

Newspaper Clips November 1, 2014

Ericsson to help IIT students develop patents

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/tech/tech-news/Ericsson-to-help-IIT-students-develop-patents/articleshow/45002634.cms>

NEW DELHI: Swedish telecom gear maker Ericsson has announced a programme to help IIT engineers develop technology patents and said that intellectual property rights will be owned by the developer team or students.

Under the programme, the company will select two projects which will get a funding of Rs 10 lakh each and developers may even get access to its labs for development of the product.

"We are seeking to encourage the culture of innovation within the IITs and to support these talented young minds to develop more innovative and relevant solutions for the benefit of industry," Ericsson head of India Region Chris Houghton said in a statement.

Ericsson will select for two projects for Ericsson Innovation awards. The selected project will be given 10 lakh each. Depending on the nature of project, the developer or team of developers may even get access to Ericsson Lab for development of product.

"The winners will receive a funding of Rs 10 lakh each for incubation of the project over a two-year period. Secondly, the patents will remain with the students," Houghton said.

At present, government runs a programme for promoting technical Intellectual Property Rights in which Indian innovator gets only 40% of revenue generated from the patent. India is considered hub of research and development but majority of IPRs are owned by foreign based multi-national companies.

The award has called for innovations in areas such as web design, cloud computing, storage and networking, human-machine interface, embedded and hardware system design, machine-to-machine or Internet of Things, open source, signal processing, graphics and visualization, as well as research.

"Ericsson has invited project proposals in these areas from IIT students across Chennai, Delhi, Kanpur, Kharagpur, Mumbai, Roorkee and Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in Varanasi," the statement said.

Following the preliminary screening phase at their respective IITs, the student proposals will be shortlisted through two jury sessions.

In the first round, the jury will shortlist up to 10 proposals on criteria such as degree of innovation, feasibility, usability, relevance, time to market and the overall impact on masses. Each shortlisted proposal will be given an incentive by Ericsson to complete the initial prototype within three months.

In the second round, the jury will select up to two innovation projects which will be announced in a ceremony in April 2015 and these projects will get support from Ericsson.

IIT alumnus designed robots read human emotions and double up as companions

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kozhikode/IIT-alumnus-designed-robots-read-human-emotions-and-double-up-as-companions/articleshow/45001944.cms>

KOZHIKODE: It was the social coming of age of robots in the true sense of the term.

Charlie and Matilda, the two baby faced and big-eyed social robots, who descended on the city on Friday, proved that they can double up as your perfect companion- one who will understand your emotions, talk, socialize help and live alongside with you, of course without ever raising a complaint.

The advanced 'Partner Personal Robots' which can decipher human feelings and emotions, obeyed to all the commands of their creator Prof. Rajiv Khosla, an IIT alumnus and director of Research Centre for Computers, Communication and Social Innovation (RECCSI) at the La Trobe University, Australia during the demonstration held here on Friday.

The sibling robots are designed to sing songs, dance, read newspapers, check emails and even make posts on Facebook and WhatsApp. These robots are on show at the exhibition held at NIT, Calicut (NITC) as part of its techno- management fest, Tathva 14.

Dr. Rajiv Khosla said that the robots have been designed to assist people with problems like dementia, autism and other medical conditions and can be used in areas like education and wellness.

He said that he was looking forward to entering into tie-up with NITC to use the technology for social innovation in the state and elsewhere in the country especially in the field of medical care for the aged and the disadvantaged.

He said that 25 field trials have been conducted with Charlie and other robots in Australia and they have been successful in providing emotional engagement to ailing and disabled people. He said the robots can read human emotions by analyzing facial features and body language and respond accordingly to lift the moods of people- thanks to the innovative new emotional intelligence recognition software installed in them.

Matilda is already deployed in many aged care facilities and homes in Australia and is providing support to patients by reminding them to take medicines and help the aged connect to society and relatives. Khosla said the robot was able to communicate information electronically to the nurses' station, which alerted them to attend to patients urgently.

"We are also working with hospital sector on how to use the robots for pain management through diversion therapy," he said adding that though the robots designed under a project with NEC, Japan are yet to be launched commercially. "Anyway it is going to be affordable as we want to support social innovation. I can assure that it will not be too much more expensive than the iPhone," he said.

President asks NITs to adopt villages

http://www.daijiworld.com/news/news_disp.asp?n_id=273876

New Delhi, Oct 31 (IANS): President Pranab Mukherjee has asked each of the 30 National Institutes of Technology (NITs) to adopt five villages and turn them into model ones - on the lines of Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He was speaking at a two-day conference of directors of National Institutes of Technology at Rashtrapati Bhavan here Thursday.

Mukherjee said he noticed that NIT Jamshedpur was already working with seven villages, NIT Uttarakhand with 20 and NIT Jaipur with five.

He said villages can be transformed into model villages "by converging various schemes like Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Swachh Bharat Mission and Digital India Programme".

Modi Oct 11 launched the Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana under which every parliamentarian was entrusted with the task of developing physical and institutional infrastructure in three villages by 2019.

The president announced that the In-Residence Programme of Rashtrapati Bhavan would now be extended to young scholars from NITs.

He also called upon the human resource development ministry to take immediate steps for creation of a database of foreign educational experts and Persons of Indian Origin which can be utilised by our institutions for filling up vacant faculty positions.

Government to restructure AICTE A review of AICTE to look at four issues, including curbing commercialization in technical education

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/jlUKmfaKMvu9DOAswUSB9H/Government-to-restructure-AICTE.html>

New Delhi: The government on Friday set the ball rolling to restructure the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), the apex education regulator of the country with more than 11,000 professional colleges under its purview, and try to curb the "commercialization" of education by private entities. As part of the effort, a 15-point review of the AICTE will look at, among other things, four contentious issues. The issues are curbing commercialization in technical education, a regulatory tussle between AICTE and the University Grants Commission (UGC), amending the AICTE Act, and separation of the grant-giving and oversight powers. "There is a realization that AICTE is finding it difficult to match the demand of private players in the field of technical education. It is a fact that a lot of private institutions have come up in technical education sector and there is a growing trend of commercialization of technical education and the laid-down norms and standards are not fully implemented," said a human resource development ministry order, which was made public on Friday. "The technical education sector needs to be re-oriented in light of these difficulties...and technical education needs to be redefined. Therefore, it's imperative that an urgent review of AICTE be conducted," said the order issued by Amarjeet Sinha, additional secretary, higher education. Recognizing the "need for restructuring and strengthening" AICTE to address challenges, the HRD ministry has also set up a review committee led by former education secretary M.K. Kaw for "fullest realization" of technical learning and research potential in India. A government official, requesting anonymity, said the mandate has the imprint of the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) manifesto for the

April-May general elections. In its manifesto, the party had said it will strive to restore the “credibility of the regulatory bodies”. It had also said that UGC will be restructured and transformed into a higher education commission rather than just being a grant distribution agency. The government had earlier set up a committee to review UGC. “AICTE is a key regulator and its restructuring will go a long way in redefining the private-dominated professional education in the country,” said the government official.

MHRD Sets up Committee to Restructure Tech Education Sector

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/education/student/MHRD-Sets-up-Committee-to-Restructure-Tech-Education-Sector/2014/10/31/article2501182.ece>

COIMBATORE: After deciding to review University Grants Commission (UGC), the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has constituted a high level committee to review the functioning of another apex regulatory body — the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), with an aim to restructure and strengthen the technical education sector.



The committee will be headed by former MHRD secretary M K Kaw and will have vice chancellor of Gujarat Technological University A K Aggarwal, director of IIT Hyderabad U B Desai, and Ashok Jhunjhunwala of IIT Madras as its members.

“The number of technical institutions in the country has increased and has thrown a wide variety of challenges. Addressing them by maintaining quality and adoption of world class norms would ensure advances in the Human Development Index of the country and transform the country into a knowledge society,” the MHRD order says.

Strongly critical of AICTE, the MHRD order also says, “There is a realisation that the AICTE is finding it difficult to match the demand of private players in the field of technical education. It is a fact that a lot of private institutions have emerged in the technical education sector and there is a growing trend of commercialisation. The norms and standards of technical education are not fully implemented.”

The committee will evaluate the performance of the AICTE in coordinating and determining standards of education in technical institutions, conduct an audit of its regulatory reach and identify strengths and weaknesses. It will also evaluate the performance of the regional offices of the AICTE.

The committee will assess requirement of regulatory space for the AICTE and analyse the regulatory, grant disbursing function of AICTE and recommend changes in the balance between the twin functions. It will suggest ways and means to set up a robust accreditation system in the technical education sector to meet the challenges of mandatory accreditation.

The committee was asked to suggest amendments in the AICTE Act 1987 to meet present day requirements, measures for industry persons to be appointed as faculty on deputation, measures for streamlining the vocationalisation of technical education and regulation of private not-for-profit entities in technical education and also helps curb commercialisation. The committee will submit its report within a period of six months.

Welcoming this, E Balagurusamy, former vice chancellor of Anna University said, "The AICTE has powers, but is not able to function independently. Presently, AICTE only acts as an agency to approve new colleges. Ensuring quality of technical education is not done mainly due to political interference. The regulatory body should be given total autonomy."

Only 20 universities comply with UGC call on women's safety

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Only-20-universities-comply-with-UGC-call-on-womens-safety/articleshow/44999937.cms>

CHENNAI: The recent survey on sexual assaults by US-based Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Hollaback social experiment may have startled the world, but higher educational institutions here continue to remain unfazed by horrific sexual harassment events closer home.

Only 20 of 676 universities in the country have complied with University Grants Commission's call two months ago to set up measures to ensure safety of women on campus.

UGC vice-chairman H Devaraj said, "The UGC sent a letter to vice-chancellors of all universities on August 28. The gender sensitization bureau has received compliance from 20 universities that they are adopting all the measures for the safety and security of their students within the campus."

He said another letter was sent to 66 academic staff colleges with a request to make a course and module in gender sensitization mandatory in both the refresher and orientation course. University of Burdwan in West Bengal, Pune University, Karnatak University in Dharwad and Maulana Azad National Urdu University in Hyderabad responded, saying they were taking initiatives on its recommendations.

Women constitute 42% of the student population in colleges and universities in the country, but higher educational institutions are not gender sensitive, said UGC's recent Saksham report. It added that many institutions were not only indifferent to the rights and safety of women, but also resorted to moral policing and were ignorant of what constituted a gender-related course.

The attitude displayed by most academics to the issue of on safety of women is galling. A member of the management of a private higher educational institution merely shrugged when asked for comments on the issue. In TN, engineering colleges impose strict restrictions on mobility of women and interactions between the two sexes. The state directorate of collegiate education had flirted with the idea of imposing a dress code on students rather than sensitising them on acceptable behaviour.

A UGC task force report on measures to be taken to ensure the safety of women on campus recommended conducting open forums regularly to achieve accountability and the involvement of all members of higher education institutions in the task of imparting equality, dignity and the ability to live, work and study without fear of harassment and violence.

At risk on campus, road

Massachusetts Institute of Technology recently made an attempt to put an estimate on the prevalence of sexual violence on campus. The review showed that 17% of female UG students and 5% male were assaulted on campus. 35% of female students said they experienced unwanted sexual behaviour, including harassment

The Hollaback social experiment attempted to highlight street harassment around the world. Shoshana Roberts, who has a black belt in taekwondo, volunteered to walk around New York city in jeans and a T-shirt, to gauge reactions. She got 100 catcalls and other types of harassment in 10 hours.

UGC to select 3 varsities for Rs 150 crore grant

DC CORRESPONDENT | November 01, 2014, 04.11 am IST

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/141101/education/article/ugc-select-3-varsities-rs-150-crore-grant>

Chennai: With aim to recognise and increase society oriented research output from state government universities, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has decided to select three varsities in the country and confer university of excellence (UE) status and award `150 crore to develop the institution.

“There are 15 universities in the country, including University of Madras and Madurai Kamaraj University which have already been conferred with the University with Potential of Excellence (UPE) status. Now we are in the process of selecting another 15 for the UPE status. We have received 31 applications for it, including Bharathidasan and Bharathiar universities from Tamil Nadu,” UGC vice-chairman Prof. H. Devaraj said after delivering the convocation address at University of Madras on Friday.

Pointing out that the commission would select top three universities from the 15 old UPE institutions, Prof. Devaraj said that the commission would take its final decision based on several parameters like number of doctorates, society oriented research, number of qualified faculty and vacant faculty posts, among others.

“We will also check the IQ levels of the vice-chancellors before conferring the University of Excellence status,” he said.

The UGC vice-chairman said that the commission has introduced Basic-Science Research (BSR) faculty fellowship meant for active senior faculty nearing superannuation, with proven track record, to enable continuance of their productive research career in varsities for a longer period.

Prof. Devaraj commended TN government’s effort in increasing the gross enrolment ratio in higher education to 38 per cent. A total of 400 graduands received their degrees during the convocation ceremony on Friday.

Education council structure against RUSA norms: MHRD

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/education-council-structure-against-rusa-norms-mhrd/article6549545.ece>

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has found that the present structure of the Kerala State Higher Education Council does not comply with the norms under the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA).

The key observation was made in the MHRD's comments on Kerala's Higher Education Plan while referring to the appointment of T.P. Sreenivasan, present vice-chairman of the State Higher Education Council. The Plan document was prepared by the Higher Education Council in association with other stakeholders.

Quoting the RUSA document, the Department of Higher Education pointed out that "Vice-Chairman must be an eminent academic administrator with proven record (rank of a Professor). In other cases, it could be a professional from industry etc., with sufficient experience in the sector."

The RUSA Resource Centre, which is responsible for vetting the Kerala Higher Education Plan, said "Mr. T.P. Sreenivasan, former Ambassador and permanent representative of India to the UN, is the current vice-chairman of the SHEC [State Higher Education Council]."

Funds denied

The Department of Higher Education has turned down the State's request to extend financial assistance of Rs.76.56 crore for filling up 320 faculty positions under the 12th Plan Period based on the inference that the student-teacher ratio of the State is 30:1. The State has to give a commitment to bring down the ratio to 20:1 to receive funds for filling faculty positions, it said.

The MHRD has also rejected the government's proposal to upgrade three existing degree colleges to model degree colleges located in Wayanad, Palakkad, and Malappuram. The Department of Higher Education has made it clear that the government must encourage all higher education institutions to apply for accreditation by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council. It has also urged the authorities to include non 12 (b) universities to receive infrastructure grant under RUSA.

MHRD to review Ignou

[Manash Pratim Gohain](#), TNN | Oct 31, 2014, 06.08AM IST

NEW DELHI: The ministry of human resource development has decided to review Indira Gandhi National Open University following growing allegations of administrative mismanagement and other issues.

According to ministry sources, it has asked vice-chancellor of Central University of Gujarat Syed Bari to look into the wide range of allegations against the Ignou administration and its vice chancellor Mohammad Aslam.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee in its report has also taken a very critical view of the functioning of the university.

When contacted, Aslam said that he has no information about the development and that he has not received any intimation from the ministry.

Ignou has been in news off late for the wrong reasons. Nearly three lakh personnel of the armed forces were left in the lurch after it suspended the Community College Scheme under which the soldiers earned certificates and diplomas in various courses.

Prior to that, just after the success of Isro's Mars mission Ignou has decided to discontinue the Isro chair that undertook research in related fields citing lack of funds. The university also decided to discontinue other chairs including CV Raman chair for science education, Mother Teresa chair for social work, UNESCO chair in technology and e-governance and the Vishveswarya chair for work in education linkages.

Thousands of people across all age groups, many of whom have no access to formal education, have been left teacherless from October 1 after the All India Radio has taken off air all 37 Gyanvani educational FM Radio stations the teaching tool of Ignou after the varsity allegedly failed to clear the outstanding dues. This sent shockwaves among those pursuing education through non-formal channels.

Aslam said that these chair were discontinued due to lack of sponsors. TOI in August reported how the three chairs set up at Ignou to commemorate 150 years of the revolt of 1857 are lying vacant despite the culture ministry having released the funds. The chairs are in the names of last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar, INA veteran Shahnawaz Khan and Kartar Singh Sarabha of Ghadar Party. The culture ministry allocated Rs 2 crore for Bahadur Shah Zafar chair in 2008 and Rs four crore for Shahnawaz Khan and Sarabha chairs in 2010.

Sources said norms for appointment were approved in 2011-12 by the Ignou board of management and in January 2013, the chairs were transferred to be run by Indira Gandhi Centre for Freedom Struggle Studies under the School of Social Sciences in JNU. Selections were also made in February 2013. But after Aslam took over as vice-chancellor in March 2013, the appointments were not cleared.

Irani favours increased linkages between varsities

Hindustan Times (Indore)

HRD minister Smriti Irani on Friday favoured increased university to university linkages between SAARC countries for mutual capacity building in education sector and recognition of each other's educational qualification. Chairing the second edition of the SAARC Education Ministers' meet, she underlined the importance accorded to education in all SAARC Summits and stressed on harmonisation of academic standards and establishment of linkages between research institutions and think-tanks in the region.

'Earth's water is from meteorites'

Washington: Oceans flooded the Earth earlier than thought, according to a new study that found primitive meteorites were a likely source of water on our planet.

Earth is known as the Blue Planet because of its oceans, which cover more than 70% of the planet's surface and are home to the world's greatest diversity of life. While some hypothesize that water came late to Earth, well after the planet had formed, findings from a new study led by scientists at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) significantly move back the clock for the first evidence of water on Earth and in the inner solar system.

"The answer to one of the basic questions is that our oceans were always here. We didn't get them from a late process, as was previously thought," said Adam Sarafian, the lead author of the paper. The study's authors turned to a potential source of Earth's water — carbonaceous chondrites. The most primitive known meteorites, carbonaceous chondrites, were formed in the same swirl of dust, grit, ice and gasses that gave rise to the Sun some 4.6 billion years ago, well before the planets were formed. "These primitive meteorites resemble the bulk solar system composition," said WHOI geologist and co-author Sune Nielsen.

"They have quite a lot of water in them, and have been thought of before as candidates for the origin of Earth's water," Nielsen said.

In order to determine the source of water in planetary bodies, scientists measure the ratio between the two stable isotopes of hydrogen: deuterium and hydrogen. The research team, which also includes Francis McCubbin from the Institute of Me-

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TURNING THE PLANET BLUE

Nasa's Orion spacecraft ready

The construction of Nasa's new Orion spacecraft was completed on Thursday. This spacecraft, designed to send humans into deep space beyond the moon, including a journey to Mars that begins with its first test flight on December 4, according to Nasa. The assembled Orion crew module, service module, launch abort system and adapter will reside in Kennedy's Launch Abort System Facility until its scheduled rollout to the launch pad, set for November 10.

Srinivas Laxman

eteoritics at the University of New Mexico and Brian Monteleone of WHOI, utilized meteorite samples provided by Nasa from the asteroid 4-Vesta. The asteroid 4-Vesta, which formed in the same region of the solar system as Earth, has a surface of basaltic rock - frozen lava. PTI

Hindu ND 01.11.14 P-10

SAARC Delhi Declaration pushes for better education

Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI: Education Ministers and officials of eight South Asian countries have resolved to collaborate on increased use of information technology and improving the quality of education.

At the second meeting of Education Ministers of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) here on Friday, representatives of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka issued a joint statement titled "The New Delhi Declaration on Education." Human Resource Development Minister Smriti Irani chaired the meeting.

The priority areas of action decided upon include

enhancing the learning and development readiness of pre-school children, ensuring education for all, expanding skill development, facilitating mutual recognition of qualifications and mobility of students and teachers and expanding alternative ways of learning such as open and distance education.

The Ministers discussed India's use of information and communication technology in education, development and sharing of e-resources, connectivity, e-learning and Massive Open Online Courses.

Agencies reported that Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman of Pakistan's Higher Education Commission, proposed a SAARC education and research network for sharing information.

'Single strand of fibre optic to carry net data?

James Vincent

A new type of fibre optic cable developed by researchers in the US and Netherlands has smashed data transfer records, managing to squeeze 255 terabits of information per second down a single strand of glass fibre.

This means that a single fibre optical cable made using this technology could carry as much data as the entire internet at peak times.

To achieve this feat engineers from Eindhoven University of Technology and the University of Central Florida created a multi-core strand of glass fibre; a development that they say is tantamount to letting "three cars [...] drive on top of each other in the same lane". Normal fibre optic cables mostly contain thousands of strands of glass

New type of fibre optic cable can transfer 255 terabits of information per second down

fibre, each strand a little thicker than human hair.

These transfer information by bouncing beams of light through the glass — imagine sending a message using morse code by flashing a torch on and off. By managing to scale down these glass fibres, cramming seven cores into a single glass strand, this new technology has achieved transfer speeds of 32 terabytes a second (a byte is eight times as big as a bit) or enough to shift 1,000 gigabytes in 31 milliseconds. This is faster than the total capacity of all the fibre optic cables currently buried under the Atlantic Ocean. THE INDEPENDENT

Cleanliness Begins At Home

Only when we have a sense of ownership about our surroundings will we keep them as clean as our homes

Chetan Bhagat



One of the first signs of a well managed place – whether it is a restaurant, hotel, airport, office or train station – is its level of cleanliness.

If the place isn't clean, it is unlikely to impress anyone. The same applies to an entire country. Indians who travel abroad are often awestruck by cleanliness levels in the developed world.

Therefore, if we want our country to realise its full potential in the world, we have to make it clean. A land of filth, no matter how talented its people and how wonderful its natural resources, will never earn the respect it deserves.

Perhaps this is a reason why the PM has taken on the Swachh Bharat mission with such gusto. Not only him, several other influencers and prominent people have lent a hand to the cause, often holding a broom along with it.

However, while the broom in hand does make a compelling photo-op and is well intentioned, it will take a lot more to clean India. If we are really serious about this, let us first figure out why we are dirty in the first place, and what it would take to have a cleaner India.

We are not dirty people. Indians keep their homes scrupulously clean. In many parts of India people do not wear shoes inside the house to keep interiors clean. Some of our religious places are kept clean (though there are exceptions, don't even get me started on Varanasi and Mathura). Diwali, our biggest festival, is the time to spring clean. Indians are meticulous about taking a shower daily, which may not be as common in the West.

So why is our country dirty? Why is it when we step out of our homes, we will find the roadside littered? Is it the municipal corporation that isn't doing its job? Is it the local politician who should ensure things are kept clean? Do we not have enough dustbins?

None of the above issues fully ex-



Anandjyoti Das Basu

plain why India is unclean. The reason is that we make it dirty in the first place. And if we want truly to be a clean country we need to take steps to ensure we minimise filth in the first place, rather than hoping someone will pick up the broom and clean it. Developed countries in Western Europe and North America do not have local authorities sweeping the streets all the time. They have systems in place, and the local population cooperates to not create filth in the first place.

We on the other hand look at our country differently from our homes. Inside our houses, we want things to be spick and span. Outside the entrance door, it doesn't matter. It isn't mine. It's dirty anyway and how does it matter if I dump some more litter on the streets?

With this mentality, you can have an army of municipal corporation workers working 24x7, a hundred celebrities sweeping the streets, the PM

The country is yours. You obviously can't clean all of it, but you can be aware of at least a little bit of area around you. If every Indian has a concept of 'my 10 metres', given the number of people we have, we can achieve a lot

making a dozen speeches, I assure you, India will not become clean.

The only way it can and will become clean is if we minimise and prevent creating filth in the first place, and the only way that will happen is when all of us together think 'what is outside my home is also mine'.

This sense of community, recogni-

tion of a greater good and collective ownership is the only way for the situation to change. Else, we risk this cleanliness drive becoming another social fad that will be forgotten when the novelty wears off.

Of course, infrastructure improvements such as new treatment plants for solid, sewage, industrial and agricultural waste are required. New sets of indices, whether they be measures of cleanliness or density of dustbin distribution, are needed too. Laws and fines have their place as well. All that is indeed the government's job and they will be judged on it.

However, all this will come to naught if we Indians don't change our mentality about what is my space and what isn't. The country is yours. You obviously can't clean all of it, but you can be aware of at least a little bit of area around you. If every Indian has a concept of 'my 10 metres', or a sense of ownership about a 10 metre radius around him or her, magic can happen. Ten metres is just 30 feet around you. Given the number of people we have, we can achieve a lot if we all get together.

So it should not just be 'my home should be clean', but 'my home and surrounding 10 metres should be clean'.

Whenever there is a collective sense of ownership, we have higher cleanliness levels. It is for this reason most college campuses are cleaner than the city outside, despite housing thousands of youngsters inside.

So get out there, scan your 10 metres. Can you improve anything? A Swachh Bharat is indeed possible. The first step is 'swachh manasikta' or clean mindsets. Are you game?

In the interests of full disclosure Prakash Javadekar, Union minister for information and broadcasting as well as for environment and forests, nominated me to help with the Swachh Bharat campaign. This column is one of my contributions towards the campaign. Opinions expressed, however, are independent and personal.