Newspaper Clips
March 25, 2015

Hindustan Times ND
25/03/2015 P-12

Three names for IIT directors sent to Prez

NEW DELHI: With the name of Rajeev Shekhar reportedly being forwarded to President Pranab Mukherjee along with two other names for the post of IIT Ropar director, HRD minister Smriti Irani seems to have had her way in the wake of disagreements for appointment to the post. A selection committee had zeroed in on Manoj Datta for the post but the name was reportedly vetoed by Irani in favour of Shekhar, professor at IIT Kanpur. For the other two vacancies for directors of IIT Bhubaneshwar and IIT Patna, Sarit Kumar Das and Pushpak Bhattacharya are the frontrunners.

Rajasthan Patrika ND 25/03/2015 P-1

आईआईटी और आईआईएम खोलने की राह होगी आसान

जमीन की कमी से निपटने के लिए मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय का प्रस्ताव

स्कंद विवेक धर. नई दिल्ली @ पत्रिका

patrika.com/india

देशभर में आईआईटी, आईआईएम खोलने के लिए सबसे बड़ी बाधा जमीन की कमी से निपटने के लिए मानव संसाधन विकास (एचआरडी) मंत्रालय ने इनके लिए जमीन का पैमाना आधे से भी कम करने की तैयारी की है। आईआईटी के लिए जहां कम से कम 500 एकड़ जमीन का जरूरत होती है, इसे घटाकर 260 एकड़ करने का प्रस्ताव है। आईआईएम के लिए 300 एकड़ जमीन के पैमाने को घटाकर शहरी क्षेत्रों में पांच से 10 एकड़ करने और गैर शहरी क्षेत्रों में 60 एकड़ करने का प्रस्ताव है।

विदेशों के संस्थानों का अध्ययन

केंद्रीय शिक्षण संस्थानों के लिए आवश्यक जमीन का निर्धारण करने के लिए एचआरडी मंत्रालय ने उच्च शिक्षा सचिव सत्य नारायण मोहंती की अध्यक्षता में एक कमेटी का गठन किया है। कमेटी ने प्रतिष्ठित आर्किटेक्ट हफीज कांट्रैक्टर से केंद्रीय शिक्षण संस्थानों के लिए एक मॉडल आर्किटेक्चरल प्लान बनाने को लेकर बात की थी। हाल ही में कमेटी की बैठक में हफीज कांट्रैक्टर ने देश-विदेश के नामी संस्थानों का अध्ययन कर एक केस स्टडी कमेटी को सौंपी, जिसके अध्ययन के बाद कमेटी ने केंद्रीय संस्थानों के लिए न्यूनतम आवश्यक जमीन का पैमाना तय किया। कमेटी की इस रिपोर्ट को आईआईटी रुड़की के चेयरमैन प्रो. अशोक मिश्र अंतिम रूप देंगे। इसके बाद इसे अप्रूवल के लिए मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री स्मृति ईरानी के सामने पेश किया जाएगा।

Financial Chronicle ND 25/03/2015 P-10

Courses via video conferencing

IIT Kharagpur is opening itself up to students of other engineering colleges, offering short modular courses on contemporary themes through video conferencing.

Rashtrya Sahara ND 25/03/2015 P-7

मरीजों को मिलेगी लंबी लाइनों से मुक्ति!

ज्ञानप्रकाश/एसएनबी

नई दिल्ली। दिल्ली सरकार के 39 अस्पतालों में ऑनलाइन पंजीकरण की प्रक्रिया के लिए नए सिरे से काम किया जाएगा। इसके लिए पहले से बनाए गए कम्प्यूटर सिस्टम को नये सिरे से तैयार किया जाएगा। नए सॉफ्टवेयर पर काम चल रहा है। धीरे-धीरे सभी सरकारी अस्पतालों को इसके दायरे में लाया जाएगा। अस्पतालों की लचर स्थिति और खामियों से दोचार होने के लिए स्वास्थ्य विभाग के अधिकारी हर दिन दौरा कर रहे हैं और कमियों संबंधी रिपोर्ट तैयार कर रहे हैं।

स्वास्थ्य विभाग के इस महत्वपूर्ण कार्य को अंजाम देने के लिए भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान (आईआईटी) दिल्ली और बैंगलुरू के एक्सपर्ट्स की मदद ली जा रही है। स्वास्थ्य विभाग का मानना है कि वर्तमान में जिस कम्प्यूटरीकृत प्रणाली का प्रयोग किया जा रहा है वह अक्सर 'हैंग' होने के साथ ही घंटों तक खुलता ही नहीं है। इसके रैम्प आदि काफी पुराने मॉड्यूल के हैं। सिस्टम में खामियों के चलते मरीजों के साथ ही विशेषज्ञों को खासी परेशानी झेलनी पड़ती है। इसके अलावा भी अस्पतालों में बुनियादी सुविधाएं दुरुस्त करने के लिए जरूरी उपाय शुरू किए जाएंगे। इसके लिए स्वास्थ्य अधिकारियों संग मिलकर योजना को नया रूप दिया जा रहा है।

लोकनायक, जीबी पंत समेत जिन कुछ अस्पतालों में सूचनाओं को मरीजों के लिए ऑनलाइन शुरू किया गया है वह चलते ही नहीं है। ऑनलाइन पंजीकरण के बारे में लोगों को जानकारी भी ज्यादा नहीं है। इसकी वजह से भी इसका फायदा दिल्ली वालों को नहीं मिल रहा है। योजना है कि पंजीकरण के लिए सुबह से ही अस्पतालों में लगने वाली लाइन को खत्म किया जाए। लोगों को इसके लिए दो से 3 घंटे तक लाइन

- ऑनलाइन रजिस्ट्रेशन सिस्टम को नए सिरे से किया जा रहा तैयार
- सभी सरकारी अस्पतालों में लगेगा नया सॉफ्टवेयर
- आईआईटी दिल्ली, पुणे के एक्सपर्ट्स तैयार कर रहे हैं नया सॉफ्टवेयर
- बड़े अस्पतालों में पंजीकरण के लिए रोजाना औसतन आते हैं साढ़े तीन से चार हजार मरीज

लगानी पड़ती है, फिर भी कुछ को खाली हाथ जाना पड़ता है। इसके लिए नया सॉफ्टवेयर बनाया जा रहा है। सभी सरकारी अस्पतालों में एक ही तरह का सिस्टम होगा। उम्मीद है सबकुछ ठीक रहा तो मरीजों को यह तकनीकी सुविधाओं का लाभ मई महीने से मिलना प्रारंभ होगा। इसमें लोगों को किस अस्पताल में कितने बिस्तर खाली हैं, कहां पर कौन सी सुविधाएं हैं, जांच व रोगी का उपचार व नैदानिक रिकार्ड संबंधी जानकारियां भी एक क्लिक पर मिलेंगी।

बुनियादी सुविधाएं बढ़ाई जाएंगी : स्वास्थ्य मंत्री डा. सतेंद्र जैन ने कहा कि कुछ अस्पतालों में बुनयादी सुविधाओं की कमी की शिकायतें आती रहती हैं। मसलन इलाज में काम आने वाले उपकरणों में खराबी व दवा की कमी, बेड न मिलना, इंजेक्शन, मरहम, पट्टी, गॉज न मिलना, लचर सफाई आदि। इन सभी मसलों के समाधान के लिए योजनाओं पर काम किया जा रहा है। अस्पताल में बेड की संख्या बढ़ाना हमारी प्राथमिकता में है।

वर्तमान में अस्पतालों की लचर है हालत : दिल्ली सरकार के बड़े अस्पतालों में प्रत्येक दिन तीन से चार हजार मरीज पंजीकरण के लिए आते हैं। इनमें से दूर दराज से भी आने वाले मरीज होते हैं, जिन्हें सुबह ही वहां आकर लाइन लगानी पड़ती है। वहीं पंजीकरण के लिए अस्पतालों में पर्याप्त काउंटर नहीं होने से मरीजों की परेशानी और बढ़ जाती है। कई बार वे पंजीकरण कराने से वंचित रह जाते हैं जिससे उन्हें अगले दिन फिर से लाइन लगानी पड़ती है। बिस्तरों की कमी है। डॉक्टर और पैरामेडिकल स्टाफ का व्यवहार मरीजों के प्रति बुरा है। ये सब फिलहाल सुधरने की बात की जाए तो स्वास्थ्य विभाग कैसे सुधारने में सफल होगा यह 'यक्ष' प्रश्न है।

Times Of India ND 25/03/2015 P-5

Study on mobile radiation begins

AIIMS, IIT-D Among 17 Top Bodies Asked By Centre To Probe Its Health Impact

DurgeshNandan.Jha
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: At least 17 top scientific institutions in the country, including AIIMS and IIT Delhi, have been commissioned by the Union government to address concerns about radiation emitted from mobile phones and phone towers causing illnesses.

Sources said funds ranging from Rs 22 lakh to Rs 2 crore, as demanded, have already been allocated for the research by the department of science and technology.

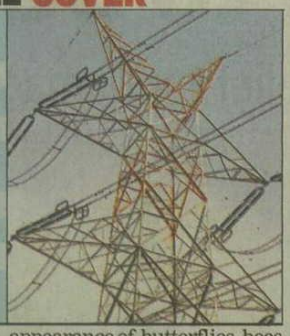
TOI spoke to officials who said the move is aimed to review different aspects of the health impact at the earliest so that action or remedial measures can be taken to save people from potential consequences. The Indian Council of Medical Research is also conducting a study but that is a prospective one and may take longer, said an official.

"The projects awarded to the 17 institutions are to be completed in a maximum of 36 months while the minimum time period is 18 months," a senior official said. He added that local-level research is needed as those conducted abroad may not determine the effect on Indians due to varying climates.

In 2011, an inter-ministerial committee had said mobile phone towers should not be installed near high-density residential areas, schools, playgrounds and hospitals after reviewing then available research some of which held that radiation from mobile phones and towers posed serious health risks, including loss of memory, lack of concentration, disturbance in the digestive system and sleep disturbances. The committee pointed to research which claimed that disappearance of butterflies, bees, insects and sparrows from big cities had been due to radiation from mobile phone towers.

WHAT THEY WILL COVER

- Risk to children and pregnant women
- Infertility in men
- DNA damage
- Effect on stress proteins
- Interference with other gadgets, including pacemakers
- Effects on skin
- Ear damage
- Neurodegenerative diseases
- Adverse effects on animals and environment



The World Health Organization also labelled exposure to radiation emitted from cellphones as "possibly carcinogenic to humans". However, cellphone operators have been resisting curbs on installing towers saying there is still no evidence on the cause-and-effect relationship between the exposure and health hazard, a fact conceded by many senior scientists.

There is fear among the public who blame exposure to radiation for rising incidence of cancer. Recently, residents in some parts of Noida snapped off power connection to some mobile phone towers. Connectivity was badly affected. "If cellphone towers are targeted without evidence, it will hamper business as well as lead to public inconvenience. We must wait for results of the study before coming to any conclusion," said a cellular operator.

Statesman ND 25/03/2015 P-7

ISRO MISSION EXTENDED BY SIX MONTHS

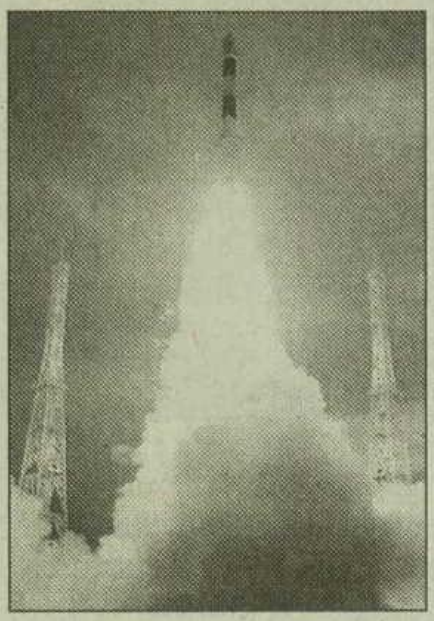
Journey continues

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Bengaluru, 24 March

The country's low-cost Mars mission, that completed six months of rendezvous with the red planet today, has been extended by another six months due to surplus fuel, a senior ISRO official said.

"Mars orbiter spacecraft has completed six months orbiting around Mars today, its life has been extended for another six months. About 37 kgs of fuel is available which we feel is sufficient to last longer," Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) spokesperson Deviprasad Karnik told reporters.

The Rs 450-crore MOM Mangalyaan is the cheapest inter- planetary mission that, at just USD 74 million, costing less than the estimated USD 100 million budget



of the sci-fi blockbuster "Gravity" and a tenth of NASA's Mars mission Maven that entered the Martian orbit on 22 September .

Karnik said "all five payloads are on, Mars colour camera has already sent about three hundred odd pictures; the accummulation of data will continue but their analysis will take more time."Stating that the spacecraft will go through a "blackout" phase for about 15 days from 8-22 June. During this period, Sun will block Mars from the earth snapping the communication with the satellite. At this time, MOM will go into autonomous mode and will take its decisions; we will not know about the fuel consumption at this time, once it comes out it will be analysed," he added.MOM aims to study Mars' surface and mineral composition, and scan its atmosphere for methane, an indicator of life in Mars.

The ISRO spacecraft was launched on its nine-month-long odyssey on a home-grown PSLV rocket from Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh on November 5 2013 and had escaped the earth's gravitational field on 1 December.

Times Of India ND 25/03/2015P-23

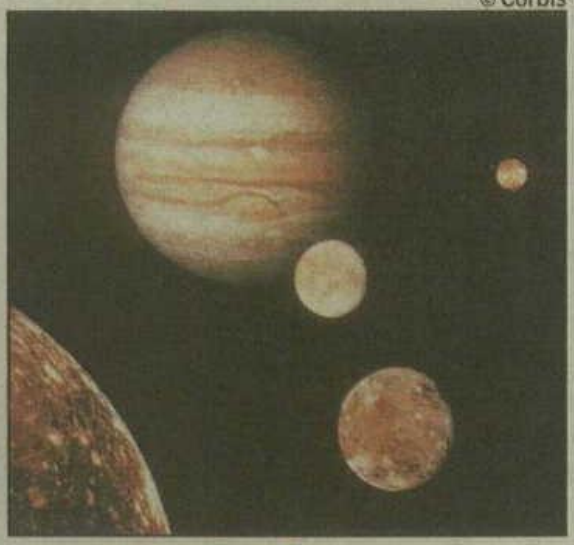
Marauding Jupiter changed solar system

Washington: Jupiter may have swept through the early solar system like a wrecking ball, destroying any newly-formed super-Earths by driving them into the Sun, a new study has found. The findings suggest that a second generation of inner planets, including Earth and Mars, would then have formed from the depleted material that was left behind.

The study also explains why the terrestrial planets in our solar system have such relatively low masses compared to the planets orbiting other Sun-like stars. "Our work suggests that Jupiter's inward-outward migration could have destroyed a first generation of planets and set the stage for the formation of the mass-depleted terrestrial planets that our solar system has today," said Konstantin Batygin, assistant professor of planetary science at California Institute of Technology.

About half of Sun-like stars in our galactic neighbourhood have orbiting planets. In our solar system, very little lies within Mercury's orbit; there is only a little debris but certainly no planets. That is in sharp contrast with what astronomers see in most planetary systems.

According to Batygin, Jupiter is critical to understanding how the solar system came to be. Their model incorporates 'the Grand Tack scenario', proposed by another team of astronomers in 2011. In that scenario, Jupiter first migrated inward toward the Sun until the formation of Saturn caused it to reverse course and migrate outward to its current position.



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'THE WRECKING BALL'

At that time, it's plausible that rocky planets with deep atmospheres would have been forming close to the Sun from a dense disk of gas and dust, on their way to becoming typical "super-Earths" — planets larger than Earth but smaller than Neptune. As Jupiter moved inward, however, gravitational perturbations from the giant planet would have swept the inner planets (and smaller planetesimals and asteroids) into close-knit, overlapping orbits, setting off a series of collisions that smashed all the nascent planets into pieces. PTI

Financial Express ND 25/03/2015 P-11

The campus call

E&P enterprises should take the lead to attract students to geosciences, besides ensuring quality education

NM BORAH

THE EXPLORATION success of an oil company hinges on the quality of its geoscientific work. A team of brilliant geoscientists and a drive towards 'More Technology per Barrel' would be the key to success.

In recent time, significant new hydrocarbon discoveries, like the deep-water reservoirs in Brazil's Santos basin, Venezuela's "extra-heavy" oil in the Orinoco Belt, the oil sands in Canada, the Kwanza basin in Angola, and the shale gas/shale oil finds in the USA, have led to substantial accretion to the global hydrocarbon resource base. But the petroleum exploration landscape in India has been singularly devoid of any giant hydrocarbon discovery beyond the offshore Bombay High find in the west coast almost four decades back.

While numerous small-to-medium, including a few fairly large size discoveries, have been made over the years, proven oil & gas reserves in India continues to be abysmally low by global standards. These new discoveries have helped the domestic industry maintain the overall production levels by compensating for natural decline from old matured fields. But the end result was stagnation in domestic oil and gas production levels. It also created a poor perception about India's hydrocarbon prospectivity.

Despite the various government initiatives to liberalise the exploration & production sector, large parts of the country's sedimentary basins remain unexplored, or poorly explored at best. In order to accelerate petroleum exploration and enhance oil & gas production, apart from enabling policy initiatives, what is needed is a major thrust in imparting quality education in geosciences, petroleum engineering and related disciplines.

The petroleum exploration landscape in India has been singularly devoid of any giant hydrocarbon discovery beyond the offshore Bombay High find almost four decades back

Mitigating exploration risks has to be seen through the prism of improving understanding of the entire petroleum system. To do this, oil companies must have a pool of excellent geoscientists equipped with cutting-edge technology. The issue assumes added significance because of the impending "Great Crew Change"—refers to the fact that a high percentage of the experienced workforce would retire in the next few years. This mass retirement would imply a sudden and irretrievable loss of a reservoir of skill, knowledge and expertise which will have to be filled up by young talents.

However, geoscience doesn't seem to be a career option of choice among bright students. The E&P industry needs to counter ill-conceived campaigns about its operations leading to environmental degradation, which creates a negative image about the "dirty" oil industry that young students abhor.

The E&P industry, in union with professional bodies and associations, need to promote geosciences amongst young students as an exciting and rewarding career option. The industry should also step up efforts towards enhancing industry-academia collaboration to improve the quality of education imparted. The earlier it is done, the better it would be.

The author is technical member (petroleum & natural gas) Appellate Tribunal for Electricity

HT.COM ND 25.03.2015 P-6

DISTANCE LEARNING DEBATE

THUMBS DOWN Calcutta High Court judgment on open and distance learning (ODL) degrees

Jeevan Prakash Sharma

■ 30 lakh students are enrolled in ODL courses
THINKSTOCK

Is a degree from an open and distance learning (ODL) system at par with a degree awarded by a formal university? Apparently not, if one goes by a recent Calcutta High Court judgment expressing serious reservations about the quality of education imparted through distance mode.

The court's observations contradict a March 1, 1995 Gazette notification of the Central government and subsequent circulars issued by the University Grants Commission (UGC), which state that an ODL degree is equivalent to a degree obtained through regular university education.

"Degrees/diplomas/certificates awarded by open universities in conformity with the UGC notification of degrees be treated as equivalent to corresponding awards of the traditional universities in the country," states a UGC circular issued on October 14, 2013.

The Calcutta High Court, in the meanwhile, deciding a candidate's eligibility for the post of a principal on the basis of his PhD obtained from an open university, recently stated, "We have no hesitation to hold that be it a graduation degree, a Masters degree, Ph D degree or M Phil degree which is granted by an open university either through distance mode of education programme or through any informal education programme cannot be equated with the graduation degree, granted to a candidate by Formal Conventional Recognised Universities after conducting a conventional course on regular basis."

Though concerned about the court's observations, academicians and experts from the field of ODL programmes have accepted that the perception of the ODL system not being qualitatively at par with regular education is because of deteriorating quality and lack of strong regulatory measures.

Manoj Soni, vice-chancellor, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, Ahmedabad, who is also chairman of the MHRD's three-member committee reviewing the feasibility of the Distance Education Council of India draft bill, finds the HC observation "quite alarming". Soni further added "I agree that some fringe elements in the distance education sector have compromised with norms and indulged in unacceptable practices, but it doesn't mean that the whole sector should be put in the dock. There are serious violations in the formal system of education as well. It's due to this ODL system that those from an economically deprived background have been able to get good education,".

> **Open and distance learning has allowed students from economically weak sections and regions to obtain a quality university education at a minimal cost**
> MANOJ SONI, vice-chancellor, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University

Well-known scholar, Prof N R Madhava Menon, who chaired a committee on reforms in distance education and gave its report in 2012, says that in principle there should be no distinction between regular and open university degrees. "There is lack of credibility in the distance education system because all types of players have been allowed and no proper regulatory system is in place. Delay in enacting the Distance Education Council of India draft bill, which has been envisaged as a strong regulator for the ODL system, is going against the interests of lakhs of students," says Menon.

Experts say that despite UGC's own notification barring state and private universities offering courses beyond their own geographical boundaries, most universities were flouting rules. "The situation has become so bad that now there is trust deficit among universities – they are not honouring each others' degrees for admitting students in higher programmes," says Swarj Basu, former director, Distance Education Council (DEC). In 2009 the Supreme Court in the matter of Annamalai University had asked if the alternative system was envisaged under the Open University Act. The apex court had stated: "The distinction between a formal system and informal system is in the mode in which education is imparted, not the education itself."

WHO IS REGULATING OPEN LEARNING?

- In India, at present, there is one national open university, 15 state open universities and more than 200 dual mode universities which are offering various undergraduate and postgraduate courses
- More than 30 lakh students, about 30% of the total enrollment in higher education, are studying in these universities
- In December 2012, the UGC took over the power to regulate open learning from the Distance Education Council, but two years later, a Rajya Sabha committee, held this transfer of power illegal
- This change of regulatory role is of no help as the UGC has failed to stop universities from offering illegal degrees

IISc has no associate director for eight months now

http://www.deccanherald.com/content/467627/iisc-has-no-associate-director.html

Prashanth G N, March 25, 2015, Bengaluru, Dhns

Institute Council forms search panel to select candidate

The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) is functioning without an associate director for eight months now.

Prof N Balakrishnan, who was associate director for nine years, resigned on July 31, 2014, the same day Prof Balaram retired as director. A good part of administrative responsibility that the present director Prof Anurag Kumar discharges cannot now be shared, as the associate director is yet to be appointed.

The appointment of Kumar as director went through a similar search process – it was undertaken well in advance of Balaram's retirement. The same cannot be said of the appointment of associate director. What is surprising is that it has taken eight months for the IISc to even set up a search committee. Anurag Kumar confirmed the same to Deccan Herald. "The IISc Council has just now formed the committee to appoint a suitable candidate. These things take time. The search process is on."

No timeframe was given for the appointment of associate director. The appointment may be taking time also because of an element of arbitrariness and personal preference involved in the process. A very senior academic, who has been part of several committees and who has held senior positions in the IISc, said the appointment of associate director was not statutory.

"The appointment of associate director is left to the likes and dislikes of the director. If the director wants an associate, the appointment will be made. If he doesn't want it, the process of appointment will not be initiated. The post of associate director is not statutory."

Other professors said that eight months was a long time for appointment of an associate director.

"There is no doubt that it takes time to appoint a new candidate, who has to be well qualified, have the relevant status and stature in the scientific field. Any search process will have to examine five to 10 candidates to select the best among them. We understand it takes time, but such a long time will send a signal that IISc is not serious about appointing an associate director."

The long search period may also indicate that good candidates are not available. "The candidate should be someone of the stature of the director as both have to work in tandem. The IISc Council, the highest body in the institute, is aware that there has to be some parity between the director and the associate for smooth functioning," a senior academician said.

IIT, IISER to function from this academic year

http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/iit-iiser-to-function-from-this-academic-year/article7029766.ece

The State government has set in motion its ambitious plan to turn Tirupati into an ‘Education Hub’, with HRD Minister Ganta Srinivasa Rao announcing the functioning of IIT and IISER from this academic year.

Interacting with the media after inspecting sites in and around Merlapaka of Srikalahasti constituency on Tuesday, Mr. Rao said admissions would begin soon and the classes would be conducted in private educational institutions until the completion of the respective buildings. “IIT will be accepting 120 students under four engineering branches, whereas IISER will accept 50 students. Separate teams from the institutions are currently evaluating the feasibility of conducting classes in private institutions in the vicinity and will soon zero in on the locations,” he said. Mr. Rao said the government was planning to hold the foundation stone laying ceremony in a big way, by involving students in the form of discussions and debates. Union Ministers Smriti Irani, M. Venkaiah Naidu and Y.S. Chowdary and Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu will take part in the ceremony on March 28.