

Newspaper Clips

March 27, 2012

FINANCIAL EXPRESS ND 27/03/2012 p-4

FE Labs

REINVENTING THE WHEEL

IIT-D develops low-cost sensor for monitoring concrete health

Is there anything common to a concrete bridge, a human foot and the flow of traffic? When it comes to a low-cost sensor developed at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, (IIT-D), to measure vibration patterns in structures, there may be a strong link.

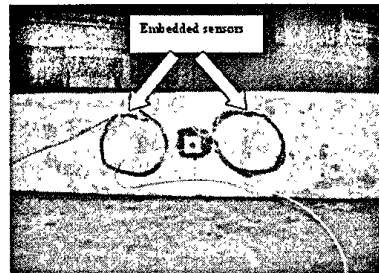
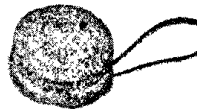
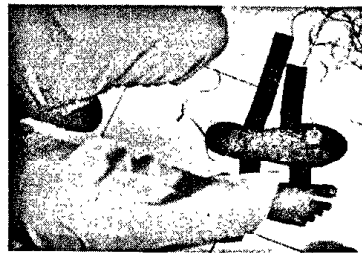
The piezo-based sensor designed by the Institute's civil engineering department was primarily aimed at structural health monitoring, but its potential applications could extend to mapping foot-sole pressure for clinical applications or as a traffic monitoring sensor buried in the carriageway.

A sensor made of a piezoelectric material such as quartz, responds to mechanical stress by developing surface charges, a phenomenon called 'direct effect'. Conversely, an electric field causes it to undergo a mechanical strain. The prefix piezo is derived from Greek, which means 'squeeze' or 'press'.

In a recent research paper, a team led by associate professor of the civil engineering department Suresh Bhalla demonstrated that a piezoelectric ceramic (PZT) patch can complement existing techniques of measuring the vibration response of a concrete structure, such as a bridge, by playing the double role of determining strain for the structure as a whole and also at a local level. This can serve as a viable alternative to expensive accelerometers, which are widely used to carry out the health monitoring of such structures, the team says.

Bhalla, who heads IIT-D's Smart Structures and Dynamics Laboratory, has come out with a ready-to-use composite piezoelectric sensor especially for reinforced concrete structures. "The cost of such a sensor would be less than one-tenth of the cost of an accelerometer," he says, adding that the sensor practically becomes part of the structure and can serve it for very long periods without any fear of accidental damage.

Their research paper, published in the Journal of Intelligent Material Systems and Structures, notes that the performance of surface-bonded patches like the piezo electric sensor have been shown to be as good as accelerometers and can capture frequencies as low as 1 hertz (Hz). "The sensor has been tested in the laboratory environment successfully," says Bhalla, adding



The sensor was primarily aimed at monitoring structural health, but its potential applications could extend to mapping foot-sole pressure for diabetics or for monitoring vehicular traffic

that further laboratory trials and pilot studies are in progress.

Piezo composites have been in use as sensors and actuators in aerospace applications for over two decades though their entry into civil engineering is more recent. Currently, the types of sensors widely used for global structural health monitoring (SHM), or monitoring a structure as a whole, include electrical resistance strain gauges, fibre-optic sensors, piezo-electric accelerometers and ultrasonic pulse transducers.

"PZT is currently used for active sensing at an extremely local level to detect flaws and damages. The jury is still out on structural global level SHM using PZT, as the performance are used for local-level response," says IIT Rourkee director Pradipta Banerji. He is also on the executive council of the International Society for Health Monitoring of Intelligent Infrastructure.

In a subsequent paper published in the Journal *Experimental Techniques*, Bhalla's team demonstrated the use of the piezo sensors for monitoring traffic flow by embedding it below the carriageway. "Compared with other traffic sensors available in the market, the proposed sensor is very cost-effective and warrants minimal data processing efforts and hardware costs," the paper noted. The sensor had successfully passed tests under different traffic types and

it could be calibrated for action under real situations, it said.

The team also collaborated with the Centre for Bio-Medical Engineering at IIT-D to adapt the same piezo sensor for biomedical applications such as mapping the foot-sole pressure and its distribution. "This is specially relevant for diabetic patients whose foot pressure distribution is sometimes of concern. Such patients tend to lose their sensation on the sole and are prone to exerting very high foot pressures leading to foot ulcers," he says.

The team has submitted proposals for transfer of the technology to a few companies under IIT-D's Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer. Bhalla says the sensor has an edge because it can be used with minimum intervention and is less expensive.

Over the past few years, the quest for better sensors for SHM has driven research into areas such as wireless sensor networks and system identification techniques to interpret data and assess the condition of structures and for life extension of old structures. According to Banerji, some of the key challenges currently are to develop substantive and automated interpretation of online SHM data that can provide alerts when a structural or functional deterioration occurs in a structure, and the integration of data from various sources.

— Ajay Sukumaran

EXPERTSPEAK

SURESH BHALLA,
associate professor,
civil engineering
department, IIT, Delhi



The cost of such a sensor would be less than one-tenth of the cost of an accelerometer. Being embedded inside the structure, the sensor practically becomes part of the structure and can serve it for very long periods with no concern of accidental damage

PRADIPTA BANERJI,
director, IIT, Rourkee



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STATFACTS

GAUGING PRESSURE



- IIT, Delhi, researchers recently developed a ready-to-use composite piezoelectric sensor for reinforced concrete structures
- The low-cost sensor is being adapted for biomedical uses such as monitoring foot pressure on the sole and its distribution
- The team also demonstrated its potential use to measure traffic flow by embedding the sensor in the carriageway
- Piezo composites are a recent entrant into civil engineering applications though they have been used in aerospace applications
- The IIT-D piezoelectric sensor has an edge because it can be used with minimum intervention and is less expensive

Business Line ND 27/03/2012 p-9

Country in a higher education emergency, says report

Our Bureau

Bangalore, March 26

The TeamLease India Labour Report 2012 suggests the country is in a 'higher education emergency' situation.

The reasons for this are challenges of enrolment, physical access and employability.

The study says the country's higher education enrolment ratio is 11 per cent, which half of the world average and way behind that of developed countries (54 per cent).

The report highlights three banes plaguing the higher education scene: not enough children go to college, not enough children have physical access to college and many colleges give degrees but don't lead to jobs.

The study titled, 'Massifying

Indian Higher Education: The Access and Employability Case for Community Colleges' argues for solutions that would combine the needs of policy makers, employers and the youth.

"Community colleges could be an important innovation because they are part ITI, part-college and part-employment exchange," says Mr Manish Sabharwal, Chairman, Team-Lease Services.

Enrolment in higher education is about 1.6 crore in 2012. The community college offering two year programmes could increase enrolment by 8 million from small towns, unorganised workers and the traditionally disadvantaged, Mr Sabharwal said.

Business Line ND 27/03/2012 p-9

Tech schools to get global accreditation

Our Bureau

New Delhi, March 26

India's burgeoning engineering student population may soon get the opportunity to stand tall alongside its western peers from "internationally accredited" institutions.

At the 1st World Summit on Accreditation organised in New Delhi, chair of Washington Accord, Dr Hu Hanrahan, said India's National Board of Accreditation (NBA) is well on its way to becoming a signatory, though he did not comment on the time frame.

Once NBA becomes a signatory, graduates of programmes and institutions accredited by it would be at par with students from institutions of 14 other signatory bodies, including ones in the US, the UK, Japan and Singapore.

While inaugurating the event, the Minister of Human Resource Development, Mr Kapil



Mr Kapil Sibal, Union Minister of Human Resource Development.

Sibal, stressed on the need for developing "a system of quality assurance" and said India is keen on becoming a part of the "family of that quality of the Washington Accord" and hopes to be ready by 2014.

Mr Sibal also said cross-border accreditation process would encourage mobility among the college-going population. The Minister

further said the Government is conceiving and putting into place a meta-university, which would involve universities collaborating with one another and giving students the option to choose courses ranging across subjects.

He said he expects this meta-university, which would also allow students to get degrees from more than one university at a time, to take off in the next academic year.

However, raising questions on the quality of education in India, corporate stakeholders said only 20-25 per cent of engineers and management graduates are employable.

Mr Sibal hoped that the National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions Bill introduced in 2010 will be passed within this year.

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Times of India, ND 27/03/2012

P-1

Soon, Indian BTech degrees may be recognized abroad

Himanshi Dhawan &
Manash Pratim Gohain | TNN

New Delhi: Engineers with undergraduate degrees will find it easier to seek jobs and opportunities for higher studies abroad from 2013, if India's bid to join the elite Washington Accord for international accreditation is accepted.

► To face US audit, P 15

If it comes through, undergraduate engineering degrees from India will be brought on a par with those of the US, UK, Australia, Canada, Singapore, Japan, New Zealand, South Africa and six other nations, easing mobility for Indian undergraduate engineers.

The National Board of

India to roll out NEET in 2013-14

It's now official — the common National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for admission to Under Graduate courses will be conducted by CBSE while the National Board of Examination will conduct the Post Graduate exams. India is all set to roll out NEET from 2013-14. The Union health ministry has informed state governments that their existing reservation policies would not be disturbed under the proposed scheme and state-wise eligibility merit lists will be prepared for respective state authorities. **P 10**

Accreditation, under the aegis of All India Council for Technical Education, plans to bid to become a permanent member of the Washington Accord in June 2013.

Said G Prabhakar, an NBA member and president, Andhra Pradesh chapter of Institution of Engineers (India), "In 2013, NBA will be a

full member of the Washington Accord. The accord recommends that the graduates of programs accredited by any of the signatory bodies be recognized by other members as having met academic requirements for entry to engineering." India was granted the status of a provisional member in 2007.

Desi BTech set for global currency

Himanshi Dhawan &
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New Delhi: Indian undergraduate engineers will soon find it easier to seek jobs and opportunities for higher studies abroad if the country's bid to join the elite Washington Accord for international accreditation is accepted.

If the move comes through, Indian undergraduate engineering degrees will be brought on par with those of the US, UK, Australia, Canada, Singapore, Japan, New Zealand, South Africa and six other nations.

The National Board of Accreditation (NBA), under the aegis of the All India Council for Technical Education

Single MBBS entrance test from 2013-14

New Delhi: India is all set to roll out the common National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for admission to undergraduate (UG) medical courses from 2013-14. While NEET will be conducted by the CBSE, the National Board of Examination will conduct the postgraduate (PG) exams.

The Union health ministry has informed state governments that their existing reservation policies would not be disturbed under the proposed scheme.

Among states that were against introduction of NEET in 2012 were West Bengal, Maharashtra, Assam, AP and Karnataka. Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa were ready to join NEET from 2013-14. NEET would mean a single entrance exam for MBBS and MD courses offered by all 271 medical colleges of India—with over 31,000 MBBS and 11,000 PG seats. TNN

(AICTE), plans to bid to become a permanent member of the Washington Accord in June 2013.

"In 2013, NBA will be a full member of the Washington

Accord. The accord recommends that the graduates of programs accredited by any of the signatory bodies be recognized by other members as having met academic require-

ments for entry to engineering," said G Prabhakar, an NBA member and president, Institution of Engineers (India)-Andhra Pradesh chapter.

However, India is yet to invite the Washington Accord to audit its accreditation system, a crucial process to become a full member, despite the country being granted a provisional status in 2007. Hu Hanrahan, chair of the Washington Accord, refused to commit to a timeline for India's membership. In India for the first World Summit on Accreditation 2012, he said the process was underway.

But even if India is granted membership, only about 20% of the 4,000-odd Indian institutes may make the cut.

Indian Exdpress Pune 26.03.2012 P-3

AICTE approves 76 new tech institutes, 14 in state

Approval comes despite request from states not to permit new colleges

MIHIKA BASU

MUMBAI, MARCH 25

THE All-India Council for Technical Education has approved 76 new technical institutes across the country despite a request from several states not to permit new engineering institutes for the 2012-'13 academic year.

The approved colleges belong to disciplines like engineering, management, pharmacy, MCA, hotel management and architecture and the number of seats available will be approximately 20,000.

Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Orissa had cited huge vacancies in their engineering institutes while asking the council not to permit new institutes. The state had recommended 92 applications in management, engineering, pharmacy etc, of which 14 have

VACANT SEATS IN STATE

22,000
engg seats in 2010

32,000
engg seats in 2011

16,000
management seats
in 2011

“ We cannot suddenly stop giving permissions. We are giving approvals to all those who have strictly met the criteria specified by us ”

SS MANTHA,
AICTE chairman

been approved in the first phase. As many as 22,000 engineering seats had gone vacant in the state in 2010,

while it was 32,000 engineering and 16,000 management seats in 2011.

Asked if the vacancy situation will be worse this year with the addition of new institutes, an official from the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) said the exact situation would emerge only after the admission process starts.

After several extensions of the final date to submit applications to start new institutes, the AICTE had received 362 proposals this year to start new technical institutes and 307 applications to begin new polytechnics — 669 applications in all. This was a massive decline from 2010, when the AICTE had received 2,176 proposals. “At a meeting held recently, we have cleared 76 proposals. They are spread across the country. Work on the remaining

applications are in progress and a decision will be taken by this month-end,” AICTE chairman S S Mantha said.

There has been a steady growth in the number of AICTE-approved technical institutes in the past few years — from 4,491 in 2006-'07 to 8,361 in 2011-'12. The intake too has gone up from 7,50,797 in 2006-'07 to 20,46,611 in 2011-'12. “We cannot suddenly stop giving permissions. We are giving approvals to all those who have strictly met the criteria specified by us,” Mantha says.

'O SHU... <http://library>.

138 PVT COLLEGES LOOKING TO SHUT DOWN

Vanita Srivastava

■ vanita.shrivastava@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: As many as 138 private institutes across the country, including 65 management and 15 engineering colleges, have sought permission to close from the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). This is more than three times the number of institutes that had come up with the request last year.

“We have received applications for closure from 138 institutes. But the final closure can be done only after we get a no-objection certificate from the state governments and the universities concerned,” said SS Mantha, chairman, AICTE.

MOST GANGA PROJECTS DON'T HAVE CLEARANCE

RASHME SEHGAL

NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

Most of hydroelectric power projects in the Ganga's Alaknanda and Bhagirathi river basins have come up in the teeth of public opposition with even water experts from IIT Roorkee having warned that even the minimum water flow in the Ganges had been adversely affected with their construction.

It was keeping this in mind that the former environment minister, Mr Jairam Ramesh, had issued a stop work order on the Srinagar project on June 30, 2011. The order has not been withdrawn even though work on the hydro-project is continuing till date.

Most of these hydro-projects are already steeped in controversy with local activists highlighting how work on these projects has kickstarted without their receiving the requisite environmental clearances.

MoEF's expert appraisal committee examined environmental violations in Phata-Byung and Singoli-Bhatai projects on the Mandakini had twice recommended work be halted due to green violations.

CLICKED THE UNIVERSITY HAD MADE THE APPLICATION PROCESS TO 121 OF ITS COURSES ONLINE THIS YEAR

JNU online admissions a hit, more than 52,000 apply

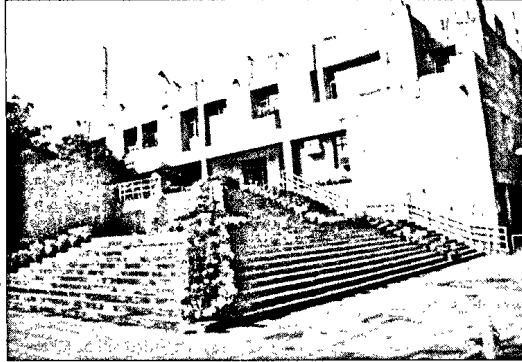
NANDINI THILAK
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

THE decisions to make admission process at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) online from this academic year has proved successful with over 52,000 applicants of the more than 65,000 who have applied this year opting to complete the process online, university officials said.

"There were many apprehensions when we launched the online process. But, so far, 52,450 applicants have completed their application process online. We sold about 15,000 forms through other methods. There is a week

left before applications close and we expect about 70,000 aspirants to apply, as is the case every year," said D Tekchandani, Advisor (Admissions), of JNU.

The University had made the application process to 121 of its courses online this year. The admissions are done through entrance examinations and the university receives applications from across India and abroad. Applicants who apply online can also make the payment online and will have admit cards sent to their e-mail ids. The university has extended the deadline for submission of applications (online and otherwise) from March 21 to March 28.



Jawaharlal Nehru University sold about 15,000 forms through other methods. PHOTO COURTESY: WWW.JNU.AC.IN

Officials said the shift to online admissions has not just made the process convenient, but has also managed to eliminate selling of forms in blackmarket

Officials said the shift to online admissions has not just made the process convenient for applicants, but has also managed to root out a bigger problem — selling of admission forms in the black market

outside Delhi. "People would come from places like Patna and buy, sometimes, a hundred forms, and then sell it in their hometowns for a profit. This has completely stopped this year," Tekchandani said.

The University now plans to make copies of old question papers, to prepare for the entrance tests, also available online. Currently, students have to remit Rs 10 either in person or by post to get these booklets.

"We had difficulties as there was not enough server space this year to put up such a huge amount of data. But from next year, it will be available free online," Tekchandani said.

Rashtriya Sahara ND 27/03/2012 p-4

हीमोफीलिया से जूझ रहा है आईआईटी छात्र मोहित

ज्ञानप्रकाश/ एसएनबी

नई दिल्ली। हालत कितनी भी गंभीर क्यों न हो, एम्स में ऊंची सिफारिश के बिना उपचार पाना मुश्किल है। आईआईटी के प्रथम वर्ष में पढ़ने वाले हीमोफीलिया से पीड़ित मोहित शर्मा (21) को लोक नार्थक अस्पताल के डॉक्टरों ने एम्स में रेफर किया था। मेडिकल रिपोर्ट में डॉक्टरों ने उसका बोनमैरो ट्रांसप्लांट करने का सुझाव दिया है। रिपोर्ट में कहा गया था कि यह सुविधा लोक नार्थक अस्पताल में नहीं है, इसलिए एम्स या फिर किसी निजी अस्पताल में आगे का इलाज किया जाए।

उल्लेखनीय है कि मोहित स्ट्रेचर पर है, उसकी नाक में ऑक्सीजन मास्क लगा हुआ है। वह खुद चल फिर भी नहीं सकता है, रूटीन भी किसी की सहायता से कर पाता है। इस स्थिति में बीते चार दिनों से उसकी मां महिमा देवी इस उम्मीद से इमरजेंसी के बाहर पड़ी है, कि यहां बोनमैरो ट्रांसप्लांट यूनिट में बिस्तर खाली होगा, फिर मोहित को भर्ती किया जाएगा। चूंकि यहां पर बोनमैरो ट्रांसप्लांट की सुविधा है। इलाज भी निजी अस्पतालों की अपेक्षा सस्ता है।

इस बाबत महिमा देवी ने बताया कि मोहित के पापा कैंसर रोग के कारण नहीं रहे। अब मेरे भविष्य का यही सहारा रह गया है। पीरागढ़ी में एक छोटा सा मकान है, रोजगार है नहीं एक कमरा किराए पर दे रखा है, उसी से बड़ी मुश्किल से गुजारा हो पाता है। मोहित पढ़ने में अच्छा है यही कारण है कि वह आईआईटी में प्रवेश पाने में सफल रहा है। उम्मीद जगी थी कि इस बीच पता चला की हीमोफीलिया रोग से उसके रीढ़ की हड्डी को सामान्य करने वाले ब्लड सेल्स खराब हो रहे हैं। उसकी हालत में सुधार के लिए बोनमैरो ट्रांसप्लांट कराना जरूरी होगा।

उल्लेखनीय है कि दिल्ली सरकार के स्वास्थ्य मंत्री डा. अशोक कुमार वालिया की पैरवी पर लोक नार्थक अस्पताल

में बीते चार महीने से इलाज चल रहा था, लेकिन चार दिन पहले ही डॉक्टरों ने उसे एम्स रेफर कर दिया। यहां पर तो कोई सुनने वाला ही नहीं है। उसने कहा कि नवम्बर महीने में उसे अपोलो ले गए थे जहां पर डॉक्टरों ने बोनमैरो ट्रांसप्लांट का खर्च 19 लाख रुपए बताया था। उसने इलाज के लिए प्रभाकर राहत कोष, राज्य सरकारों के तहत परिचालित रोगी कल्याण समिति में भी इलाज शुरू के लिए आवेदन किया है। फिलहाल कोई जबाब नहीं आया है।

एम्स के डा. ललित कुमार का कहना है कि रोगी

► आर्थिक तंगी के चलते एक अस्पताल से दूसरे अस्पताल में रेफर किया जा रहा है

हीमोफिलिक है इसके इलाज पर होने वाली दवाएं महंगी है। जो विदेश से मंगाई जाती है। वह जन्म से हीमोफिलिया से पीड़ित है, जिसे अब तक नियंत्रण में रखा गया था। लेकिन बीते 10 मार्च को अचानक इंटरनल रक्तस्राव होने पर उसे बीएल कपूर स्मारक अस्पताल ले जाया गया था। आर्थिक तंगी के चलते हुए कुछ घंटे बाद ही उसे वहां से सरकारी अस्पताल लाया गया।

मोहित एक जॉनियस स्टूडेंट है, अपनी कबिलियत के चलते उसे पहले प्रयास में ही आईआईटी दिल्ली में प्रवेश मिला। वह अपनी कक्षा में जॉनियस स्टूडेंट के नाम से जाना जाता है। उसे आरएच फैक्टर 3 एवं 7 की जरूरत है। इसकी देश में कमी है, यह प्रोटीन इंपोर्ट किया जाता है। प्रति यूनिट प्रोटीन की कीमत 25 से 30 हजार रुपए तक है। जिसे हर 15 दिन के अंतराल में देना होता है।

एम्स के प्रवक्ता डा. वाईपी गुप्ता ने कहा कि बिस्तर खाली होने पर ही उसे भर्ती किया जाएगा, इस दौरान उसे देखरख में सफदरजंग अस्पताल में रखे जाने की सलाह दी है।

इस बीच, मोहित का जीवन बचाने के लिए आईआईटी के अन्य छात्रों ने केंद्रीय स्वास्थ्य मंत्री गुलाम नबी आजाद को पत्र लिखा है। जिसमें उसे दीए जाने वाले खून के प्रोटीन के अवयव उपलब्ध कराने का अनुरोध किया गया है। छात्रों को उम्मीद है कि श्री आजाद उसकी मदद करने के लिए संबंधित एजेंसी को आदेश देंगे।

यह भी : हेमाटोलॉजी यूनिट के डा. डीसी यादव ने कहा कि हर पांच हजार मेल बच्चों पर एक को हीमोफीलिया है। देश में यह ज्यादा है, पर यहां 90 परसेंट मरीजों को सही इलाज नहीं मिल पाता। हीमोफीलिया अनुवांशकीय (जेनेटिक) बीमारी है। यह एक्स क्रोमोसोम यानी मां की तरफ से बच्चों में आती है। यह 99 फीसद लड़कों में होती है। इससे पीड़ित रोगियों में खून को जमाने वाला प्रोटीन फैक्टर मिसिंग होता है। किसी व्यक्ति में यह माइल्ड होता है, किसी में मॉडरेट तो किसी में सीवियर। ऐसी अवस्था वाले रोगियों में चोट लगने पर लगातार खून बहता रहता है। ऐसे में इलाज न किया जाए तो समस्या गंभीर हो सकती है। सबसे खतरनाक हालत अंदरूनी रक्तस्राव के कारण होती है।

आरटिमस अस्पताल के वरिष्ठ हृदय रोग विशेषज्ञ डा. अनिल ढल ने कहा कि घाव यदि जोड़ों में हो तो यह अपंगता का सबब बन सकता है। इसका स्थाई इलाज नहीं है। इसे महंगी दवाओं से मैनेज किया जाता है। इन दवाओं के माध्यम से प्रोटीन फैक्टर दिया जाता है। जो रोगी के शरीर में प्रोटीन फैक्टर को पूरा करता है। देश में हीमोफिलिक दयनीय जीवन व्यतीत करते हैं। विदेशों में गर्भावस्था के दौरान ही कैरियर डिटेक्शन एंड प्री नेटल टेस्ट के माध्यम से पता लगा लिया जाता है। टेस्ट पोजिटिव पाए जाने पर गर्भपात करा दिया जाता है। देश में यह सुविधा फिलहाल कुछ ही कापरेट अस्पतालों में है। जागरूकता की कमी से इसका लाभ आम महिलाओं को नहीं मिल पाता है।

INFY, HCL TECH, COGNIZANT ORGANISING MEETS

IT Cos Pamper Placement Officers for Best Talent

Efforts aimed at getting best interview slots when hiring from colleges, say analysts

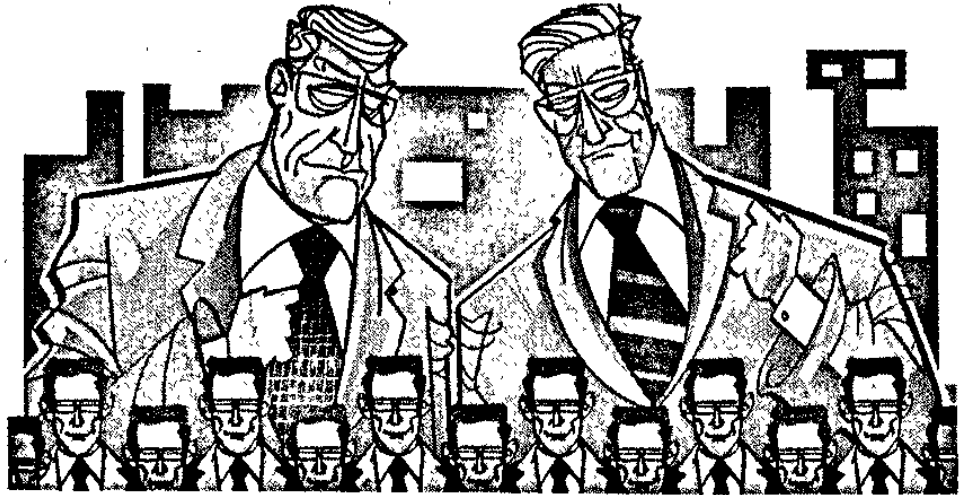
**SANGEETHA KANDAVEL &
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Once reserved for market analysts and key clients, Indian information technology companies are now pampering college placement officers by taking them on domestic and foreign trips as they seek to hire the best talent from Indian campuses ahead of competition.

Over the years Cognizant has been taking placement officers to cities like Bangkok and Dubai while others have been holding their offsites within their campuses. Infosys has also joined the race this year, although with a modest start in domestic locations. Indian IT firms depend on campus recruits for a bulk of their hiring every year, making job offers to thousands of students every year. In this financial year for instance, Infosys is hiring over 20,000 students from campus while TCS is hiring over 30,000.

Such events, some analysts say are part of efforts to get the best interview slots when hiring from colleges. Infosys, which insiders say lost out in the talent scramble because it failed to get the so-called "slot zero" has now started Samvaad 2012, where the Bangalore-based firm hosts placement officers in Mysore, Pune, Hyderabad, Bhubaneswar, and Chandigarh. Some 310 placement heads from a similar number of engineering institutions across the country are being invited, according to a company spokesperson. Through the event, Infosys seeks to impart skills, including "negotiation skills" to help these placement officers in their current roles.

Like Infosys, HCL Technologies too started a similar event last year, organis-



ing placement officer meets in Bangalore, Delhi and Chennai. "This conclave helps us in sharing performance feedback of students with their respective colleges, the joining dates are shared, gives us the opportunity to build long lasting relationships," said Ravi Shankar, senior vice president, human resources at HCL Technologies.

Much like an analyst meet, these events too witness participation from senior company executives, sometimes including the CEOs and heads of HR who explain the company's performance, new initiatives and opportunities for students. "Such meets are a forum for the company to share important information and set expectations," Priti Rajora, vice-president and global head, talent acquisition, Wipro Technologies said. "It's also an opportunity to network amongst the community."

Cognizant started a similar initiative nearly six years back called, 'Defining

Dialogues,' which is a forum to "discuss and share ideas of mutual interest, thereby furthering industry-academia collaboration," according to Sriram Rajagopal, the Nasdaq-listed company's vice-president, human resources. "By no stretch of imagination should Defining Dialogues be seen as a recruiting platform."

TCS said it started a similar initiative because they wanted to understand the needs of placements officers as well as tell them about the company.

However, strategic HR advisor and the former HR head of Infosys Hema Ravichandar, does not believe this is a knee jerk reaction from companies focused only on getting the first slot on campus. "One should not look at these initiatives tactically, it is the building of an endearing and sustainable relationship," she Ravichandar said.

Placement officers say such forums may help in building bridges but at the end of the day, students have the final say.