

# Newspaper Clips

March 15, 2012

Business Standard ND 15/03/2010 p-14

## Cloud over IIT-JEE to lift next month

IITs say students should not be kept guessing for too long

KALPANA PATHAK & M SARASWATHY  
Mumbai, 14 March

Come April, and the suspense over the new Indian Institute of Technology-Joint Entrance Examination (IIT-JEE) will finally be over. With the deliberations done and reports submitted, IIT directors say a final decision on when to introduce the new pattern of the examination is likely next month.

The wait has been a real cliffhanger, say students and faculty members at the IITs and the engineering test-preparation institutes.

"The report was accepted, and several discussions on the matter have taken place. With regard to its implementation, a lot of details still have to be looked into. A formal notification will come in by April. We cannot keep the younger generation guessing for too long," said an IIT director.

Last year, the IIT council accepted the recommendations of the T Ramaswami Committee report on JEE reforms, which proposed a single entrance test for all engineering colleges, including IITs, National Institutes of Technology and private institutions.

According to the Chandy Committee report that established a correlation between school performance and IIT performance, it was concluded that students were doing better in the school.

IIT directors say that due to the culture of coaching classes, the schooling system has been thrown out of the window. So much so that students do not attend schools because of the pressure of such training programmes.

Industry experts feel that exams like IIT-JEE have been causing difficulties at the school level, as the focus has been shifting from school education to IIT-JEE exam. Students do not attend schools and instead join coaching institutes.

"Today school teaching and Board exams are neglected due to pressure of coaching classes. Students focus only on learning physics, chemistry and biology and don't study geography or English, which are the subjects taught in schools. The ministry has therefore convinced the IITs to consider school education in IIT-JEE," says Gautam Barua, director, IIT Guwahati.



**A NEW LEAF** Minister for Human Resource Development Kapil Sibal (inset) has maintained that the test for admission to IITs will be called JEE, and the IIT faculty will set the question papers. BS PHOTO

Minister for Human Resource Development, Kapil Sibal, has maintained that the exams will be called JEE, and that the IIT faculty will set the question papers.

"Board exam marks (Class XII) will be given weightage, and this is likely to be about 40 per cent. The new system will help the premier institutes get better students," Sibal had said last month. He added that with the coaching system dominating, students were ignoring board exams and were focusing only on coaching for the JEE.

### Faculty members unhappy

Kapil Sibal has maintained that the new format of entrance exam for admission to the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) will ensure bright students getting through to the prestigious institutions. But the IIT faculty is not convinced.

The All India IIT Faculty Federation (AIITFF) says admission to the IITs, as per the IIT Act, is a function of the institutes' panel. Senate, which was never consulted.

"Reforms in the admissions process

is the need of the hour, but you cannot do it without consulting the faculty. We have suggested that the test should be held in such a manner that it acts like a filter. Students who clear the test at the preliminary level can seek admission to other engineering institutions. There should be another test only to select students for the IITs," said Atul Mittal, secretary, AIITFF.

Faculty members argue that the quality and standard of the education Boards in India differ. Hence, the formula which the government is proposing has a problem.

Sibal has said that the exam will be held in two parts — mains and advanced. The first part will be an aptitude test and the second part will check the student's depth of knowledge.

IIT directors, however, agree that there are several bodies involved — the IIT Council, MHRD and the councils of the Centrally-funded engineering institutes — and to reach a consensus on this issue will take time.

### IITians protest on social media

The displeasure against the new exam-



Rao IIT has also hired professors who coach students for MBA tests. The Institute has begun the process of hiring more coaching personnel to teach students the analytical and data interpretation aspects of the exam.

Dikshit informs that parents of the students at Rao IIT Academy are

pleased with the decision to have a single examination. "Students are a little confused about the new pattern of the exam. It will take some time for them to accept it," Dikshit added.

As students reel under the pressure of preparing for IIT-JEE in addition to keeping up with the syllabus at school, test preparation institutes say they are maintaining status quo. RK Sharma, senior manager (student welfare) at Resonance, said the Institute was awaiting for the syllabus of the aptitude test and the advanced test.

Pramod Maheshwari, CEO, Career Point Infosystems, a Kota-based IIT-JEE training institute, said they are in a wait-and-watch mode. Maheshwari had earlier said that given the changes in IIT-JEE pattern, his company would launch a school curriculum coaching division and also look at partnering with schools to train students on campus.

"Seeing the kind of shift the regulatory framework may bring in, we are looking at incorporating some changes in our business model. We are gearing up to open a school curriculum coaching division by next academic year. So far, we have been preparing students for competitive examination, but now we have decided to partner with schools and prepare students for Board exams too," said Pramod Maheshwari, chairman and managing director.

FIT-JEE, on the other hand, is not making any specific provision as its officials are of the view that only the nomenclature of the exam has changed. K M Satish of FIT-JEE said that the institute was realigning itself to the new pattern. "Too much hype is created around the exam. There is just a structural change in the pattern. What has changed is the application of the matter," he said. This is more suited to the present times because of the logical reasoning and analytical aspects.

ination has been brought out on Facebook by a group led by ex-IITians, called IITians.org. The group believes that the quality of students will be affected. Moreover, the new exam is untested and may lead to complications, the group says. "Students and parents will now be at the helm of the coaching institutes. The only uniqueness about IIT is IIT-JEE. Kill this and IIT students will be just normal (and some below normal). Aptitude and not mere book knowledge is important to become an IITian," said the founder of the group. Further, the group has given various calls for protests and class boycott at the IITs. Their aim is to bring back the status quo to the IIT admission process.

### Test-prep institutes in wait-and-watch mode

Rao IIT is seeing this change as an opportunity for students. "Earlier, only students scoring 95 per cent plus would get through. Now, even students scoring 80-85 per cent stand a chance to get into the IITs," said Chandan Dikshit, marketing head at Rao IIT Academy.

Times of India Chennai  
14.03.2012 P-10

# Make IT-BHU IIT, students write to Sibal

**New Delhi:** With their future in limbo, about 1,800 students of In-



stitute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University have written to HRD minister **Kapil Sibal** urging the gov-

ernment to pass the legislation giving their institute legal sanctity. The 'Institutes of Technology (Amendment) bill 2011' has been pending before the Rajya Sabha for almost a year.

The students of 2010 and 2011 batches have been waiting for their degrees for a year now due to the legislative delay. TNN

Mail Today ND 15/03/2012 P-3

By **Ritika Chopra** in New Delhi

THE government is considering a proposal to make caste discrimination in institutions of higher education a punishable offence.

The HRD ministry has been jolted into action by an increasing number of suicides by Dalit students over the past few years and an appeal by the forum of SC/ST parliamentarians.

Sources said HRD minister Kapil Sibal has decided to take the Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Technical, Medical Educational Institutions and Universities Bill, 2010 back to the cabinet with an amendment that recognises discrimination of any kind (caste, religion and gender etc) as a malpractice. The Bill will also define the penalty for it.

To ensure that the institutions keep caste bias in check, the accreditation of a college or university, which will be made mandatory in future, will also depend on the "approach of the institution in matters of equity and inclusion".

Sibal has decided to introduce this provision in the National Accreditation Regulatory Authority Bill through an amendment.

"Lately, there have been complaints of SC/ST students being ill-treated in their colleges. This has happened in different forms such as unfair marking or teachers being unhelpful. So the ministry feels that there have to be some changes and responsibility fixed at the end of the institution," an HRD official said.

The most recent incident that allegedly carries the taint of discrimination on campus was the suicide of AIMS student Anil Kumar Meena (22) on March 3. Students alleged that Meena, who came from a tribal family of farmers, couldn't follow lectures in English and that teachers, too, were not helpful.

Though neither the ministry nor the UGC maintain a record of suicides stemming from caste bias in higher education institutions, there have reportedly been about 20 such suicides in the past five years.

Most of the cases have been reported from institutes of technical education and medicine. While some of the deaths of Dalit students have been attributed to caste discrimination specifically, the cause of others remains largely unknown.

In the past year, three such suicides (see box) were reported of which the families of two students had openly alleged discrimination in the respective institutes.

The incidents even forced UGC to issue two embarrassing circulars in June last year asking universities to keep their biases in check. Now, the HRD ministry is set to stem

# Sibal plans law to curb caste bias in education



Kapil Sibal's HRD ministry plans to make caste bias in educational institutions punishable.

## UNDER FIRE

A SECTION of AIIMS students on Wednesday demanded a judicial probe into the alleged suicide of a first-year student earlier this month. Anil Kumar Meena (in pic) is believed to have hung himself in his hostel room on March 3.

"In the past, a similar episode took place when Balmukund Bharti, a final-year student of the reserved category committed suicide in 2010," Dr Mahendra Meena, convenor of the Students Action Committee (SAC), said. The SAC, which demanded Anil's family be compensated and the 2006 Thorat Commission recommendations be implemented immediately, accused the administration of discouraging reserved category students. They will hold a candlelight vigil on Thursday.

Sonakshi Verma & Zoya Khan/Delhi



## DEATH ROSTER

■ **ANIL KUMAR MEENA (22)**  
The first-year MBBS student at AIIMS is believed to have hanged himself in his hostel room on March 3 this year.

■ **LINESH MOHAN GAWLE**  
The PhD student at Delhi's National Institute of Immunology killed himself in his hostel room on April 16 last year.

■ **MANISH KUMAR (20)**  
The second-year IIT-Roorkee student jumped to his death from the fifth floor of his hostel on February 6 last year.

this menace by making discrimination a malpractice and encouraging affirmative action in the direction of inclusion.

"By affirmative action we mean measures such as holding bridge courses or remedial classes for disadvantaged and quota students like the one

organised by IIT-Delhi every year. In the case of private institutes, which do not reserve seats for SC/STs, the accrediting authority can look at how the institute is trying to support disadvantaged students through freships," a ministry official said.

Times of India ND 15/03/2012 p-2

# Court junks old study, wants fresh survey on BRT

## HC Wants Independent Agency To Conduct Survey, Shoots Down Proposal To Engage RITES, IIT

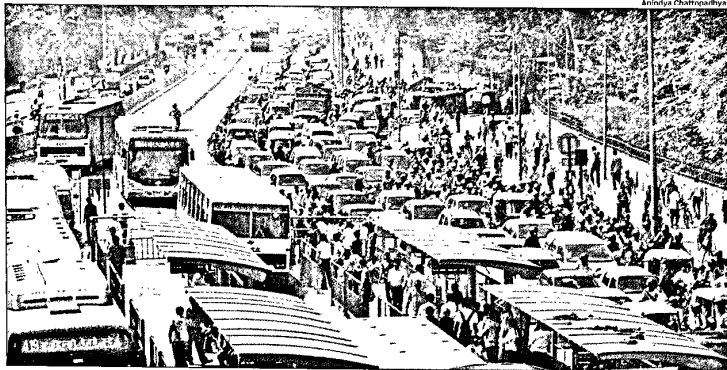
Abhinav Garg | TNN

New Delhi: Junking a state government-backed study that the vexed BRT corridor has been useful to commuters, the Delhi High Court on Wednesday said it wants a new survey on the corridor's utility.

"Are you sure users had a different opinion than that given by the mass media? We can order an opinion poll if you wish," a division bench comprising acting chief justice AK Sikri and justice Rajiv Sabal Endlaw said, rejecting claims by the state government that a 2006 study found commuters using the BRT corridor were a satisfied lot.

The bench pointed out the study cited by the government was very old and failed to show the current status or the impact of the opening of the corridor on daily commuters. "Your study is (from) just a few months after opening of the BRT. This is the February 2009 position. What is the position after that? Let there be a survey by an independent agency," Justice Sikri observed.

The HC also shot down a proposal by a cornered government to push across the names of RITES and IIT as the expert agencies best suited to conduct another survey. "We can't send it back to RITES. The BRT corridor



**CORRIDOR OF CHAOS:** The petitioner, NGO Nyay Bhoomi, had pleaded that most of the time the bus lane remains free while the situation on other lanes, meant for cars and other vehicles, remains chaotic



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was designed by them. Let it not go to RITES, let it go to a 'wrong!' the bench remarked half in jest, even as it indicated it is serious to test the claims of the government on the viability of the corridor.

Suggesting the survey can be done either by National Highways Authority of India or Central Roads Research Institute (CRR), the HC said it will pass an order to this effect on Thursday and gave the government a day's time to find out from

these two bodies if they are willing to carry out the study. HC has in a past hearing even observed that if a fresh study recommends scrapping of the BRT project, "so be it."

The 2009 study tabled by the government before the court projects a rosy picture of the traffic situation on the corridor, claiming that 25% of the road space is taken up by buses which serve more than 50% of the commuters. As per the four year-old study, bus travel became much faster on the corridor due to the dedicated lanes.

Nyay Bhoomi, the petitioner NGO that filed the PIL, contradicts the findings in the study. It has pointed out to the court that there are more than 73 lakh vehicles on Delhi roads, in comparison to 32,000 buses and having dedicated lanes further creates a traffic mess.

According to the petition, for smooth traffic movement on the 5.7km Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor between Ambedkar Nagar and Moolchand Flyover, the government should not restrain vehicles other than buses from plying in the bus lane.

The petitioner had pointed out that most of the time the bus lane remains free with the situation on other lanes, meant for cars and other vehicles, remaining chaotic as private vehicle owners get stuck in avoidable jams.

## DIMTS: Usage of road has been democratized

With reference to the series titled 'Scrap the trap', you have claimed that 'people want their road back'. However, do the people here include cyclists and bus commuters or only car/bike users? Without considering the opinions of the first two categories of road users, it would be at best an assumption that the views of a certain privileged section of society is the opinion of all the users of the BRT stretch.

A survey carried out by EMBARQ revealed 80-85% satisfaction in bus users/cyclists/pedestrians and 40-50% satisfaction among car users. BRT has democratized the road, giving bus users and cyclists the opportunity to travel faster and safely.

The study also revealed that the average travel time for buses has decreased by 20-25% and for cars and two-wheelers it has gone up marginally by about 10-12%. World over, the travel time of cars is being sacrificed in favour of faster movement of public transport.

The MV lane occupying 14m — i.e. double the space of a bus lane — is actually ferrying about 1 lakh passengers as compared to 1.2 to 1.4 lakh being ferried by the buses.

The jam at Chirag Dilli and Siri Fort intersections can be attributed to the fact that Siri Fort is the first traffic signal after 3.4 km of signal-free run from DPS, Mathura Road. Vehicles will bunch up here with or without BRT.

DIMTS does not issue any challans since it does not have the authority to do so. Its mandate is to provide the authorities with images of violations which can act as a proof when the challans are issued.

DIMTS is doing all that is possible to operate and manage the corridor. Through the marshals and the cameras, we are trying to contain the violations. Cleaning and repair work is carried out at regular intervals despite the huge pe-

destrian and traffic load and the continuous damage that is done to the street furniture.

Pedestrian crossings have been provided at intersections and also at mid-block bus stops. Safety of the commuters has always been our prime concern. Also, it will be seen that pedestrians prefer at-grade crossings rather than having to climb up and down to cross the road.

Public transport in the middle of the road is not a new idea. It is at least a century old. The reason Delhi buses have to kill people is because they



**EAR TO THE GROUND**

are forced to drive on the side where these modes are. Stops are at the red light and passengers are guided onto the zebra crossing where they can cross safely. At present bus passengers have to run across the road when they have to take a bus or leave it. This is because if people live or work on both sides of the road, then at every bus stop about 50% have to cross the full road to take the bus or after leaving it. At present there are no facilities and so they kill themselves.

DIMTS is following design guidelines set by UTTIPEC, which has been based on best international practices and has been approved by the governing body of UTTIPEC.

Smita Mathew,  
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REGA output:ramesh - 15...

<http://www.pressdisplay.com>

# Seek IIT help to improve NREGA output:Ramesh

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**RANCHI:** Concerned over the below par performance of MGNREGA - the country's largest job guarantee scheme - in Jharkhand, the Centre has told the state government to hire the services of IIT Kharagpur or any other similar institution to get time and motion studies of various ongoing development programmes done.

"We are ready to facilitate if you so require," Union rural development minister Jairam Ramesh said in a letter addressed to Jharkhand chief minister Arjun Munda last weekend. HT has a copy of the letter.

Ramesh had visited Jharkhand more than a couple of times this fiscal with focus on expediting development works in Left wing extremist-hit areas of the state. The idea is to usher in development vis-à-vis generate more and more employment opportunities for the unemployed masses in Naxal-affected areas of the state. His ministry's initiatives have charged up the hibernating administrative machinery in rural Jharkhand.

"One of the main constraints resulting in below par performance of MGNREGA in Jharkhand is lack of adequate human resources at all levels for its implementation including the MGNREGA commissionerate," Ramesh said in the letter dated March 7, and added, "You will agree that the state government has to make available adequate manpower as has been done by states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.

A week after meeting Munda in Ranchi on February 29, Ramesh's ministry released ₹ 200 crore to meet the immediate fund requirements for MGNREGA implementation in the state. The Union minister



■ **Jairam Ramesh**

went on to depute his joint secretary to visit Jharkhand and suggest measures to improve MGNREGA implementation in the state. The joint secretary visited Jharkhand on March 3 and gave his feedback to Ramesh on the issues and also charted the steps that need to be taken.

As per the joint secretary's report, the Jharkhand government had initiated a programme to dig 1.18 lakh wells in farmers' land last year. Owing to lack of capacity and underestimation of cost, the wells could not be completed and some of them collapsed last monsoon.

As on date, nearly 85,000 wells are still incomplete. They will have to be completed before the onset of monsoon. Quoting the report, Ramesh said as the office of the commissioner, MGNREGA, is weak in terms of human resources, the state government may explore whether the services of good NGOs or reputed institutions is needed to regularly monitor the progress of the wells programme. "If the wells are not completed before monsoon, it can be catastrophic to the poor farmers," he stressed.

The report said the model estimates prepared by the rural development department had left out some provisions for transport of materials like stones while adopting the schedule of rates of the chief engineer, vigilance.

Hindustan Times

Title : Maha Bharat Lesson from Berkeley

Author : SAMAR HALARNKAR

Location :

Article Date : 03/15/2012

# Lesson from Berkeley

The emerging crises, and fighting qualities, of the US education system hold lessons for the coming Indian Budget

I have not met Saul Perlmutter, winner of the 2011 Nobel prize in physics. It is, however, inspiring to know he is a colleague, as are nine other Nobel laureates.

These distinguished gentlemen do the same thing I — somewhat more undistinguished — do as a visiting fellow at the University of California at Berkeley in San Francisco's Bay Area, they teach. There is much to be inspired by. For instance, while he accelerates our knowledge of the universe's expansion, Perlmutter challenges 120 undergraduate students to explore music through the prism of science.

At a time when a US presidential candidate trashes higher education and India ponders new funding increases alongside declining outcomes, I am conscious of the freedom, foresight and investment that created one of the world's great universities and, now, sustains it at a time of trial.

At Berkeley, 23 alumni have won Nobels. The achievements of others are only somewhat less significant — such as founding companies called Intel, Apple, Sun Microsystems,



Free their minds, and the rest will follow

## Maha Bharat



SAMAR HALARNKAR

Google Earth and, my personal favourite, Chez Panisse, the restaurant that inspired the simple, organic style of cooking called California cuisine. There are too many other Berkeley notables to list here, but I cannot omit J Robert Oppenheimer; he who fathered the atomic bomb and after witnessing its destructive power, quoted the Bhagavad Gita (he learned Sanskrit

in 1933 and read the Gita in that language) to say, "I am become death, the destroyer of worlds."

Given the magnificence of such a system of learning, it is sobering to know that the US in general and the state of California in particular are slashing spending on education, even as China and India press forward. Across the US, public funding fell 12% over the last five years. In California, which is bankrupt, it is down 20%, and the state has been roiled by student and faculty protests. At Berkeley — one of 10 University of California campuses — state funding now stands at 10%, down from 52% about 30 years ago. Berkeley tuition costs are up 300% from 1981, and the university is about a finish a two-year campaign to raise \$3 billion.

Raising tuition fees is not a long-term solution for a public university and only provides ammunition for the growing hostility among US conservatives towards higher education. Rick Santorum, a strong candidate in the Republican party race to elect a presidential candidate to challenge Barack Obama, recently accused Obama of seeking to increase college enrol-

ments because colleges are "indoctrination mills", apparently responsible for dragging the world's only superpower towards a godless purgatory (and creating liberal voters).

From the 1950s to the 1970s, US students received college degrees in record numbers, mainly at public universities. The result was an army of world-leading scientists and professionals. "Public higher education has been the gateway to the middle class but that gate is shutting — just when income and wealth are more concentrated at the top than they've been since the 1920s, and when America needs the brainpower of its young people more than ever," writes Robert Reich, a Berkeley professor of public policy, in his blog. "This is nuts."

Yet, earlier this week, the United Nations' World Intellectual Property Organisation reported that US universities remain the most prolific international patent filers globally; 30 of the top 50 institutions are American (followed by Japan and South Korea, with seven each, Israel with two, Australia, China, Denmark and Singapore with one each — India does not figure).

Among institutions, the world's largest filer of patents is, unsurprisingly, the University of California system. Anecdotally, I concur. Apart from the innovative, even radical, thinking and thinkers I see around me, as a science writer, I often trawl new global scientific papers, only to find many of the authors in neighbouring buildings and cities.

Last month I met a Berkeley scientist, head of a typically multi-disciplinary team of neurologists, psychologists, engineers and statisticians that has converted brain waves into videos. Just back from his first visit to India and an IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) — I

won't name him or the IIT, so he won't be embarrassed — he was perplexed by the intellectual atmosphere. "It was only my first visit, but it seemed so much like a military institution, so hierarchical," he said. I think his larger point is that to excel, to be truly world class, universities, their students and professors must imbibe and dispense independent thought and action and learn to be leaders not followers.

Higher education has defined emerging India, but, equally, its failures threaten to imperil future growth.

In the rush for profit over excellence, 80% of India's engineering graduates are deemed unemployable without additional training. This crisis found an echo last week when the All India Council of Technical Education, the regulatory authority for technical and engineering institutions, said there could be a moratorium in some states on new institutions by 2014. Across India, as many as 65 business management colleges have announced closures due to declining demand, reports the University World News. Some privately run colleges have done well, but India's future rests with public institutions.

So, it seems sensible that the government increased funding for higher education 900% between 2007 and 2012, with the bulk of the money going to IITs and IIMs. There will be big hikes in the coming budget. The problem is that these institutions need to do more — intellectually and financially — to compete with the world's best at a time when the India story is faltering. Many IITs have attracted serious money from their alumni. Now, the government must cede control, so they can ring in sweeping intellectual changes.

Free their minds, and the rest will follow.

The views expressed by the author are personal

HindustanTimes

Title : Scientists clone pashmina goat

Author :

Location : KARNAL:

Article Date : 03/15/2012

# Scientists clone pashmina goat

**HT Correspondent**

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**KARNAL:** Three years after creating the world's first cloned buffalo, Indian scientists have successfully cloned the famous pashmina goat using an indigenously developed technique.

The healthy female kid was born on March 9, said Dr Tej Partap, vice-chancellor of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agri-

cultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST). The cloned animal, which weighed 1.3kg at the time of birth, has been kept under observation.

A team of scientists from SKUAST and Karnal's National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI) worked on the World Bank-funded project for three years. They used somatic cells from the ear of a donor goat.

Pashmina is a special breed

of goat, indigenous to the high altitudes of the Himalayas. Pashmina wool is known for its softness and the finer cashmere is from the underside and neck area of these goats.

"The increasing demand for pashmina products over the years has led to a sharp fall in the number of goats. The new achievement will help us multiply and protect the native goats from extinction," Partap said.