajya Sabha even attacked Kapil Sibal for giving his reply in English. To this the minister retorted by saying that the Opposition members should ensure that Leader of the Opposition Arun Jaitley also speaks in Hindi all the time. Satyavrat Chaturvedi of the Congress said that Hindi is the *rajbhasha* according to the Constitution, and the IIT governing council is not above the Constitution. Members from the Left, the TDP, SP, JD-U and the RSP joined the protest and demanded the use of Hindi and the regional languages in IIT examinations.

It is not very helpful to look at the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution to determine the positions of English and Hindi in our scheme of things. English is not among the 22 languages listed in the Eighth Schedule and Hindi just happens to be one of the 22 languages. The thing to do is to go to Article 343(1) of the Constitution as also Articles 343(2), 343(3) and 348(1) (a) and (b) for a clearer idea of what the compilers of our Constitution had intended. Article 343(1) of the Constitution says categorically: "The official language of the Union shall be Hindi in the Devanagari script." But Article 343(2) says: "Notwithstanding anything in clause (1), for a period of fifteen years from the commencement of the Constitution, the English language shall continue to be used for all the official purposes of the Union for which it was being used immediately before such commencement." However, 343(3) adds: "Notwithstanding anything in this article, Parliament may by law provide for the use, after the said period of fifteen years, of (a) the English language, or (b) the Devanagari form of numerals, for such purposes as may be specified in the law." Article 348 (1) (a) and (b) (i), (ii) and (iii) stipulate that the "language to be used in the Supreme Court and in the High Courts and for Acts, Bills etc." shall be English. Article 348 includes (a) all proceedings of the Supreme Court and in every High Court; (b) the authoritative texts of all Bills to be introduced or amendments thereto to be moved in Parliament or the Legislature of a State; all Acts passed by Parliament or the Legislature of a State; and all orders, rules, regulations and bye-laws issued under the Constitution or under any law made by Parliament or the Legislature of a State shall be in the English language. True, Article 344(2) (a) recommends the progressive use of the Hindi language "for the official purposes of the Union".

Given what has happened to many of the provisions of the Constitution, it is only fair to ask how many years the Constitution originally gave the SC and ST reservations. It was just ten years, and look what our lawmakers have done to this provision! They used amendments to make reservations a permanent feature of our polity because they have such fantastic electoral advantages. By the same token, is it at all surprising that a provision made for 15 years has continued for 61 years because of the obvious advantages that the use of English has given to our bureaucrats mostly educated in English-medium schools? It is unlikely that Hindi and the regional languages will ever be used for the examinations of the IITs because in 64 years of independence our ministers of Education/HRD did nothing to promote Hindi and the other languages of the Eighth Schedule to make them capable of handling all the tasks that we may have in mind for these languages. Our ministers and bureaucrats were content to ape the West as far as the model and language of our higher education was concerned. Can the progeny of the MPs who are complaining about the language used by the IITs for examinations on technical subjects cope with examinations conducted in any language other than English? Our MPs must learn not only to be 'pragmatic' but also practical.