

Newspaper Clips

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Whistleblower gets back IIT job

New Delhi: IIT Kharagpur has revoked the suspension of whistleblower Prof Rajeev Kumar who had exposed flaws in JEE and other irregularities in the institute. The action came after a report by a one-member inquiry committee which was accepted by the IIT Kharagpur's board of governors. "Prof Kumar has been reinstated," said sources in the HRD ministry. Kumar was suspended in May 2011 on the charge of bringing disrepute to the institute and misrepresentation of facts. ■■

The adventures of University of Delhi

UNIVERSITY of Delhi has taken a decision to expand the undergraduate degree programme to four years from the upcoming academic year. In the new academic year, students will not have an option of BA or B Com (pass).

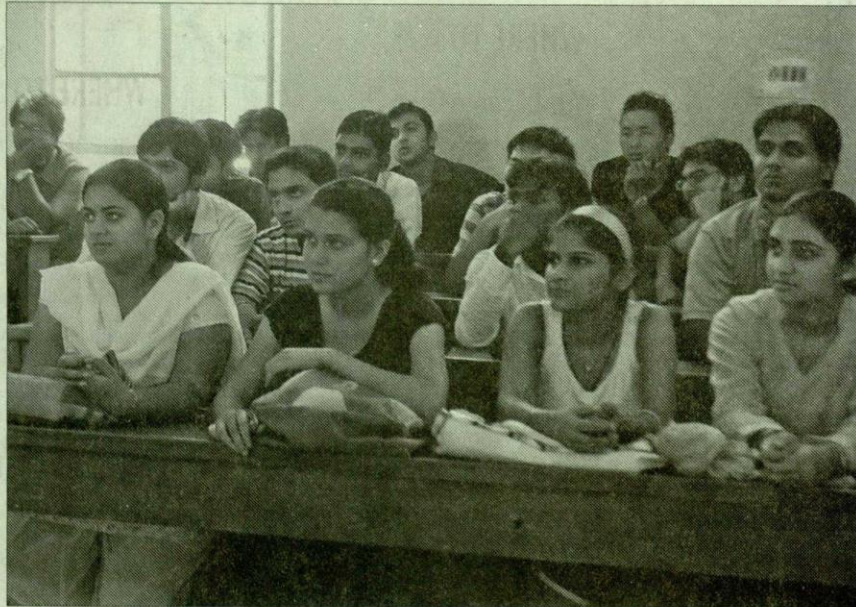
The new course structure includes 11 foundation courses, which are mandatory for all students in the first two years. In addition to these, there are 26 discipline papers spread over eight semesters, and five applied courses spread over five semesters with exit options available. On completion of four years of study, students will get an honours' degree. Otherwise, they can take an associate baccalaureate after two years or a baccalaureate after three years.

A centralised faculty will be set up by the university to conduct classes for foundation courses. The vice chancellor has already constituted a committee to develop the curriculum for these as well. Discipline courses will be followed by applied courses and these courses will equip students with enough skills so as to find good jobs if they exit halfway.

There is an additional non-credit course on integrating mind, body and heart. Students won't be given any marks for this, but it will be retained on the degree. Cultural activities are also a part of the new structure.

Students will be given admission on the basis of marks in the best four subjects. University of Delhi would create a separate examination cell for the smooth conduct of exams and evaluation under the four-year undergraduate programme. The exam cell will be a part of the exam branch, but will have a separate team dedicated to managing exams under the four-year programme. The rea-

Arun Nigavekar



DEEP CONCERN: It is yet not clear if academic and other support infrastructure is available and how much is the present faculty experienced with regard to implementing a four-year degree programme

son for a separate cell is that the new course structure will be different from the three-year structure and the evaluation process will also be different. It appears that various faculties approved this expansion of degree programme by one year in the month of April and probably bodies like academic and management council are yet to approve it. Moreover, it is not clear whether such a change has been deliberated with all concerned stakeholders, namely teachers, academicians and skill development experts.

On the face of it, someone would feel that the university is making bold reforms and it should be allowed to go ahead with the launch of the four-year degree programmes immediately. However, there are two factors that need to be

carefully looked into; the first one is details and operational plan for implementation, while the other is the financial feasibility. The success of the four-year degree programme with a blend of various subjects, languages and application oriented skills programmes requires meticulous planning of curriculum, delivery of education, well-defined time schedule and links with industries. If this would not be well planned along with the creation of a support framework, it would generate wrong and compromised education that would be of no direct guarantee for getting jobs, leaving the student community frustrated.

It is also not clear if academic and other support infrastructure is available and how much is the present faculty experi-

enced in this respect. If they have to make external faculty/experts as a part of teaching, which is a good and welcome action, the university needs to create a legal provision to recognise external experts in a well-defined knowledge domain.

The other aspect that the university needs to be clear about is the financial implications of four-year degree programme. What fees would the students be charged and is the university financially stable enough to launch the programme? In all probability along with looking at the history of central universities, more importantly because of their dependence on the funds from the MHRD/UGC, it has not worked out these details and they would just demand for more funds, both annual and

development, from the central government. Most of the central universities in Delhi such as University of Delhi and its colleges, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Jamia Millia Islamia, because of their proximity in Delhi and contacts with several other entities in the capital, take it for granted that they need not have discussion with the MHRD/UGC along with believing they have every right to enhance the financial demand. Indeed, the UGC is to support all the universities in the country. Ten years ago, financial support given to central universities per student, and this does not include development support, was around Rs 2,60,000, while the state universities, which are supported by the state governments, used to get Rs 260 only. The development grant given to central universities was almost five to six times more than state universities for no justifiable reasons.

Thus, it is advisable that the University of Delhi does not do adventure without academic, implementation and financial planning. There is a need to do more detailed deliberations with all concerned academics, industry persons and the MHRD/UGC to work out a reliable and practicable four-year programme. Another point that needs to be seriously thought over is why can one not think of creating modular degree programme and also diploma programmes that are application-based and focus on skill development to allow students to do both the things in three years. This is very well feasible.

arun.nigavekar@mydigitalfc.com
(The writer is former chairman of UGC, former vice-chancellor of University of Pune and founder director of NAAC)

University of Cincinnati offering twin IT-MBA degree

The IT-MBA "ACCEND" programme is reserved for the highest-achieving students

HT Education Correspondent
heducation@hindustantimes.com

The University of Cincinnati (UC) recently launched an accelerated programme through which Indian students can receive a bachelor's degree in information technology along with an MBA.

The IT-MBA "ACCEND" programme is reserved for the highest-achieving students. According to the US university, it is the only programme of its kind in the world, "which allows students to gain both an undergraduate and a graduate degree while also earning over 18 months of full-time paid

work experience through the UC Cooperative Education (co-op) programme."

Admission is open to the highest-achieving students who need to apply a year before the due date of the session they wish to join. The university has intakes in August and January for the IT-MBA programme. The priority deadline for the next intake — August 2014 — is December 1, 2013. The final deadline for admission for the August 2014 intake is June 1.

Aspirants are required to fill in an online application and submit the past three years' academic records and SAT scores.

The tuition cost is \$25,000 a year. Students can receive scholarships ranging from \$5,000 up to the full cost of tuition — \$25,000 — per year. The university says all applicants are automatically reviewed for scholarships.

More details are available at <http://admissions.uc.edu/international>

Times Of India ND 01/05/2013 P-23

First pvt spaceship clears supersonic test

Maiden Trial Flight Of 10 Minutes Prepares Ground For Inaugural Cosmic Tour By Year-End

New York: For the first time, a commercial passenger space-liner designed to carry tourists has made its maiden rocket-powered test flight, reaching supersonic speeds, paving way for commercial flights in the near future.

The test of space vehicle, SpaceShipTwo (SS2), conducted by teams from Scaled Composites (Scaled) and Virgin Galactic, officially marks the company's entrance into the final phase of vehicle testing prior to commercial service from Spaceport America in New Mexico. "The first powered flight of Virgin



VOYAGE TO THE FINAL FRONTIER

Spaceship Enterprise was without any doubt, our single most important flight test till date," said Virgin Galactic

Founder Richard Branson. "For the first time, we were able to prove the key components of the system,

fully integrated and in flight. We saw history in the making on Tuesday and I couldn't be more proud of everyone involved," Branson said in a statement.

Upon reaching 47,000 feet altitude and approximately 45 minutes into the flight, SS2 was released from WK2.

SS2 was propelled forward and upward to a maximum altitude of 55,000 feet. The entire engine burn lasted 16 seconds, as planned. During this time, SS2 went supersonic, achieving Mach 1.2. The entire rocket-powered flight test lasted just over 10

minutes, culminating in a smooth landing for SS2 in Mojave. "The successful outcome of this test marks a pivotal point for our programme. We will now embark on a handful of similar powered flight tests, and then make our first test flight to space," Virgin Galactic president & CEO George Whitesides said.

In the coming months, the test team will expand spaceship's powered flight envelope culminating in full space flight, which the companies anticipate will take place before the end of 2013. PTI

Early Earth smelled like rotten eggs?

Researchers have recreated the whiff of Earth 1.9 million years ago — and found our ancient planet smelled of rotten eggs. Tiny 1,900 million-year-old fossils from rocks around Lake Superior, Canada, give the first ever snapshot of organisms eating each other and suggest what the ancient Earth would have smelled like, researchers said. The fossils capture ancient microbes in the act of feasting. PTI

Financial Chronicle ND 01/05/2013 P-10

Colleges in US turn to online courses to ease burden

TAMAR LEWIN

International Herald Tribune

SAN JOSE: Dazzled by the potential of free online college classes, educators are now turning to the gritty task of harnessing online materials to meet the toughest challenges in American higher education: giving more students access to college, and helping them graduate on time.

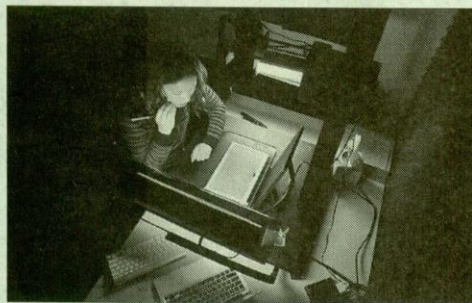
Nearly half of all undergraduates in the United States arrive on campus needing remedial work before they can begin regular credit-bearing classes. That early detour can be costly, leading many to drop out, often in heavy debt and with diminished prospects of finding a job.

Meanwhile, shrinking state budgets have taken a heavy toll

at public institutions, reducing the number of seats available in classes students must take to graduate. In California alone, higher education cuts have left hundreds of thousands of college students without access to classes they need.

To address both problems and keep students on track to graduation, universities are beginning to experiment with adding the new "massive open online courses," created to deliver elite college instruction to anyone with an Internet connection, to their offerings.

While the courses, known as MOOCs, have enrolled millions of students around the world, most who enroll never start a single assignment, and very few complete the courses. So to reach students



HELP ON THE WEB: A student is preparing to record a statistics course at Udacity, an online classroom instruction provider in California

who are not ready for college-level work, or struggling with introductory courses, universities are

beginning to add extra supports to the online materials, in hopes of improving success rates.

Here at San Jose State, for example, two pilot programmes weave material from the online classes into the instructional mix and allow students to earn credit for them.

"We're in Silicon Valley, we breathe that entrepreneurial air, so it makes sense that we are the first university to try this," said Mohammad Qayoumi, the university's president. "In academia, people are scared to fail, but we know that innovation always comes with the possibility of failure. And if it doesn't work the first time, we'll figure out what went wrong and do better."

In one pilot programme, the university is working with Udacity, a company co-founded by a Stanford professor, to see whether round-the-clock online mentors,

hired and trained by the company, can help more students make their way through three fully online basic math courses.

The tiny for-credit pilot courses, open to both San Jose State students and local high school and community college students, began in January, so it is too early to draw any conclusions. But early signs are promising, so this summer, Udacity and San Jose State are expanding those classes to 1,000 students, and adding new courses in psychology and computer programming, with tuition of only \$150 a course.

San Jose State has already achieved remarkable results with online materials from edX, a nonprofit online provider, in its circuits course, a longstanding hurdle for would-be engineers.

Hindu ND 01.05.12 P-12

Trinamool activists disrupts exams at IIT-Kharagpur

Staff Reporter

KOLKATA: Less than three weeks after people holding flags of the Trinamool Congress' student wing vandalised Presidency University here, protests by the party's labour wing disrupted academic activity at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur (IIT-KGP) in the State's Paschim Medinipur district on Tuesday.

"About 500 M. Tech students were scheduled to appear for viva examinations during the day. But the protesters did not allow the non-teaching staff to enter the campus, jeopardising the entire examination schedule," IIT-KGP's Registrar T.K. Ghosal told *The Hindu* over telephone.

Saying academic activities

were disrupted at the Institute for the first time due to protests, Mr. Ghosal said the examinations, which were scheduled to start from 8 a.m., started hours later in the afternoon as non-teaching employees were not allowed to enter the premises. "Our air-conditioning system was not functioning and the water supply was disrupted," he said. Those protesting under the banner of Indian National Trinamool Trade Union Congress (INTTUC) were demanding that the institute's 300 contractual staff be made permanent, the Registrar said.

The protesters blocked the IIT main entrance and another gate from 5 a.m. to 1 p.m. Only after the Institute's officials intimated the district administration of the situation did the protesters allow the

non-teaching employees to enter the premises and examinations were held in some departments.

Local Trinamool Congress leaders who led the agitation said the protests were meant to highlight the demand of contractual workers at the IIT.

Presidency probe

Meanwhile, the inquiry committee formed by the West Bengal Human Rights Commission (WBHRC) probing the vandalism at Presidency University on April 10 interrogated officers of the Jorasanko Police station during the day. "Members of the committee asked the police officers what steps were taken by them on the day of the disturbance," a senior WBHRC official said.

Asian Age ND 01/05/2013

P-3

SC RESERVES VERDICT OVER ELIGIBILITY TEST

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

The Supreme Court on Tuesday reserved its verdict in the matter concerning the National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET) for admission to medical colleges for post-graduate courses.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Altamas Kabir reserved the verdict after all parties concluded their arguments. The judgment would affect the future of at least 90,000 doctors in the country seeking admission to post-graduate courses this year.

The case concerns the decision taken by the Union ministry of health in February last year to hold just one entrance examination, the NEET, for admission to post-graduate medical courses in all colleges across the country. The decision has been challenged by various medical colleges.

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HRD ministry won't interfere in FYUP: Tharoor

Akshaya Mukul | TNN

New Delhi: Shashi Tharoor, minister of state for the HRD, has ruled out ministry's intervention to postpone the proposed four-year undergraduate programme of the Delhi University (DU).

Tharoor, who believes in leaving academic matters to academicians, says,



Tharoor says DU setting a benchmark with programme

"The basic point is ministry did not come up with the idea. It is DU's idea and should be left to the university to implement." Defending the four-year undergraduate course, Tharoor says the American norm of 12+4 has become popular. "Indian students with 10+2+3 were made to do an extra year in the US. It was frustrating for many," he says.

Asked about the protest by a section of DU teachers against the hasty introduction of the programme, Tharoor says DU vice-chancellor Dinesh Singh has informed the ministry

that the academic council voted overwhelmingly for it. "It is irrational to petition the ministry. If we start second guessing academic councils why have them at all?" he adds.

Tharoor defends Singh, his batch-mate from St Stephens, for creating a benchmark. "DU is a pioneer. Let's see how it works out," he says, adding that change is never smooth.

But why create a single structure with more than one exit point in a course that is designed in favour of honors students? Tharoor says the DU VC can answer specific queries but explains there is enough flexibility in the new proposal for students who want to leave after three years.

As for the implication of a four-year undergraduate programme on the duration of the post-graduate course, Tharoor says, "The issue of post-graduate course will appear only after four years. DU has enough time to design new PG courses." But what about students of other universities who have done three-year undergraduate course and want to join the varsity to pursue post-graduate studies? Tharoor says, the DU VC has informed him that such students would have to gain credit and do a two-year post-graduation course.

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China pips US to become world's biggest PC market

Saibal Dasgupta | TNN

Beijing: China has become the world's biggest market for personal computers with industry specialists saying it received 69 million shipments of PCs in 2012.

In the process, China trounced the US which was the biggest PC market till 2011. China has already become the biggest internet market in the world with more than 500 million users.

Releasing figures to show China's rise to the top rank, consulting firm IHS said it

20 years on, first web page to be reborn

The world's first web page will be dragged out of cyberspace and restored for internet browsers as part of a project to celebrate 20 years of the web, organisers said on Tuesday. The European Organisation for Nuclear Research said it had begun recreating the website that launched the world wide web, as well as the hardware that made the groundbreaking technology possible. The world's first website was about the technology itself, allowing browsers to learn about the system and create their own web pages. **AFP**

was caused by rising demand for desktops in the country's rural areas at a time the world was more in favour of laptops.

Heavy investment by the government in computer infrastructure has also been

credited as a reason as it plans to spend around \$6.4 trillion on the sector in the next 10 years. The market will go along the lines of developed markets with 36% share to desktops compared to 64% for laptops.

Criticised locally, rumble strip experiment finds votary in IIT team

HT Live Correspondent

■ chdividesk@hindustantimes.com

CHANDIGARH: The MC's rumble strip experiment, which has drawn much flak from city residents, has found an admirer in a team of experts from the Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi, UT adviser KK Sharma has claimed.

Talking to mediapersons on Tuesday, Sharma said the two-member IIT team suggested that the rumble strips, set up on the Sector 30-20-19-27 roundabout, should be replicated in other parts of the city, too.

The municipal corporation (MC) had set up the rumble strips for the purpose of connecting roads with bicycle tracks. A passage for cyclists had been created on the roundabout and the rumble strips had been laid to slow down vehicles.

Though it meant well, the MC has been severely criticised for the rumble strips, with several residents describing the traffic safety measure as an inconvenience for commuters.

Giving details, Sharma said the IIT team was in the city to conduct a workshop for UT officials on making city roads safer.

Sharma said the team also



■ Rumble strips on the roundabout of Sectors 19, 20, 27 and 30. HT FILE PHOTO

visited the roundabout where the rumble strips have been set up. "They appreciated the concept and suggested that such strips should be laid on other roundabouts also," he said, adding that the road safety initiative was likely to be extended to other parts of the city this year.

CHECKING ROAD ACCIDENTS

The IIT team from New Delhi conducted a workshop with UT officials with a special aim to make city roads safer. The experts gave two major suggestions for checking fatal accidents in the city:

BETTER MASS TRANSPORT

The experts stressed upon improving public transportation by increasing the number of buses. At present, Chandigarh Transport Corporation (CTU) intends to purchase 50 more buses for which budget has been allocated. Recently,

CTU had pulled out 33 buses from the inter-state service to strengthen its local service. As per official figures, CTU has a fleet of more than 500 buses, which carries more than 50,000 residents every day.

MORE RUMBLE STRIPS

Though commuters detest them, it seems rumble strips are here to stay. The team from IIT, New Delhi, has suggested

that the rumble strips on the Sector 19, 20, 27 and 30 roundabout, should be replicated in other parts of the city.

'RUMBLE STRIPS FOR ROAD SAFETY'

The MC has been finding traffic safety mechanisms like the rumble strips to curb the high number of road accidents in the city. Data, too, paints a grim picture. In 2012, 156 people were killed in road

accidents. Most of these fatal accidents took place during the evening rush hour — between 6pm and 9pm — during which 109 people were killed.

Similarly, 40 people lost their lives in accident, which took place between 9pm to 12am.