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आईआईटी छात्र ने चोरी पकड़े जाने पर की आत्महत्या

नोएडा | कार्यालय संवाददाता

आईआईटी छात्र ने चोरी पकड़े जाने पर आत्महत्या की थी। पुलिस को छात्र द्वारा मुथूट फाइनेंस में चोरी की ज्वेलरी जमा करते हुए सीसीटीवी रिकार्डिंग मिल गई है। घटना के वक्त वहां मौजूद चचेरे भाई ने भी पुलिस को अपने बयान में चोरी की कहानी बताई है। इसके बाद कोतवाली सेक्टर-58 पुलिस ने हत्या की रिपोर्ट को आत्महत्या के लिए उकसाने की धाराओं में तब्दील कर दिया है।

मूल रूप से बागपत का रहने वाला 21 वर्षीय अंचल भारद्वाज दिल्ली आईआईटी से एमटेक कर रहा था। वह नोएडा के चौड़ा गांव

दुखद
- तीन अक्तूबर को सेक्टर-121 में आठवीं मंजिल से गिरकर हुई थी मौत
- मुथूट फाइनेंस में चोरी की ज्वेलरी जमा कराते मिली सीसीटीवी रिकार्डिंग
- हत्या की रिपोर्ट थी दर्ज, आत्महत्या के लिए उकसाने में तब्दील हुई धारा

स्थित एक पीजी में रहता था। उसकी बुआ का बेटा अमित शर्मा पत्नी के साथ सेक्टर-121 के एक अपार्टमेंट में रहता है। अंचल अक्सर इनके घर आता-जाता था। आरोप है कि अंचल ने इनके घर से लाखों रुपये कीमत की ज्वेलरी चोरी कर ली थी।

संदेह होने पर घटना वाले दिन (तीन अक्तूबर को) अमित, पत्नी के साथ इसके पीजी में आया था। बातों-बातों में वह अंचल को अपने साथ पीजी के बाहर कुछ खाने के बहाने ले गया। इस दौरान उसकी पत्नी ने अंचल के कमरे की तलाशी ली तो उसे कैमरे से ज्वेलरी के बॉक्स बरामद हो गए। इसके बाद दोनों जबरन उसे अपने साथ सेक्टर-121 स्थित अपने घर ले गए।

यहां पर अंचल के ताऊ का बेटा भी आ गया था। पुलिस को दिए बयान में उसने बताया कि ज्वेलरी चोरी को लेकर अंचल व अमित के बीच काफी लड़ाई-झगड़ा हुआ था। इसी बीच अंचल ने अचानक आठवीं

मंजिल पर बने इनके घर से नीचे छलांग लगा दी। वह लोग उसे तत्काल अस्पताल ले गए, जहां उसे मृत घोषित कर दिया गया। मामले में अंचल के पिता महावीर ने अमित व उसकी पत्नी के खिलाफ हत्या का मामला कोतवाली सेक्टर-58 में दर्ज कराया था।

प्राथमिक जांच में पुलिस को अंचल द्वारा सेक्टर 12-22 स्थित मुथूट फाइनेंस में चोरी की ज्वेलरी जमा करते हुए सीसीटीवी रिकार्डिंग मिल गई है। पुलिस ने रिकार्डिंग कब्जे में ले ली है। हालांकि पुलिस अभी खुलकर कुछ भी कहने को तैयार नहीं है। सीओ सेकेंड विश्वजीत श्रीवास्तव ने बताया कि मामले में तथ्यों के आधार पर जांच की जा रही है।

CCTV footage provides fresh twist in IIT-Delhi boy's death

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/City/Noida/CCTV-footage-provides-fresh-twist-in-IIT-Delhi-boys-death/articleshow/44818759.cms

NOIDA: With the recovery of a CCTV footage showing IIT-Delhi student, Anchal Bhardwaj, at the office of a private financial company that offers loan against mortgage of gold jewellery, police claimed to have made headway in the investigation of his death.

Bhardwaj's father had alleged that his son was killed by his cousin who suspected him of stealing gold jewellery from his apartment.

The cousin's family had later claimed to have recovered a jewellery box from Anchal's room, cops said. Anchal died after falling from his cousin's eighth-floor apartment on October 3. Police said they are yet to ascertain whether it was an accidental fall, a murder or an abetment to suicide.

"During the investigation, we recovered CCTV footage of a private financial company in Noida which deals in giving loans against gold. The footage suggests Anchal had visited the company office," an officer said. Sources said Anchal had deposited some gold ornaments with the financial firm and sold the rest to friends. "We have seen the deceased in the CCTV footage. We have also questioned some of his friends who purchased gold from him," an officer said.

The cop added that while Anchal's cousins said he fell-off accidentally, his father Mahavir Bhardwaj alleged that the

cousins, who suspected Anchal of stealing the jewellery, threatened to set his educational documents on fire if he did not admit to the crime and also pushed him to his death.

Deccan Herald ND 15/10/2014 P-8

CBSE scheme to help girls crack Engg entrance tests

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Girls in Class XI and Class XII will now have some additional help in cracking the entrance exams to gain admission to premier engineering colleges, including the Indian Institutes of Technology, thanks to a new scheme by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

Under the Udaan scheme, 1000 girls will get online tutorial and study material for their preparation for entrance examinations. Fifty per cent of them would be chosen from general category, while the rest will be picked from scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and backward classes categories.

"The programme is open for all girl students studying in class XI and XII irrespective of their examination board," a CBSE official said.

Girls pursuing science stream (Physics, Chemistry and mathematics) who had scored an aggregate of 70 per cent in Class X and 80 per cent in science and mathematics will be eligible to participate in Udaan. For boards which follow cumulative grade point average (CGPA), a candidate needs to have secured a minimum over all CGPA of 8 and grade point average (GPA) of 9 in Science and Mathematics in order to benefit from the scheme, the official said.

The CBSE has called for applications from the candidates. "They could either log on to the CBSE website or apply by post on or before Oct 27," the official said. The scheme, launched by Union HRD Minister Smriti Irani last month, aims to increase the number of girls in technical institutes which continues to be low.

Preference will be given to those girl students who belong to financially weaker sections where the combined family income should be less than Rs 6 lakh per annum for both general and reserved category candidates, a CBSE official said.

"Based on the performance of the students in the periodic assessment conducted, they will accrue points which will be converted into money. This money will be available to the students once they get selected into a college on the approved list. If a student fails to get admission, the money will be put back into the general pool to assist other students," the official said.

Once selected, students will have access to an online portal which will have content in the form of videos, tutorials and text. The students will be provided tablets with preloaded content to allow 24x7 learning, the official added.

HT.Com ND 15.10.2014 P-8

US-India's top priority is education and training

Ayesha Banerjee

The third para of the White House release on the recent meeting between US President Barack Obama and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi refers to "education and job training" of youth as a priority for both countries.

"The US education system is one of the cornerstones in the development of the country. They unschackled their education system and India can learn a lot from it," says Sanjay Mehta, regional council member of the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC) and MD, Teleperformance India, a multi-channel customer service provider.

India, Mehta feels, still has to develop its education and skilling systems. A major stumbling block is that the system is not for profit in India. The embargo on foreign universities is also highly misplaced in today's circumstances. "Indians spend $4 billion to $6 billion per year, that is ₹24,000 crore to ₹36,000 crore, to get their children educated overseas. Thus, the embargo becomes dysfunctional. Most of the young people go abroad not because they really want to, but because India does not have the capacity in-house or the quality," Mehta adds. Citing the example of the BPO industry, which runs multiple shifts and has built a $100 billion business out of it, he says colleges should be mandated to run two shifts. Teachers would get more pay for more lectures. For opex funding, higher education fee should be hiked. "A Delhi University graduation degree comes for $300 or ₹15,000. An English-speaking public school charges about ₹15,000 a month." Why would parents mind paying a similar sum for a college degree if they want quality education for their children?" Mehta asks.

The government should make it manda-

> **Most of the young people go abroad not because they really want to, but because India does not have the capacity or quality.**
> SANJAY MEHTA, MEMBER OF IACC

tory for MPs, MLAs, secretary and deputy secretary-level and top municipal corporation officials to send their children to government and municipal schools. This would automatically ensure that the schools improve their act, he says.

BPOs, too, can play an important role to skill the youth. About 90% of BPO employees are under 25 and 50% are first-time jobbers. "BPOs spend ₹3,500 crore and ₹5,000 crore per year on skill development at the intake level. That is the budget of 300 to 500 IITs (each has a ₹75 crore to ₹120 crore budget). Both offshore and domestic BPOs need English-speaking skills and are going to create a million of jobs in the coming years. Nasscom aims to make it a ₹3 lakh crore industry by 2020 and this is the only industry that spends 80% of its revenues in the same cities that it exists," Mehta adds.

The IACC is organising its 10th Indo US Economic Summit on October 15 to 16 at Hotel Hyatt Regency, Delhi: Convergence and Connectivity in Indo-US Economic Relations.

Hindustan Times ND 15/10/2014   P-20

INSTITUTES OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

Quality control

BEST BET Status upgrade to 'institute of national importance' will make specialised academies such as NID more professional and research-oriented, writes Gauri Kohli

THINKSTOCK

WHAT IS AN INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE?

According to the University Grants Commission, an Institute of National Importance is defined as one that plays a key role in developing highly skilled personnel within the specified region of the state or country. Only a select few institutes make it to this coveted list and are usually supported by the Centre as they also receive government funding to be developed as centres of excellence in research and academics. These institutes are given this status through an act of Parliament. Currently, there are over 40 instiutions that have been accorded this status.

INSTITUTES IN THE TOP LEAGUE

All India Institute of Medical Sciences

Indian Statistical Institute

Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Education & Research, Chandigarh

Indian Institutes of Technology

National Institutes of Technology

These are some of the country's premier institutions in the fields of design, film, media and management education, known for imparting the best of training, skill sets and knowledge to students. And now, they are likely to be upgraded to the status of 'institutes of national importance,' (INI) if the government has its way.

While the government has proposed grant of this status to Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) in Pune, Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI), Kolkata, and the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, the National Institute of Design (NID) has already got this tag as per a recent government notification.

Pradyumna Vyas, director, NID, Ahmedabad, says: "Over the years, NID has been delivering a range of experimental learning programmes through cross-disciplinary education, which is a unique model. We have been offering diploma programmes which are unique in terms of curricula and pedagogy and we did not want to come under any framework because we enjoyed this kind

GRANT STATUS, BUT NOT IN HASTE, WARN EXPERTS

How many institutes should be granted the status of institutes of national importance? Experts say it should be handled with caution and not in haste. Says Professor Keyoor Purani of IIM Kozhikode, "INI status should be granted to a limited number of institutes based on national human development priorities. A large number of institutes directly under the department of higher education pose obvious challenges of management and hence this may be provided to institutes keeping national HRD goals in mind."

Professor Rajiv K

Srivastava, interim director of IIM Lucknow, agrees. "Too many institutions with this status may dilute the concept of an institute of national importance and too few may create an 'elitist club' mentality. The status should be earned and not just be given without much deliberation or because an institute is already a brand in itself. Some generally acceptable standards need to be evolved, and at least some of them should be quantifiable. For example, years in operation, number of graduates, number of faculty with PhDs, aggregate research output

etc," he says.

According to Professor Sudhanshu Bhushan, professor and head, higher education, at the National University of Educational Planning and Development, "There is no document by the government which spells out clearly in what respect INIs are different from any university system. Establishment of INIs, outside the university setup, will promote fragmentation in the name of specialised knowledge. Promotion of standalone INIs will promote elite knowledge having disconnect with society and economy."

of freedom as it did not come under bodies like the University Grants Commission and All India Council for Technical Education. However, we realised that even though we had this freedom, we were unable to offer degrees. We wanted to take the route which would

help us enjoy the freedom and autonomy we already had and also offer degree programmes. This is why we thought of getting an INI status."

The decision to accord this status to NID also means that the government has recognised that design education is at par

with technology, engineering and medical science. "After technology, design has got this stature. This will give more options to students wanting to go abroad or trying for the UPSC Civil Services exam. This will also give a push to the institute's expansion plans with four

new NIDs coming up in Jorhat, Vijaywada, Kurukshetra and Bhopal in the next two years," adds Vyas.

NID currently offers diplomas in design streams such as furniture and interior design, graphic design, product design and textile design. With the new status, it will offer degrees at the bachelor's and master's levels.

Experts say that if other quality institutes are upgraded as well, it will lead to greater professionalism and give a boost to research. In order to provide statutory backing through an act of Parliament to declare FTII and SRFTI as INIs, the government has proposed a bill. This would enable both institutes to award their own degrees and

diplomas and start new activities on the lines of the IITs and IIMs. For FTII, too, the new status would be an advantage. "It is expected that when the Act comes into force, FTII would be able to award its own degrees and create more opportunities for a globally interconnected learning experience and achieve excellence in a more structured way," says DJ Narain, director, FTII, Pune.

The human resource development ministry has also initiated the process of declaring the School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal and Vijayawada and the Indian Institute of Information Technology Design and Manufacturing, Kancheepuram, as INIs.

Universities need India centric ranking

B.S. Ghuman

India's continued poor performance in educational rankings comes in the background of working towards National Knowledge Network. Many countries put resources into improving the global profile and performance of their universities. Should India care for these rankings or should we have our own ranking system?

IN ancient times, two Indian universities, Nalanda and Takshashila were among the top ranking universities across the world. These were epicenters of quality education like present day Oxford and Harvard; attracting international students from countries like Korea, Japan, China, Tibet, Indonesia, Persia and Turkey. The famous treatise of Arthashastra by Kautilya is said to be compiled in Takshashila. At present, however, none of the Indian universities figures in the first top 200 universities of the world. In the Times Higher Education Ranking Survey of World Universities, only two universities, namely, Panjab University, Chandigarh, and Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, figured in the group ranked between 275-300. President of India in his recent address through National Knowledge Network expressed his serious concerns about the low performance of Indian universities and stressed on new initiatives for enabling the Indian universities to find a place among first 200 universities.

The low ranking of Indian universities suggests something is seriously ailing our universities. It seems a facile generalisation, otherwise how do we explain the outstanding contribution of our alumni within India and abroad in areas like fundamental research, management, information technology, that includes the Silicon Valley? These simple facts certainly point to strengths of the Indian universities and also question the efficacy of global methodologies employed by the ranking agencies like The Times Higher Education, Shanghai University and QS. The methodologies show a bias in favour of advanced countries. For example, in some of the surveys, alumnus and staff winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals in Mathematics, academic reputation surveys, papers published in Nature or Science, proportion of international students etc. are given sizeable weightage. Countries like India suffer on these parameters. It is only rarely that a Nobel Prize and a Field Medal are awarded to scholars of the third world. These two indicators together are given 30% weightage in case of Shanghai Ranking.

The challenges to higher education in India are much different from advanced countries. Therefore, for assessing the performance of the Indian universities, we need a ranking methodology which is governed by the issues and challenges of our higher education system. Prime Minister of India, Minister, HRD and Chairperson, UGC have already called for evolving India specific methodology.

The major issues and challenges relating to higher education are of moderate quality barring few Centres of Excellence, low access, and inequity. The access to higher education is 18% against 100% in Korea and 95% in the USA. Besides being low it is highly inequitable across gender, location and socio-religious groups. Additional issues include weak networking among Indian universities; lack of trusted institutional mechanism for university-industry and society interface; over-emphasis on lecture based teaching pedagogy; and fragile cultural diversity in many campuses.

The suggested methodology should also include the identification of parameters, which have the potential of tak-

Key areas for performance measurement

Area	Weightage in the Overall Ranking (%)
Quality of teaching and learning outcomes	25
Curriculum development and revision	05
Quality of research	25
Social inclusion	10
Balanced growth	05
Indianess	05
University-industry, government and civil society linkages	05
Outreach programmes	05
Employability	7.5
International reach	05
Accreditation	2.5
Total	**100**

ing leading Indian universities among top world universities.

Providing a scope for improving our global ranking by keeping India specific issues in mind, 45 calibrated performance indicators are suggested for ranking the Indian universities. These are classified into 11 key areas. The significance of each area is shown in the table.

Quality of teaching and learning outcomes (25%)

For assessing the quality of teaching and learning outcomes, the indicators to be factored into are: (i) teacher-taught ratio (5%); (ii) teaching pedagogy combining traditional lecture based method, problem solving, experiential learning, student seminars, field based learning and use of ITC (3%); (iii) teachers having completed qualifying degree from other universities (2%); and (iv) adjunct faculty (1%); (v) choice -based credit system (3%); (vi) ratio of continuous assessment and terminal examination (3%); (vii) percentage of students with first division (3%); and (viii) students' feedback (5%).

Curriculum development and revision (5%)

For making our courses relevant to emerging needs of the economy and society, the recommended indicators include: (i) introducing new courses in tune with market/research surveys (2%); (ii) major restructuring of curriculum on regular intervals (2%); and (iii) involvement of stakeholders particularly alumni and industry in curriculum development (1%).

Quality of research (25%)

For incentivizing the universities for undertaking fundamental, policy, applied and evaluative research the major indicators include: (i) papers per teacher published in blind peer review journals normalized subject wise (5%); (ii) citation index/ research impact measuring frequency of published work cited by researchers across the globe and research's accumulated influence to drive action (10%); (iii) grants per teacher for major national and international projects (3%); (iv) productions, concerts, performance, art works, creative writings per teacher of participating disciplines (1%); (v) patents per teachers of the participating departments (2%); (vi) inter-disciplinary projects (2%); and (vii) Research Awards conferred by National/State Funding institutions (2%).

Social inclusion (10%)

For measuring the performance of Indian universities for promoting social inclusion, indicators can be: (i) percentage of rural students (2%); (ii) percentage of girl students (2%); (iii) percentage of minority students (2%); (iv) percentage of reserved categories including handicap students (2%); and (v) percentage of first generation learners (2%).

Balanced growth (5%)

Top ranking universities should strive for a balanced growth. The suggested indicators include: (i) percentage of Social Science and Humanities students (2%); (ii) per-

centage of Basic Sciences' students (2%); and (iii) percentage of inter-disciplinary courses' students (1%).

Indianess (5%)

The Indian universities have Centres for Excellence which hardly collaborate with each other. The cultural diversity in the universities needs to be encouraged in the new methodology by having indicators: (i) collaborations in teaching and research/intervarsity knowledge clusters (2%); (ii) percent of students from other states/UTs (2%); and (iii) percent of faculty from other States/UTs (1%).

University- industry, government and civil society linkages (5%)

The university-industry, government and civil society partnership bridges the gap between academia and market; engages in innovations and transfer of knowledge; and promotes student internships. The performance indicators in this regard can be: (i) industry funded research project grants/income per teacher of participating disciplines (2%); (ii) outcome of technology incubation centres (1%); (iii) exchange of faculty and professionals (1%); and (iv) students' internships with industry, governments, civil society, courts, etc. (1%).

Outreach programmes (5%)

A number of universities in India remain confined to their walls, keeping this in view the recommended performance indicators comprise: (i) percentage of research projects relating to local community (2%); (ii) awareness programmes relating to health, environment, sanitation, low sex ratio, corruption, crime against women, drug abuse, etc. (1%); (iii) undertaking literacy programmes (1%); and (iv) involvement in disaster management programmes (1%).

Employability (7.5%)

In the Indian context there is wide gap between the skills formed in the universities and skills required by the market

resulting in low employability ranging from 25% in case of professional courses to below 10% for arts graduates. In an economy having demographic dividends, preparing the students for market should be one of the priorities of the universities. For judging employability, performance indicators are: (i) institutional arrangements like Central Placement Cells/ Finishing Schools for honing students' skills for jobs (2%); (ii) percentage of students in vocational and job oriented courses (2%); and (iii) overall employability (3.5%).

International reach (5%)

Earlier, a large number of students from Africa, Middle East, East and South Asian countries were coming to the Indian universities. Settings up of universities in home countries and foreign exchange distress have resulted in a visible dip in the number of international students. Some universities are still getting international students. The number of foreign collaborations by the Indian university is on the increase. Good numbers of students are coming to India for internships. Keeping these considerations in view, indicators suggested for international reach are: (i) proportion of international students (1%); (ii) proportion of international faculty (1%); (iii) international partnerships in research and teaching including Joint/Dual Degree Programmes (2%); and (iv) international student internships (1%).

Accreditation (2.5%)

Regular accreditation holds the key to excellence. In India the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and National Board of Accreditation (NBA) are two accreditation agencies. Unfortunately their efforts have not yielded expected results as accreditation has been a voluntary activity till recently. In this light 2.5% weightage is suggested to all the universities which have received Grade B and above.

Overall rank of a university

For developing an overall rank of a university based on above-mentioned performance indicators, a standardized methodology by using suitable statistical techniques need to be followed.

Role of the universities and government

In most universities teachers are driven by their professional accomplishments. They spend maximum time on academic works. They eschew from participating in the meetings for devising strategies for marketing the achievements of the universities. Thus we have very impressive achievements of our faculty but we fail to project properly the macro accomplishments in the absence of an institutional mechanism for collating achievements. For marketing, the cumulative achievements of the universities, each university should either set up its own Cell for Performance Ranking or outsource this work. According to Mr. Phil Baty, Editor, The Times Higher Education Ranking, many countries invest resources for improving the performance of their universities. India should also emulate this practice by investing adequate resources for improving ranking of the Indian universities.

The writer is Professor at Department of Public Administration, Panjab University, Chandigarh. He has co-edited a book on higher education titled, Higher Education in India: The Changing Scenario.

For assessing the performance of the Indian universities, we need a ranking methodology which is governed by the issues and challenges of our higher education system.

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■ The move may help IIM students get global acceptance for their qualification, say experts.

Do IIMs need to be upgraded?

Gauri Kohli

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The human resource development ministry is also mulling the introduction of a proposal to grant institutes of national importance status to the Indian Institutes of Management. If implemented, will the IIMs benefit by enjoying greater autonomy or will it dilute the IIM brand? Experts are divided on the issue.

According to Professor Rajiv K Srivastava, interim director, IIM Lucknow, "For most students who live and work in India, it will not make much difference as the PGDM offered by IIMs is recognised as equivalent to an MBA. However, it could make a difference to students when seeking jobs/admissions abroad. It could also help attract international students. This could be good for new programmes launched by institutes."

The move is also likely to help doctoral students, says Srivastava. "It could be helpful since doctoral programmes at different IIMs are in the approval process. The status would also improve access to some research projects and funds from the government and the UGC. From the point of view of governance, the IIMs would have to balance the challenges of need for autonomy vs relatively standardised gov-

ernance," he adds.

Another section of experts feel that since in its current status the IIMs function directly under the department of higher education, MHRD, there isn't going to be any major change with this status changing to an IIM act.

Says Professor Keyoor Purani of IIM Kozhikode, "The IIMs have built a formidable reputation in the country with regard to management education and have national significance anyway. The IIM act may formalise it. However, to an extent, the direct, immediate benefit to the students would be that they would be able to earn degrees as against PG diplomas or fellowships which are conferred by IIMs. Though in India, a PG diploma from IIMs holds more value than an MBA degree from most universities, this may help them get international acceptance of their qualification."

Further, the INI status would help IIMs directly contribute to national human development goals and thus may get more attention in terms of developing academic centres focused around specific areas of knowledge, newer programmes, research funding, international collaborations, etc. This would have an indirect effect on the opportunities of learning and development to the students, he adds.

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From defence to fish, Oslo and Delhi sign thirteen agreements

Amit Baruah

OSLO: As many as 13 agreements were signed between Indian and Norwegian entities on the second and concluding day of President Pranab Mukherjee's visit to this Scandinavian nation.

The agreements, which range from a statement of intent between the Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment and setting up a state-of-the-art fish farming unit outside Delhi, also had IIT-Kanpur, Hyderabad University and several other educational institutions reaching accord with their Norwegian counterparts.

The President, in his address to a joint business gathering, announced that Norwegian tourists would soon be given the visa-on-arrival facility, even as Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg said Oslo would open a new consulate in Mumbai.

As Mr. Mukherjee suggested that Norway's $900-billion pension fund would increase its exposure to India, given the new Narendra Modi government's intent to create an enabling business climate, Ms. Solberg said pension fund decisions were made independently of the government.

"Norway's sovereign wealth [pension] fund decisions are made on the perception of the business environment," she stressed. "They will invest where they feel they should."

The President hoped that there would be an "early conclusion" to ongoing talks for a free trade and investment agreement between India and the four-nation European Free Trade Association, of which Norway is a key member. Referring to the Modi government's pitch to "Make in India," Mr. Mukherjee said, "the Indian government is committed to a business-friendly environment — impediment-free, predictable, facilitatory and transparent."

At a separate press briefing, Ms. Solberg said the Norwegian government did not direct private investment but played the role of a "service provider" to business ventures.

President Pranab Mukherjee with Queen Sonja, King Harald V and Crown Princess Mette-Marit, attending a state banquet at the Royal Palace in Oslo on Monday. – PHOTO: PTI

Religion not a big issue: Norwegian PM

Amit Baruah

OSLO: Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg has said religious or national background is not such a big issue when asked whether it was appropriate to mention the religious affiliation of Kailash Satyarthi and Malala Yousafzai in their Nobel Peace Prize Citation.

Ms. Solberg was responding to a specific question from *The Hindu* whether it was appropriate to mention their religious background when millions of Hindus and Muslims lived together in India.

"The [Norwegian] Nobel Committee regards it as an important point for a Hindu and a Muslim, an Indian and a Pakistani, to join in a common struggle for education and against extremism," the citation said.

The Nobel Committee, which is independent of the Norwegian government, has in the past made controver-sial choices such as granting the Peace Prize to Barack Obama and the European Union in recent years.

However, the Norwegian government has faced the maximum fire for the actions of the Nobel Committee for granting the Peace Prize in 2010 to Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo, currently serving a jail term.

A senior Norwegian official told this writer that China had frozen relations after the Prize was announced for Mr. Liu. "There have been no contacts since this decision was taken," the official said.
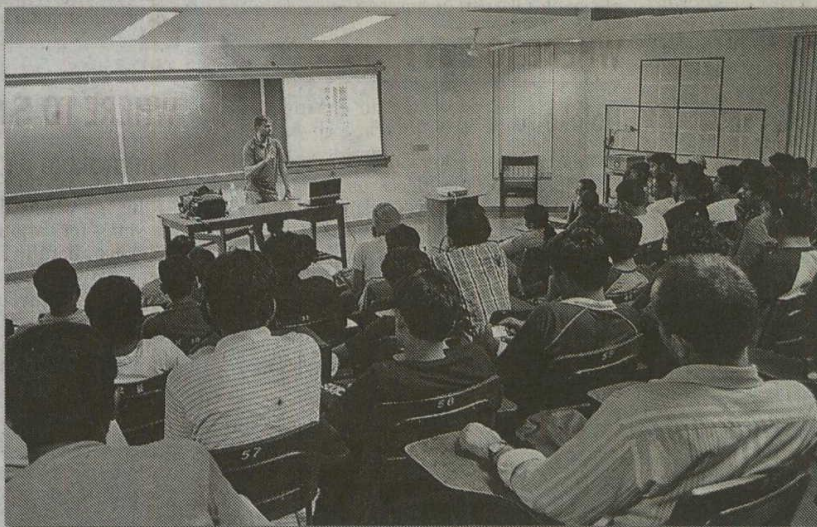
At a press conference, Ms. Solberg said even if Norway had flourishing ties with China, it would have "stepped-up" cooperation with India. She said Norway viewed the re-emergence of Asia on the global stage as an opportunity.

How crucial is e-learning for India?

Arun Nigavekar

DIGITAL DILEMMA: Ubiquitous services of the internet has connected all the best brains in the world, making access to a wide range of knowledge more convenient that ever

THERE has always been some sort of a disconnect between how things are taught in a classroom and how things work in the 'real world'. While academicians, industrial community and the government agree that such a divide exists; students — who suffer because of such a disparity — are silent acceptors of the harsh reality. In early days, teachers were the real masters in classrooms who would put in the best of their knowledge to educate the pupil. They would share numerous examples from the real world and link them with fundamental/theoretical education imparted in classrooms. But those were the days when many a good, dedicated teachers catered to a limited number of students. Nevertheless, in the past three decades, the scenario has drastically changed. The numbers of both, students and teachers have increased. While infrastructure has gradually developed, the thirst for education without an enhanced knowledge foundation has also grown. Today, teacher-driven fundamental classroom education has lost lustre and has become a mere exercise to be finished within a given time schedule or deadline. This shoddy approach of education delivery is not acceptable to most industries and businesses, which are fighting the 'knowledge economy' war in a highly competitive and struggling world.

Educational institutions in other countries, particularly in developed nations, quickly understood the game. They realised the importance of bringing information and communica-tions technology (ICT)-driven systems into the teaching and learning process. Such organisations accepted the fact that creating a strong foundation in core fundamental subjects of various faculties was of great importance and that it was necessary to enrich students by establishing a bridge between core education and application orientation. The rapid growth of computers, enhanced connectivity, flow of information through broadband and access to remarkable speed for this entire process has completely changed the environment of learning. Teachers are no more the 'brand masters', but have become facilitators.

Moreover, the integration of e-learning/online leaning/open online learning with face-to-face delivery system has changed the dynamics of the education sec-tor today. Many new pedagogical models like project-based as well as challenge-based learning have become an integral part of the classroom teaching process. Ubiquitous services of the internet has connected all the best brains in the world, making access to a wide range of knowledge more convenient that ever. The tremendous growth of smartphone and tablet usage too has made a big change in broadening the knowledge spectrum for one and all. Thanks to such a fast-changing scenario, the workforce of this century would soon be saturated with people who have 24/7 access to search engines via their 'smart' devices, and for whom, sharing and collaboration are the norm, and cre-ative freedom is king. In that sense, shouldn't our classrooms represent such a phe-nomenal shift to all things 'smart' too?

Our teaching community, educational policymakers and the government, per se, are supposed to be the driving force for igniting a new, improved classroom environment. However, in spite of minor efforts at various levels, the change has yet not been triggered. So, a vital question arises: why are we still uncomfortable with the new, dynamic, ICT-driven teaching process that has become a driving force in the education domain worldwide? The latest technique allows the assimilation of mobile learning as an integral part of our classroom teaching. It is interesting to note that our education system gave almost a million ICT experts to the world who are actively contributing to major advancements and developments in the western world. But let us remember that just a fraction of our youths — who are born as brilliant individuals and are supported financially by their families — become a part of the world's ICT revolution. For in the process, we forget the millions of youths from small towns and cities, smaller talukas and even villages, who pass schools or colleges, but sadly do not get the right exposure in the higher education sphere. It is here that reliable and speedy broadband connectivity as well as access to modern devices, particularly large screen and memory devices, become extremely crucial.

The Indian education system needs to accept the use of technology as an integral part of teaching and learning process. Teachers must be willing to decipher the online aspects of curriculum that go beyond just black board lessons. They must explore the internet and make full use of the widely available expert opinions and commentary in respective fields — along with its application — to be used in face to face lectures. In doing so, students would be all the more engaged, encouraged and excited to see the practical shift from learning to real life application. Mobile learning too, is an advanced and more defined version of what teachers have achieved via classroom teaching till date. Thus, teachers could certainly become great knowledge partners of today's youths, if they are determined to bring about a positive change in the system.

(The writer is former chairman of UGC, former vice-chancellor of University of Pune and founder director of NAAC)

Hindustan ND 15/10/2014   P-7

गूगल-फेसबुक से ज्यादा छात्रों को डीआरडीओ लुभा रहा

नई दिल्ली | मदन जैड़ा

भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थानों (आईआईटी) के छात्रों को अब गूगल और फेसबुक के मोटे पैकेज की नौकरियों की बजाय रक्षा अनुसंधान एवं विकास संगठन (डीआरडीओ) की चुनौतीपूर्ण मिसाइल परियोजनाओं में नौकरी करना भाने लगा है।

डीआरडीओ में नौकरी के लिए आने वाले आईआईटी के डिग्रीधारियों की संख्या में हाल के वर्षों में तेजी से इजाफा हुआ है। कुछ साल पूर्व तक पांच-सात फीसदी लोग ही आईआईटी से डीआरडीओ में आते थे लेकिन आज सालाना होने वाली भर्तियों में 60

बदली राह

- अपने देश में वैज्ञानिक बनना बेहतर मान रहे हैं आईआईटी के छात्र
- डीआरडीओ की वैज्ञानिक भर्ती में 60 फीसदी आईआईटी डिग्रीधारी

फीसदी तक की हिस्सेदारी आईआईटी छात्रों की होती है।

डीआरडीओ के अनुसार पिछले तीन सालों के दौरान 136 आईआईटी डिग्रीधारियों ने रक्षा अनुसंधान में कार्य करने को प्राथमिकता दी है जबकि इनमें से कई छात्र ऐसे थे जिन्हें

बहुराष्ट्रीय कंपनियों में मोटे पैकेज मिल रहे थे। पिछले तीन सालों के आंकड़ों को देखें तो डीआरडीओ में साल में 70-80 नए वैज्ञानिकों की भर्ती हुई जिनमें से 2012 में 46, 2013 में 45 तथा इस साल अब तक 45 आईआईटी छात्रों की भर्ती हुई है।

तकरीबन 60 फीसदी वैज्ञानिक इस समय डीआरडीओ में आईआईटी से आ रहे हैं। इनमें बीटेक, एमटेक तथा पीएचडी सभी किस्म के डिग्रीधारी हैं।

डीआरडीओ के एक वरिष्ठ अधिकारी के अनुसार अब डीआरडीओ ने चुनींदा आईआईटी खड़गपुर आदि में कैंपस प्लेसमेंट के लिए जाना शुरू कर दिया है। सच्चाई यह है कि आज कहीं ज्यादा आईआईटी डिग्रीधारी डीआरडीओ ज्वाइन करना चाहते हैं। पर दिक्कत है कि हमारे डीआरडीओ में पद कम होते हैं। अधिकारी ने बताया कि जिस वक्त आईआईटी में प्लेसमेंट चल रहे होते हैं, उस वक्त हमारे पास वैकेंसी या तो

नहीं होती हैं या बेहद कम होती हैं। कई ऐसे आईआईटी छात्रों ने बाद में डीआरडीओ ज्वाइन किया जो बहुराष्ट्रीय कंपनियों में मोटे पैकेज पर जा चुके थे। बाद में वे कम वेतन पर डीआरडीओ आए।

डीआरडीओ में करीब एक हजार और वैज्ञानिकों की भर्ती आने वाले दिनों में होनी है। डीआरडीओ की योजना है कि जब भर्तियों के लिए सरकार से मंजूरी मिल जाएगी तो बड़े पैमाने पर आईआईटी, एनआईटी और इंडियन इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ साइंस बेंगलुरु में भी कैंपस प्लेसमेंट में हिस्सा लेगा। ईटी और आईएससी से पढ़े नौजवान डीआरडीओ ज्वाइन कर रहे हैं।

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Anthropocene: An Earth era 'named' after us

Washington: People are changing Earth so much, warming and polluting it, that many scientists are turning to a new way to describe the time we live in. They're calling it the Anthropocene — the age of humans.

Though most non-experts don't realize it, science calls the past 12,000 years the Holocene, Greek for "entirely recent." But the way humans and their industries are altering the

© Roy McMahon/Corbis

THE AGE OF HUMANS

planet, especially its climate, has caused an increasing number of scientists to use the word "Anthropocene" to better describe when and where we are.

"We're changing the Earth. There is no question about that," said eight-time spacewalking astronaut John Grunsfeld, now associate administrator for science at Nasa. He said looking down from orbit, there was no place he could see on the planet

that didn't have the mark of man. So he uses the term Anthropocene, he said, "because we're intelligent enough to recognize it."

On Friday the Anthropocene Working Group ramps up its efforts to change the era's name with a meeting at a Berlin museum. The movement was jump-started and the name coined by Nobel laureate Paul Crutzen in 2000. AP

Times Of India ND 15/10/2014   P-23

Feeling sick? Google has a doc waiting on video

Tech Co Is Running A Trial Programme In Which People Searching For Basic Health Info Can Chat With Medics

Conor Dougherty

The Internet can be a dangerous place to get medical advice. Stomachaches turn into cancer, stress becomes an endocrine tumor. Crack remedies and strange diets abound. Now Google is playing with a new technology that it hopes will help people find more reliable medical information. It's called a doctor.

Google's "Helpouts" product — a service where people can search for experts and talk to them over video — is running a trial programme in which people who are searching for symptoms like pink eye and the common cold can video-chat with a doctor. The company is working with medical groups including Scripps and One Medical, which are "making their doctors available and have verified their

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TIME FOR E-PRESCRIPTION

credentials," according to a spokeswoman. "When you're searching for basic health information — from conditions like insomnia or food

poisoning — our goal is provide you with the most helpful information available," the spokeswoman said in an emailed statement.

Health care has become one of Google's biggest side projects. The company's life sciences division is developing a contact lens that monitors glucose levels. It recently acquired Lift Labs, maker of a high-tech spoon for people with hand tremors.

Google has also used its tremendous coffers to fund Calico, a pharmaceutical company that is being run by the former head of Genentech. Calico recently announced a new partnership to build a Bay Area-based facility that will research diseases that afflict the elderly, like neurodegeneration and cancer.

"When you're as big as Google is, there are only so many other markets that matter, and health care is one," said Ben Schachter, an analyst at Macquarie Securities.

Telemedicine is an old concept. Doctors have been using the tele-

phone since the telephone was invented. And they have been sharing X-ray images and using videoconferencing for at least 40 years, according to the American Telemedicine Association.

"This year, between 800,000 and one million consultations will be done over the Internet directly to consumers in the United States," said Jonathan Linkous, chief executive of the American Telemedicine Association. "So clearly consumers want this.",

The $2.8 trillion United States health care market is a big target for all kinds of companies. .

Apple announced a health-monitoring app, HealthKit, for its new iOS 8 operating system. The app logs statistics like a user's footsteps, heart rate and sleep activity, and will be able to pull data from third-party fitness and health-monitor-

ing hardware.

Apple also said it would allow makers of health-monitoring apps to integrate tightly with HealthKit. For example, the Mayo Clinic has retooled its app so that if a patient's vital signs, like blood pressure, seem concerning, HealthKit can notify the hospital so that a doctor can reply to the patient.

Walmart has also been experimenting with ways to tap into health care. A PWC report has a case study of a recent Walmart partnership with Kaiser Permanente, in which Walmart opened 300-square-foot "Kaiser Permanente Care Corners" at two stores in California. The centers had diagnostic equipment like blood pressure cuffs and, much like Google's new "Helpouts" feature, they allowed customers to do video calls with Kaiser doctors and nurses. NYT NEWS SERVICE

Government to keep close watch on history research in the country

Hindustan Times (Indore)

NEW DELHI: The government-funded Indian Council of Historical research (ICHR) is creating a database of all historians in a bid to keep tabs on trends in historical research and teaching at universities across the country.

The database will be created through a survey called 'State of the Discipline Survey in History' under which every research scholar/ teacher will register with the ICHR with details such as place of work, area of research and publications.

The survey could raise eyebrows in liberal circles which may see it as the BJP government's attempt to monitor historical research in India as part of its socalled "saffronisation" of history.

ICHR, which promotes historical research by giving grants, was hit by controversy recently over the appointment of Yellapragada Sudershan Rao, a known supporter of Sanatan Hindu religion and Vedic literature, as its chairperson.

"The ICHR has initiated a State of the Discipline Survey in History for surveying and assessing the state of history teaching and research on India. This information will help us in compiling a database of teachers and researchers engaged in universities/colleges working in different areas of history," said a note ICHR member secretary Gopinath Ravindran sent to all universities and colleges. Ravindran said the exercise, the first of its kind in the country, will help take stock of the discipline and improve history research in the country. "It will help us know the trend in history- writing in the country," he told HT.

"We will get to know whether an institution has the requisite number of history faculties or not; whether the grants given for a particular research are being utilised properly or not."

Former ICHR chairperson and noted historian Irfan Habib said the ICHR was not an intelligence agency which should keep details of the research scholars but added that he did not see any "design" in the move. "It will help the specialists in the field," he said.

How Germany managed to abolish university tuition fees

http://www.newstatesman.com/education/2014/10/how-germany-managed-abolish-university-tuition-fees

If Germany has done it, why can't we? That's the question being asked by many students around the world in countries that charge tuition fees to university. From this semester, all higher education will be free for both Germans and international students at universities across the country, after Lower Saxony became the final state to abolish tuition fees.

It's important to be aware of two things when it comes to understanding how German higher education is funded and how the country got to this point. First, Germany is a federal country with 16 autonomous states responsible for education, higher education and cultural affairs. Second, the German higher education system –

consisting of 379 higher education institutions with about 2.4m students – is a public system which is publicly funded. There are a number of small private institutions but they enrol less than 5 per cent of the total student body.

Back and forth with fees

Until 1970-71, West-German higher education students had to pay tuition fees at the level of about 120 to 150 German Marks per semester. There were needs-based exceptions but basically these fees had to be paid by every student.

When they came to power in the late 1960s, Germany's Social Democrats supported higher education expansion by promoting widening participation and equal opportunities and by increasing the number of higher education institutions. From 1971 onwards, a system of state financial assistance for students was established and tuition fees were abolished. The assistance came first as a grant, later as a mix of half repayable-loan and half grant.

During the peak period of higher education expansion in the late 1960s, exclusive funding of higher education by the states became too much of a burden. New provisions were introduced for a framework law laying down the general principles governing higher education across West Germany. The first law, introduced in 1976, included a prohibition of tuition fees.

Despite a flirtation with the idea of re-introducing tuition fees under the conservative-liberal coalition government in the 1980s, a stalemate ensued over whether tuition fees would lead state governments to reduce their regular funding to universities.

Fees win out in late 1990s

The fall of the Berlin Wall and German Unification put all reform plans on hold for several years until the whole East German system of higher education institutions and academies had been evaluated and reformed. A new discussion about tuition fees then started around the mid-1990s, with their re-introduction seen as a solution to a number of existing problems in the higher education system.

Around the end of the 1990s, the dam of resistance broke by allowing the introduction of fees for so-called long-term students: students who had been enrolled several semesters past the regular duration of their study programme and had not finished.

Those states with a conservative government filed a law suit in 2002 against the framework law of higher education, arguing that its prohibition of tuition fees was an illegitimate intervention into the legal authority for educational matters of the states. The Federal Constitutional Court upheld the complaint in 2005; immediately, seven states introduced tuition fees.

In 2006, the framework law was abolished under wider reforms of German federalism. Tuition fees were capped at 500 Euros per semester, but Berlin and all East-German states refused to introduce them.

Excellence and crisis

Yet the same reform of federalism led the states to reclaim complete authority and responsibility for their higher education. This led the Federal Ministry for Education and Research to refuse any further co-funding with states on higher education. And it left the federal ministry with a lot of spare money. A large part of this was eventually invested into the German Excellence Initiative, a competitive funding programme launched in 2005 to support a group of universities to become global players.

But this also meant that the poorer states faced a funding crisis for their higher education institutions. The problem was aggravated by the fact the a number of the poorer states were located in East Germany, where all states had decided not to introduce tuition fees in the hopes to attract more students.

Gradual abolition

In successive years, as soon as state government elections have elected social democratic or green party governments, tuition fees have been abolished. The state of Hesse, for example, had tuition fees for only a single year. In the end only two states were left with tuition fees: Bavaria and Lower Saxony. The conservative government of Bavaria gave into the mainstream and abolished tuition fees in the winter semester 2013-14, with Lower Saxony abolishing fees in the winter semester 2014-15.

But the heads of higher education institutions negotiated with their ministries, arguing that they could not properly do their job of offering high-quality student experience if the loss of income from tuition fees was not compensated one way or another.

So most states have agreed to compensate their higher education institutions with extra money – not quite covering the loss in fees though – which was to be invested exclusively into the improvement of the quality of studies and teaching. Most ministries decreed that students had to be involved in decisions about how and for what purposes the money was going to be spent.

How funding works now

The present situation is that all higher education institutions receive a budget from the responsible ministry of the state in which they are located, based on annual or biennial negotiations. This basic budget is complemented by additional agreements between higher education institutions and the state concerning the intake of additional numbers of students and the money to compensate the loss of income from tuition fees.

There are additional funding programmes – some funded jointly by the states and the federal ministry – for supporting and promoting research, in the competition for excellence.

Of course, most higher education institutions continue to feel underfunded. The pressure on academic staff to attract external research funding has increased, as has competition for such grants. Still, compared to other countries in Europe, German higher education institutions continue to be rather generously funded by their states – an estimated 80 per cent of their overall budgetary needs. There are also ample opportunities and considerable amounts of external research funding available.

Publicly funded, but for how long?

Despite the fact that competition for funding and accountability has increased in German higher education, there is still a general consensus that it is a public system and should be state-funded. The abolition of tuition fees, even by conservative state governments, reflects this consensus too. In fact, the new Federal Minister for Education and Research, a member of the Conservative Party, recently announced a major increase in the levels of needs-based state financial assistance to students that will start in the 2016-17 academic year.

But funding varies considerably depending on different institutional and regional factors. The winners of the German Excellence Initiative have received and are receiving considerable amounts of additional funding in the hope that more German universities will be able to achieve better positions on world university rankings. There were 12 German universities in the 2014-15 Times Higher Education World University Rankings, up from 10 the year before.

Higher education institutions in the poorer states (most of them in the east of Germany) receive less money and academic staff are being paid lower salaries while higher education institutions in the richer states (typically in the south) are better funded.

The debate about tuition fees – though dead for the moment – can easily be revived in the future. It has not been dropped from the agenda once and for all. Government policies continue to be in favour of tuition fees, most representatives of institutional leadership are as well, though for different reasons. But there is currently a lack of general public support. Once this has changed – and influential advisory bodies and think tanks are working towards such a change – the idea of tuition fees will be introduced again.

Barbara Kehm is a member (and former Secretary) of the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers (CHER) and the German Association of Higher Education Research GfHf). This article was originally published on The Conversation. Read the original article.