

Newspaper Clips

March 29, 2011

Hindustan Times ND
29/03/2011 p-10

FACE OFF



■ HRD ministry has said the national higher education survey — that Pitroda cited as an example of government wasting time — is critical for the country to prepare its higher education strategy. FILE

Pitroda barb hits home, HRD ministry retaliates

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NEW DELHI: The human resource development ministry has hit back at criticism from Prime Ministerial advisor Sam Pitroda over the need for a national higher education survey the government is planning, picking the same platform used by Pitroda.

A day after Pitroda accused the government of wasting time on a higher education survey instead of pursuing reforms, the HRD ministry countered that skipping the survey would force policy planning based on conjecture rather than robust statistics.

Pitroda delivered his scathing remarks on Friday at a conference of over 200 Vice Chancellors of central and state universities organised by the University Grants Commission and the HRD ministry. The HRD ministry delivered its counter punch at the same conference later — but away from the glare of the media.

In a presentation to the VCs, the ministry argued that the national higher education survey — that Pitroda cited as an example of the government wasting time — is critical for the country to prepare its higher education strategy. The survey, the ministry said, was necessary to build a detailed statistical baseline that would show up areas in which the government needs to focus.

"The other option available is to ... go by perception instead of robust statistics. Policy inter-

ventions and planning ought to be based on robust statistics and not on a set of conjectures, however insightful they may be," the presentation argued.

Pitroda, while dismissing the need for survey on Friday, had asked the VCs to instead fill up a two-page questionnaire he had prepared which he argued was adequate replacement for the HRD ministry's survey.

As chairman of the National Knowledge Commission — set up by the PM in 2005 — Pitroda had a tense relationship with the HRD ministry under the late Arjun Singh during UPA-1. Pitroda had however publicly not questioned the HRD ministry under Kapil Sibal — till now.

"Five years have gone since we made our recommendations. Nothing has happened. All I see is more talk, more discussions. We do not need more discussions, we need to act," Pitroda had said while addressing the VCs.

Experts however point out that some of the NKC's recommendations — such as setting up a national knowledge network — have been accepted and are being implemented.

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SAM PITRODA
PM advisor on Friday about non-implementation of his recommendations

Hindu Chennai 28.03.2011 p-2 (Education Plus)

Opt for higher studies in IITs

The Indian Institutes of Technology at Kanpur, Mumbai, Roorkee, and Guwahati have invited applications for admission to their two-year full-time M.Tech. programmes in various branches and specialisations.

IIT Madras provides excellent study facilities for M.Tech. courses offered by Departments of Aerospace Engineering, Applied Mechanics, Chemical Engineering, Civil, Computer Science and Engineering, Electrical, Mathematics (industrial mathematics and scientific computing), Mechanical Engineering, Met-

allurgical and Materials Engineering, Ocean Engineering and Physics.

The institute also offers M.Tech. degree course in clinical engineering.

Candidates with BE or B.Tech. degree in the relevant branches or B.Arch. degree/ Master's degree holders in chemistry/mathematics/physics/ life sciences along with a valid GATE score are eligible to apply.

Candidates can submit online application till April 4 through the web site http://gate.iitm.ac.in/mtech_admissions.

Last date: April 7. Detailed information on M.Tech. degree course in clinical engineering can be obtained from the web site www.biotech.iitm.ac.in/mcephd.

IIT Kanpur offers M.Tech. degree course in aerospace, biological sciences and bio-engineering, chemical, civil, computer science and engineering, electrical, industrial and management engineering, material science and engineering, mechanical, nuclear engineering and technology, environmental engineering and management, and laser technology. Candidates with BE or B.Tech., degree/ M.Sc. degree with a

valid GATE score or UGC CSIR score are eligible to apply.

Last date: April 15. For more details, visit www.iitk.ac.in/doaa/admissions.html.

For application form, information brochure and other details on M.Tech. admissions to various departments in IIT Bombay, visit the institute's web site www.iitb.ac.in/admissions.

Applications can be downloaded from March 24 to March 31. The last date for online application is April 8.

For details on M.Tech. admissions to various departments in IIT Roor-

kee, visit the institute's web site www.iitr.ernet.in from March 21 to April 21. Last date: April 21.

IIT Guwahati has invited applications for admission to full-time dual M.Tech. plus Ph.D. programme of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering for candidates having BE/ B.Tech degree in areas other than computer science and engineering or IT.

Application form and information brochure can be downloaded from the web site www.iitg.ernet.in/acad. Last date: April 13.

GOPANUMAR KARAKONAM

Hindu Chennai 28.03.2011 p-1 (Education Plus)

The enigma of IIT-JEE

Experts and students share their perspectives on approaches that will help you succeed in this examination.

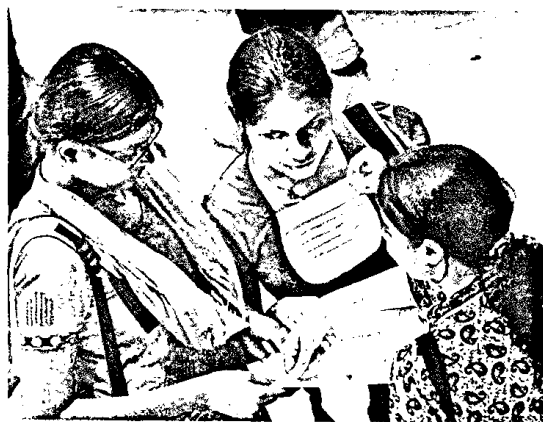
VASUDHA VENUGOPAL

A world of billion-dollar possibilities, near misses, parental sacrifices, and conceptual learning, not to forget the hard work, dedication and assumptions of luck that go with it. Come this April 10, nearly 5 lakh students would attempt the much talked-about IIT Joint Entrance Examination. The fabled world of the IITs is a tale told and retold every year, as a land of limitless aspirations.

"The competition, the peer pressure, and the way you think, everything changes when you start preparing," says Nagaraju Chellapa, a Class XII student from Chennai, who has been attending entrance coaching for four years now. "I was not serious initially, but the fever grips you eventually," he says. The reasons for the IIT dream vary. "It opens unimaginable doors of opportunities, be it admissions in globally reputed B-schools and research organisations, or attractive company offers," says Aarthi Selvakumar, a student.

A peep into the grind that lands the students in favourable positions reveals the work needed. "The preparation makes you aware of your strengths, and many times of your limitations," says A. Nithya, an IIT aspirant, talking about how at last 50 per cent of the people who start preparing for the much coveted exam give up midway.

While children who learn by rote stand no chance, those who grasp ideas quickly and use them



SUCCESS CODE: Approaching the problems by applying logic, and not through patterns, may help. PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

have a headstart, says A.R. Venkateswaran, mathematics tutor.

The IIT-JEE 2011 consists of two question papers with objective type questions, both of three hours' duration. Both the question papers will consist of three separate sections on Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics. The paper over the years has undoubtedly become simpler, say experts. While coaching classes work on different strategies to refine their results, the committee too comes up with its share of twists and turns to ensure only the best get into the most reputed 20 institutes. "The student is not expected to conquer the question paper, but rather show his competence in a stipulated time," says K. Ravi, general manager (classroom teaching), Brilliant Tutorials.

Answering questions in the test involves a set of logical steps in sequence, but getting the students tuned to such a regime is difficult, says Balaji Sampath, a trainer. A lot, however, depends on the training and testing patterns of institutes. "Students have to stop looking for patterns," he adds.

The paper now lays stress on statement assertion questions and matrix matching questions which expect a student to approach the questions cautiously. "The student is supposed to very cleverly eliminate the impossible options in the first flutter of seconds, and then work on the remaining two options," adds Mr. Ravi.

While three years back, the questions consumed at least 8-10 minutes, the present ones are expected to be solved in two-three minutes each. "The key is to abandon the question if it is taking more time," says Prof. Venkateswaran. The problem many students face is in the case of probability or permutation where there are a set of possibilities to be devised, and even losing out on one gives a wrong answer, he adds.

The paragraph questions, a recent addition to IIT-JEE entrance, say experts, is an excellent way to test the conceptual grasp of the students. Another concern is the fact that many schools and coaching institutes fail to give impetus to Class XI portions. "Almost 30 per cent comprises

questions on chemical equilibrium and atomic structure that are supposed to be taught in Plus One," says R. Gurumurthy, chairman (retd.), Annamalai University, who trains IIT aspirants in chemistry now. It is about identifying the 'knot' in every IIT-JEE question, once you do it, it becomes a simple problem, he adds.

National mock tests help students decide the extent of competition, says Mr. Ravi. "States such as Andhra Pradesh and Bihar produce students with better chances of clearing the exam, while Rajasthan and many parts of north India have students drilled in problem-solving methodology who might not often clear the exam," he says. "Other States have regular repeater batches, but few parents in Tamil Nadu let their children 'waste' a year. This puts more pressure on the students," he adds.

The last few days, he says, should be spent in refreshing the basics and optimising solving methods. "The assumption now is since you know all the methods to solve a problem, you strategise and decide which should take the least time, and give you all the values required," he says.

The exam, say experts, is evidently meant only for those who have put in months of preparation. "It's true that a student with clarity of concepts can for sure attempt the questions rightly, but would he do that in the stipulated time," asks Prof. Venkatesan. Approximately two percentile of the people who take the exam get into approximately 5,000 seats in the coveted institutes. While many have their back-ups ready — from exams of deemed universities to nationwide engineering entrances — for a committed few, there is just one concern.

"It's four years at stake. Three hours decide everything," says Kishore Balaji R., a Class XII student from D.A.V. Matriculation School. Making a choice, for many of them, is not really an option.

Times of India ND 29-Mar-11 P-17

AntiGravity Yoga: Hanging around for fun and fitness

New York: An AntiGravity Yoga class looks more like circus play than an ancient practice, as people dangle head-first like bats or flip weightlessly through the air.

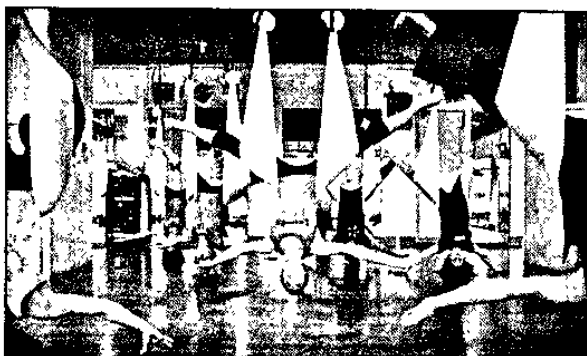
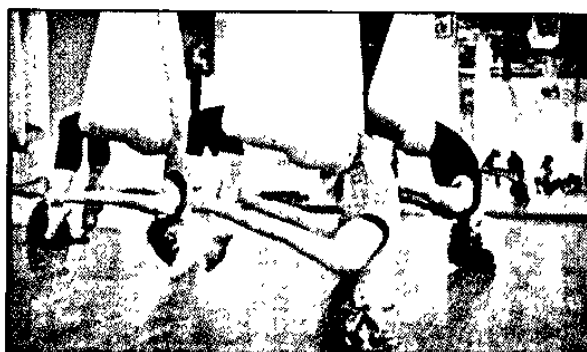
But if the anti-gravity component stands yoga on its head, as an exhilarating group fitness experience, it has legs. "AntiGravity Yoga involves a mix of yoga, Pilates, calisthenics, aerial arts, dance," said Illaria Cutolo, AntiGravity Yoga coordinator for Crunch, the national chain of fitness centers. "People come for the flying effect, and the playground aspect."

The concept grew out of AntiGravity, an acrobatic performance troupe founded in 1990 by Christopher Harrison, an aficionado of yoga, who designed the fitness regimen around hammocks. Suspended about 1 meter off the floor and attached at two overhead points, the fabric hammocks act like a swing or soft trapeze. "Christopher wanted the spirit of yoga to shine through," Cutolo said. "We remind students to come to place of presence in their breath, bodies and mind. A lot of the moves we do come from yoga."

Gentle warm-ups, sun salutations, breath awareness techniques and strength training comprise the pre-flight protocol of most classes. Unlike traditional yoga the inversions, going upside in an AntiGravity class is weightless. "There's zero compression of cervical spine, so it's very therapeutic," Cutolo said.

Floating through the air, said Cutolo, has informed her own yoga practice. "I've gained a lot more balance in my handstand and in general. It's also a way for me to crossstrain by using muscles I don't normally use."

Jessica Matthews, spokesperson for the American Council of Exercise, sees AntiGravity Yoga differently. She said the class can build core strength and improve flexibility, and is enthusiastic about the rewards of being upside down. "Headstands, handstands, any inver-



NORMAL IS BORING: AntiGravity Yoga Wings class at Crunch Fitness Center, New York City

sion changes the way the blood flows through the body," she said, adding that AntiGravity might be just what the yogi ordered for the reluctant, the fearful and the averse.

As dedicated yogi, Cutolo, is candid about the difference between these classes and her yoga. "I take yoga practice," she said. "Yoga is a discipline. AntiGravity Yoga is playtime." REUTERS

Business Line ND 29-Mar-11 P-7

Future course of Web is difficult to predict, say researchers

Our Bureau

Hyderabad, March 28

What direction is the World Wide Web going to take? "It is very difficult to predict," Prof Krithi Ramamrithan, Chair in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at IIT Bombay, said.

"It was not like this two years ago. Sites like Wikipedia are changing the Web landscape significantly," he said,

talking to reporters on the inaugural day of the five-day World Wide Web conference on Monday.

"Several people at different levels are working to enrich the Web. For one, IIT Bombay has incubated Aaqua, the Web-based social networking forum for farmers. Using this, farmers can post queries on the problems they face. Their peers, who might have solved these

problems, could relate their solutions," he said.

'Aaqua' would also send SMS alerts to farmers on various issues connected with farming.

Prof. Ramamrithan is not alone in failing to hazard a guess on the future of the Web. Researchers from 50 countries gathered here at the 20th International WWW conference were also at a loss in predicting its future.

"The participants will focus on the regional and global impact of expanding Open Web platform for application development," Prof. Sadagopan, Director of IIIT (Bangalore), said.

The theme for this year's conference is 'Web for All' that aims at promoting inclusive aspects of the Web. Mr Tim Berners-Lee, founder of the Web, would deliver a keynote address on 'Designing the Web

for an open society'. Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, former President, and Prof. Christos H. Papadimitriou of UC Berkeley would also address the conference.

Mr Kris Gopalakrishnan, Chief Executive Officer of Infosys, and Mr N. Chandrasekharan, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of TCS, would take part in an industry panel discussion on Tuesday.

Financial Chronicle ND 29-Mar-11

P-7



Sadagopan
Director
IIT Bangalore

Shortage of quality regional content is a big challenge for India internet-space. We

expect that academic research for internet will get some good funding during this round of the global conference on internet

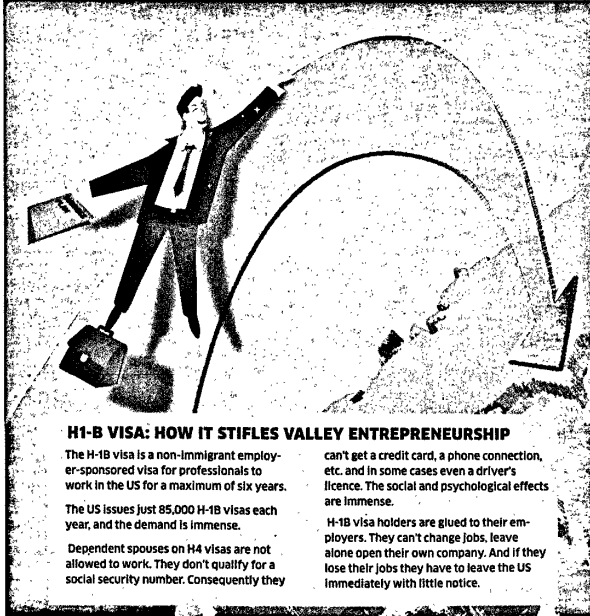
Why Indian Geeks In US Are Home-Bound

Indian entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley are finding their dreams imprisoned in an immigration warp

The Startup Bill

According to a new bill, startup visas will be available to some groups, subject to conditions:

- ▶ **Entrepreneurs living outside the US:** If a US investor agrees to financially sponsor their entrepreneurial venture with a minimum investment of \$100,000. Two years later, the startup must have created five new American jobs and either have raised over \$500,000 in financing or be generating over \$500,000 in yearly revenue.
- ▶ **Workers on an H-1B visa, or graduates from US universities in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, or computer science:** If they have an annual income of at least \$30,000 or assets of at least \$50,000 and have had a US investor commit investment of at least \$20,000 in their venture. Two years later, the startup must have created three new American jobs and either have raised over \$100,000 in financing or be generating more than \$100,000 in yearly revenue.
- ▶ **Foreign entrepreneurs whose business has generated at least \$100,000 in sales from the US:** Two years later, the startup must have created three new American jobs and either have raised over \$100,000 in financing or be generating more than \$100,000 in yearly revenue.
- ▶ **The investor must be a qualified government entity or a qualified venture capitalist or an angel investor who is a US citizen:** He should have made at least two equity investments of at least \$50,000 every year for the past three years.



H-1B VISA: HOW IT STIFLES VALLEY ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant employer-sponsored visa for professionals to work in the US for a maximum of six years.

The US issues just 85,000 H-1B visas each year, and the demand is immense.

Dependent spouses on H4 visas are not allowed to work. They don't qualify for a social security number. Consequently they

can't get a credit card, a phone connection, etc. and in some cases even a driver's licence. The social and psychological effects are immense.

H-1B visa holders are glued to their employers. They can't change jobs, leave alone open their own company. And if they lose their jobs they have to leave the US immediately with little notice.

RITUPARNA CHATTERJEE
SAN FRANCISCO

"What on earth am I doing here!" Kunal Bahl said to himself in frustration, as he waited seven long hours to meet with a prospective client for his venture SnapDeal. As the clock ticked away in the lobby of the shoe-making company's India office, Bahl revisited the fragments of the American Dream he had lived — road trips aboard his convertible along the Pacific coast with the ocean on one side and the mountains on the other. But most of all, the professionalism and respect for young entrepreneurs like himself. He had started his first company, a detergent start-up, while still studying at Wharton.

When he didn't win the visa lottery, Bahl had to pack up his entrepreneurial dreams and his bags and return home to Delhi. Visas are granted through a lottery system when the number of applicants is more than the number of visas to be granted. "There are no options then. There's nobody you can petition, no forums you can appeal to," he says.

Over half-a-million highly-educated and skilled immigrants are stuck with temporary, non-immigrant work visas like the H-1B, which don't allow them to start a company or even change jobs. Pushed to a corner, they come back to India, where the entrepreneurial climate is far from ideal.

"These are people with new business ideas, energy and the drive to succeed in an ecosystem that fosters creativity, but their dreams are shattered by a system which believes they are taking away American jobs. But in reality, this is actually hurting job creation in recession-hit US. The immigration system's fears may not be centred in reality. Between 1995 and 2005, 25% of Silicon Valley's startups — which had at least one immigrant founder — employed nearly 450,000 people. The companies generated \$92 billion in revenue in 2006, according to a report titled, *Intellectual Property, the Immigration Backlog, and a Reverse Brain-Drain*, co-authored by Vivek Wadhwa, an entrepreneur and academic who has been researching the subject for years.

"Now, due to immigration issues, that's a loss of that many jobs," says Wadhwa, whose first company, Seer Technologies,

created 1,000 jobs within five years and second company, Relativity Technologies, created 200 within three years.

Besides, by losing some of the brightest minds, US immigration is putting Silicon Valley's innovation hub status in serious jeopardy. Yale graduate and former Amazon employee Sachin Garg says visa issues prevented him from pursuing the two business ideas he had built specifically for the American market. Garg might employ just 10 people right now at his online book store up-Rack.com but that's because he just started it a few months ago. By as close as 2016, he claims the company will grow in revenue to \$1 billion and employ over 4,000 people. "These jobs could have belonged to the US," says Wadhwa.

On the other side of the fence, most dreams fade out with the H-1B visa (see box). Hardeep Singh knows just what it feels like. He quit his high-profile job in San Francisco with an investment bank, to start Costnomic — a software as a service start-up that promotes IT financial transparency — with his partner Nilesh Patel. Being on H-1B meant he could invest in the company but not take money from it. His old employer had offered to file for his green card. "But that meant I'd be stuck with the company for 10 years and my youth, energy, go-get-it factor would all be gone. So I decided that I'd rather go," says Singh who moved to Pune to start the India development team for the company.

Like Singh, Prakash Mishra too had invested in a start-up in the Bay Area but could neither raise much funding nor reap the monetary benefits because he was on the temporary H-1B. After years of trying, when he finally left to become an entrepreneur in India, the company was acquired and Mishra got nothing. A Much has been said about Indians and Chinese immigrants returning to their home to take advantage of the booming economies there. While that's true, many return frustrated with no real choice. That too, after having spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in obtaining degrees with the hope that they'll let you live the dream entrepreneurial life

in America. "You don't tell mummy and daddy that you're back because America didn't want you. You say you came back because you missed them and would rather pursue your entrepreneurial dreams here with them in this booming economy," says Wadhwa.

It's also harder to be an entrepreneur in India. "Indian VCs are focused on how you can solve a problem in India. Our solution is focused on Global 2000 companies which are mainly in the US and Europe. They don't even understand the concept of our idea! The more I stay in front of the customer and US VCs, the more profitable we can get as a company and the more jobs I can create in the US... it's all one big cycle," says Singh. His presence in the US is pressing for the company — the clients are mostly American, and he needs to raise funds to expand his business.

But the US' self-inflicted loss could become India's gain in terms of not only jobs in the short term but also innovation. As emerging powers like China threaten its supremacy, it's in America's interest to maintain itself as a lucrative innovation hub. After all, foreign nationals accounted for 24.2% of all US international patent applications in 2006. The

Chinese led the pack, followed by Indians.

Ditched by the US, these entrepreneurs are putting their American lessons to good use in India. Garg for instance, created upRack.com straight out of his Amazon learnings. "It will revolutionise online retail in India just like Amazon did in the US," he says. Bahl utilised the lessons he had learned from the detergent start-up he had founded in the US to create SnapDeal; today, he's a rising entrepreneur in India, having innovatively created an entire market that didn't exist.

Silicon Valley will certainly lose out on talent like Anil Panariya, a semiconductor engineer who lives five minutes away from Google, NASA Ames, LinkedIn, Complete Genomics and others, in Mountain View, California. Panariya has been itching to take time

off and work on a prototype for years. Taking three months off to build a product even if it doesn't work is only normal in this neighbourhood. But his H-1B visa status doesn't let him do this.

"I live in this global innovation hub but I can't build my own innovation due to my visa. I'm a technical person and I want to experiment with some prototypes. If these work out then of course I'll pursue a business idea. However, if these don't, then I would return to my day job. Is this basic freedom too much to ask for? If returning to my home country is the only way to live my dreams, then I guess that's my only option," he says.

After years of struggling with immigration issues, Rohit Kulkarni finally got the much-coveted green card employee authorisation document (EAD). This allowed him to finally launch a company whose first product is a health-tracking iPhone app. "I worked like crazy. But I just couldn't give it the dedication and the nurturing a start-up needs because I was too busy complying with immigration rules and working full-time for my H-1B and green card employers," says Kulkarni. Worse, in spite of burning all that midnight oil, Kulkarni's green card wasn't approved, forcing him to move to Paris and pursuing his idea there. "The US offered my wife wonderful work opportunities but we moved to France so that I could finally focus on my company," says Kulkarni.

This explains why investors Paul Graham, Brad Feld and others have long been pushing for the Startup Visa. Under the current legislation, it will be granted to foreigners if they can raise at least \$100,000 from a US investor to start their company and create at least five new American jobs after two years.

Alternatively, if the person is on H-1B visa and/or is a student at an American university, the candidate can get a start-up visa if s/he earns at least \$60,000 per year plus \$20,000 from a US investor (see box: *The Startup Bill*). "The impact of such a bill would be huge and even more so for Silicon Valley," says Wadhwa, who expects the legislation to be passed between three and six months.

We would love to hear from you. Please send us your responses at et.technology@indiatimes.com