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IIT directors' selection process to be reviewed

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New Delhi: The IIT Council meeting next Wednesday will review the appointment process of IIT directors, take a final call on stand-off with UGC on nomenclature of degrees and also see how best to tweak the 20 percentile criterion in advanced JEE.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet this week will take up HRD

ministry's proposal to make US mentor for the proposed IIT in Goa. The US will help the new institute in areas of research, creation of infrastructure, faculty exchange and other related issues. The agreement will be signed during the PM's visit to the US later this month. Sources said the PMO is very keen for this agreement though land is still to be acquired. The

Goa government had offered 60 acres of land that was found inadequate by the ministry. As for the council meeting, sources said, appointment process underwent a slight change in the last few years. It was felt that directors who have performed well should be given another term.

For the full report, log on to www.timesofindia.com

IIT-Delhi to bail out Andhra Pradesh weavers

VISAKHAPATNAM: In what can bring hope and cheer to 20,000-odd poor weaver families of coastal AP, IIT Delhi's department of textile technology will collaborate with the community to bring in improved weaving machinery and modified loom designs that will protect the health of workers through its innovative ergonomics.

Senior faculty members from the textile department recently visited and interacted with the handloom weavers at Chirala in the Prakasam district. They will submit a report to the ministry of textiles on this collaborative project.

At present, poor weavers from the area are struggling with financial and health problems, which they say need to be addressed at the earliest. Their monthly income ranges from Rs 3,500 to Rs 7,000 depending on the type of loom (jacquard or chain dobby) used.

Elaborating on the health issues, B Govardhana Rao, technical superintendent, Weavers Service Centre, Vijayawada said, "Due to the use of pit-looms, cotton fibre easily gets into the respiratory system often causing asthma. These looms need to be raised to the floor level. Again the commonly used jacquard looms are too heavy to operate and many of the weavers have contracted tuberculosis. Continuously working on looms for 14 to 16 hours a day has led to spine and back aches, especially among women. The yarn sizing system needs to be modified as well."

Mohan Rao of Rastriya Chenetha Jana Samakhya said already poor weavers of coastal Andhra have been suffering from various health problems such as asthma, tuberculosis, and spine and back aches due to unscientific designs of pit-looms and heavy jacquard looms. "On top of it, cooperative societies, especially in the Krishna district, aren't running properly, particularly after state bifurcation. There's a dearth of funds to purchase fabric and procure materials. Lack of government support for weavers and middlemen have made matters worse. Weavers are forced to depend on private market. Some of them are quitting their traditional profession and joining masonry and such other works."

Samrat Mukhopadhyay, associate professor, department of textile, IIT-Delhi, who inspected the weavers' colony in

Prakasam district, said, "Based on our observation and interaction with the weavers, we will submit a report to the ministry of textiles. The collaborating team consists of textile experts and mechanical engineers."

About improving handloom technology, he pointed out that a majority of problems in this sector relate to heavy and repetitive forces, work posture, respiratory problems and environmental conditions in which the weavers work. One major intervention which the weavers sought was a change in the design of the weaving machinery and change in ergonomics so that they can continue work for long hours.

"One major objective of the project is to work on new designs to investigate how manual forces exerted during lifting and picking can be reduced. That will imply modifications in the loom design. The other objective will be to work on better ergonomics taking care of the postures," said Prof Mukhopadhyay.

Plagiarism charge on IIT teacher, HRD probe ordered

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New Delhi: Indian Institute of Information Technology teacher Vijaishree Tewari, daughter of Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Pramod Tewari, is caught in a plagiarism row with the HRD ministry setting up a one-man fact-finding panel to probe the allegations against her.

Former IIT, Kharagpur director KL Chopra has been asked to submit the report within a month.

It is alleged that Tewari co-authored an article 'Public Distribution System in India: The Problems and Dimensions' which was uploaded on Social Science Research Network (SSRN) website. The article is alleged to have been plagiarized from a report — Public Distribution System of Essential Commodities as a Social Safety Net: A Study of the District of Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh — submitted by Bhaskar Majumdar to the Planning Commission. The panel had financed the study. The article, authored by Tewari and others, lifts verbatim big chunks from Majumdar's paper, especially while profiling Allahabad and the sample size.

The article, co-authored by Tewari, was actually a project report by four of her students. Tewari and her colleague Madhvendra Mishra supervised these students for MBA degree from IIT, Allahabad. Later, the report appeared as an article in SSRN.

Tewari outrightly denies the allegations. She says, "I have been told about the fact-finding inquiry. I have done nothing wrong. The project report was done by students." Tewari says the complaint is "motivated". She says the article carried the name of her four students as well as Mishra.

However, Tewari does not explain why she referred the SSRN article in appraisal information form of faculty members. In fact, the article is even mentioned as achievement in IIT's annual report for 2010-11.

Chopra will go to Allahabad soon to conduct the inquiry. Tewari says HRD ministry is not to be blamed as it is trying to find out the truth.

Times of India ND 19/09/2014 P-10

Ranking matters

Indian or international, quality is the litmus test

THE quality of education in India has always been a matter of great concern. Be it the President of India or the former Prime Minister or other dignitaries, all have repeatedly reiterated what has by now become a truism of our education system. Without a doubt, quality has not kept pace with the quantitative expansion of the Indian education system. To monitor the quality and performance of Indian universities annually, Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Smriti Irani has now proposed the idea of a national ranking system. Indeed, bearing in mind the disheartening faring of the Indian universities in international rankings, what with none of them finding a place in the top 200 universities in the world, perhaps this could be the way forward.

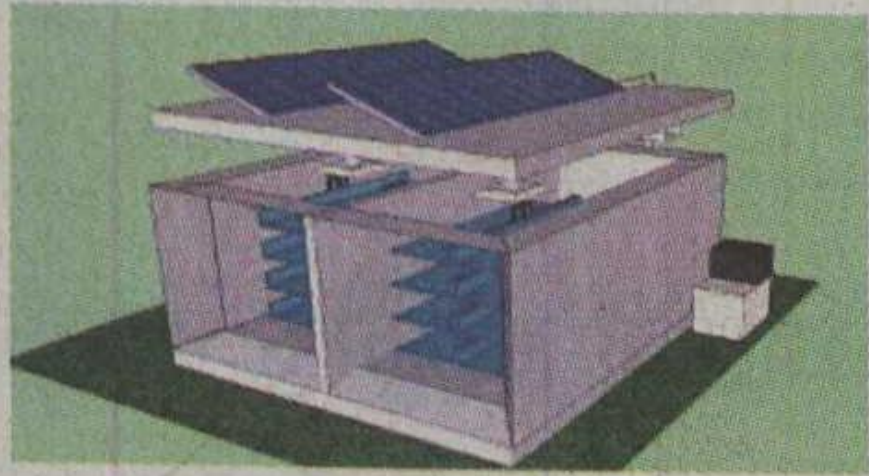
While we are free to dismiss international rankings as irrelevant to our system, there is no denying the inertia that plagues our higher education sector. It's precisely to check this that the recommendations of the "Yash Pal Committee to advise on renovation and rejuvenation of higher education in India" were taken seriously. In order to ensure academic meritocracy, accreditation, an international practice that assures quality, was made mandatory for all higher educational institutions by the UGC. But the poor progress made on this front makes one wonder whether the proposed ranking system would deliver, let alone provide the much-needed cutting edge to our educational institutions.

Amidst the gloomy scenario, however, the silver lining is the news that India is emerging as the least expensive destination for education for foreign students. If only quality were to match the economic advantage that Indian universities offer, education could become a key catalyst in India's economic growth. While India might be en route its goal of universal access to elementary education, it can become a knowledge hub only if education imparted at all levels is truly world class. Sadly, as things exist, adverse learning outcomes only decelerate the wheels of economic growth. The Indian education system has to ensure quality to make the most of its demographic dividend.

Rashtriya Sahara ND 19/09/2014 P-16

पेश है बहुत कम लागत का सौर चालित कोल्ड स्टोरेज आईआईटी के छात्रों ने किया है विकसित

कोलकाता। आईआईटी के युवा इंजीनियरों ने कृषि उत्पादों को बेकार होने से बचाने के लिए किफायती समाधान के तौर पर एक अनूठा सौर चालित कोल्ड स्टोरेज तंत्र विकसित किया है और इसे चलाने की लागत करीब-करीब शून्य है।



मैकेनिकल इंजीनियरिंग के छात्र विवेक पांडेय और उनकी टीम ने आईआईटी खड़गपुर के 'साइंस एंड टेक्नोलॉजी इंटरप्रेन्योरशिप पार्क' (एसटीईपी) में विकसित माइक्रो कोल्ड स्टोरेज तंत्र का कर्नाटक के एक खेत में सफलतापूर्वक परीक्षण किया है। पांडेय ने कहा, 'दुनिया भर में अपनी तरह का यह पहला उत्पाद है क्योंकि इसमें किसानों को इसे चलाने के लिए कोई खर्च नहीं करना पड़ता है और स्वच्छ तथा सतत तकनीक पर 12 महीने काम करता है। हमने उत्पाद में इस्तेमाल तकनीक के वास्ते चार पेटेंट के लिए आवेदन कर दिया है।'

नियमित ठंडा करने के साथ अनोखे थर्मल स्टोरेज विधि का प्रयोग करते हुए माइक्रो कोल्ड स्टोरेज 2.5 केडब्लू -3.5 केडब्लू सोलर पैनल के जरिए कृषि उत्पादों की आयु को बढ़ा देता है। उन्होंने कहा कि पैदा बिजली को सीधे कंप्रेसर पर भेजा जाता है जो ठंड की मांग के हिसाब से तालमेल बिठाकर अपनी गति तय करता है। बैटरी के स्थान पर तंत्र में थर्मल स्टोरेज यूनिट है जो बादल छाए रहने या बारिश होने की वजह से सूरज नहीं निकलने की स्थिति में 36 घंटे के लिए बिजली संग्रह कर सकता है। (भाषा)

Few elite institutions mask Indian job-skills problems

Only 25% of the adult workforce qualified enough to be hired

SOUMYA GUPTA

Bloomberg

AFTER a failed attempt at making it to the elite Indian Institute of Technology, Mudassir Hussain is giving it another go at the college seen as a ticket to a lucrative job in the US. The 17-year-old is one of the 1.4 million aspirants who take a shot every year at these state colleges considered the Holy Grail of Indian higher education.

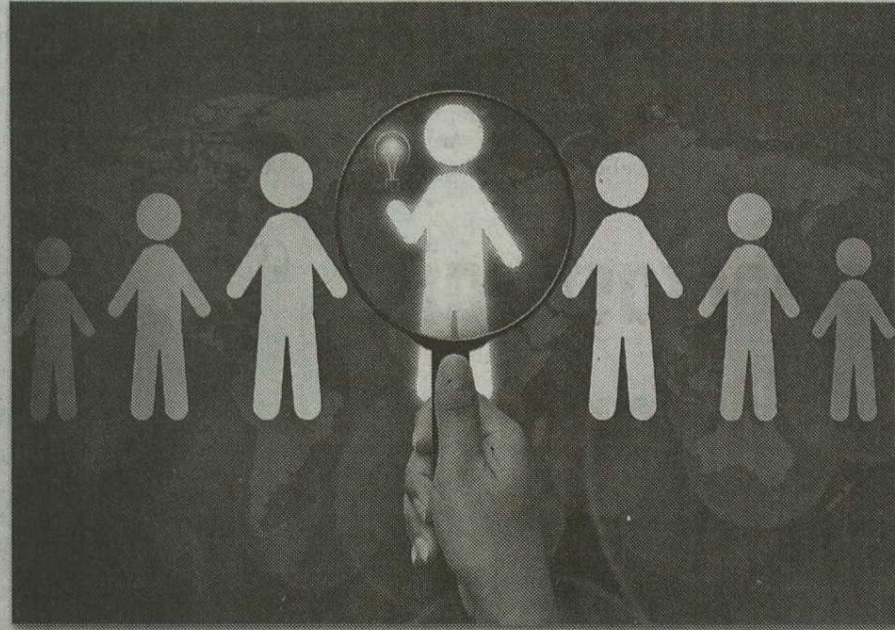
Less than one per cent of them succeed. A majority of the rest and 16.9 million more settle for lesser known schools, with many facing bleak prospects after graduation or even unemployment.

The fame of the top institutes that have groomed Google's Sundar Pichai and RBI governor Raghuram Rajan only masks the weakness of India's education system, which dishes out diplomas that don't match industry needs.

Prime minister Narendra Modi, who won a decisive mandate in May with his pledge to create jobs, is seeking to fix that as the lowest labour productivity among Asia's biggest economies threatens to derail his development agenda.

Modi's government aims to create 500 million skilled workers, more than the population of the US and Mexico combined, by 2022, according to the labour ministry. He plans to spend Rs 1 trillion (\$16.4 billion) over the next 5 years to fund the initiatives.

There's excess supply of graduates and that is a huge issue, said Himanshu Kapania, managing director of Idea Cellular, a mobile



DEMOGRAPHIC ISSUE: India is projected to have the world's youngest population by 2020, with 64 per cent of the people in the working-age group

carrier controlled by billionaire Kumar Mangalam Birla. "We have engineers to maintain and guard fibre optic cables, a job meant for ordinary technicians.

In a nation of 1.2 billion, where the World Bank says more than 800 million live on less than \$2 a day, only the privileged with the right connections or the affluent can afford quality education. For the rest, it is government- or municipality-funded primary, elementary and secondary schools with poor infrastructure.

About 49 per cent of Indian children drop out of school before finishing 10th grade, according to data from United Nations Children's Fund, versus 7 per cent before the 12th grade in the US, according to US government data.

Only about a quarter of

the adult workforce is qualified enough to be hired at all even as the almost \$1.9 trillion economy needs 700 million skilled workers over eight years, according to a report prepared by People-Strong, a human resources consultant based in Gurgaon near New Delhi, in association with the Confederation of Indian Industry.

About half of the 1.5 million engineers Indian colleges produce every year are unemployable, the report said, citing a sample survey.

The starting income of a fresh desktop engineer is barely about 20 per cent more than an unskilled electrician's, and the gap may not diverge much even after eight years, according to TeamLease Services, a Bangalore-based staffing consultant.

Modi is overhauling the

nation's various skills development agencies, bringing them under one umbrella organisation and making it easier for factories to hire and fix pay for interns. He is also drumming up investor interest overseas to help create manufacturing jobs at home.

Modi's plans include training 10 million rural students for jobs in information technology, and providing electronic textbooks for students.

India is projected to have the world's youngest population by 2020, with 64 per cent of the people in the working-age group, spurring optimism among policy makers that the country will reap a demographic dividend. While that is good news, labour productivity data tell a different story.

Statesman ND 19/09/2014 P-6

UGC STEPS BACK AS JAYA LETTER SNAPS AT MODI

UGC COMPELLED TO PULL OUT CIRCULAR ON HINDI AS KEY LANGUAGE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Chennai, 18 September

Under attack from Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalithaa and political parties in the state, the UGC today decided to withdraw its controversial circular directing universities to teach Hindi as one of the primary languages in undergraduate courses.

The University Grants Commission will now issue a revised circular on the subject tomorrow, UGC Chairman Ved Prakash said today, hours after Jayalithaa wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi opposing "imposition" of Hindi and that the directive was

"not binding" on the state chief minister Jayalithaa said the move, amounting to "imposing Hindi", had been initiated during the previous government. She said the two institutions - Anna University and Alagappa University - had received the circular on September 16, 2014 where it was stated that Hindi be taught as a primary language along with English in undergraduate courses, besides following it in law and commerce streams also.

She said this decision had been taken at the meeting of the Kendriya Hindi Samiti (National Hindi Council) on July 28, 2011 under then Prime Minister

Manmohan Singh.

The Council then said that students in Gujarat either graduated studying English or Hindi, thus resulting in lack of translation skills in Central departments and UGC had been asked to ensure Hindi was also taught along with English, she said in a statement here. "From this, it is clear that the effort to impose Hindi basically stemmed from the decisions taken in this July 28, 2011 meeting of the Kendriya Hindi Samiti," she said.

Jayalithaa also questioned why DMK, then a part of the Congress-led UPA, remained silent, though it opposed the move

now. She said her party's stand was consistent and Hindi should not be imposed on non-Hindi speaking states. The Official Languages Act, 1963, made it clear that Hindi should not be imposed on states not speaking the language, while the communication between Centre and such states, classified as 'Zone C', should only be in English.

"Therefore, the UGC circular will not at all apply to universities in Tamil Nadu," she said. At a time when she raised demands like Tamil being made official language and being accorded the same status in Madras High Court, such a directive is unacceptable.

Financial Express ND 19/09/2014 P-6

PAY SCHOOL

Higher pay for teachers doesn't lead to better learning outcomes, studies find



While activists have often claimed that India's spending on education, including remuneration for teachers, must increase for learning outcomes to get better, two new studies cited in *The Economist* say that teachers' salaries and teacher-to-pupil ratio could have little bearing on learning levels. GEMS Education Solutions, a consultancy, looks at the relationship between spending and outcomes in 30 rich and developing nations while the OECD's annual *Education at a Glance* report, examines school financing's impact on the learning levels.

The GEMS study throws up some interesting results—while former Soviet bloc nations Czech Republic and Hungary spend very efficiently, i.e., for the money they spend, they have high returns in term of learning levels, the US's expensive school system offers much sub-par efficiency and disappointing outcomes. Similarly, though average teacher salaries are much higher in Switzerland than in Finland—which was ranked by OECD-run PISA as the country with best learning outcomes for students—basic reading and science are areas in which the Alpine nation lags badly. Coming to student-teacher ratios, Finland and South Korea, again another country rated high by PISA, have more number of students per teacher but outperform France and Norway, which have fewer pupils per teacher. Outcomes register an impact only when the ratio is too high, like in the case of Brazil and Chile. The findings counter the argument on increasing spending on overheads like teachers' pay and strength. But hiring high-quality teachers—a factor that PISA researchers say could influence learning the most—would also mean offering competitive salaries. So, while spending is not likely to directly impact the outcomes in the sector, it certainly does facilitate factors that do.

IIT Kharagpur students to learn from Swami Vivekananda ideals

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/iit-kharagpur-students-to-learn-from-swami-vivekananda-ideals/articleshow/42888709.cms>

KOLKATA: To promote the ideals of nineteenth century philosopher-saint Swami Vivekananda among young technocrats, IIT Kharagpur will soon start a Vivekananda Center for Human Excellence at its campus.

To be built on a 2 acre plot, it will promote holistic education with focus on the three-staged material, social and normic aspects of life as envisioned by Vivekananda.

IIT officials said the centre aims to fulfill Vivekananda's vision of having a right mix of modern education drawn from the best western ideals with the goal of total development of human personality as envisioned by the eastern sages.

IIT Kharagpur director Partha Pratim Chakrabarti said Vivekananda is a youth ideal and hence the centre is being named after him to honour his spirit and inculcate it among the youth.

He said that in addition to regular academic curricula there is a need for leadership and human excellence.

As a human excellence and leadership centre there will be regular lectures and discourses on thought leadership.

By focusing on art, architecture, philosophy and cultural heritage it would also provide for holistic development of students, they said.

The centre would be built with funds of Rs 15 crore from the union ministry of human resource development, officials said.

IIT alumnus Vijay Kumar has contributed Rs 1 crore for the project, the construction of which is expected to start from next year.