

Newspaper Clips

March 8, 2011

Mint, ND 08-Mar-11

P-3

Common test for medical courses, says Supreme Court

By PRASHANT K. NANDA & NIKHIL KANEKAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday passed an order that for the first time will enable a common medical entrance test for all private and government medical colleges in India.

The Medical Council of India (MCI) will oversee a common entrance test each for undergraduate and postgraduate medical programmes in the country. Every year about 30,000 students are admitted to undergraduate programmes and some 11,000 for postgraduate courses.

The order by justices R.V.

TURN TO PAGE 3»

SC nod to single common test for medical courses

► FROM PAGE 1

Raveendran and A.K. Patnaik came after several medical colleges challenged the apex medical education regulatory body's move to organize a common entrance test.

In response, MCI had moved the Supreme Court in October.

The decision to hold a joint entrance test would not only make it easier to administer, it will also reduce pressure on aspirants who sometimes have to appear in anywhere between 12 and 17 entrance examinations.

"Normally a student has to give 17 exams for one medical seat. Also there are problems like clash of dates and multiple fees. We had suggested a common exam as is in engineering. Then the MCI regulation came. But there was some problem in Tamil Nadu because of some private colleges," said A.D.N. Rao, an advocate for a group of students, who had in 2008 moved court demanding such a student-friendly move. "This court direction will be a big relief for students."

There are some 271 medical colleges in the country, of which 138 are government-administered and 133 are under private management.

MCI board members are "rushing for an emergency meeting" and will deliberate on the "possible implications" of the order on medical education in the country, said Ranjit Roy Chaudhury, member, board of governors of MCI.

The meeting was on till the time of going to press.

It was not immediately clear if undergraduate courses in dentistry and specialized postgraduate diploma courses such as in child health will come under the purview of the common entrance tests.

The response from private medical colleges was mixed.

K. Ramnarayan, vice-chancellor of the privately run Manipal University in Karnataka that also offer medical courses, said he was not against such a concept. "If you look at international practice, it's not a bad idea. It's a logical extension," Ramnarayan said. "We welcome the move if conducted objectively. Implementation and rigour of the test, however, need to be taken care of objectively."

P.K. Gupta, founder and chancellor of Sharda University in Greater Noida on the outskirts of Delhi, expressed some reservations. Since education and health are the responsibility of both the Centre and the state governments, the common tests could become contentious issues, he said.

"Every state has its own entrance test and now we have to see how it (the order) is impacting that," Gupta said. "We have not seen the court order and after reading the details, would be able to give a road map."

The court noted that since the decision in this regard has already been notified, MCI and the Central government can proceed on holding the common entrance test.

Advocate Amrendar Sharan and Somesh Jha, appearing for MCI, drew the attention of the court that the Centre on 13 August had said MCI can go ahead with the implementation of a single entrance test, and the regulations were notified in December.

The judgement may also help resolve differences between the health and human resource development ministries. The latter was proposing that entrance tests for undergraduate engineering and medical programmes should be clubbed together.

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PTI contributed to this story.

Mint, ND 08-Mar-11 p-15

MATCHMAKING MARKET

Networking website connects start-ups, investors

Akin to dating sites, AngelList gets start-ups to pair up with investors looking to buy into the next Twitter or Facebook

BY MALIA WOLLAN
feedback@livemint.com
SAN FRANCISCO

For Naval Ravikant, the problem with investing in start-ups boils down to coffee.

"I got really tired of coffee meetings," said Ravikant, 37, a technology entrepreneur turned investor. So burned out in fact that he bought the Web address [Idontdocoffee.com](http://dontdocoffee.com). When start-up companies looking for financing request in-person meetings, they get a reply from the email address naval@dontdocoffee.com.

"I thought, we're dealing with Internet start-ups here, there has got to be a better, more efficient way to evaluate them than to do thousands of coffee meetings," said Ravikant. "Coffee should be the last step, not the first."

So in February 2009, Ravikant and Babak Nivi, a fellow investor and start-up mentor, started AngelList, a networking website that substitutes endless pitch meetings with Internet-based matchmaking.

Akin to online dating sites, AngelList allows eager startup companies to pair up with investors looking to buy into the

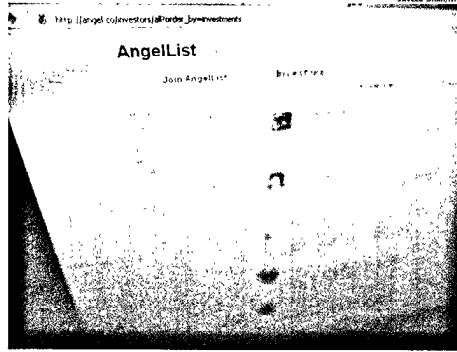
next Twitter or Facebook. More than 1,300 investors have already joined the site, including around 400 venture capitalists. The rest are angel investors, the name given to investors who buy a stake of a firm with their own money.

On average, more than 20 start-ups from all over the world join the site every day, and about 200 companies have been financed. Ravikant and Nivi vet the investors before they are allowed on the site, which is free for both investors and start-ups to join and has become hotter in Silicon Valley than many popular start-ups.

The site combines deal-making with social network profiles to make it "one of the most innovative things that has happened in venture capital in the last five years," said Dave McClure, an angel investor and founding partner of 500 start-ups, a Silicon Valley technology incubator.

McClure is one of the most active investors on AngelList's site, writing cheques for up to \$250,000 (\$1.13 crore) to dozens of start-up companies, including \$100,000 recently to Forrst.com, an online community for Web designers.

Not everyone shares McClure's enthusiasm. Some Silicon Valley venture capitalists have voiced concern that AngelList adds more fuel to an already overheated start-up market. Among the site's detractors is Bryce Roberts, co-founder of O'Reilly AlphaTech



Social link: A screenshot of AngelList's website.

Ventures and an investor in Foursquare. He recently wrote a blog post detailing why he had deleted his AngelList account, saying the site created an environment where "angels feel compelled to invest for fear of missing the boat every-one else is getting on."

As for Ravikant, he sees AngelList enabling start-ups from a wider geographic range to find the capital needed to build their companies. It is expensive for a start-up in Chile or Estonia, for example, to get coffee with an angel investor in Palo Alto, California.

If some small start-ups fail along the way, and many undoubtedly will, that is no reason for concern, Ravikant said. "What is the harm if a bunch of rich, old people are writing

cheques to a bunch of young kids to go build start-ups and pursue their dreams and maybe create the next Twitter?" he said.

"Worst-case scenario, it is a very efficient wealth-transfer scheme," he said. "Best case, it is the engine that is going to fuel small-business job creation."

Ravikant has been on both the investor and the start-up side, and his allegiances are unquestionably with the start-ups. After growing up with little money in Delhi and then New York, Ravikant started learning computer programming languages as a teacher's assistant at Dartmouth, where he also delivered newspapers and washed dishes in the cafeteria to pay his way through

college. "I'm always rooting for the small guy," he said. "Call it a Napoleon complex, call it the underdog, call it growing up as a poor, fat, immigrant kid. I never like to see the entrenched powers win."

After moving to Silicon Valley, Ravikant helped create a handful of companies including Epinions.com, a product review site, and Vast.com, a classifieds site. He also invested in companies such as Twitter, Foursquare and Jambool, a payment system for mobile applications that Google bought last year.

AngelList now operates out of a one-room office in a multistory building full of one-room-office technology start-ups in South of Market, a popular neighbourhood for technology businesses in San Francisco.

In recent weeks, AngelList witnessed its biggest investor frenzy yet, over a company called Green Goose, which bills itself as a "real-world game platform." Green Goose makes tiny motion-sensing stickers that attach to everyday objects, like a running shoe or a pill bottle, and upload real-time data when that object is used. Two angel investors

committed \$100,000 to Green Goose's founder, Brian Krejcarek, after listening to him describe his product on stage at a start-up conference in San Francisco. "AngelList went nuts," Krejcarek said. "I got a hundred-some emails from interested angel investors."

Within days, Krejcarek had hand-picked about a dozen investors and raised \$500,000. "I've been eating Ramen noodles for the last two years," said Krejcarek, who moved to Silicon Valley last week after completing the investment round. "I'd been pounding on

Some Silicon Valley venture capitalists have voiced concern that AngelList adds more fuel to an already overheated start-up market

doors over and over again without too many people listening, so the sheer volume of really qualified, interesting angel investors reaching out to me was overwhelming."

Ravikant says that is not an unfamiliar story, but the happy ending still does not include coffee. "We have a collection of liquor bottles in our office because companies stop by all the time and say 'Thank you, you got our financing done,'" he said. "They don't know how to thank us so they pay us in liquor, cookies and cupcakes."

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Economic Times ND 08/03/2011

P4

Not Getting Enough Sleep? Turn Off the Technology

Watching TV, checking text messages or email before hitting the bed is depriving Americans their quota of sleep, impacting their work, mood, sex lives and health

PATRICIA REANEY
NEW YORK

Dependence on televisions, cellphones and laptops may be costing Americans dearly — in lack of sleep.

The national penchant for watching television every evening before going to sleep, playing video games late into the night or checking emails and text messages before turning off the lights could be interfering with the nation's sleep habits.

"Unfortunately, cell phones and computers, which make our lives more productive and enjoyable, may be abused to the point that they contribute to getting less sleep at night leaving millions of Americans functioning poorly the next day," Russell Rosenberg, the vice chairman of the Washington DC-based National Sleep Foundation said in a statement.

Nearly 85% of people questioned in an NSF study said they used some type of electronics in the hour before going to bed, and about two-thirds admitted they do not get enough sleep during the week.

Charles Czeisler, of Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, said exposure to artificial light before going to bed can increase

alertness and suppress the release of melatonin, a sleep-promoting hormone. "Technology has invaded the bedroom," Czeisler explained in an interview. "Invasion of such alerting technologies into the bedroom may contribute to the high proportion of respondents who reported they routinely get less sleep than they need."

■ People are coping by consuming caffeinated drinks—about three 12-ounce beverages per person—per day

Baby boomers, or people aged 46-64 years old, were the biggest offenders of watching television every night before going to sleep, while more than a third of 13-18 year-olds and 28 percent of young adults 19-29 year olds played video games before bedtime.

Sixty one percent also said they used their computer or laptop at least a few nights each week. And a propensity to stay in touch means that even people who have managed to fall asleep, are being woken up by cell-phones, texts and emails during the night.

"One in 10 kids report they are being awoken by texts after they have gone to bed. People don't turn off their Blackberries," said Czeisler, adding that

much of this is happening at the expense of sleep. Generation Z'ers, 13-18 year olds, were the most sleep-deprived group, with 22 percent describing themselves as "sleepy" compared to only nine percent of baby boomers.

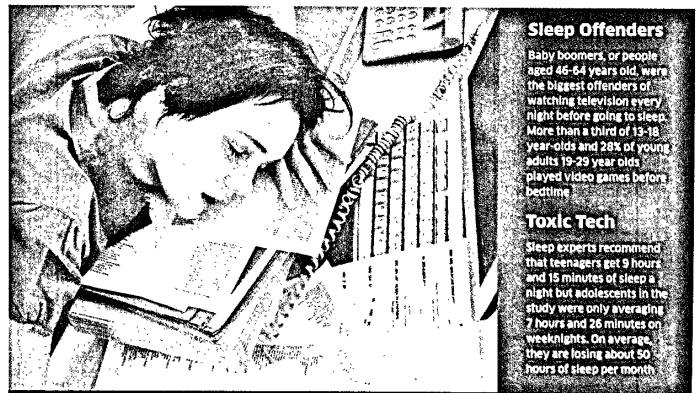
Sleep experts recommend that teenagers get 9 hours and 15 minutes of sleep a night but adolescents in the study were only averaging 7 hours and 26 minutes on weeknights.

"I am the most concerned about how little sleep 13-18 years are getting," said Czeisler. "Kids today are getting an hour and a half to two hours less sleep per night than they did a century ago. That means that they are losing about 50 hours of sleep per month," said Czeisler.

Americans' lack of sleep is negatively impacting their work, mood, family driving habits, sex lives and health, according to the NSF. All age groups are coping by consuming caffeinated drinks—about three 12-ounce (354 ml) beverages per person—per day, and taking naps, sometimes more than one during the day.

"Parents should get these technologies out of the bedrooms of kids if they want them to do well (in school)," said Czeisler.

Reuters



Sleep Offenders

Baby boomers, or people aged 46-64 years old, were the biggest offenders of watching television every night before going to sleep. More than a third of 13-18 year-olds and 28% of young adults 19-29 year olds played video games before bedtime.

Toxic Tech

Sleep experts recommend that teenagers get 9 hours and 15 minutes of sleep a night but adolescents in the study were only averaging 7 hours and 26 minutes on weeknights. On average, they are losing about 50 hours of sleep per month.

Mindless regulation

AICTE covers up incompetence with blunt action

If there was ever a decision that proved that the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) isn't doing its job properly, it is its blanket ban on part-time MBA courses. This means that the regulator for technical education will no longer approve such courses and those that are in operation will not be given permission to extend them once they are completed. In other words, by 2012, there will no longer be any AICTE-certified part-time MBA courses. AICTE officials say the rationale for doing this is that several B-schools are misusing the facility, running other programmes under the guise of an MBA course and are even recruiting fresh graduates instead of those with work experience. This is undoubtedly true, as any recruiter will attest. But there are also many reputed institutes running decent part-time courses. Should they be penalised for other institutions' sins? Surely AICTE should do some soul-searching about its own efficacy as a regulator and enforcer of technical education standards. Its solution to a problem of poor governance in part-time MBA courses is the equivalent of, say, the electricity regulator banning electricity transmission on grounds that T&D thefts are high. Using the same logic, there are many fly-by-night B-schools under AICTE's bailiwick. Should it ban all B-schools?

To be sure, the ban on part-time is unlikely to be as disruptive as the rules for admissions, curricula and fees for the post graduate diploma in management (PGDM) that it notified in December, a matter that is now in court. Compared to the 200,000-odd seats available for full-time MBA courses from some 2,000 institutions, part-time MBA

courses under AICTE's ambit cover just 20,000 students in some 400 colleges. But as with the full-time PGDM, demand for the part-time MBA is growing robustly. Just as the PGDM is replacing the college graduation degree as the basic qualification for entry-level employment in a host of professions, the part-time MBA is increasingly being considered a tool for mid-career advancement by employers and employees alike, since it does not require a sabbatical. The popularity of the MBA degree can be seen from the fact that the US, the world's largest economy, turns out just over 100,000 MBA students each year; in India, 300,000 youngsters appear for the full-time PGDM entrance tests. Part-time MBAs from reputed institutions also fulfil an economic gap because at ₹1 lakh at the most, they are significantly cheaper than the full-time MBA, so it is easy to see why they are likely to grow in popularity.

Given the robust latent demand a blanket ban is unlikely to put an end to part-time MBAs. If anything, the lack of regulation is likely to encourage more and more unscrupulous businessmen to enter the field by offering such degrees with uncheckable affiliations and certifications from questionable "foreign" institutions, intensifying the very anomalies that AICTE hopes to check. Indeed, AICTE has not covered itself with glory with its indiscriminate approvals to all manner of B-schools and other technical educational institutions. Instead of trying to cover up for its mistakes with restrictive and heavy-handed regulations that are unlikely to enhance the quality of business management education in India, AICTE should focus on better, not more, regulation.

Business Standard ND 08/03/2011 p-9

India on mind, Carnegie Mellon University thinks digital

SURAJEET DAS GUPTA
& PIYALI MANDAL
New Delhi, 7 March

Carnegie Mellon University President Jared Leigh Cohon has been trying to push "digital education" as the next big revolution in the sector. Just a few years ago, Cohon, one of the most respected educational administrators in the US, met Apple Inc CEO Steve Jobs, requesting him to insert an application to deliver undergraduate courses on the iconic iPhone, on an experimental basis. Jobs refused point-blank, saying educational applications were "boring".

Cohon, however got a more encouraging response from Facebook's maverick co-founder, Mark Zuckerberg. He went to him with a simple offering — digital education is good, but it misses out on social interaction that students develop while living on the campus. So could Facebook fill in this gap in the digital platform? Zuckerberg told Cohon he did not understand the digital education business, but he would be willing to integrate Facebook if the university built applications for such an interaction.

Cohon says: "Digital education is a disruptive technology, as it could bring education at a lower cost to the masses. But, more important, it is an ideal way to reach markets like India, where cost is a key factor and the majority knows English."

Mellon may be a private university, charging a steep \$50,000 annually with no scholarships at the undergraduate level — certainly more expensive than other competing US universities. But the high costs have not deterred Indian students from coming here in droves. They constitute over 8 per cent of Mellon's 11,000-strong student fraternity, and, as many as 150 of them are in the undergraduate studies. This is the reason why Mellon is aggressively pushing, despite its constraints in making India one of the key markets in its ambition to become a global university.

"Our strategy in India is clear — we will collaborate with local



'OUR STRATEGY IN INDIA IS CLEAR — WE WILL COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL INSTITUTIONS. WE WILL OFFER OUT FACULTY, COURSES AND TECHNOLOGY. INDIA IS SURELY A KEY MARKET FOR US'

JARED L. COHON
President, Carnegie Mellon University

institutions, as we don't have huge resources to invest. We will offer our faculty, courses and technology. India is surely one key market for us," says the soft-spoken Cohon. As part of that game-plan, Mellon has tied up with Shiv Nadar Foundation and is offering undergraduate courses in their university in engineering, mechanics and computers. In the four-year course, students study for two years at Mellon and two in India, and get a Mellon degree.

But the next step is to go for post-graduate studies as well as research with the Nadars, though no time period has been envisaged for this. Cohon is also looking at tying up with Indian companies to set up centres for research and post-graduate programmes for their employees. He says Mellon has been able to commercialise products and technology developed in its labs and research centres. "We can collaborate with companies

or institutions like the Indian Institute of Technology to commercialise products or technology built in labs," says Cohon.

Mellon is also open to the Indian corporate sector providing funds, which could be used for financial assistance to students in the US. But, he also believes that the chances of such deals is rare, as Indian companies are more keen on setting up their own universities and foundations of education within India.

Mellon believes the experimental digital education model could be an attractive proposition for markets like India, where most students know English. Building the course material, of course, costs a lot — about \$1 million for one course, but the cost can be spread across a larger number of students. Cohon says: "Of course, the key issue is to ensure quality of content and have intel-

ligence built into the software to assess whether a student is learning. Surely, these programs that we are now working on at the undergraduate level will be prepared at a fraction of the cost of a physical course, but a business model has to be built."

Have US universities fundamentally changed after the financial meltdown and 9/11? Are these universities losing their earlier attractiveness? Cohon answers in the affirmative. He says there are three things. One, in the aftermath of 9/11, there has been a significant rise of universities in Australia, Singapore and western Europe, especially because getting student visas in the US was getting increasingly difficult. Two, the financial meltdown obviously meant that many of the rich families and companies, who funded universities, reduced their support. So financial assistance dried up. And three, non-US universities are improving in terms of quality and are also cheaper in many cases.

Mellon, however, has already taken rapid strides globally. It has set up a Mellon campus in Qatar, and is running programmes in Greece, Portugal, Australia and Singapore, to name a few. In Qatar, for instance, the financing of the campus, including paying the staff is completely taken care of by the Qatar Foundation. In Portugal, its programmes are supported by the government, which wants the country to become a higher educational hub. In Greece, it is supported by a local telecom company.

So, is Mellon looking for government financial support? Cohon rules that out, saying the Indian government already has many other areas in education that it has to look at on priority. But, he is looking forward to a legal framework that would define the entry of foreign universities into the country.

Cohon also wants the perception that Mellon charges heavily and makes massive profits to change in India. "We are a not-for-profit organisation and our fees are higher because we are a privately run institution," quips Cohon.

Sunday Guardian ND_06.03.11 p-33

Technology helps disabled people, but is expensive

ANJANA PRADHAN

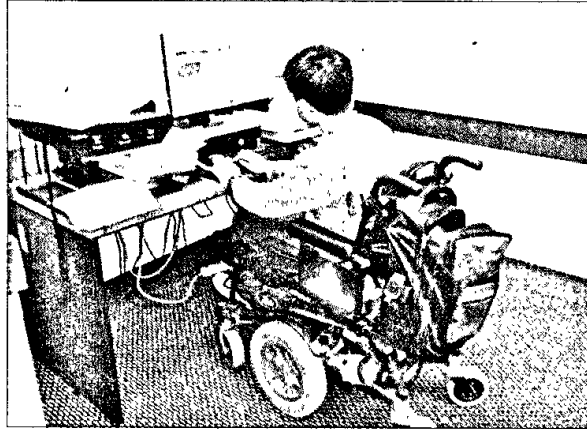
Rohit Parekh Jain, a 20-year old from Chennai, suffers from cerebral palsy and has not been able to communicate verbally all his life. But just over a year ago, in February last year, he spoke a sentence for the first time in his life after using Avaz, a device with a graphical interface, processor, software and a non-contact switch that can be used by children with cerebral palsy or poor motor skills to select alphabets and construct sentences. A former student of Vidya Sagar, Jain was in Class 12 when he first used Avaz. "Using Avaz, he can now say anything that he wants to and can communicate with people on his own," says Kalpana Rao, principal of Vidya Sagar, Chennai. Last year, the innovators at Invention Labs in Chennai launched Avaz (priced at a moderate Rs 30,000), which won the National Award for Empowerment of People with Disabilities in 2010. The device was conceptualised during the Silent Revolution Conference (2005) in Chennai. "For 10 years before that, we were importing a similar device, but this was very expensive," Rao adds.

India is home to nearly 70 million people with disabilities. But recent

Rohit Parekh Jain (20) who suffers from cerebral palsy spoke a sentence for the first time in his life after using Avaz, in February last year.



advancements in technology have produced many applications that help make the lives of disabled people easier. Assistive Technologies (AT) not only help them communicate with others, but also develop important life skills. Some of the most popular AT hardware and software products include speech recognition, which allows data en-



Advancements in technology have produced many applications that help make the lives of disabled people easier

try by voice commands rather than a mouse or keyboard. Similarly, on-screen keyboards provide the image of a standard or modified keyboard on the computer screen, and touch screens allow direct selection or activation of the computer by touching the screen. Further, modern technology has made many useful tools for people who read and write Braille, such as electronic Braille notetakers, which are portable devices with Braille keyboards that visually challenged people can use to enter information. Other technologies range from electronic wheel chairs,

computers to automatic page turners.

Arathi Abraham, principal designer, 99&1 Design, Chennai, has developed Slate, a content development tool aimed at parents and teachers. She says, "The software enables teachers to create audio-visual communication aids for children with learning disabilities, autism and low vision. It can also be used to create a custom media player for movies, music, audio books and websites that can be accessed independently." Currently, Slate is used in special schools in Delhi, Banga-

lore and Chennai.

However, experts feel that though technologies can bring about a revolution in the lives of disabled people, they are very expensive, and to make them affordable for everyone is still a distant dream for many in India. "Specially challenged people need affordable and locally usable technology solutions to empower them and overcome challenges. Many of the technologies like JAWS, which costs more than Rs 4 lakh, are beyond the reach of the poor," said Aqeel Qureshi, manager of Disability News Asia.

Qureshi, who is also the vice-president of Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments, says that as of now, there is no policy or law to support technologies for people with disabilities except the Persons with Disabilities Act 1995. Although Dr Madhumita Puri, executive director of the Society for Child Development, New Delhi, feels that technology has revolutionised the way people with visual or hearing impairment participate in society these days, "There is space for development. A thrust must be given to vernacular languages. Also, as most of the materials are in English, there should be more programmes that deal with translation works".

Financial Chronicle ND 08-Mar-11 p-11

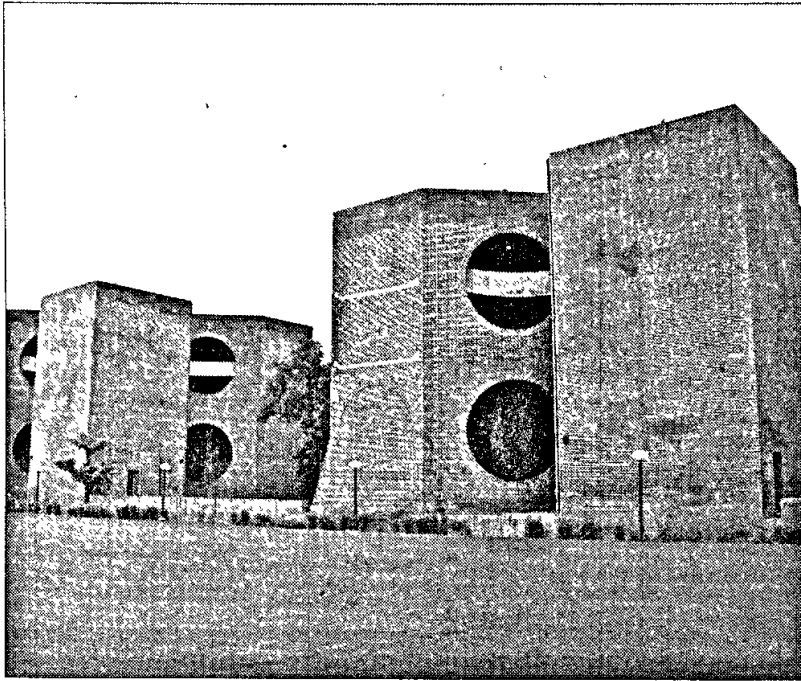
Need for quality research centres

ALL human beings have the potential to transform the world. Historians have noted how politician-warriors and entrepreneurs have changed the world around us through the ages. Not only, however, have appreciated the role that scientists and economists could play in deepening our understanding of the universe. Within our country, we have failed singularly to build the institutional foundations for research laid down by ancient scholars such as Chanakya and Brahmbhatta

Few Indians have received adequate recognition for their pioneering work done inside the country. One recalls the movie *Ek Doctor Ki Maut* (Death of a Doctor), which was based on a real-life story of a budding scientist working on a vaccine for leprosy, who was ignored, discouraged and repeatedly humiliated. Ultimately, it led him to commit suicide. I know of a researcher in India whose contributions on 'high-performance organisations' has been acknowledged by the *Harvard Business Review* as a pioneering effort. There are Indian scientists, economists, management scholars and even Nobel laureates whose contributions the world gratefully acknowledges. Unfortunately, they could excel and get recognition in their respective knowledge domains only once they left the shores of our bureaucratic universities. Recently, I came across such an example.

For scientists and researchers the world over, it is a lifetime aspiration to be published in prestigious journals such as *Nature*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, or *Science*. To get an editorial commentary on one's research in such journals is considered a big achievement. The December 23, 2010 issue of *Nature*

Arun Kumar Jain



LOSS OF FOCUS: IIMs have lost direction in carrying out relevant research for the nation and set standards. This is where our centres of excellence have failed to deliver results

carried an editorial on research of Somnath Baidya Roy on turbulence created by windmill turbines. In 2004, Roy was working at Princeton University (the same university where Albert Einstein worked) as an environmental engineer and atmospheric modeller. He showed that wind farms could have a significant negative effect on near-surface temperatures and affect agricultural production in nearby farms.

Renewable energy (especially wind and solar energy) has been the flavour of the new millennium and big money and effort are being expended globally in tapping these abundant and seemingly cheap resources. Big multi-

nationals and oil-energy giants have earmarked enormous research funds for developing lead products in renewable energy. Roy's work was, therefore, an antithesis to the prevailing wisdom, and according to the editorial, his findings were roundly criticised by most commentators. Some said he was a paid agent of the thermal energy lobby; others threatened him with dire consequences. *Nature* quotes a president of one US-based wind farm company writing to Roy to consider "how much heat is your head turning out, while you consider such thoughts?"

The editorial says that in October 2010, Roy, who had moved to University of Illinois,

published a 25-year data set suggesting that those constructing wind farms should consider low-turbulence turbines. The research showed that the main impact — raising of surface temperatures at night and lowering during the day — could benefit agriculture by decreasing frost damage and extending the growing season if managed properly. His work is now being hailed as one that will result in better designing of wind turbines and better location of the sites that in turn could boost agriculture production.

Roy's research is something that our own scientists and researchers could also do in their own labs and on their computers. But, as we all know, it requires a personal vi-

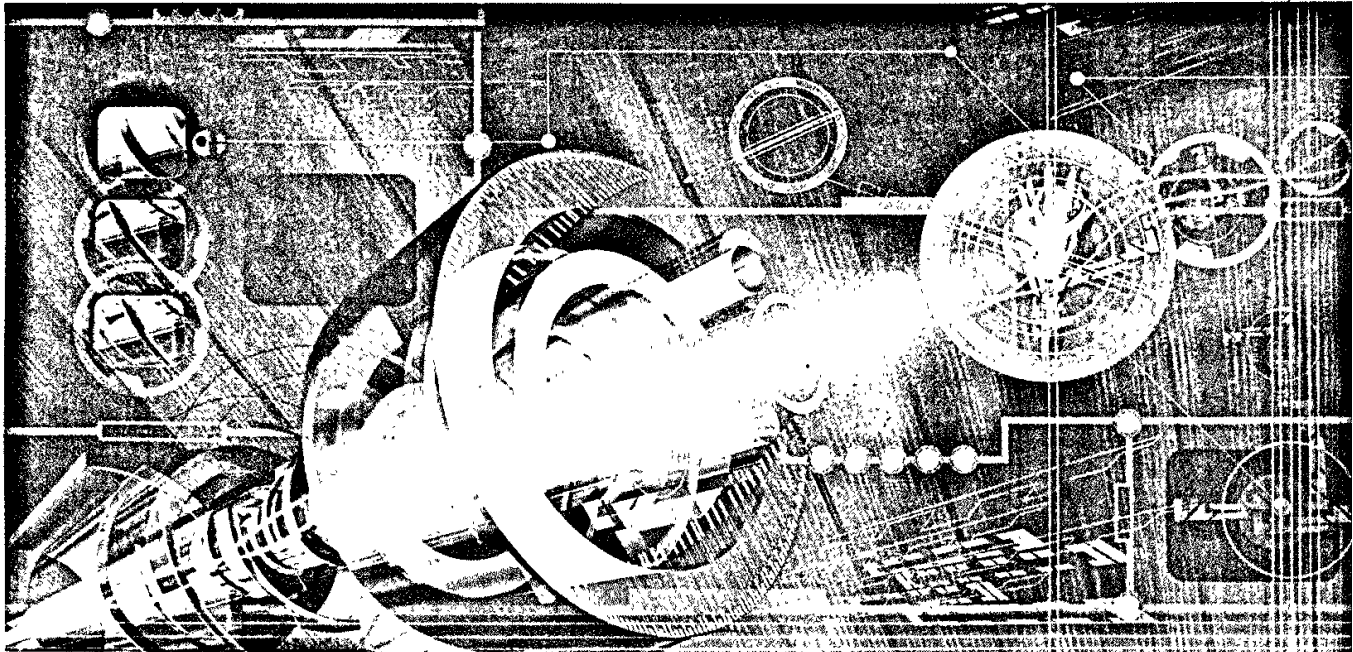
sion dovetailed with the requisite institutional academic ambience and support systems to come to fruition.

This is where the centres of excellence have failed to deliver in our country. Originally, these centres were designed to focus on research and innovation. However, the lofty performance metrics have gradually been diluted to more 'operational' needs such as teaching in various short and long-term programmes and writing consultancy reports. IIMs, for instance, are one such category of institutions that has lost its way in carrying out relevant research for the nation and set standards. In due course of time, money-earning executive development and other short-term programmes have crowded out quality and path-breaking research that was earlier expected of faculty members.

The latest missive of the ministry of human resource development to IIMs to increase the minimum teaching time from 90 hours to 150 hours, implies that a faculty member must devote more than 80 per cent of his total annual academic load (from the present 50 per cent) to teaching. Essentially, in that case, IIMs would become more of knowledge-dissemination shops rather than knowledge-creating centres of excellence. Credit for developing field-based case studies, doing long-term collaborative research, and writing research-based books have already taken a back seat.

With such metrics, how can we stop our best brains from leaving our shores?

(The writer is chairman of Center for Accelerated Learning, Innovation and Competitiveness, Germany, and professor of strategy and corporate governance, IIM-Lucknow)



Next-gen engineers need to update skills to work with new materials and an ever-growing information technology

ENGINEERING CHANGES

PURNENDU GHOSH

ENGINEERS work under various constraints. The constraints are imposed by nature, cost, safety, environment, ergonomics, reliability, manufacturability and maintainability among others.

Engineers have done pretty well in the past on various fronts for nation's progress and prosperity. Next generation engineers, however, need to broaden their skills, because they have to work with new materials and ever-growing information technology in an ever-changing techno-bulged industry and society. In the knowledge-driven world, the tools of creation are proliferating, and in this scenario engineers are expected to possess the ability to innovate and integrate their knowledge across a broad spectrum of disciplines. Industry wants engineers "equipped for the complex interactions, across many disciplines, of real-world engineered systems". We expect among our engineers the confidence to handle unknown and unexpected problems. Global perspective and the capacity to work in multidisciplinary and culturally-diverse teams are other characteristics engineers need to have in their armoury.

In this emerging scenario, write William Wulf and George Fisher, engineering education must shift its "centre of gravity". "As the world becomes more complex, engineers must appreciate more than ever the human dimen-

sions of technology, have a grasp of the panoply of global issues, be sensitive to cultural diversity, and know how to communicate effectively." It simply means engineering education needs a change.

The gap between "what employer wants and what is taught" is widening. According to some experts, fundamentals should include (in addition to physics, chemistry and mathematics) biology, and the knowledge of the global cultural and business contexts. The engineering curriculum, says James J Duderstadt, should give more emphasis on "information-rich science" while reducing the emphasis on "reductionist science". Another view is that more balanced curriculum should give emphasis on synthesis rather than analysis. The merger of creative disciplines (art, music, architecture) with engineering activities (design and innovation) will add value to the curriculum.

Option for more elective courses needs to be introduced. The present day engineers also require special skills such as the ability to manage complex and uncertain situations, ability to advocate and influence quality of entrepreneurship and decision-making. Good engineering design should not be deprived of the benefits of a broad spectrum of life experiences. It is time technology experts decide technology-based issues. Adequate familiarisation with societal demands is essential for practical technological literacy. But if new courses are added to the already overloaded

curriculum, what could or should be removed? Or, should we think of revising the duration of the undergraduate programmes?

Engineering education needs reforms in faculty assessment, including teacher evaluation by students. How about evolving a separate assessment criteria for engineering faculty from those of science faculty? Teaching skills often are not given due recognition in the assessment. Research skills are important, but more important are an engineering faculty's capability to teach and familiarity with the practical issues of "design under constraint". Engineering faculty needs to recognise the importance of life-long learning. Some of us may disagree, but many of our engineering faculty are not practising engineers.

Who should take the lead to bring the aforesaid changes: Engineering schools or industry or regulatory bodies? Not only students, teachers also need mentors. Indian National Academy of Engineering (INAE) can play a significant role in the revitalisation of engineering education. One of the INAE's recommendations (Gautam Biswas, KL Chopra, CS Jha, DV Singh: Profiles of engineering education in India) is to establish new institutions that need not be carbon copies of role model engineering institutions which were established 50 years ago. ■

The writer is a biotechnologist and ED, Birla Institute of Scientific Research, Jaipur

In India's forgotten diseases, an opportunity

Innovative developing countries such as India have the capacity to produce a new generation of drugs, diagnostics, and vaccines.

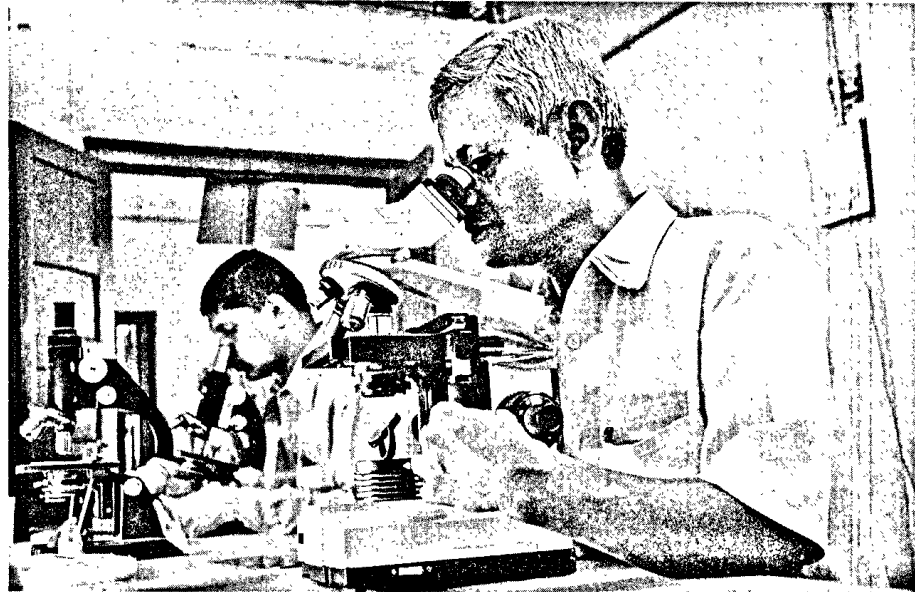
Peter Hotez

India has the extraordinary opportunity to link its leading government research institutes and pharmaceutical companies in a unique public private partnership to address the diseases of the poor throughout South Asia.

Despite India's dramatic modernisation over the last decade, it remains "ground zero" for some of the world's most dreaded tropical diseases. A recent report in *The Lancet* reveals that 205,000 people in India die annually from malaria, mainly in Orissa and the surrounding states of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, with almost one-half of those deaths in children. Similarly, India and its South Asian neighbours account for one-quarter of the world's intestinal worm infections such as hookworm and roundworm, and more than one-half of the world's cases of elephantiasis, leprosy, and visceral leishmaniasis (VL). The State of Bihar alone accounts for a large percentage of the world's cases of VL, a serious parasitic infection also known as kala-azar that affects the bone marrow, liver, and spleen, and is associated with high mortality. Thus, while much of the global health attention is largely focused on sub-Saharan Africa, the truth is that India and adjoining Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka are just as devastated by neglected tropical diseases (NTDs).

A little known fact about NTDs is that they not only adversely affect the health of the poorest people in India and elsewhere, they also have the capability to cause and prolong poverty. For instance, the disfigurement and swelling of the limbs and genitals resulting from elephantiasis prevents adults from going to work or working effectively. Dr. K.D. Ramaiah of the Indian Council of Medical Research in Pondicherry has estimated that India suffers almost \$1 billion in annual economic losses as a result of this NTD. Similarly, chronic hookworm infection occurring in over 70 million Indians stunts the growth and intellect of children to the point where a child's future wage earning is reduced more than 40 per cent. In the first-ever comprehensive report on NTDs released in October, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported the economic burden of dengue costs India \$30 million annually. NTDs can impoverish entire families and communities. The bottom line is that NTDs are one of the reasons why India is trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty.

The good news is that India is beginning to fight back and show global leadership in solving its own NTD problem and, to some extent, the challenge of NTDs among its neighbouring countries. According to the World Health Organization, the Indian National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme has scaled its mass drug administration programme to treat 85 per cent of the 600 million people at risk in India for ele-



A laboratory at the Sir Ronald Ross Institute of Tropical and Communicable Diseases in Hyderabad, India needs to link its government institutions and its private biopharmaceutical companies in a partnership to stimulate innovation for the poor. — PHOTO: K. RAMESH BABU

phantiasis. As a result, the overall prevalence of this disease in India has been cut in half since 2004, and there is the prospect that this ancient condition, which has affected the people of India for centuries, could be eliminated in the next decade. Similarly, India is aggressively implementing leprosy elimination through multi-drug therapy programmes, while in 2005 the governments of Bangladesh, India and Nepal signed a memorandum of understanding to eliminate kala-azar by 2015, with an emphasis on the border districts of these three countries where more than 50 per cent of the cases occur. Another notable achievement for India was the elimination of yaws in 2006, a chronic infection affecting the skin, bone and cartilage.

With these successes, India has the opportunity and indeed the moral obligation to take these NTD control and elimination activities to a higher level. India, together with nations such as Brazil and China, are sometimes referred to as innovative developing countries (IDCs). The concept of the IDC refers to the fact that while these countries may have chronic and debilitating poverty and high NTD prevalence, they also benefit from having top universities, medical research institutes and biotech companies. The track record of scientific publications and patents among the IDCs indicates that nations such as India have the capacity to produce a new generation of drugs, diagnostics, and vaccines for

NTDs such as hookworm and kala-azar which require technologies in order to ensure that they can move towards disease elimination.

However, a big problem with new biopharmaceuticals for NTDs is that these products will almost certainly not become money makers. Almost by definition, NTDs occur exclusively among people living on less than \$1.25 (or roughly Rs.56.4) per day. The people who need new NTD vaccines and treatments the most can never afford to pay for it. Hence, there is no financial incentive for India's private industry to embark on research and development activities for NTDs. Therefore, India urgently needs new strategies to link its government institutions and its powerful private biopharmaceutical companies together in a public-private partnership to stimulate innovation for the poor. Examples of this include a handful of non-profit product development partnerships (PDPs) supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and sources. The PDPs include a joint venture between Merck & Co. and the U.K.'s Wellcome Trust, which is now being established in New Delhi. Brazil has set a strong example through two well-established public vaccine manufacturers, FIOCRUZ and Instituto Butantan, that collaborate with PDPs, including the Sabin Vaccine Institute, where I serve as president. As a result Brazil is producing a new generation of NTD vaccines.

The reason there are not more than a handful of PDPs is the dearth of adequate government funding specifically targeting PDPs as well as well-financed private philanthropies beyond the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. In addition to increased support, there are formidable obstacles for applying complex technologies to solving global infectious disease problems, working with national regulatory authorities in low- and middle-income countries, and the difficulties of conducting clinical trials in resource poor settings.

Having had the pleasure of meeting the current and past leadership of the Indian Council of Medical Research, I know first-hand that a vision does exist that can link industry, government and the PDPs in an innovative partnership to address diseases of poverty.

An Indian public-private partnership for NTDs could produce a new generation of drugs, diagnostics, and vaccines that will benefit all of South Asia, and indeed the entire world's "bottom billion" — the 1.4 billion people in the world who live in extreme poverty. Innovation for the poor could truly become India's greatest gift to the world.

(Peter Hotez is president of the Sabin Vaccine Institute, a product development partnership for NTDs, which also hosts the Global Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases. He is the author of Forgotten People, Forgotten Diseases.)

Times of India ND 08/03/2011 P-19

MCI-appointed agency to conduct CETs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The SC allowed MCI to go ahead with its decision to hold a single entrance test each for all MBBS and postgraduate seats in private and government medical colleges from 2011-12.

MCI's counsel Amarendra Saran narrated the sequence of events leading to the notification by the SC bench of Justices R V Raveendran and A K Patnaik allowing the regulator to implement its December 27 notification. Saran, aided by petitioner

Simran Jain's counsel A D N Rao, had pleaded for a single entrance test to spare students from the harassment of appearing in 10-15 entrance tests every year. The CETs will be conducted by a nodal agency to be appointed by MCI in consultation with the Union government.

MCI had clarified that the state quota would remain intact as an entrance test would draw up a national merit list as well as statewise ranking list for general category, SC/ST and OBC and physically-challenged persons.

The MCI proposal said, "In order to be eligible for admissions to MBBS courses for a particular academic year, it shall be necessary for a candidate to obtain a minimum of 50% marks in each paper of the test."

This year onwards, there will be a single exam each for MBBS and MD courses offered by all 271 medical colleges, 138 run by governments and 133 under private management. All these colleges offer over 31,000 seats for MBBS courses and another 11,000 seats for PG degrees.

Times of India ND 08/03/2011 P-21

More genes tied to heart risk found

Breakthrough To Help Identify Likely Victims, Boost Treatment

London: In what could soon pave the way for identifying people at risk from a future heart attack, an Indian-origin scientist-led team claims to have discovered over a dozen genes associated with coronary heart disease.

Nilesh Samani of the British Heart Foundation led the international team which analysed the genetic make-up of 140,000 people to find DNA faults in those susceptible to coronary heart disease. The scientists identified 13 new genes associated with the

A team led by Indian-origin scientist Nilesh Samani identified 13 new genes linked to the risk of heart attacks and strokes, doubling the number already known. Understanding how these genes work will help develop new treatments, says Samani

risk, doubling the number already known, findings they say could lead to new treatments for the disease and open the way of diagnosing those at risk from the condition in the future.

Samani said that most of the

genes the team has identified were not previously known to be involved in the development of coronary heart disease.

"The most exciting thing about our study is that we have discovered several new genes not

previously known to be involved in the development of coronary heart disease, which is the main cause of heart attacks.

"Understanding how these genes work, which is the next step, will vastly improve our knowledge of how the disease develops, and could ultimately help to develop new treatments," he was quoted by The Daily Telegraph as saying.

The findings have been published in the latest edition of the 'Nature Genetics' journal. ■

Times of India ND

08/03/2011 P-21

Now, an app to meet all your pet dog's needs

Need a dog groomer? Looking for a trainer or nearby park? A new iPhone application provides canine information and also functions as a dog's ID and medical and insurance cards. The "My Dog" app allows dog owners to create and share a personalized profile of their dogs, similar to Facebook, according to its creator. The profile includes a picture, description, information about the dog's owner and emergency contact information, as well as details on vaccinations and medical history. The data about the dog can be emailed or uploaded to a user's Facebook or Twitter account. The app can also serve as a dog-travel guide with listings of services such as dog-friendly hotels and the pet rules of US-based airlines and rail services.

Times of India ND 08/03/2011

P-4

Mom's blood test can tell if fetus has Down's syndrome

London: Scientists have developed a simple blood test to check unborn children for Down's syndrome, which they claim could save pregnant women from undergoing invasive tests that risk losing their baby.

The blood test has been developed by the scientists in Cyprus after they identified the key DNA difference that flags up Downs syndrome, a chromosomal condition caused by presence of all or part of an extra 21st chromosome. Infants with Down's syndrome, which is characterised by severe physical and mental impairments, have an extra copy of Chromosome 21. As DNA can cross the placenta from the baby to the mother, the blood test looks for chemical differences and extra chromosomes — a telltale defect in unborn babies.

The scientists believe the simple technique should be rolled out as a screening test in future, the Daily Express reported. Philippos Patsalis of the Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics said, "The method is simple and fast and easy to perform in every genetic diagnostic lab worldwide because it does not require expensive equipment, software or special infrastructure. Such a non-invasive approach will avoid the risk of miscarriages of normal pregnancies caused by current, more invasive procedures." PTT

Publication: The Times Of India Delhi; Date: Mar 8, 2011; Section: Times Nation; Page: 12;

No comfy office, this IIM-B graduate is an 'aam' admi

Sruthy Susan Ullas | TNN

Bangalore: He will pass out of one of the most sought-after B-schools of the country. While 332 of his friends will get into those cushy jobs, he will work closer to Mother earth — working with farmers and help them produce export-quality fruits and vegetables and finally export them.

Ashutosh Sawant, a PGP second year student, has started a firm which looks at exporting frozen fruits like alphonso mangoes, frozen strawberry, pomegranate arils, frozen vegetables and cauliflower florets.

“The main reason why our products could not be exported was because we used farming methods that were unacceptable in other countries — like using banned pesticides. I will work closely with farmers, help them with best practices and finally export the produce,” Ashutosh said.

Ashutosh has already started his pilot projects. Back at his hometown in Kade-goan, Karad taluk, Maharashtra, he has entered into a contract with the owner of a 150-acre mango grove. “I helped the farmers with the technical knowhow like drip irrigation and use of chemicals. They do not have access to such knowledge. I consulted with the Central Food Technological Research Institute. The first produce



BACK TO ROOTS: Ashutosh Sawant

is almost ready,” he said.

The total value addition to fruits and vegetables in India is less — around 4% — compared to global standards of 45%-50%, he points out. “I have seen my uncle sell pomegranates for Rs 8 a kilo when I buy for Rs 60 here in Bangalore. We produce 80% of world’s pomegranates and export just 2%. Lots of them are being wasted, this provides an opportunity to process them,” he says.

Once the produce is there, he will look at marketing it to retail chains in other continents. The processing involves cleaning them from chemicals, cutting them according to the specifications of the client and packing in refrigerated containers.

Publication: The Times Of India Delhi; Date: Mar 8, 2011; Section: Times Nation; Page: 15;

Medical fraternity hails verdict

Mumbai/New Delhi: The Supreme Court verdict dismissing the plea for mercy killing of a nurse was on Monday welcomed by the medical fraternity, including nurses looking after the comatose sexual assault victim, which cautioned that any move to legalise active euthanasia was fraught with dangers.

"India is not mature enough to handle euthanasia," senior Bangaluru-based cardiologist Devi Prasad Shetty said while expressing his happiness over the verdict on a mercy killing plea.

"It will definitely prevent many more premature deaths and people trying to take advantage of euthanasia," he said. Shetty's view was shared by

Who is a 'next friend'?


The SC was so appreciative of the dedication shown by the KEM Hospital staff, that it called them the "real family" and "next friend" of Aruna Shangaug. In law, "next friend" is a concept where a competent adult, not necessarily a family member, acts in the best interest of the person he or she is representing. Cornell Law University describes "next friend" as a phrase used to refer to a person who represents another person who is under disability or otherwise unable to maintain a suit on their own behalf (such as a minor child) or who does not have a legal guardian. Such a person need not be a family member. Such a person has to be legally-competent whose interests do not run counter to those of the person on whose behalf they are acting. **TNN**

Chief Cardiologist of Bombay Hospital B K Goyal, who said euthanasia is an emotional issue which can be "misused."

"The subject of euthanasia is very emotional. When we call it mercy killing, there cannot be mercy and then killing. The

two words don't go together," he said and likened it to permitting medical termination of pregnancy (MTP). There was joy among Aruna's former colleagues and nurses in local KEM hospital who have been tending to her. **PTI**

Publication: The Times Of India Delhi; Date: Mar 8, 2011; Section: Editorial; Page: 20;

A study suggests improved energy efficiency may lead to increased energy demand 

Not a waste of energy

To say energy efficiency is vital for human welfare is a truism. Developed and developing nations may quarrel over targets linked to carbon emissions reduction. But neither doubts it must contribute to realising such cuts by conserving energy. However, going by a recent study, achieving greater energy efficiency may be a waste of time courtesy its 'rebound effect': a proportionate rise in energy demand. US think tank Breakthrough Institute suggests the gains registered as energy savings could thus be erased, and carbon emissions actually increase. For, higher energy efficiency seems to boost rather than trim energy consumption.

The theory isn't new. True, improved energy efficiency raises economic productivity, which impacts demand. The more inclusive growth is, the greater the number of consumers of ever-improving energy services and products. But surely the solution isn't to junk conservation. Going by the study's logic, the only way to curb consumption would be by slapping punitive taxes on energy use. This can boomerang dangerously, apart from being prejudicial towards the disadvantaged. Stop

saving energy and the ecological costs will escalate sharply. The poor will be the main victims of an ever-expanding carbon footprint, being less able to insulate themselves against environmental damage and harmful climate change.

Developmental goals and growth targets will also be imperilled. If development is to be inclusive, energy use can't

■ TIMES VIEW ■

be restricted to the privileged while keeping other potential users out in the name of slashing consumption. Rather, we need campaigns raising awareness across the social spectrum about the urgent need for sustainable energy use. Finally, the International Energy Agency says greater energy efficiency in industrial processes, buildings and transportation could trim world energy needs in 2050 by one-third. This is only one such reassuring projection, among many others. Clearly, saving energy is the way to go.



Make energy cost more

The concept of the rebound effect is not a new one. Its original name, in fact, is the Jevons paradox, named after English economist William Stanley Jevons. In a book published in 1865, Jevons took a look at advances in the technology of coal-consuming industries and machinery, making them more efficient. But instead of decreasing coal consumption,

■ COUNTERVIEW ■

Anil Thakkar

this increased efficiency pushed it up. More than a century later in the 1980s, economists Daniel Khazzoom and Leonard Brookes took a fresh look at the issue in what is now called the Khazzoom-Brookes postulate and came up with similar conclusions. These are the foundations of the Breakthrough Institute's study; it is carrying on an established line of research.

When less of a commodity is needed for a particular task – and, therefore, usage costs go down – there is naturally a shift

towards capitalising on the lower costs by using the commodity more widely. The truth of this is only too easy to see in an Indian context. The massive water and electricity subsidies granted to farmers have been slammed by economists not just for the burden they place on government finances, but also because of empirical proof that lowered costs have led to farmers using far more of these resources than

is necessary for their needs, leading to inefficiency and wastage. The dangers of this sort of wastage are illustrated by projections that the relative low costs and high availability of oil are pushing us faster towards peak oil production, after which it will begin to decline rapidly, severely impacting the global economy.

Technological improvements increasing energy efficiency must be coupled with higher charges on energy usage to offset the rebound effect. Will this cause a certain level of economic pain for consumers? Undoubtedly. But in the long run, it is preferable to the wastage and concurrent illusion of being energy efficient that technological improvements will cause.

Publication: The Times Of India Delhi; Date: Mar 8, 2011; Section: Times Business; Page: 25;

Flexi hrs passe, Gen-Net working is new rage

Namrata Singh & Samidha Sharma | TNN

Mumbai: Over the years, companies have accelerated their innovation processes in technology marketing, cost cutting and finance to drive business

growth. But it was only a few years back that firms started devising new practices to drive gender diversity with an aim to develop and retain women employees. Even as programmes like flexi-work hours, career breaks and child care are still being experimented with by a larger number of firms, some have jumped on to second-generation programmes to tackle invisible barriers in the process of skill development and employee retention.

Last month, after a brain-storming session involving 200 employees of Hindustan Unilever (HUL) and members of its leadership team, a women's network called Gen-Net (gender balanced net) was unveiled. The discussion resulted in the formation of a gender balance council comprising senior employees to drive the



Woman Central

gender balance agenda in the company. A women's network would essentially provide an opportunity for employees to come together and expand their professional and social networks to strengthen their professional development and

- ▶ **Women battle it out with bulls and bears, P 26**
- ▶ **Woman CEO missing in Indian IT, P 26**

business acumen.

According to HUL's executive director-HR, Leena Nair, Unilever's commitment on gender balance is unequivocal

and India is a key market where the organization needs to move the needle. This would require an overhaul of policies and a clear roadmap on how to develop and retain women across the organizational pyramid. "In our experience, mentoring and employee networks are two key interventions that can help drive inclusion and learn from experiences of peers and other successful role models," said Nair.

Standard Chartered Bank too has started a similar programme titled 'Identity Explorer', which is an experiential learning programme for women and is an attempt to understand what is really important to them. The objective is to help female employees understand their identity moorings and accordingly build skills to pursue careers.

"Through this session, we intend to provide our women employees with opportunity to interact directly with senior executives within and outside the bank. The programme is al-

so aimed at understanding the dilemmas and challenges which women go through, whether they should opt for a career or family, they self-analyze in this group," said Madhavi Lall, regional head of Human Resource, India & South Asia, Standard Chartered Bank.

Going by the response in Mumbai, it is looking to take the programme across all centres. The idea behind such programmes can be explained by what Lall has to say—that women in this forum shared their thoughts in a very "non-threatening environment".

In any large organization, building networks and influencing multiple stakeholders is critical to being effective. "While men find their own formal and informal ways to network, not all women do this very effectively. Some tend to look down upon it as a waste of time and, even feel awkward and embarrassed. This network has a significant role in legitimizing and urging women to come together," said Nair.

Publication: The Times Of India Delhi; Date: Mar 8, 2011; Section: Times Business; Page: 26;

Woman CEO missing in Indian IT

Shilpa Phadnis & Sujit John | TNN

Bangalore: Try to think of a woman CEO in Indian IT and our guess is you will struggle. Neelam Dhawan, MD of HP India, may come quickly to mind. But after that, it's not easy. Capgemini recently promoted Aruna Jayanthi, its global delivery officer for outsourcing, as its CEO for India. Akila Krishnakumar has been head of Sungard India for some years now.

At the next CXO level, it's only a little better. In an industry where over 30% of the employees are women, and which boasts of almost 50% of its new hires in recent times being women, the near absence of women at the top may appear odd.

But it isn't difficult to understand. Most Indian women still value their roles at home. Many times, a woman self-imposes career blocks to prioritize home over work. "A CXO's job involves being available 24/7. It's not the capability issue, but availability issue," says Kunal Banerji, CEO of Absolute HR. Ganesh Shermon, partner & country head, human capital, at KPMG Advisory, says when it comes to composition of boards, peers impact the choice of other members. "The senior, aged board members are averse to the younger lot, and definitely women at that. Traditional business houses prefer their own family as board members. They are quite uncomfortable with external women directors on their Board asking them questions," Shermon says.

But there are signs that situation is changing for women. Sunita Cherian, GM for talent engagement and development at Wipro Technologies, says that as the number of women in the corporate sector has grown, so has their ambitions.

Dainik Bhaskar ND 08/03/2011 p-7

20 नए आईआईआईटी केंद्रों पर काम शुरू

योजना आयोग बैठकों का दौर शुरू, 2809 करोड़ रुपए का बजट तय, केंद्र-राज्य सरकारों के साथ निजी क्षेत्र की होगी भागीदारी

अमिताभ पाराशर | नई दिल्ली

देश में 20 नए आईआईआईटी (इंडियन इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ इन्फॉर्मेशन टेक्नॉलॉजी) खोलने के केंद्र सरकार के प्रस्ताव पर योजना आयोग में बैठकों का दौर शुरू हो गया है। इन्हें शुरू करने के लिए केंद्र सरकार, राज्य सरकारों और निजी क्षेत्र यानी इंडस्ट्री को एकजुट होना है। इसके लिए करीब 2809 करोड़ रुपए का बजट तय किया गया है।

योजना आयोग के संबंधित सलाहकारों ने मानव संसाधन मंत्रालय के इस प्रस्ताव पर अब लगातार बैठकें शुरू कर दी हैं। सोमवार को योजना आयोग के एक संबंधित अधिकारी ने कहा कि हालांकि

छह सदस्यीय समिति

बीते 25 फरवरी को केन्द्र सरकार ने 6 सदस्यीय एक विशेषज्ञ समिति का गठन किया है जिसमें इंप्रोसिस के टी.पी. मोहनदास पाई समेत आईआईआईटी और भारत सरकार के प्रतिनिधियों को शामिल किया गया है। इस समिति का काम यह देखना होगा कि प्रस्तावित आईआईआईटी से जुड़ने के लिए निजी कंपनियों के चुनाव की क्या शर्तें हों। साथ ही यह समिति उन राज्यों और स्थानों पर विचार करेगी जहाँ आईआईआईटी शुरू किए जा सकते हैं। इसके बाद इस समिति की सिफारिशों को अंतिम रूप योजना आयोग देगा।

इस प्रस्ताव को पिछले दिसंबर में ही कैबिनेट ने स्वीकृति दे दी थी लेकिन इस पर अमल करने के लिए संबंधित पक्षों से बातचीत का गंभीर दौर अब शुरू हुआ है।

आयोग की इच्छा है कि नए केन्द्र उन्हीं राज्यों में शुरू हों, जहाँ ये अभी नहीं हैं। इसने कुछ राज्य सरकारों से बातचीत शुरू

कर दी है जिन्हें मुफ्त में प्रस्तावित आईआईआईटी के लिए 50 से 100 एकड़ जमीन उपलब्ध करानी है। कई राज्यों ने इस दिशा में पहल की है तो कुछ अभी भी सुस्त पड़े हैं। लेकिन आयोग के लिए असली चुनौती लगभग हर प्रस्तावित आईआईआईटी के निर्माण लागत में इंडस्ट्री

की भागीदारी को सुनिश्चित करना है। इसके लिए इसने इंडस्ट्री के प्रतिनिधियों से भी बात शुरू कर दी है। हर आईआईआईटी के सिर्फ भवन निर्माण में 128 करोड़ रुपये खर्च किए जाएंगे जिनके लिए केन्द्र सरकार, राज्य सरकार और इंडस्ट्री 50:35:15 के आधार पर पैसे लगाएंगी। आयोग के उक्त अधिकारी ने कहा कि पूर्वोत्तर के राज्यों में हालांकि केन्द्र सरकार लागत का ज्यादा प्रतिशत (57.5 प्रतिशत) लगाएगी लेकिन इंडस्ट्री को प्रस्तावित 7.5 प्रतिशत लागत के लिए तैयार करना चुनौती है। देश में पहले से ही इलाहाबाद, जबलपुर, ग्वालियर और कांचीपुरम में आईआईआईटी चल रहे हैं।