

Newspaper Clips

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12th Plan to create 10 million more seats in higher education

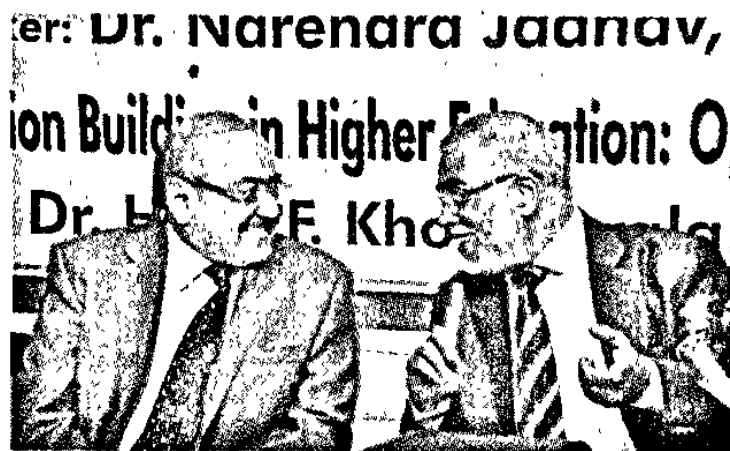
Our Bureau

Hyderabad, March 4

An additional capacity of 10 million seats will be created in higher education during the 12th Plan which will commence from April 1, according to Dr Narendra Jadav, Member, Planning Commission.

Delivering Dr B L Maheshwari Memorial Lecture at the Centre for Organisational Development here, Dr Jadav said enrolments in higher education in the country were 20 million besides four million in the distance mode of learning.

The number might look impressive in absolute figures. China had far exceeded India in higher education with 30 million enrolment, he said.



Mr Narendra Jhadav (right), Member, Planning Commission, having a word with Mr Habil F. Khorakiwala, Founder Chairman, the 4th Dr B.L Maheshwari Memorial Lecture on 'Institution Building in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges, in Hyderabad. — P.V. Sivakumar

"The bad news, however, is that the gross enrolment ratio in higher education in the age group of 18-23 years is very low at 17 per cent which is nearly one-half of

the world average" Dr Jadav said.

There was a need to ramp up the total number of universities from existing 634 to 1,500 over the next five years, he said.

SHORTAGE OF FUNDS

About 89 per cent of the entire student population were going to 293 State universities in the country which were starving for funds. "They require large reforms and funds," he said.

A growth target of 9 per cent was being contemplated for the 12th Plan and education development was vital for Indian economy to bounce back, he added.

Dr B L Maheshwari was an acclaimed manager educationist.

India-born scientists caught faking data

DUBIOUS MEANS Authorities at University of Texas say they are reviewing the charge of research impropriety

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THE THREE CASES

WASHINGTON: Dr Bharat Aggarwal, a University of Texas researcher who was trying to find a herbal cure for cancer, was late February put under investigation for allegedly manipulating data.

He is among three Indian-origin researchers recently accused by their employers of fabricating and falsifying data, publishing suspect papers, and misleading colleagues and mentors.

The other two are Dr Anil Potti, a cancer researcher earlier with Duke University, and Dr Dipak K Das, head of cardiovascular research at University of Connecticut.

At the university's MD Anderson Cancer Centre, Aggarwal was researching the benefits of plant-derived chemicals in fighting cancer.

"MD Anderson takes an allegation of research impropriety seriously, and we will use internal and regulatory processes to review any such matter that is reported," Dr Raymond N DuBois, MD Anderson provost, told Hindustan Times.

Aggarwal could not be reached. But he did confirm to Retraction Watch, an online watchdog of scientific studies, that his lab was indeed under investigation. "I think that somebody out there is putting this whole thing together and their mind is made up," he had said.

■ Dr Bharat Aggarwal, a University of Texas researcher, was trying to find a herbal cure for cancer

■ Dr Anil Potti, formerly with Duke University, had claimed he was close to finding a way to tailor chemotherapy as per patient's genetic make-up

■ Dr Dipak Das, researcher at University of Connecticut, was found to have fabricated data on resveratrol.

The case against Dr Potti, on the other hand, is over. He left Duke, in North Carolina, late last year, following problems found in the "reproducibility" of his research.

Hyderabad-born Potti had attracted worldwide attention following claims that he was close to finding a way to tailor chemotherapy to match a patient's genetic make-up. Researchers, however, found it difficult to replicate his experiments. Duke announced it was initiating steps to retract and review his papers. Potti couldn't be reached for comments.

The third case, involving Das, was made against him by University of Connecticut in January after a three-year probe found he had fabricated data on resveratrol, an ingredient found in red wine. Das couldn't be reached for comments.

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Every institution must be a place of excellence: UGC Chairman

Press Trust of India
Kozhikode, March 4

Stating that educational institutions should ensure quality of education, University Grants Commission Chairman, Prof Ved Prakash, today said that every institution must be a place of excellence.

"Every single institution must be a place of excellence,"

Prof Prakash told reporters here. Higher education must be made available to the children at an affordable cost, he said, adding "if the child is not able to cope up with the existing institution fees, it must be the responsibility of the state government to see that he is not denied access to higher education for want of money."

Hindustan Times ND 5/03/2012 p-2

Cut-offs a closed chapter at DU?

RADICAL CHANGE Committee set up to review admissions suggests entrance exams to all courses, academic council to decide

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NEW DELHI: Astronomically high cut-offs at Delhi University (DU) may soon be history.

A high-powered committee set up by the university to review the undergraduate admission process has recommended that entrance tests be conducted for admissions to all streams in the coming few years in place of the old system of cut-offs.

While it is almost impossible to implement this suggestion this year, it could become a reality next year if the Academic Council approves it.

The soaring cut-offs in DU has made the university out of bounds for average students and led to considerable criticism in recent years.

"We have recommended that all admissions in future be done

This will streamline the process. Students will be better suited to the course they pursue and not arbitrarily take up a subject.

A MEMBER
High-powered committee

through entrance exams, especially to science courses," said a member of the committee.

"Students who want to pursue biosciences will be admitted through scores obtained in the centralised All India Pre Medical Test (AIPMT) and those who want to pursue physical sciences will be admitted through scores of the All India Engineering Entrance Examination (AIEEE)," the member said.

"For courses in humanities and commerce, the university can hold its own entrances. We have already done this in English, BBE and journalism," the member said.

The committee was set up by the university in November last year to review the admission process and suggest changes to make it better.

The 16-member committee has principals from various DU colleges such as SRCC (Shri Ram College of Commerce), Lady Shri Ram College for Women, Miranda House and Kamala Nehru as its members.

"This will streamline the process. Students will be better suited to the course they pursue as they have cleared a test and not arbitrarily taken up a subject," the member said.

While this recommendation

ADMISSION CONUNDRUM



may take some time to turn into reality, the suggestion to take application process online could be implemented this year.

The committee has suggest-

ed that application forms be made available online from this admission season. Last year, no forms were to be filled before taking admissions.

Currently, admission in most courses is done on the basis of Class 12 marks. Individual colleges decide the cut-offs.

In some courses, however, students are admitted on the basis of entrance tests. These are: English, Journalism, Bachelor of Business Economics, Bachelor of Business Studies, Bachelor of Financial and Investment Analysis, Bachelor of Fine Arts

Every year, lakhs of students apply for admission to DU. RAJ K RAJ/HT FILE

It has also recommended that admissions through both sports and ECA quota be done individually by colleges instead of a centralised process.

'Diverse meteorite mix helped create Earth'

Experts Suggest New Theory On Formation Of Our Planet

Washington: Earth might have formed from collisions of many different types of meteorites, scientists suggest. Our planet is thought to have formed around 4.5 billion years ago from a disk of dust grains left over from the cloud of material that built our sun.

These grains slowly clumped together, drawn by gravity into pebbles, then boulders, then planetary embryos. Eventually, enough mass coalesced to form the planet Earth.

Scientists had thought that most of the bodies that merged to make Earth formed from a narrow zone in space and were similar to each other, belonging to a subclass of

meteorites called enstatite chondrites. This idea was based on measurements of numerous striking similarities between different isotopes of elements such as oxygen, nickel and chromium, between the Earth and enstatite chondrites.

But a new study of the silicon isotope signature of Earth rock samples and meteorites suggests that Earth is made of a more diverse mix of meteorites. Geochemists Caroline Fitoussi and Bernard Bourdon of the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon in France analysed silicon isotopes in terrestrial rock samples collected from diverse types of mantle rocks.

They also analysed lunar



BORN THIS WAY?

rock samples collected by NASA astronauts on moon missions. They compared these to meteorite samples, particularly enstatite chondrites and another type called enstatite achondrites. The measurements were done at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology of Zurich in Switzerland.

Using computer models of Earth's formation, researchers calculated that a mix of three types of meteorite ingredients may have produced the right blend of oxygen, nickel, and chromium isotopes previously measured in Earth samples, as well as their new findings about silicon isotopes in terrestrial and meteorite samples. ANI

Anyone there? You can join alien hunt

Washington: The SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) Institute is asking the public to join in its hunt for life beyond the Earth.

It says anyone can register on the new website, SETILive (setilive.org), to help analyse data from SETI's radio telescope devoted to scanning the heavens for signals from ET.

"There are parts of the spectrum where our sophisticated signal processing system is overwhelmed because there are so many signals," said astronomer Jill Tarter, director of the SETI Institute's Center for

SETI Research.

"I'm hoping to put together this army of citizen scientists to help figure out which signals to follow up on," Tarter stated.

In contrast to some other crowd-sourced science projects, such as SETI's own SETI@Home, which rely on users donating spare computer time to data crunching, this project is asking the public to donate brainpower.

"You don't do anything in SETI@Home; your computer does," Tarter told SPACE.com, a sister site to LiveScience. ANI

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Indian companies, the flavour of IIM placements this year

Shobha Roy

Kolkata, March 4

The global economic meltdown following the sub-prime crisis in 2008-09 and the recent Euro zone crisis seems to have prompted the premier B-schools like the IIMs (Indian Institutes of Management) to look at the domestic market for recruitments.

Most of these institutes – which once used to rely largely on international offers – are now looking at attracting Indian companies across various sectors for campus recruitments.

The recent crisis has also encouraged these institutes to look at new and emerging sectors such as e-commerce. Plans are also afoot to tweak the courses to meet emerging demand of the industry.

According to Prof Ashok Banerjee, Dean, New Initiatives and External Relations, Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta (IIM-C), there has been a “correction” in the nature of placements post the 2008 crisis.

“With the global economy moving into a recession, the over-dependence on multinational corporations has come down. The Indian market has, however, been posting a steady growth and so are the companies here. This is prompting them to hire,” Prof Banerjee told *Business Line*.

REALIGNMENT

This, in turn, has brought about a sort of realignment in



Steady growth: A view of the campus of Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta (file photo). — A. Roy Chowdhury

placement process. “Earlier, Indian companies were not getting good slots in the placement process but now, with the demand from MNCs coming down, they are also getting a good slot and able to select from the best of the candidates,” he said.

Investment banking has been one of the worst affected following the crisis, said Prof Amit Dhiman, Chairperson – Career Development and Placements, IIM-C.

“The number of offers, particularly from i-banks, has clearly come down this year but this has been more than

offset by the participation of new companies and new sectors,” he said. IIM-C had some concerns with regard to placements this year and did a lot of legwork to attract newer companies and sectors. “There were some feelers that the recruitments might not be very easy; so we talked to a lot of new sectors and companies. A number of technology firms, for instance, hired in large numbers this year. This apart, there was also lot of interest from e-commerce companies,” he added.

There has also been a churn in the kind of courses opted

by the management graduates.

“Pre-2008, more than half of the batch of students would opt for finance and there were no takers for courses such as operational management and human resource management. This was an aberration and this has been corrected to a great extent now as finance and investment banking are one of the worst affected areas in so far as placements are concerned,” Prof Banerjee said.

COURSE PATTERN

Courses such as logistics and

supply chain management and operational management have been slowly catching up, he added.

According to Prof Rajiv Mishra, Chairperson, Placements, XLRI Jamshedpur, the course pattern has to change keeping in mind the changing needs of the industry.

“Courses have to be dynamic in nature keeping in mind the needs of the industry. At XLRI, we encourage the faculties to make modifications in courses as and when required. This year, for instance, we saw some e-commerce companies coming in for recruitment. We can have some new curriculum built into our existing course to focus on the needs of specific industries,” he said.

According to Prof Banerjee, placements would continue to be a challenge till 2015. The job scenario in the global front might not look up immediately and there could be a change in the profile and nature of jobs coming to B-schools.

“Things are not going to change drastically at least on the global front. However, in India, a number of banks will face a mid-management crisis post-2013 as there would be a huge exodus of staff on account of retirement. The profile of jobs and company will change – we will see more number of public sector units and Indian private sector companies hiring from B-schools,” he said.

UNDER PRESSURE

1st-year AIIMS student found dead in hostel



■ MBBS students from AIIMS protest outside the residence of director Dr RC Deka on Sunday evening. VIPIN KUMAR/HT PHOTO

HT Correspondent

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NEW DELHI: Depressed over repeated failures in his exams, a first-year MBBS student at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) allegedly committed suicide in his hostel room early on Sunday.

Son of a farmer, Anil Kumar Meena (22) from Pipliya Chowki village, Baran district in Rajasthan, was found hanging in his room in hostel-6 by his friends on Sunday morning. Meena was immediately rushed to the emergency ward at AIIMS where he was declared brought dead.

"Kumar had failed in the first-year exam as well as internal examinations. He had also low attendance and was not promoted. He also had problems in following lectures in English," said Chhaya Sharma, deputy commissioner of police (south).

The police said when his friends did not hear from him in the morning, they called the security guard to check. The guard open the wired net covering a small ventilator above the door and found him hanging.

"No suicide note was recovered from him. We are investigating about him from his friends and college staff," she said. Meena was the eldest of four brothers and his family has been informed.

"The deceased was allegedly under depression. He also apparently had psychiatric problems," said Dr YK Gupta, AIIMS spokesperson who was out of Delhi on Sunday.

A classmate, who wished to remain anonymous, said, "He was a loner, who did not often mingle with people. He had been very upset from the past few days and was not talking to anyone."

"Even yesterday night, he was very low and kept sitting at his desk till late in the night. He last spoke to some friends at 2am and then went to his room," the student added.

Following the suicide, on Sunday evening, over 200 students gathered at the lawns of AIIMS director Dr RC Deka's residence demanding his immediate resignation.

"Anil Kumar was facing difficulty in his studies. He had approached the director's office several times to discuss his problems but to no avail," said another student, requesting anonymity.

"The administration's responsibility doesn't end with the admission of a student. There are several students who come to AIIMS from various states, various backgrounds. There is a definite need for regular counselling of young students," said an angry student, holding the picture of the deceased.

"Let alone counselling, there is no place to address basic grievances. There will be more suicides, if the administration does not learn its lessons," he said.

Meanwhile, AIIMS hostel superintendent HS Dash said an internal enquiry committee had been constituted to look into the incident. "The committee will meet tomorrow. Only after that will we be able to say anything," he said.

COULD PROFESSOR RAO have written papers, year after year, at the rate of two publications per month? Most scientists could not even average a thorough read of two scientific papers each month, let alone writing at that speed.

Indian Express, March 5, 2012

dance of his authorship averages out to 30 papers and a book for each year. The question is, even leaving aside the books, could Prof. Rao have written papers year after year, at the rate of two publications per month? Most scientists could not even average a thorough read of two scientific papers each month, let alone writing at that speed.

The C.N.R. Rao episode puts the spotlight on scientific misconduct in India, particularly involving research publications and books. As research and development accelerate in a variety of fields in India, plagiarism is on the rise, says Prof. K.L. Chopra, who heads the Society for Scientific Values, an independent New Delhi-based watchdog which works towards upholding ethics in Indian science. Since the case involving Prof. Rao became public, there has been a spurt of complaints of plagiarism to the society, said Prof. Chopra, a former director of IIT Kharagpur.

Seven fresh cases have been reported to the Society in the last 10 days and most of the cases involve prominent Indian scientists. Prof. Chopra, who says the Society offers a service to the public, is bollixed and challenged by the gush of recent complaints. The Society's findings only serve to bring moral pressure on the culprits and have no legal bearing but

HindustanTimes

Title : Farm scientists do their bit to tame food inflation

Author : Zia Haq zia.haq@hindustantimes.com

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Farm scientists do their bit to tame food inflation

FROM LAB TO PLATE



■ As food inflation hovers over 9%, scientists efforts may yield in easing the hike in food prices. HT

■ Study at the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research led to an overhaul of entire range of vegetables

■ Consumers enjoy better quality of vegetables. But the quality comes with a price-tag.

■ The scientists are now fighting an unlikely enemy they have inadvertently strengthened: high prices.

■ The scientists first assess demand in the local markets then employ a group of aggregators to collect the produce at an assured price

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BANGALORE: India's high food prices may have their origins in the lab, not just the markets. Farm scientists, therefore, are also giving a shot at fighting food inflation. Welcome to the weirdly innovative world of the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR), a cutting-edge government facility outside Bangalore.

Research at the institute has led to an overhaul of India's entire range of commonly consumed, traditional vegetable varieties. The current generation of Indians eats a completely new array of disease-resistant and high-yielding hybrid veggies. And therefore pays a higher price.

Consumers now commonly have grapes and melons without seeds, capsicums that are a shiny yellow, tomatoes that are fleshier, French beans without fibrous strings that make them easy to cut and, also, anytime-of-the-year cabbage, etc.

But quality comes with a price. About 10 gm of "triple-disease-resistant" tomato seeds sell for ₹650, which ultimately shows up in retail prices. Hybrids — any veggie you pick is one — are a technological leap, but they also hold the clue to why vegetables are not easy on the pocket anymore.

Having fought the pests, sci-

Buying at a constant but profitable price from farmers and selling them further with a 15% mark-up has helped in stabilising prices.

B BALAKRISHNA
scientist at IIHR

entists at the Bangalore institute — a wing of the flagship Indian Council of Agricultural Research — are now fighting an unlikely enemy they have inadvertently strengthened: high prices.

Senior scientist B Balakrishna of the IIHR oversees a group of 55 farmers who collectively farm over 100 acres of high-value vegetables, such as European cucumber and pick-rose onions grown in climate-controlled "polyhouses".

The scientists first assess demand in the local markets in terms of quantity and quality, and then employ a group of aggregators to collect the produce at an assured price, who would further sell to the markets.

The key is to buy at a constant but profitable price from farmers and sell them further with a 15% mark-up.

"This has ensured a largely continuous, stable price," Balakrishna said.