Newspaper Clips

March 3, 2011

Hindustan Times ND
03/03/2011 p-6

5 held for robbing student

NEW DELHI: Five people were arrested for robbing an Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) student of his laptop and mobile phone after giving him lift in a car, the police said on Wednesday.

Gulfam (22), the kingpin, Fai jan (22), Salman (19), Aman Kaljera (20), and Wasim (28), were apprehended from Sarai Kale Khan in south Delhi on Monday, deputy commissioner of police Ashok Chand said.

The incident took place on February 24 when the five whipped out a knife and forced the student to withdraw money from the ATM. He withdrew ₹5,000 and was dumped at Dilshad Garden in east Delhi.

Police recovered 17 gm of gold and diamond jewellery, ₹22,600 cash, a laptop, 13 stolen mobile phones and a three-wheeler from the gang. **IANS**

Hindustan Times ND 03/03/2011 p-10

Sibal good news for teachers?

SALARY Over 4.5 lakh teachers will get long overdue pay bonanza if Centre funds cash-strapped states

ht SPECIAL

Charu Sudan Kasturi
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NEW DELHI: Over 4.5 lakh teachers across India's state universities and affiliated colleges are set to finally receive a long overdue pay bonanza with the Centre preparing to drop a controversial norm preventing it from financing fund-strapped state governments.

The human resource development ministry will move the Cabinet on Thursday to allow it to pay state governments 80% of the additional financial burden imposed by hiked University Grants Commission teacher salaries, top government sources have told HT.

The HRD ministry is seeking Cabinet sanction to dump a controversial norm in the UGC pay package, which was notified on December 31, 2008, and has been implemented across India's central universities but eludes state varsity teachers.

The norm the ministry wants to junk allowed the Centre to financially assist only those states that raise the retirement age of their college and university to 65 years. Different states at present have different retirement ages.

Paying all states up to 80% of the additional cost for salary hikes could run up a Central bill of up to ₹8,000 crore a year, officials said. "But this is the same amount we were earlier too preparing to pay — except that now we are not insisting on raising the retirement age," an official said.

MINISTRY WANTS TO DUMP UGC NORM THAT LINKS CENTRAL AID WITH RETIREMENT AGE OF TEACHERS

Education ministers from most states — both those ruled by the Congress and those ruled by Opposition parties — had asked HRD minister Kapil Sibal at their meeting on June 18, 2010 to retract the norm insisting on hiking the retirement age to 65 years to entitle them to Central funds.

Some states like Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh have argued that hiking the retirement age would hurt young aspiring teachers — an argument rejected by the HRD ministry citing the massive vacancies in universities that in fact forced the hike in superannuation age.

Haryana and Uttar Pradesh have argued that teachers in their states were a part of the government cadre and that their retirement age could not be raised selectively without hiking the age of superannuation of other government employees.

Kerala and West Bengal have argued that teacher retirement age is solely a state subject and have questioned central attempts to link the financial assistance package to the retirement age hike.

The HRD ministry has also received several petitions from state university teacher groups pleading the Centre to aid states financially to facilitate their salary hikes.

Hindustan Times ND 03/03/2011 p-11

Indian solves 400-year-old sunspot mystery

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NEW DELHI: A Calcutta physicist and two US scientists have solved a 400-year old mystery on the working of the sun, offering a solution that could help predict space weather and plan space missions and polar flights.

Dibyendu Nandy at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) in Calcutta and American scientists Andres Munoz-Jaramillo and Petrus Martens have explained unusual recent sunspot behaviour in findings published on Wednesday in the journal Nature.

The scientists found that variation in speed of flow of plasma within the sun towards its equator affects the frequency of sunspots. Sunspots are dark spots occasionally seen on the surface on the sun, which are

SUNSPOTS ARE DARK SPOTS SEEN ON THE SUN'S SURFACE, WHICH ARE FOCAL POINTS OF MAGNETIC ENERGY

focal points of magnetic energy on the solar surface that affect space weather including on and near the earth. But the work also helped gain insight into the working of sunspots that has eluded scientists since sunspots were first known to have been observed four centuries ago.

"The work has helped us understand why the sun spots disappeared for an inordinately long period of time towards the end of the last solar cycle," Nandy told Hindustan Times, hours before a global teleconference on the findings that have left the global astrophysics community excited.

The work offers the possibility for short term forecasts of space weather. "We can now take our simulation model forward to predict space weather, which can be used to schedule space missions and air traffic near polar regions (which are most affected by sunspot-caused weather changes)," Nandy added.

The sun's output energy is the principal natural input that affects space climate, including the climate near the earth. The solar energy output was believed to be a constant till the mid 20th century.

Solar energy output is now understood to be a result of a dynamo mechanism within the sun, converting the energy of plasma flow beneath the surface of the sun to magnetic energy foci on the surface that are observed in the form of sunspots.

Economic Times ND 03/03/2011
P-19

75 Companies Take Part in IIM-L Lateral Placements

OUR BUREAU
KOLKATA

IIM Lucknow has wrapped up its higher entry placement process (HEPP) with participation from over 75 firms offering roles across a variety of domains, including consulting, corporate finance, IT and sales and merchandising. ICICI Bank led the pack with 22 offers, followed by Deloitte with 20 offers. International offers were made by Ernst & Young, Dubai, Olam International and HCL, among others. This placement season also witnessed the participation of 25 first-time recruiters such as Adani Group, CEB, Ford IT, HP, i3 Consulting, Info Edge, Infomedia, JLT Group, Nereus Capital and Target.

This time around, over 50% of the graduating batch at IIM Lucknow were eligible for the lateral placements process. The average work experience of the batch was 34 months.

Among the most coveted offers made on campus was the one in the private equity space made by Baring Private Equity. Leading mail and logistics services group, Deustche Post DHL, made an offer for its in-house consulting profile in Singapore. Capgemini, Deloitte, Goldman Sachs, ICICI Bank, L&T, M&M, PWC and RPG were among the regular recruiters on campus, while niche profiles were offered by the likes of Thomas Cook and Fujitsu. Glenmark and BA Continuum recruited for HR as did Amazon, Google and Microsoft IDC for their product management and online sales and operations profiles.

Mail Today ND 03/03/2011 p-13

No electricity for surgery? Just use a pair of spectacles & some sunlight

By **Max Martin** in Bangalore

A TEAM of researchers in Madhya Pradesh have perfected a method of keyhole surgery for family planning without the use of electricity.

What they have done could pass off as a real life replay of the sequence from Bollywood blockbuster *3 Idiots* in which Aamir Khan and his colleagues help a doctor deliver a baby using light from headlights of a car.

The real life trio used sunlight to light up a laparoscopy for tribal people in their state.

Prof. Roopiekha Chauhan of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Medical College, Jabalpur, and her team used sunlight reflected from a bike's rearview mirror. Focusing it with a pair of spectacles sent through the laparoscope's optical fibre, they lighted up the fallopian tubes for the keyhole surgery. In the process they replace the halogen lamp — and electricity.

HOW IT WORKS

- In the surgery, the team used sunlight reflected from a bike's rearview mirror
- Focusing the sunlight with a pair of spectacles sent through the laparoscope's optical fibre, they lighted up the fallopian tubes for the keyhole surgery
- In the process, they replaced the halogen lamp and hence made no use of electricity

"The story began way back in 1980," Chauhan said. Under the Indian family welfare programme, the first local laparoscopy camp was organised at Mawai, a remote place in MP's Mandla district. The evening camp could not start as there was no electricity and the generators just didn't work, she said.

Chauhan took the unplugged, solar route the next day with her students"It worked and when I told my husband he started laughing. He said people would laugh too," Chauhan recalled, and so, she kept quiet.

But out of the 44 cases so operated, 42 were successful. Also in camps in Sahajpur and Belkheda, 50 cases were operated using a similar technique, the team wrote while describing innovative technique in scientific journal *Current Science*.

"It is something that came out of sheer necessity," co-researcher P. Vinay Rao at the Regional Medical Research Centre for Tribals, Jabalpur, said.

Business Line ND 03/03/2011 P-8

Rs 6,626-cr Budget booster for space sector

Thrust on launch programmes despite 2 failures last year

Madhumathi D.S.
Bangalore, March 2

Budget 2011-12 for the Department of Space brings focus back on 'bread and butter' satellite and launch projects even as it puts human flight or Mars dreams on the back seat.

The Department of Space is to get a total of Rs 6,626 crore (including a non-Plan Rs 926 crore) in Budget 2011-12. Of this, Rs 2,061 crore is for launch vehicles and related technologies.

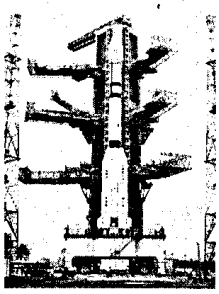
Overall, upcoming satellites and launch vehicles have been given Rs 900 crore, including two foreign launches that have been contracted with Arianespace, an official said.

If you went by the annual schedule of the space agency ISRO, the period April 2011-March 2012 could be the busiest year yet with seven targeted launches of PSLVs (4), GSLVs (2) and hopefully the heavy-lifting GSLV MkI-II.

These are expected to put a couple of GSat communication satellites and some remote-sensing satellites (IRSs) in orbit. They are needed to sustain ongoing broadcasting, communication and commercial services.

The latest DoS allocation of Rs 6,626 crore is a 36 per cent jump over revised 2010-11 estimates of Rs 4,880 crore.

Compared with last year's first estimate of Rs 5,778



crore, the Budget this year signifies a regular 15 per cent annual increase for space.

This time too, resources have put ISRO's next big leap, the Human Space Flight, on the back seat. A token Rs 98 crore has been made in the new Budget, which does not support the key ingredients of the human flight plan but just a few pre-project pilots, the official, who requested not to be named, said. Last year, it got Rs 150 crore.

HUMAN MISSION TO WAIT

Considering the "present GSLV setbacks", ISRO will focus on the job of urgently putting INSATs and IRSs in orbit first; the human mission may continue to get such trickles "until we make a couple of successful flights," the official said.

GSat-4 was lost during a failed launch in April 2010 and GSat-5P was lost in December 2010, upsetting ISRO's schedules badly. ISRO has to substitute them first before taking up new plans or other satellites.

In January, ISRO Chairman, Dr K.Radhakrishnan, had said the human mission would fructify six to seven years from its approval.

It would need a massive Rs 2,000-3,000 crore to take off but ISRO has been told to take it up in three phases — starting with creating life-supporting technologies.

The yet to be approved HSF proposal, made around 2009 as ISRO's next dream project after the successful 2008 lunar mission, put the cost at over Rs 12,000 crore. It plans to send two astronauts around Earth for seven days.

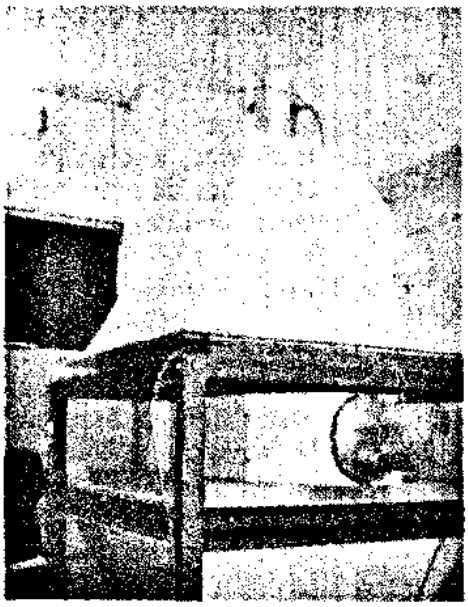
Pioneer ND 03/03/2011 p3

Nasa project to monitor weather patterns at JNU

SANA SHAKIL ■ NEW DELHI

Jawaharlal University campus in the Capital has been chosen by National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa) as the site for installation of a 'cosmic ray detector device' (CRDD). The prestigious project is part of Nasa's plans for monitoring the weather patterns of the space and movements of earth's crust, following predictions made by ancient Mayans of Latin America that earth would face great calamities by 2012. While graphic predictions of world coming to an end have been depicted by some Hollywood films as *2012* and *The day after tomorrow*, Nasa is not taking things lightly. Fourteen data collection instruments are to be placed in 14 different countries to lead real time measurements of the Sun's activities and also tectonic movements deep below the earth's crust by the year 2012, but so far these devices have been set up in only three countries which include Croatia, Bulgaria and the JNU in India.

CRDD has been installed in the remote sensing applications laboratory of the school of environmental sciences. Professor Saumitra Mukherjee from the Department of Zoology and remote sciences at JNU said, "This is a part of space of environment viewing and analysis network developed by a consortium of scientists across the world in collaboration with NASA." Cosmic ray division Armenia has developed the CRDD for India.



Cosmic ray detector device

Mukherjee told *The Pioneer* that this is the only detector available in India to identify different species of cosmic rays and in all 14 such detectors are likely to be installed in the world by Nasa by 2012. Notably, sun is one of the sources of cosmic rays but there are some other sources from the outer space which generate cosmic rays too. The professor said, "CRDD started functioning successfully from December on our campus and is capable of differentiating between different types of cosmic rays. From the existing sources, it has been found that the rate of cosmic shower on earth has increased dramatically especially from 2009 onwards." Mukherjee explained that increased cosmic showers can be the reasons behind phenomenon such as 'global warming' and 'climate change' and said that the readings of this instrument will definitely help in understanding such phenomenon.

The detection of cosmic rays will help in predicting the resulting changes in the environment. The amount of cosmic rays usually increases before the occurrence of rains and before the onset of winters whereas the amount of cosmic rays usually decreases before the occurrence of an earthquake.

Business Line ND 03/03/2011 P-11

Holcim Foundation ties up with IIT-Bombay

Pact will give an international platform for students

Our Bureau
Mumbai, March 2

Switzerland-headquartered Holcim Foundation has tied up with the Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay as part of its third International Holcim Awards Competition.

Besides participating in various events organised by the Holcim Foundation, the institute will shortlist projects from the Asia-Pacific region for the award.

Mr Edward Schwarz, General Manager, Holcim Foundation, said the tie-up would be valid for three years and help students from the IIT share their thoughts on sustainable construction by participating in international forums.

"Sustainable construction aims to reduce the environmental impact of a building over its entire lifecycle, while optimising its economic viability, comfort and safety of its occupants," he said.

Holcim Foundation has similar tie-ups with leading international technical universities such as the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zurich); Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico; Ecole Supérieure d'Architecture de Casablanca, Morocco; Tongji University, China; Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil and University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa.

AWARDS

The awards competition offers a prize money of $2 million and is open to sustainable building and civil engineering works; landscape, urban design and infrastructure projects and materials, products and construction technologies.

Registration for the award closes on March 23. Entries can be submitted using a Web-based form at www.holcimawards.org.

The main category of the competition is open to architects, planners, engineers, project owners, builders and construction firms that showcase sustainable responses to technological, environmental, socio-economic and cultural issues with contemporary building and construction. Projects are eligible for the competition if they have reached an advanced stage of design.

Construction (or commercial production in the case of materials, products and construction technologies) must not have begun before July 1, 2010. In addition, the Holcim Award seeks vision and ideas for the "Next Generation" category, open to student projects created within university programmes at the final-year level or above (including Masters and Ph.D).

Project submissions are evaluated by independent juries based on a set of target issues relating to sustainable construction. "They serve to assess each submission against environmental, social and economic performance. An additional target issue applies specifically to architecture and a final criterion recognises the need for innovation and transferable approaches," said Mr Schwarz.

The results will be announced in late 2011 in Milan, Washington, Buenos Aires, Casablanca and Singapore. Winners from each of the five geographic regions will progress to the Global Holcim Awards in 2012.

NOTED WORKS

Some of the projects that have won Holcim Awards Gold include a comprehensive urban renewal project in Budapest, Hungary; a sustainable energy showcase and resource centre in New York; an urban planning project for a commune in Medellín, Colombia; a remediation and urban development scheme for the river precinct in Fez, Morocco and a sustainable development project for a rural community on the urban fringe of Beijing.

Times of India ND
3/03/2011 P-19

Life may have come from space: In what bolsters the theory that life on Earth came from outer space, scientists have discovered nitrogen "building blocks" in a primitive asteroid which was found in Antarctica in 1995. Tests showed that the rock contained ammonia which is made up in part of nitrogen, and that contains DNA and proteins — the building blocks of life.

Times of India
ND 3/03/2011
P-19

New gel can heal wounds after surgery

Washington: Scientists have produced what they claim is a ground-breaking gel which can heal wounds after sinus surgery without causing any negative side-effects.

The gel could potentially lead to a reduction in the number of post-operative complications which frequently occur following sinus surgery, say its developers. The gel, derived from a polymer named chitosan extracted from crab-shell and squid, has undergone successful sheep and human trials over the past four years.

Simon Robinson, who headed the research project, said the "adhesions" or scarring can block sinus passages, often requiring further surgery to correct. This affects roughly one third of all sinus-related operations. The new gel is inserted into the nasal passage and forms a coating over the wound so that adhesions cannot form, and it also helps to stop bleeding with its superior blood clotting properties, according to him. PTI

Times of India ND 3/03/2011 P-19

A salty meal cuts blood flow in just 30 minutes

Alters Function Of Cells That Line Arteries: Study

London: It may sound alarming, but a new study has claimed that eating a single salty meal could reduce blood flow in your main arteries in just 30 minutes.

And, blood flow becomes temporarily more restricted for between 30 minutes and an hour after the salty food has been consumed, say researchers. The researchers tested how quickly salt had a damaging effect on the body by recruiting 16 healthy adults and feeding them each a high-salt meal, containing 4g and later a low-salt meal, made with just 0.3g, the Daily Mail reported.

Before and after each meal, they tested how smoothly blood was flowing in the brachial artery — the main blood vessel in the upper arm normally used for checking blood pressure. Although the artery does not measure blood flow directly to the heart, it is commonly used to give an indication of cardiovascular health.

RISKY BITE

The results showed blood flow was significantly more impaired within 30 minutes of eating the salty meal than low-salt alternative and restriction reached a peak after an hour. In a report on the findings, the authors from a group of research organisations in Adelaide, Australia, said, "This study showed the amount of salt similar to that in a commonly eaten meal impairs blood flow in healthy men and women. The mechanisms for this need to be investigated more intensively."

Graham MacGregor, the Chairman of the lobby group Consensus Action on Salt and Health in the UK, said, "This research is of great interest. It clearly shows a rapid effect on the stiffness of the blood vessels. It looked at effects of eating just four grams of salt.

"In fact, if you eat out you will probably consume more than that. This kind of damage to blood flow is thought to be a very early sign of heart disease. Every time you eat a salty meal you are altering the function of the cells that line your arteries." PTI

Times of India ND 3/03/2011 P-13

B'lore top choice for engineers

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Seven out of 10 engineering students in the country chose Bangalore as their most preferred "first job city" in the country, according to a survey of 19,000 students conducted by an employment research firm. Delhi, Hyderabad, Pune and Chennai rounded out the top five list.

While Bangalore was expectedly the most preferred destination for freshman engineers in the south region, it was also the top preference for respondents in the east, perhaps reflecting the absence of a major local employment hub in the east. Kolkata came in fourth after Delhi and Pune as a preference for engineering students in the east. Reflecting Bangalore's all-round popularity, the IT hub came second to Delhi in north and third to Pune and Mumbai in the West.

These findings emerged from a survey conducted by the Research Department of Aspiring Minds, a venture of IIT and MIT alumnus which assesses employability and workforce related issues. Mumbai, the financial capital, was only the sixth most preferred city at the all-India level.

Others that made it to region-wise top-five lists included Chandigarh at No 4 in the north, and Mysore at No 4 in the south. In more general terms, for almost 30% of engineers, being in a major metro city was more important than which city it was. Just 8% would rather be in a city smaller than a metro like Pune. Around 37% preferred a major southern city while only 11% favoured a major northern city.

Top Hubs

- Seven of 10 engineering students chose Bangalore as their most preferred 'first job city' in the country
- Delhi, Hyderabad, Pune & Chennai rounded out top five list
- Survey conducted by Aspiring Minds, a venture of IIT and MIT alumni

Times of India ND 3/03/2011 P-10

Test for docs to level playing field

Objective Is To Remove Doubts Over Proficiency Of Grads From Different Med Schools

Kounteya Sinha | TNN

New Delhi: India is mulling a proposal to introduce the Indian Medical Graduate degree — an examination that will be on a par with MBBS — which can be taken by all doctors passing out of medical school as an additional qualification.

Brainchild of Medical Council of India (MCI), it will do away with doubts over the competence of a doctor with an MBBS degree from not-so-good colleges or universities.

Speaking to TOI, Dr Ranjit Roychoudhury from MCI explained that at present, an MBBS doctor from All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) thinks he is better than, say, his counterpart from UP or Bihar. And so, even though the latter holds a valid MBBS degree, the individual is discriminated upon all his life.

WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY: MCI's recommendation is to standardize the skills of doctors

"Now, a doctor, after passing out of medical college, can take this examination which will be of the same standard as the MBBS degree, and prove his mettle. He can then say that even though he got his MBBS from a college in Muzaffarnagar, he also passed the Indian Medical Graduate test, which stamps his credentials," Dr Roychoudhury said.

He added, "The test will, however, be voluntary and only for prestige. Those who don't want to appear for the examination can start practising soonafter getting their MBBS degree as usual."

Dr Devi Shetty, another member of MCI's governing body, added that the proposal has been forwarded and is under consideration of the Union health ministry.

"At present, whenever our doctors apply in the United Kingdom for training, British Medical Council asks for a DNB degree. That's because states have hundreds of universities and colleges granting MBBS degree, each having a different standard. So, there is no assurance on quality. DND, on the other hand, is a national standard examination. This new exit examination will give uniformity to all Indian degrees," Dr Shetty added.

MCI had recently informed the Supreme Court of a common exit test after obtaining the MBBS degree from medical colleges. They, however, said it would be mandatory, but seem to have changed their view.

Considering the sensitive nature of the profession — dealing with life and death — and keeping in mind varying standards of education in medical colleges, MCI proposed this common exit examination for MBBS passouts, solicitor general Gopal Subramaniam had told a bench of Justices R V Raveendran and H L Gokhale.

MCI's recommendation is to standardize the skills of doctors and in line with the decision of Bar Council of India (BCI), making it mandatory for law graduates to clear a test to be able to practice in courts.

Times of India ND 3/03/2011 P-10

How the sun lost its spots: Indian-led team solves puzzle

Srinivas Laxman | TNN

Mumbai: In a major breakthrough, a team of scientists led by Dibyendu Nandi of the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Kolkata, has used a computer model of solar activity to explain how the Sun lost its spots and solar storms for a long period. Sunspots are dark spots on the Sun with strong magnetic activity.

The results of the study on the characteristics of the Sun is slated for international release on Thursday in the "Nature" journal and has been praised by Nasa as a breakthrough in generating advanced knowledge of sustained good weather in space. Nasa has scheduled a conference on Thursday involving several international scientists to discuss the results.

Speaking to TOI from Kolkata, Nandi explained the significance of these predictions lie in the fact that these can be used by airline operators while scheduling air traffic, especially over polar routes and also by space agencies in planning missions.

"Did you know that there is weather in space just like weather on Earth? And that dark spots on the Sun's surface called sunspots can affect weather in space and can disrupt flights over the Earth's polar region," Nandi said.

THROWING LIGHT: The significance of these predictions lies in the fact that they can be used while scheduling air traffic

"The shorter, polar routes are preferred by airline operators because less fuel is consumed and predictions of good weather can be used to direct heavier traffic through these remote regions," he said.

The research was funded by the Ramanujan fellowship of India's Department of Science and Technology and by a grant from Nasa. Others on Nandi's team were Andres Munoz-Jaramillo from Harvard's Smithsonian Centre For Astrophysics and Petrus Martens from Montana State University.

Nandi explained that the Sun was made up of a hot gas called plasma, which tosses and turns deep within and creates magnetic fields.

These fields pop out of the solar surface creating dark sunspots which have been observed systematically since Galileo trained his telescope on the Sun in the early 17th century.

He said that the energy output of the Sun, which influences Earth's climate system, fell to low levels for a sustained period and there were no storms in space with perfect space weather conditions. "In fact it was the quietest the Sun had been in almost a century and scientists started wondering what was wrong with the Sun," he told TOI.

The scientist said sunspots often explode ejecting vast amounts of charged particles into space, adversely affects orbiting satellites, telecom facilities and power grids. These particles rush through the Earth's polar region, creating beautiful auroras but also disrupting sensitive electronics of airlines and messing up their communication system.

Nandi said his team found that changes in a large river of hot plasma, flowing inside the sun, disrupted the formation of sunspots and distanced the previous sunspot cycle from the following one. The last sunspot cycle ended in 2007.

Nandi said the delayed start of the new sunspot cycle could be a boon for India's maiden mission to the Sun, Aditya, because in the coming years the indigenous spacecraft can study a lot of solar storms.

Nandi is a co-investigator on this Rs 40 crore mission tentatively slated for 2014.

Publication: The Times Of India Delhi;Date: Mar 3, 2011;Section: Times City;Page: 9;

Hi-tech lab in Gurgaon to design vaccine for HIV

Kounteya Sinha | TNN

New Delhi: Gurgaon will now be home to the country's first state-of-the-art laboratory that will exclusively work to design an effective vaccine against the deadly human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

The Translational Health Sciences and Technology Institute (THSTI), an autonomous institute under the department of biotechnology (DBT), and the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), have signed an agreement to jointly establish, operate and fund this HIV vaccine design programme.

The programme will primarily focus on one of the greatest scientific challenges of AIDS vaccine design and development — the search of antibodies capable of neutralizing a broad spectrum of circulating HIV strains.

Bringing hope to the idea of developing an effective vaccine against the deadly virus, scientists have been working on powerful new antibodies that neutralise all major forms of the virus. An antibody is an infection-fighting protein produced by our immune system when it detects harmful substances like viruses and bacteria.

Scientists say these antibodies would ultimately reveal the Achilles heel of the virus. Studies have found that antibodies target a stable portion of the virus that does not frequently mutate — a defence mechanism that has till now helped the virus escape earlier developed experimental vaccines.

Experts in this Indian lab will now look at new antibodies and how they bind to the virus. This will tell scientists which part of the virus to target with vaccines. The idea is to create artificially synthesized mimics of their targets on HIV, to be used in vaccines to elicit similar actions and teach the immune system how to thwart HIV infection.

"With 7,100 people contracting HIV every day, effective tools to prevent infection are indispensable to the fight against HIV and AIDS. A broadly effective AIDS vaccine would be a powerful asset to efforts to arrest the spread of HIV," said M K Bhan, secretary of DBT.

This collaborative programme will participate in a coordinated, global effort to create replicas of virus targets in the laboratory for use as immunogens, which are the active ingredients of vaccines. The programme will have the task of developing, testing and then implementing strategies to rapidly screen large numbers of immunogens against HIV-1 (dominant strain) and to prioritize them for further evaluation in preclinical studies.

"We are very excited about the launch of this collaboration," said Seth Berkley, CEO of IAVI.

Other institutions participating in this partnership include the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology in New Delhi and the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.

Indians, too, are being screened for such effective HIV slaying antibodies. The country has its share of "late progressors" or "elite controllers" — people infected with HIV who stay healthy for years without requiring life-saving antiretroviral treatment (ART). About one in 300 people with HIV is an elite controller.

Meanwhile, another fascinating community — mainly comprising women — has also got scientists in India excited. Called "exposed sero negative" these are women who have, for years, had sex with HIV-positive, condom-refusing husbands, but never got infected. Many have also had babies who are not HIV-positive. Scientists are studying these elite controllers to see whether they carry special genes, which prevent the virus from multiplying in their bodies. The cure for AIDS may come from members of these two communities, scientists believe.

Publication: The Times Of India Delhi;Date: Mar 3, 2011;Section: Times Nation;Page: 15

₹60L spent, AMU probe plods along

Akshaya Mukul | TNN

New Delhi: The probe into the alleged financial and other irregularities by PK Abdul Aziz, vice-chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, has cost the varsity around Rs 60 lakh but there is no trace of even an interim report.

The inquiry committee consisting of Justice BA Khan, former chief justice of the Delhi High Court, and Justice AN Divecha, former judge of the Gujarat HC, was to give the report in May last year, two months after it was set up. But it has dragged on since then.

But it is the cost of the inquiry committee that has raised eyebrows. In reply to an RTI query, AMU admitted that till December 1, 2010, it had spent Rs 52.57 lakh from its 'unforeseen account' on the panel. AMU sources said till the end of February nearly Rs 60 lakh had been spent.

As head of the committee, Justice Khan gets a monthly remuneration that is equal to the total emoluments — including DA and other allowances — of a sitting chief justice of an HC. This is in addition to the pension that he gets. Justice Divecha also gets Rs 40,000 a month in lieu of his entitlement to a chauffer driven staff car. Amicus curiae Saif Mahmood, a Supreme Court advocate, gets Rs 7,500 per hearing.

Publication: The Times Of India Delhi;Date: Mar 3, 2011;Section: Times Business;Page: 23;

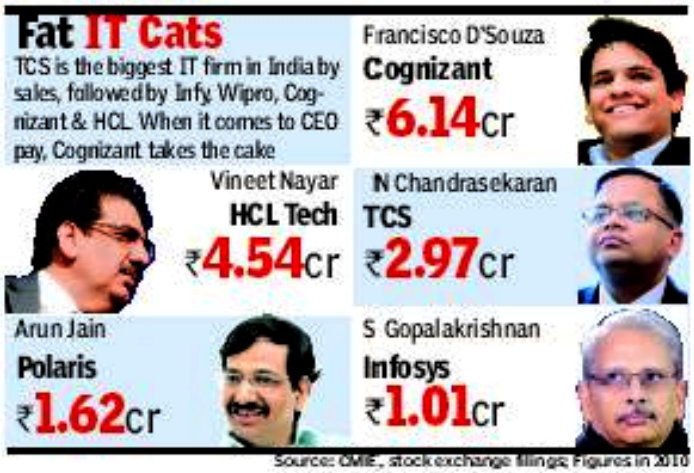
Cognizant CEO top-paid IT boss

Ishan Srivastava | TNN

Chennai: With IT companies and their stocks emerging strongly from the recession, the focus is shifting to how much their top executives are taking home as salary.

Late last week, IT major Cognizant disclosed its top executives' remuneration to American stock exchanges. CEO Francisco D'Souza earned $1.36 million as salary and bonus in 2010. That would roughly be Rs 6.14 crore converted at Rs 48.58 per dollar. This includes a base salary of Rs 2.44 crore and a bonus of Rs 3.7 crore.

In comparison, Vineet Nayar, the managing director and chief executive of HCL Technologies, took home a total of Rs 4.54 crore out of which Rs 1.2 crore was base salary (as of June 2010), according to think tank CMIE.



Natarajan Chandrasekaran of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) earned Rs 2.97 crore, which included a bonus of 2 crore. S Gopalakrishnan of Infosys earned Rs 1.01 crore and Arun Jain of Polaris Software got Rs 1.62 crore. Even Wipro's two outgoing CEOs Girish Paranjpe and Suresh Vaswani were paid Rs 2.11 and Rs 2.96 crore, respectively, (as declared on March 31, 2010).

On a standalone basis, these salaries are not globally competitive, say recruiters. "Salaries of Indian CEOs are artificially kept low because astronomical figures at higher level will raise demands for appropriate increase in salaries in levels down the chain. This is particularly true of Indian IT companies," said Ganesh Shermon, partner & country head (human capital) at KPMG India.