

Newspaper Clips

March 16, 2011

Publication: The Times Of India Delhi; Date: Mar 16, 2011; Section: Times City; Page: 7;

No threat from radioactive cloud to India

Neha Lalchandani | TNN

New Delhi: Experts have just one thing to say on the SMSes and Facebook messages of a possible radioactive threat to India from Japan's nuclear blast that are doing the rounds: rubbish. The Indian Meteorological department has identified westerly winds over Japan which indicate that the radioactive plume will blow over the Pacific Ocean and skip land altogether.

"There is no chance that the radioactive plume will reach India. For one thing we are really far away from them and secondly, the current wind direction will blow everything towards the east, leading to some concern maybe for North America," said Ajit Tyagi, DG, Met.

Based on a study of atmospheric conditions, the Met department says that radiation from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant has been detected 100 miles northeast of the plant, over the Pacific Ocean. "Westerly to southwesterly winds have predominated over Japan in the past few days, carrying most of the radiation eastwards out to sea. The latest forecast for, located about 40 miles north of Fukushima nuclear plant, indicates that westerly winds will dominate for the remaining week, with the exception of a six-hour period on Tuesday. Any radiation released by the plant will affect Japan or blow out to the sea," said sources.

Professor R K Shivpuri, science adviser to Delhi University, said that the idea of the plume affecting India was far-fetched. "The plume will consist of alpha, beta and gamma rays in the form of photons and electrons. These lose energy very fast and there is very little chance that they will affect any country other than Japan. However, exposure is highly dangerous as it changes constitution of atoms and causes extensive damage to tissues," he said.

Experts are using NOAA's HYSPLIT trajectory model to track the movement of the radioactive cloud. This makes predictions based on the movement of a hypothetical release of a substance into the atmosphere using a specific altitude and location of release.

Officials tracking the radioactive plume say that most models have indicated that the plume will be moving eastwards over the Pacific Ocean and remain over water for at least five days.

India does not have the luxury of renouncing atomic power: US expert

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: Two American principals who were instrumental in pushing the US-India civilian nuclear deal said on Monday that New Delhi could not afford to forsake nuclear energy even in the wake of the tragedy in Japan although the disaster will have a salutary effect on India's choice of sites and technology.

Carnegie Endowment's Ashley Tellis and US-India Business Council's Ron Somers, who propelled the nuclear agreement within the American strategic and business community respectively, maintained that India must and will continue to embrace nuclear power given the enormous energy deficit the country faces, shortage that cannot be met from any one source.

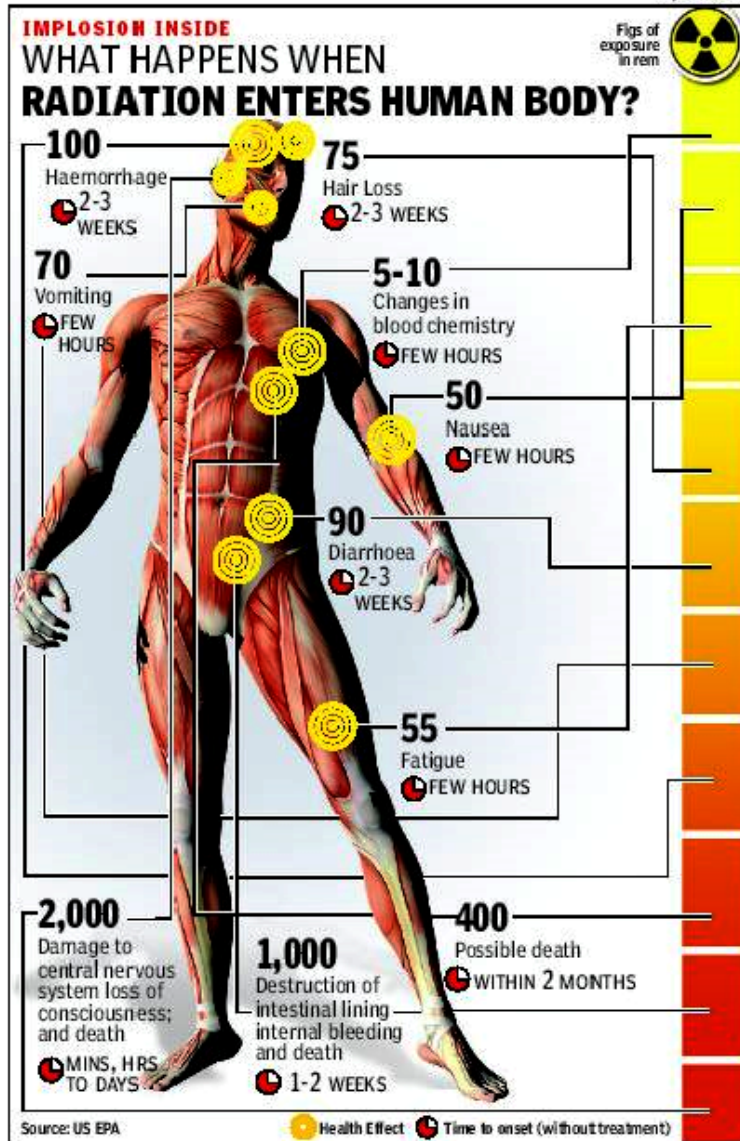
"India does not have the luxury of renouncing nuclear power," the Mumbai-born Tellis said at a conference on "The Rise of India," hosted by the American Enterprise Institute. "What India will push for is to be more careful about where plants are sited...that is salutary. It will insist that (nuclear reactor) designs are validated a lot more. I don't think there will be a downward revision (of nuclear power targets)."

India plans to increase its nuclear power production from its current 4000 MW installed capacity to 20,000 MW

by 2020 and 40,000 MW by 2030 in one of the largest expansions in the world. The earthquake-induced tragedy in Japan has opponents of nuclear power up in arms over a source and technology that is seen by them to be of a catastrophic nature.

But USIBC's Somers maintained that the Japanese designs were of 1972 vintage and current technology would have coped better with the circumstances. "In that sense, it is a blessing India is getting its civilian nuclear program started now because new technology in the event of such an earthquake would automatically shut down and there won't be a possibly of meltdown," Somers said.

Critics of this line of argument, who have already been venting about India considering untested technology for its new projects, say there is no way to insure against catastrophic incidents. Carnegie's Tellis said that while the Japan tragedy is going to "give India pause" it won't lead to any fundamental revision of targets. "The reason for that is India needs more of everything fast. It needed it yesterday," he said. "Even if all the sources of power were produced on time and very efficiently, India will be confronted with a deficit in terms of power generation. There is no way the arithmetic of demand and supply add up."



Times of India ND 16/03/2011 P-15

State should tap hydroelectric potential instead, says report

Viju B | TNN

Mumbai: The Japan nuclear leak has heightened fears of experts and locals near the proposed plant at Maharashtra's Jaitapur.

Geologist Dr M K Prabhu, who has been studying the seismic activity in the region for the past two years, says there are three huge gorges in the area. Shivane village, 20km from Jaitapur, had to bear the brunt of micro-seismic activity two years ago due to which cracks have appeared, he said.

"The plate extends up to Jaitapur, and there is a definite possibility of micro-seismic activity in and around the proposed nuclear plant. The state should think of setting up smaller-sized reac-

tors," said Prabhu, adding that he is not against nuclear energy. "(But) the government should realize that even Japan, which has advanced technology, couldn't stop the blasts that occurred in its nuclear reactors."

Madhav Gadgil, chairman of the Western Ghats ecological council, had made a similar suggestion in his report last year. "What we need is less ecologically damaging power plants, and tap mini and micro hydro-electricity potential in this area," said the report.

Leading nuclear scientist Anil Kakodkar had addressed some of the public fears on Monday, but residents were not appeased. He had said the reactor would be built 25m above sea level. Environ-

mental activist Indulkar said: "The height of the plateau where the reactor is coming up now is 25m. But according to the environment impact assessment report, there are plans to bring down the height to around 7m to conserve energy needed for pumping 5,200 crore litres of cooling water every day."

Dr V Subramanyam, former professor of Geology at IIT-Bombay, said the Jaitapur nuclear power plant would be able to withstand an earthquake of magnitude up to 7. "The earthquake in Japan was of magnitude 9. We will not face this big a quake in the western coast though the entire area is prone to smaller earthquakes, and this is indeed a serious matter," he said.

Times of India ND 16/03/2011 P-2

Wheat allergy an 'impending epidemic' in India

Durgesh Nandan Jha | TNN

New Delhi: Wheat allergy, once considered a disease of the West, has been termed an 'impending epidemic in India' in an article published in a recent issue of Indian Journal of Medical Research (IJMR). The disease is not just affecting paediatric patients but adults too.

According to the report, celiac disease, commonly known as wheat allergy, is seen more in north India as compared to south India due to high consumption of wheat products that contain gluten — a protein which causes this allergy — in this part of the country.

A change in the variety of wheat grown—from ancient or diploid wheat to the modern hexaploid wheat — has also been cited as a reason for an increase in the number of cases. Hexaploid wheat is more antigenic — a substance which stimulates the production of an antibody

when introduced in the body. The modern hexaploid wheat has highly antigenic glutes, which are more capable of inducing celiac disease.

The article states that for centuries, diploid, and later tetraploid, wheat was grown in India. These varieties were less antigenic in comparison to hexaploid wheat, which has recently been introduced. Thus switching over to older varieties of wheat may be better for public health. The IJMR article — which has been written by B S Ramakrishna, a professor of gastroenterology at Christian Medical College, Vellore — adds that public authorities should examine infant feeding recommendations and wheat varieties cultivated in the country for finding ways to avert the epidemic of celiac disease. In addition to breast feeding, infants are often fed rye, barley and other wheat products after a certain age, mostly

GO FOR GLUTEN-FREE

Allergy to wheat and related products was once considered a disease of the West, but it has now been termed an 'IMPENDING EPIDEMIC' in the country. Doctors say there is an urgent need to address the problem by means of timely diagnosis and by making necessary changes in the diet to improve the condition of the patient



What is celiac disease?

An autoimmune disorder that can occur in genetically predisposed people of all ages

CAUSES

Protein gluten found in wheat acts as a trigger for the immune system to develop antibodies that cross-react with bowel tissues. The small intestine is then not able to absorb important nutrients, vitamins and micro-nutrients

Symptoms | Diarrhoea, weight loss, constipation, iron deficiency, anaemia, osteoporosis, along with vitamin deficiencies or fatigue

If left undiagnosed it can lead to | Type I diabetes, thyroid, liver disease and neuro-psychiatric conditions

PRECAUTIONS |

Avoid wheat, barley, rye and oats
Use all gluten-free products



when they are six months to one year old.

The prevalence of celiac disease is much lower in countries like Finland, Estonia and Denmark, which are characterized by low gluten consumption in infancy, than in Sweden, where gluten consumption is high in infancy, the article states.

According to experts, the classical symptoms of celiac disease are related to the gastrointestinal tract — diarrhoea, weight loss, failure to thrive, abdominal pain, anorexia, vomiting and constipation. These may account for only a portion of the cases. "Celiac disease is actually a multi-system disorder, which is highly variable in its clinical expression. It may occur at any age, and may have a variety of manifestations, including iron deficiency, anaemia, osteoporosis, vitamin deficiencies and fatigue. It may manifest in the form of delayed puberty, infertility or recurrent foetal

loss or as dental enamel hypoplasia," said the expert. He added that celiac disease is also associated with neuropsychiatric conditions like depression, anxiety and epilepsy.

Said Dr Pankaj Vohra, paediatric gastroenterologist at Max Healthcare, "I have seen more than 350 cases of celiac disease in the past few years. A three-year-old child came to us recently with a bloated stomach, sticklike limbs and passed several heavy stools daily. Her parents could not understand why she refused to grow." He said that a change in the diet chart of the patient and certain medicines can help.

Dr Ishi Khosla, who heads the Celiac Society for Delhi, added, "One should consume foods that require minimum processing to prevent allergy caused by gluten. It's a good idea to have fresh fruits, fruit juices, nuts and south Indian food items."

**Times of India
ND 16/03/2011
P-11**

Ethics to be taught in MBBS curriculum

Kounteya Sinha | TNN

New Delhi: Medical Council of India (MCI) has decided to incorporate “medical professionalism” under the revised MBBS curriculum as ethics is increasingly coming under scrutiny.

As per an MCI note, “medical ethics and professionalism forms the basis of contact between doctors and society and so it is imperative that professionalism and ethical issues in practice should be incorporated into medical curriculum.”

MCI’s undergraduate education working group, headed by Professor George Mathew, principal of Christian Medical College in Vellore, has strongly recommended its introduction.

Professor Mathew told TOI, “the details are still being finalized. We will formally introduce medical ethics in the curriculum.”

Professor Sandeep Guleria, professor of surgery, AIIMS, who is member of the working group, added, “There is a huge problem of ethics in medical profession. Since ethics is a very important part of medicine, we will introduce lectures formally.”

Hindu ND 16/03/2011

P7

Panel wants office of Visitor for Central universities to go

“IIMs should be allowed to grant degrees to make them more autonomous”

Aarti Dhar

NEW DELHI: A high-power committee has called for sweeping changes in the country's higher education system. It has recommended that the office of the Visitor for Central universities be done away with and the powers transferred to the Chancellor; and that all legislative framework under which these universities are established be uniformly revised and brought under a common Act.

If the recommendations are accepted, all Central universities will be made to undergo a comprehensive review of their functioning once every 10 years by an external agency. The President is the Visitor for all the Central universities.

The committee, constituted to “evolve a comprehensive policy for autonomy of Central educational institutions”, suggests that the Indian Institutes of Management be allowed to grant degrees to make them more auton-

- **“All legislative framework of Central universities should be revised and brought under common Act”**
- **“Clauses subversive of institutional autonomy should be repealed”**

mous.

The committee was headed by N.R. Madhava Menon. The other members were Professors Seyed E. Hasnain, Pankaj Chandra, M.S. Ananth, Mihir Choudhary and Ved Prakash.

“There is a need to free universities and Central educational institutions from extensive control from outside, for which statutes establishing them have to be revisited. Clauses subversive of institutional autonomy need to be repealed or modified... In this process, it is desirable to ensure that the membership of academic bodies is strictly restricted to eminent academicians and independent experts,” says the report submitted to Union Human Resource De-

velopment Minister Kapil Sibal. The Ministry is yet to take a view on it.

Advocating a similar overarching legislation to govern the IIMs, the report says that ensuring the existing amount of autonomy and additional measures, including the degree-conferring status, are a must. At present, the IIMs award only diplomas in management courses. A council of vice-chancellors of Central universities, like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) Council, should be constituted under the overarching Act which should mandate the council to meet at least once a year and the general financial rules for Central educational institutions should be modified in consul-

tation with the relevant stakeholders — the Central universities, the IITs and the IIMs.

Calling for avoiding the practice of appointing civil service officials to university positions, the committee says the Central educational institutes should create a pool of education-administrators endowed with expertise in managing educational and research institutions.

The committee recommends that every Central educational institute establish an office of ombudsman to intervene in times of crisis and find solutions acceptable to the stakeholders so that minor disputes do not disrupt the academic calendar and peace. Also, they should establish an office of research and integrity to evolve and sustain mechanisms for funding advanced research and ensuring acceptable standards, and an equal opportunity cell to ensure inclusiveness.

As for autonomy in academic matters, the panel sug-

gests that all universities switch to choice-based credit courses along with the semester system in the minimum possible time. This will make the academic structure flexible and promote student mobility, both in the country and abroad. Though the universities should aim for a complete internal evaluation of students over a period of time with individual teacher having full autonomy in evaluation, there could be a mix of internal and external evaluation during the transition period, it adds.

The committee says the Central educational institutes should be free to decide the fees to be charged, the scholarships to be granted and the recoveries to be made, subject to the government's broad policy guidelines. To improve the performance of teachers it recommends that all faculty members be subjected to a review once in five years by a committee appointed by the executive council.

Plan for Education Like Any Other Financial Goal in Life



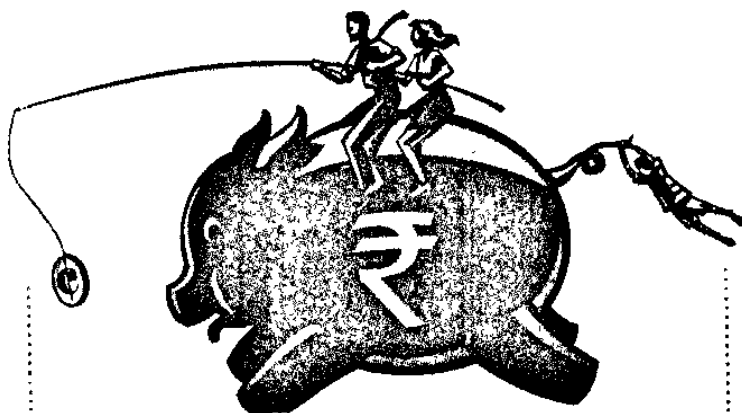
T. RAMACHANDRAN
CEO & MD
Aviva India

A good education is an asset that can never be taken away, an investment that can never depreciate. Hence, when a survey tells us that young parents in India believe that education determines a child's future and if they are able to give the right input to the child in terms of a good education, they have done their job, it echoes the sentiments of many parents we meet. However, with the rising cost of education, parents have to save and bear the burden of rapidly-increasing fees right from pre-school, school to college. The rise is certainly alarming for the large section of middle-class parents in India, who will not be able to afford the cost unless they do early financial planning. Considering the most common career aspirations a parent may have for a child — an MBA, an engineering degree or medicine. Let's take an example of doing an MBA from a premier management institute.

The cost of doing an MBA from IIM-A has increased from ₹3.16 lakh in 2003 to ₹12.5 lakh in 2009, an inflation of nearly 22%. Even if we take a moderate inflation rate of 11%, an MBA could cost over ₹22 lakh in the next 10 years.

In the research Education Insights with IMRB International, we found out that the majority of parents in the country — nearly 81% — are concerned about the rising cost of their children's education even more than their health, lifestyle or marriage. Around 30% of the parents are concerned more about the educational expenses than performance in school or marks. A large section of parents, 57% in metros and a whopping 71% in non-metros want to send their children to play school which increases the education expense early. For 69% of the parents, school fee is one of the top concerns while selecting a playschool. Additionally, a number of students supplement their regular school/college studies with specific coaching, leading this to be the next biggest expense for parents after school tuition. Also one out of every 10 parents wants to send their child abroad for higher studies. It is not surprising then to see that 72% young parents are saving for their children's future as compared to 52% for investment protection and 45% for retirement.

So do these aspirations and concerns reflect into higher savings and planning for a child's future? Unfortunately not. While a large number of parents have concerns about saving, an equal



number don't have a clear idea on future cost of education and various tools to do proper planning. Around 81% of the parents admitted that they don't know how much higher education will cost. On an average, young parents save around ₹26,000 p.a. which amounts to a mere ₹4.67 lakh over 18 years, which clearly will not be sufficient for any career aspirations unless supplemented by loans and other means of income. Parents may want additional funds not only during higher studies (26%) and graduation (21%), but also as the child approaches the 10th standard (19%). Many parents today are also open to letting their children choose the career they want to be in want to provide them with the best possible education for the same, including additional coaching and studying abroad. However, there are a very few who actually go a step ahead and do proper financial planning and investments to meet this need.

One out of 2 parents believe that insurance is the most effective tool to cushion the child's education cost. In case of an untimely death, they believe the money will provide for the child's education. However, out of these, only 13% parents are properly planning for their child's education and saving through specific child insurance plans designed for providing funds for key education milestones. Other modes of saving also include fixed deposits in banks/post offices, national saving certificates, jewellery/gold and in some cases mutual funds as well. The awareness of the corpus needed to fulfill their children's aspirations and the subsequent planning and investing in various options according to the returns and risk profile should be the first step to education planning for any young parent.

So, proper planning, awareness and investments, should help you plan for it like any other easily attainable financial goal.