Newspaper Clips
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आईआईटी में भी इस योजना की शुरुआत

देश में इस योजना की शुरुआत सबसे पहले आईआईटी दिल्ली ने इस साल से की है। अब डीयू इसे अपनाने जा रहा है। गौरतलब है कि पिछले कुछ माह पहले आईआईटी रुड़की के छात्रों को परिणाम निराशाजनक रहा था। कई छात्र फेल हो गए थे। ऐसा आईआईटी दिल्ली में न हो, इसे देखते हुए 'ग्रुप ट्यूटोरियल' की व्यवस्था लागू हुई थी। इसके अनुसार, वरिष्ठ छात्र रोजाना विभिन्न समूह में अपने विभाग के जूनियर छात्रों को पढ़ाते हैं। इसके लिए आतंरिक मूल्यांकन में वरिष्ठ छात्रों को अंक दिए जाते हैं।

Business Line ND 24/09/2015 P-04

IITs may audit urban local bodies

New Delhi, September 23

Urban local bodies, which form the key component of the government's smart cities mission, may be subjected to third-party audit by the Indian Institutes of Technology. "Urban local bodies need to be strengthened. I am looking at how nearby IITs can carry out third party audit for these bodies," Urban Development Minister M Venkaiah Naidu said at the 41st Skoch Summit. He also urged States to adopt the 42nd and 43rd amendments and delegate powers to ULBs. "This is important for ULBs in order for them to become effective," he added. Naidu also expressed hope that the Real Estate Bill will be taken up in Parliament in the next session. OUR BUREAU

Business Standard ND 24/09/2015 P-22

IIM-Sambalpur begins session with 49 students

The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) at Sambalpur in Odisha, one of the six new IIMs sanctioned by the Centre in 2014, took off on Wednesday with the orientation of 49 students.

The classes for these students — 40 boys and 9 girls — will start on Thursday. IIM-Sambalpur, which can take up to 60 students, will offer the flagship Post Graduate Programme in Management (PGP). All other new IIMs — Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh), Bodh Gaya (Bihar), Sirmaur (Himachal Pradesh), Nagpur (Maharashtra), and Amritsar (Punjab) — have already started their classes. "The regular faculty of IIM Indore, besides visiting professors, will be taking classes. We're running late by two months and will make all efforts to complete the session on time," said Rishikesha T Krishnan, director, IIM - Indore, IIM-Sambalpur's mentor institute.

BS REPORTER

NIT Rourkela head suspends registrar

http://www.thestatesman.com/news/odisha/nit-rourkela-head-suspends-registrar/92173.html

In an unusual move the Director of National Institute of Technology (NIT), Rourkela, has suspended the Registrar of the prestigious institute for alleged insubordination and dereliction of duty.

In an intra mail the Director, Sunil Sarangi has intimated the staff that the Registrar Santosdh Kumar Upadhyaya has been suspended.

When contacted Sarangi said: "I had to take the ultimate step as there was no way out. He has been suspended for insubordination and dereliction of duty. His activities were unbecoming of his post due to which I had to take such a step".

The Director also informed that the suspension has been ordered as per the statute of the institute.

"The 26(1) clause mentions that the Director has the power to suspend the Registrar and I have done it within the ambit of law", said Sarangi.

"The whole aim of the suspension was not to let any negative atmosphere prevail in the campus", he said.

The Registrar, however, said: "I am the secretary of the Board of Governors and I had to communicate certain decisions of the Board as well as certain circulars and orders to the Director in my capacity as secretary who acts on behalf of the Board."

The Director wanted the orders to be revoked and pressurised me to do so, said the Registrar. Following this the Director issued instructions that the orders of the Registrar did not have necessary sanctions as per the rule, added the Registrar.

The issue was taken up even by the Chairman of the Board, Vasantha Ramaswamy, he said.

According to him the whole problem started on the awarding a Ph D to a scholar, which the Director objected.

Subramanian Swamy Considered for Post of Jawaharlal Nehru University Vice Chancellor

http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/subramanian-swamy-considered-for-post-of-jawaharlal-nehru-university-vice-chancellor-1220937

New Delhi: Ministry of Human Resource and Development (HRD) is believed to have offered the post of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) vice chancellor to BJP leader Subramanian Swamy, but he has put some conditions before accepting the coveted post.

It is learnt that HRD Minister Smriti Irani spoke to Dr Swamy about the offer. However, there was no official communication from the Ministry.

As per the rules, a panel of names selected by the committee is sent to the President (who is Visitor of the central varsities) by the HRD Ministry before the announcement of the new vice chancellor.

What ails our engineers?

http://www.thestatesman.com/news/supplements/what-ails-our-engineers/92189.html

Akash (name changed) is an engineering graduate from one of the top private universities in the country but even a year after obtaining his engineering degree, he works as a call centre executive for a multinational firm at night and prepares for civil service examinations during the day. His only hope is to crack the UPSC examination and bring a smile back to his parents' face. He says, "I last saw that smile on my parents' face when I made it to an engineering college but little did I or they know that it was nothing to rejoice." But how did the world turn upside down?

Making it to a top engineering college is after all a thing to rejoice, most would think. And then graduating successfully with the degree is like mission accomplished, or is it the other way round? For Akash, like several others, the destination to an engineering college was pre-defined. Coming from an average middle class family in Bihar, he completed his schooling from Muzzafarpur and then travelled to Patna for IIT-JEE coaching during his high school (plus-2). It is worth noting that Akash, like most of his other friends attending the coaching, did not go to a regular school for Plus-2 but either attended an open school or managed the required attendance criteria through "jugaad" (manipulation), a phenomenon openly prevalent in most parts of our education sector. During the two years that followed, Akash attended coaching classes regularly in Boring Road, Patna, but visited his school, back in Muzzafarpur, only during the examinations. It is not that the two years were spent only in cramming up physics lessons or solving equations, he recalls, "The first few weeks were fine everybody was studying with full enthusiasm and then gradually somehow we began losing sight. Movies after classes became an almost regular affair and it was during those days that I first tasted beer, something that has stuck to me till now."

The two years, however, passed faster than he had thought and like many of his other friends he was unable to make it to the prestigious IITs or even NITs. It was then that they came in contact with a local agent, who promised them admission to any of the top private colleges through donations. That was it. The family, hoping to soon have an engineer at home, set forth on the astounding mission. Akash spent the next four years of his life in the greater Noida region, studying engineering in a private university that he had managed to get into. His academic fees were, however, financed by a nationalised bank under the education loan scheme. Four years later, Akash failed to land any job and the pressure to pay off loans compelled him to opt for the call centre. "It was not that I could not get any of the jobs, there were some options but they were way below my qualifications

and even after working for 10 to 12 hours a day, they were willing to pay me around Rs 10,000. Imagine, I spent more than Rs 10 lakh to earn Rs 10,000 per month," he concluded.

Akash is not alone. When I met him the second time outside his office for some clarifications, he introduced me to two of his colleagues, who were his seniors in the same college. Akash also said a considerable chunk of the call centre executives were engineering graduates and that there were others too opting for odd jobs like typing for a clerk, preparing solved books of the past year question papers, so on and so forth. The highly-expensive engineering courses of most of these students were funded through education loans and they are now paying their wages for it.

The curriculum

The course curriculum in most of the engineering institutions is generally theoretical in nature and, therefore, students fail to become aware of the applications of the theories in the industry. The lack of interaction between academic institutions and industries is clearly visible in the programmes and the content of these courses. "Few, if any, structural changes have occurred in the curriculum although rapid developments in the field of Science and Technology is an everyday affair now. Why then are these courses not modified or their structures reshaped in accordance with the current scenario? It is equally sad to note that several new branches of engineering have been introduced but their basic structure is still in the traditional pattern," said Dilip Mahato, a professor of Physics from Delhi University.

Moreover, the institutions mostly follow the traditional method of teaching giving little thought to the fact that information nowadays is readily available on the Net and thus students would not get interested unless they get something extra by attending classes. "It is more of content delivery than knowledge delivery. The assignments given quite often are routine and do not involve any research or innovation. It is a great challenge to motivate and attract us to serious learning. Moreover, the evaluation system has not been made robust enough to check the knowledge level of the students," said Amit, a final year engineering student from Amity University.

Impact of IT sector

The emergence of the IT sector has also affected the quality of graduates in other traditional engineering disciplines. Knowing that it is easy to get a job with a high salary in the IT sector, students from other disciplines also take as many IT- related courses as possible in electives and do not give much importance to their discipline subjects. "Even during summer vacations some of them take coaching in IT-related courses. In the process we produce half-baked engineers, neither good in their own disciplines nor in IT. In addition, over-dependence on software packages in some of the core discipline courses rather than on concepts has led to poor understanding of the subjects. Moreover, the emphasis on soft skills during campus interviews has created a wrong notion among students. They give too much importance on the development of soft skills and ignore the subjects of their disciplines. It seems employers have also accepted the fact that students with soft skills can be trained in the industry and thus do not expect a high level of knowledge in discipline subjects," noted A K Sarkar, senior professor, department of civil engineering, BITS Pilani. So what is the way forward?

"An all out effort is needed to produce readily-employable technical manpower in the country," concluded Prof Sarkar. "The improvement of infrastructure, redesigning of curricula, improvement of teaching-learning methods and attracting well-qualified teachers are only a few steps that could be initiated by individual institutions. The main challenge is to create an academic environment and education system that promote and ensure learning. However, there are many external and societal factors that need to be addressed. The process is quite challenging, but not impossible to achieve with honest effort."

Quality vs quantity

A 2012 report raises serious questions on the quality of engineers that our so- called top institutes produce year after year. According to this three-year-old report, over one-third engineers do not possess mathematical skills needed in day-to-day life for doing simple transactions, counting and arranging. In other words, they have a weak understanding of concepts as elementary as decimals, powers, operations, ratio, fractions and the ability to apply these concepts to real-world problems. The study, released by Aspiring Minds, is based on the results of more than 55,000 students from over 250 engineering institutes, who took the AMCAT test. The engineers had graduated in 2011. Aspiring Minds, started by MIT alumnus Varun Aggarwal and IIT-Delhi graduate Himanshu Aggarwal in 2008, devised these standardised tests, whose test scores are used by top companies to recruit freshers. Almost 30,000 students take this test every month.

Raising serious questions about the quality of education in schools and engineering institutes, the study states, "These skills are required in all engineering and analytics jobs in the knowledge-based industry. For instance, an engineer, who cannot multiply/divide decimal numbers (the total being an alarming 42 per cent) would face difficulty in doing basic engineering calculations."

The report also raises concern over the language skills of fresh engineering graduates. Given the importance accorded to a candidate’s fluency in English during the interview process, the report states that a sizeable chunk of the engineers fail to impress the recruiters since they don't have the "English comprehension skills to understand engineering school curriculum".

"Twenty-five to 35 per cent engineers cannot comprehend English usage even in day-to-day conversations. Since engineering education is in English, this is a key concern for colleges, as such a lack inhibits students from grasping concepts in other subject areas as well," the report states. To illustrate the weak vocabulary, the study states that more than half the number of students did not understand words such as absurd, generic, cease and adamant, among others. It's probably not surprising why less than 25 per cent of the engineers joining the workforce every year are seen as unemployable by the industry. Since there has not been any major shift in the curricula of our institutions in the past three years, the findings of this report still holds significance.