

Newspaper Clips

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HT Lucknow

IIT-Kanpur appoints overseas ambassador in US

Vanita Srivastava

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NEW DELHI: Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur has appointed its alumnus Sanjeev Khosla mainly to promote the academic interest of the institute abroad, particularly in the US.

Khosla, who has been appointed for three years, will work closely with Dean of Faculty Affairs and other senior IIT-K officials to support faculty recruitment, promote research and development, and arrange overseas events. He will also raise financial resources and liaise with donors to the institute and promote all other aspects of academic interest for enhancing the international image of IIT Kanpur.

Khosla is involved in global commodities trading since the early '90s and while his main role has been as a trader, his specialisation has been complex derivatives structuring, hedging and trading especially in energy.

IIT Kanpur has recently established its overseas office in New York, essentially to tap academic talent for faculty recruitment.

HT Mumbai

Look beyond university rankings

STUDY ABROAD



KIMBERLY DIXIT

A couple of weeks ago, the US News and World Report released their college rankings for 2014. Most of the media coverage of this dubious event has concluded that not much has changed, especially among the top 10 colleges. This is important to Indian students for whom US News is sometimes treated as a sacred text. Indian applicants' focus is so narrowed on the top 10 (maybe 20) ranked colleges that it's almost impossible to convince them to consider applying anywhere else. This is often blamed on a 'status conscious' or 'brand-obsessed' perspective. While I think this tendency is exaggerated, I offer some reasons why even more supposed practical reasons for sticking with the top 20 are unfounded.

The most obvious reason for strict adherence to college rankings is understandable – education abroad is expensive and families want a solid return on their investment. A student should attend a college where her earning potential after college is the highest. But when it comes to jobs, the top colleges are not necessarily the darlings of industry. In fact in a recent column by Alison Singh, a US-based lawyer and writer, she cited a Wall Street Journal study in which recruiters were asked which colleges prepare students best for satisfying, well-paid jobs with growth potential. Most of the colleges on the list were large public institutions and Cornell was the only US News top 20 college included (it should be noted that India's favorite non-top 20 made it to the list — Carnegie Mellon).

Besides return on investment, Indian applicants also believe it is important to study at top 20 ranked US News colleges, because it will ease their way into top graduate programmes such



■ In case of jobs, the top colleges are not necessarily the darlings of the industry. Many large public institutions also feature on the list of colleges that help students get satisfying, well-paid jobs.

as Harvard Business School or Yale Law or Duke Medicine or Stanford Engineering. But widely available data for these graduate programmes shows that they admit students with undergraduate degrees from a broad range of colleges. In fact if you compare rankings to rankings, Business Week's top 20 MBA feeder school rankings and US News's top 20 national universities have only 5 colleges in common (MIT, Penn, Wash U, Cornell, Notre Dame). It seems attending Boston College makes you more likely to end up in business school than if you go to Harvard (according to these rankings). That is, obviously not to say that you cannot go to business school if you attend Harvard, rather that you are just as likely to attend a great business school if you attend a lower-ranked college.

Of course, I'm being hard on the applicants that are stuck on

EVERY ONE OF THE 2,000+ FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES IN THE US HAS A UNIQUE ETHOS, CULTURE AND MISSION. APPLICANTS SHOULD CHOOSE BASED ON WHETHER THESE FEATURES FIT WHAT THEY WANT

the top 20. But I don't mean to be, I mean to make the broader point that sticking to any list (even if it the top 100) is a mistake when it comes to applying to college, especially in the US. Every one of the 2,000+ four-year colleges in the US is unique and has a special ethos, culture and mission. I wish that each applicant would choose their college based on where these features fit into

they want from their college experience, rather than what they think (based on rankings) the college will do for them.

I have seen students go to Ivy League colleges and get very little out of it as they pined for home and longed to once again be a big fish in a small pond. And I have seen students go to The University of Richmond and take advantage of every opportunity presented to them, build their résumés through service and extracurricular learning and take hold of opportunities they could have never imagined. At the end of four years, whose résumé will impress a recruiter? It's not what you get out of college that makes you who you are after four years; it's what you put in.

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A long road ahead

WORK IN PROGRESS Indian institutes are taking stock of why they have slipped further in world university rankings. A look at their plans for reform, and areas that need change

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When Rohan Nisar graduated with an engineering degree in 2010 from the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi (IIT-D), he decided to study abroad for his master's course. "I chose a programme at the London Business School instead of one in India, as their curriculum seemed more practical."

"Doctorate degrees abroad are well-organised and resourced, with qualitative research outcome, and therefore attract Indian students," says Anindya Sen, dean of academics, IIM-Calcutta.

Earlier this month, Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) from the UK, one of the foremost global education ranking companies, released its list of the top 200 universities in the world for 2013, with no Indian institutes on the list. IIT-Delhi ranked 222, down from 212 in 2012, and IIT Bombay even lower, at 233, down from 227 in 2012.

The University of Mumbai ranked number 601, almost at the end of the list. Similarly, the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM-A), slipped eight places this year, and ranked 19th in the UK's Financial Times rankings.

This drop in rankings has raised serious concern among the academic fraternity, which is carefully analysing

the quality and credibility of the Indian education system.

IN OVERHAUL MODE

To evaluate dismal QS rankings, the ministry of education met with the IITs last week, to decide upon measures for improvement.

At the meeting, they decided that each IIT director will receive an annual performance appraisal, based on an evaluation by a board of governors.

A team of IIT officials also met with the QS team to understand where they fell behind. "Maintaining an ideal teacher-student ratio is a challenge, and one of the QS parameters," says RK Shevgaonkar, director of IIT-Delhi, who was part of the IIT team. "Some IITs failed to provide QS with updated

data, and therefore, they used outdated figures to evaluate our performance."

To address the widening student-teacher ratio, the IITs have decided to increase the number of PhD candidates. Now, they will admit third-year graduates from centrally funded technical institutes (CFTIs) such as the National Institutes of Technology; if they have a cumulative grade point average of over 7.0. Until now, these students were admitted to PhD programmes only after an additional exam, the Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering (GATE). "This will help improve the number of quality faculty at our institutes, since PhD students often become professors," says Shevgaonkar.

REASONS FOR LOW RANKINGS

1. Cash-strapped institutes: Colleges say that the higher education sector needs much more funding and investment. "Indians who go abroad perform well there and serve the global economy. Why is it that they cannot perform in their own country?" asks Ashok Wadia, principal, Jai Hind College. "They don't have enough resources here, so improvement is difficult."

However, this isn't entirely the government's fault, say experts. "The government has a limited budget anyway. Institutes like ours need to find ways ourselves to fund research, within our limits," says Devang Khakhar, director, IIT-Bombay.

2. Sub-par curriculum and faculty: "There is no incentive to be a professor in India. High quality work is not recognised or rewarded by the system," says Wadia. "Students who want to eventually become teachers are discouraged because of this."

Experts say the teaching style and curriculum at Indian institutes need to be made more contemporary, and cater to futuristic needs. "Curricula should be updated regularly," says Pratibha Jain, an education counsellor.

3. Politics in education: Experts say that reservation in the education sector, with respect to both student and faculty appointments affects the quality of education.

"To even qualify as a professor or reader, the candidate should have published high-quality research. But,

ALSO IN THE TOP 200

- 24 National University of Singapore
- 26 University of Hong Kong
- 39 The Chinese University of Hong Kong
- 60 Korea Advanced Institute of Science & Technology, South Korea
- 75 Tohoku University, Japan
- 127 Universidade De Sao Paulo, Brazil

SOURCE: QUACQUARELLI SYMONDS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

If reserved candidates are allowed leeway here, it's not possible to hold others accountable. This is eating up our system," says Abhay Petha, head of economics department in the University of Mumbai.

4. Little industry participation: Corporates should invest in the education sector, say academics. "Indian industrialists are donating hefty sums to western universities, but aren't doing anything for Indian colleges," says Sen.

"This is one of the biggest reasons why foreign students are more employable than Indian students," says Fraser Mascarenhas, principal, St Xavier's College. "Industry needs to show faith in our own students, and help produce high-quality scholars."

REALITY CHECK

Experts say that while the ranking system should not be totally discounted, it may not be fair to club Indian colleges with the world's best on certain parameters used, which are beyond India's current capacity.

"Some parameters such as the institute's international students and faculty numbers don't apply to Indian colleges currently, which brings down our rating," says Mascarenhas.

Moreover, Indian colleges need to cater to students who are at a different level than western students. "Few countries have to cater to a whole generation of first-time learners. It will, therefore, take time to reach at par with other countries," says Petha.

QS PARAMETERS

The QS board judges colleges on:

- Academic reputation
- Employer reputation
- Faculty-student ratio
- Citations per faculty (if the quality of faculty research is found to be sub-standard, that institute will not feature on this list)
- International faculty
- International students

RADIO GAGA

Students of IIT-Bombay promote indie music through their online radio; website has a repertoire of over 850 artistes and 2,500 songs

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Unlike the west, online radio stations for independent music caught on in India fairly late in the day. And although there are only a handful of websites that play alternative genres — which, in India, may mean anything that is non-Bollywood — one initiative stands out. BC Radio (www.bcradio.in) is the brainchild of IIT-Bombay students who felt a need to promote original talent — both established and upcoming.

“It started out with three guys discussing how there were hardly any platforms for sharing music. Since we were actively part of Mood-Indigo (IIT-B’s annual cultural festival), we were in contact with many bands. And that’s how we roped in some big names, such as Parikrama and Pentagram, to support us by contributing their music,” says Saksham Jain, a student of metallurgy and material science, IIT-B, who handles artiste management and public relations for BC Radio.

The initiative started with a repertoire of 100 bands and now has more than 850 artistes and around 2,500 songs in its catalogue.



Pentagram is one of the veteran acts in BC Radio’s music catalogue

PHOTO: NAADRO FACEBOOK PAGE



BC Radio also features music by Sri Lankan percussion ensemble, Naadro, among many other Indian artistes

The website has also sorted their vast range of music into genre-based categories. “We are putting together our mobile app too,” Jain informs.

Besides providing an online platform to artistes, BC Radio also helps upcoming bands in

getting a chance to perform at festivals. “We have tied up with Sea Rock (annual rock competition at BITS-Pilani Goa) and Mood-I. We also assist bands with registrations for both,” adds Jain, who is part of the four-member

OTHER ONLINE RADIO PLATFORMS FOR INDIE MUSIC:

- **Radio Flote** (www.radioflote.com): Has a huge range of music, again classified by genre.
- **Radio City Freedom**: Features songs by over 400 artistes.
- **Monkey Radio** (www.monkeyradio.in): Provides news as well as original music by Indian artistes.

team that currently handles the operations of the project. Apart from artiste management and PR, the three other lines of responsibilities comprise business development, web and design, each of which is handled by one student.

Ask him how challenging it is to maintain the website while juggling studies, and he says, “It is very time-consuming but after being at it for some time now, we can see that it has made a difference.”

Do we need approval?

Students of Indian IIMs are managing the affairs of top MNCs and proven themselves to be at par with any foreign graduates.

By Ashwani Mahajan

International ranking agency 'Quacquarelli Symonds' (QS) has recently published a list of top ranked 200 universities globally, which does not include even one university from India. A university from Singapore, namely National University of Singapore (NSU) comes in the 24th position in this list. Interestingly, most of the universities included in this list are from the USA and Europe.

However, in the list of top 200 Asian universities, four Indian universities find place. In case of other institutions 38th position goes to IIT Delhi. IIT Mumbai, IIT Madras, IIT Kanpur, IIT Kharagpur and IIT Roorkee are at 39th, 49th, 51st, 58th, and 66th positions respectively. University of Delhi comes in 80th position, while other three universities --Universities of Mumbai, Kolkata and Pune are at 140th, 143rd and 181st positions respectively.

If we accept these rankings, it puts a question mark on the legitimacy of top institutions and universities in the country. It is notable that there has been a significant development in the field of education after independence. Today there are more than 400 universities and 20,000 institutions of higher education in the country, where more than seven lakh teachers are working, imparting education to more than 150 lakh students.

The nation is proud of hosting 17 IITs and 13 IIMs whose products (students) have proven their worth internationally in the fields of science and technology (especially software) and management; ex-students of IIMs are managing big corporate (both in India and abroad). Today Indian doctors and engineers are making India stand apart in these fields. According to All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) in 2006 there were 1,268 engineering colleges, which had increased to 3,346 in 2012. However, it is also a fact that we are not able to absorb all our engineering graduates.

We may agree to the point that despite this huge educational infrastructure a majority of our students do not stand up to expectations. We need to

learn from the world's top universities. But there is no need to be overtly disturbed by the rankings as published in 'QS' report. If somebody wants to examine the level of education of any educational institution, they must look at the international performance of the students of those educational institutions.

Today our doctors are working in large numbers in almost all developed countries, especially in the USA and Europe. Their expertise is well recognised the world over. In the USA more than 40 per cent doctors are from India. Our IT graduates have proven their worth globally in the field of computer software. Students of IIMs are manag-

is deprived of appropriate education facilities.

Commercialisation of education will create further problems in universalisation of education. Therefore, while not discouraging private sector in education, government needs to make investment in education (at all levels). The condition is deteriorating at primary and secondary levels of education. We have failed to create appropriate infrastructure. We may even have to link education to industry, so that skill developed through education could be directly useful for industry. However, we need not obtain certificate from international ranking agencies.

It is fact that there is no system in place for ranking of our universities and education institutions. However there is a bill pending in Parliament with a view to constitute a regulatory authority, in the name and style of 'National Accreditation Regulatory Authority' (NARA). According to this proposed legislation, NARA would be established, task of which would be to regulate accreditation agencies. Each institution of higher education will have to get itself accredited with one of the agencies, which would undertake the task to certify the academic standards of the respective institution.

Our leadership thinks in an extremist fashion, as it has a mindset, that anything foreign is good. They feel that any world level project of skill development can run only by inviting foreign educational institutions, which is merely an illusion. Although a bill to allow foreign universities to set up their institutions in India is still pending in Parliament, the government is trying to allow these universities from back door. Many universities in the developed countries who are unable to sustain themselves due to economic meltdown are dreaming of trying their luck in our country inhabited by nearly 124 crore people. Government of India is giving them a red carpet welcome. This endeavour of the government is not going to benefit the nation.

In fact if the government provides more funds for education, in tune with the global practices and develop educational infrastructure, it may yield better results. It is notable that public spending on education in India is hardly 3.3 per cent of GDP, while it is 5.4 per cent in US, 5.6 per cent in UK and 6 per cent in South Africa. If we want to bring about improvement in our education sector, we can achieve the same, only by coming out of the western mindset.

Top 10 (Global)

Rank	Overall score	University	Country
1	100.0	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	US
2	99.2	Harvard University	US
3	99.0	University of Cambridge	UK
4	98.9	UCL (University College London)	UK
5	98.0	Imperial College London	UK
6	98.7	University of Oxford	UK
7	98.5	Stanford University	US
8	98.4	Yale University	US
9	98.3	University of Toronto	Canada
10	98.2	University of Michigan	US

ing the affairs of top MNCs and proven themselves to be at par with any foreign graduates, if not better.

Chosen few

Even then if international rating agencies put Indian institutes on the second grade position, we can understand that there is a chance of 'bias' or 'design' to malign our educational institutions. Commercialisation of education has increased. In the era of liberalisation and globalisation country is flooded with private sector technical and other educational institutions. Now the government is trying to bring in foreign universities directly or from back door. It is notable that not more than 5 per cent of households have more than Rs 2 lakh of annual income. Therefore benefits of private educational institutions will remain concentrated with only a chosen few. Government today is talking about reaping the demographic dividend, 'thanks' to our youth population. But even today a majority of our youth

IIM-A sees 8 per cent drop in maximum salary package offered

Deepa Nair
Nivedita Ganguly

Mumbai, Sept. 24

The economic slowdown seems to have had an impact even on placements at India's premier B-school, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.

This year, in terms of salary packages for the post-graduate programme, the maximum earning potential for domestic recruitments dropped by eight per cent to Rs 37 lakh. Last year, the figure was about Rs 40 lakh.

The maximum earning potential is the total of the fixed yearly component, one-time cash benefits, maximum possible performance-linked compensation during the first year and all other salary components.

The minimum earning potential, too, fell 13 per cent to Rs 6.5 lakh from Rs 7.5 lakh last year.

In addition, international hiring at IIM-A nosedived 65 per cent. Of the 360



Slowdown hits pay packet

students who were part of the B-school's placement process, only 15 were placed in international locations compared to 42 last year. The maximum earning potential in the salary package for international placements declined to \$150,000 this year from \$166,926 last year.

"More than 130 firms participated in the placement process in 2013, including the laterals (placements for graduates with work experience) process. Among global investment banks, Goldman Sachs was the largest

recruiter, having picked seven students for roles in financial markets as well as quantitative strategy," said IIM-A, in an official statement.

The maximum salary package for domestic placements came from the banking and financial services sector, with a total guaranteed cash payment of Rs 35 lakh. The median for the domestic salary package (mid-point between highest and lowest salary) was Rs 16 lakh this year.

Banking and financial services, consulting and the IT sector companies offered the highest salary packages.

In terms of volumes, the consulting sector offered the maximum number — 114 — of jobs. Boston Consulting Group was the top recruiter, having picked 15 students. Among the new sectors, 27 graduates bagged offers from online services and real estate companies.

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Indians, Chinese keep US B-schools in biz

Hemali Chhappia | tnn

Mumbai: Young graduates from India and China are powering the growth of full-time MBA programmes worldwide. In contrast, the share of working people wanting to pause to pursue an MBA—through online, executive or part-time mode—is plummeting.

These trends emerged in the latest survey of 328 graduate B-schools in 42 nations by Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), which conducts the GMAT. It shows that 31% MBA programmes worldwide received the second most applications from India. Business schools in the US have gained, while those in the Asia-Pacific have witnessed a decline.

Like in the recent past, American B-schools are popular destinations for aspirants from China and India; as they are for male candidates. "There was a noticeable increase in programmes where India was the greatest increase source of talent (24% programmes) compared to last year's survey re-

FULL TIME'S UP, PART TIME DOWN

> 31% MBA programmes globally received second most applications from India

> 1.21 lakh or 36% of all applications came from women for 2013-2014. Year before, 40% were women

> 39% Indians in 2011-12 borrowed money to fund their MBA dream

> 22% received financial grants

sults (14%)," said Michelle Sparkman Renz, director of research communications for GMAC.

Globally, the full-time two-year MBA received about 4.1 applications for each available spot, whereas the full-time one-year programme had around 2.7 candidates vying for every seat.

"In 2008 and 2009, early in the Great Recession, there was impressive growth in the share of full-time MBA programmes showing appli-

cation increases," said Lawrence Rudner, GMAC vice president, research and development. "In 2010 and 2011, there was a decline, but full-time programmes began to rebound in 2012 and look sturdier today." Of all forms, executive MBA—which promises a climb up the corporate ladder—had the most dismal year, with every second college reporting a fall in the application count. The uncertainty of the times, increasing work demands, depleting savings, and fears of the next round of layoffs—all dictated this.

The latest GMAC survey, released globally on Tuesday, revealed that fewer professionals wanted to invest time and energy in further education. A fall in international students once again kept the growth of European business schools lean, with just 38% of full-time one-year MBA programmes witnessing an increase in applications. Close to 54% of European programmes reported a decline in their foreign candidate pool.

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

Women form 36% of applicants

Graduate business schools that participated in the latest Application Trends Survey of the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) reported receiving 1.21 lakh applications from women, which represented 36% of the applicant pool of the 2013-2014 academic year.

In 2012, women had formed 40% of the applicant pool. But this time, their share contracted a little, particularly in professional MBA courses and specialized master's programmes. Only in two programmes was there an increase: master's of accounting programmes got 59% applications from women, up from 56% last year; and the master's programmes in IT management received 45% applications from women, compared with 40% in 2012. TNN

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

40% of students take edu loans

Mumbai: Nearly four in 10 Indian students took loans in 2011-12 to fund his or her MBA dreams, data collated by the Graduate Management Admission Council shows.

Many B-schools came to the rescue of students in this uncertain economy. Twenty-two per cent of Indian aspirants received financial assistance in the form of scholarship or grant. Among the rest, 17% took the help of parents, 10% dug into personal savings and around 13% looked for other options of funding.

More master's in management programmes (87%) offered scholarships than other specialized master's or MBA programmes, although full-time two-year MBA programmes had the highest average percentage of student scholarship recipients (43%) across all programme types. TNN

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

Spinning CDs to clean sewage water

© Wavebreak Media LTD/Wavebreak

Washington: Wondering what to do with your obsolete audio CDs? Researchers have come up with a practical application: they can be used to break down sewage.

"Optical disks are cheap, readily available, and very commonly used," said Din Ping Tsai, a physicist at National Taiwan University. Close to 20 billion disks are already manufactured annually, the researchers noted.

Tsai and his colleagues used the large surface area of optical disks as a platform to grow tiny, upright zinc oxide nanorods about a thousandth the width of a human hair.



USING E-WASTE TO CLEAN UP

Zinc oxide is an inexpensive semiconductor that can function as a photocatalyst, breaking apart organic molecules like the pollutants in sewage when illuminated with UV light.

As the disks are durable and

able to spin quickly, contaminated water that drips onto the device spreads out in a thin film that light can easily pass through, speeding up the degradation. The team's complete water treatment device is approximately one cubic foot in volume. The device also consists of a UV light source and a system that recirculates the water to further break down the pollutants.

The team tested the reactor with a solution of methyl orange dye. After treating a half-litre solution for 60 minutes, they found that over 95% of the contaminants had been broken down. PTI

Moon 100 million years younger than believed?

Kounteya Sinha | TNN

London: Earth's moon may actually be 100 million years younger than what is believed at present. A new analysis announced in London on Monday at the Royal Society shows that the moon is between 4.4 to 4.45 billion years old.

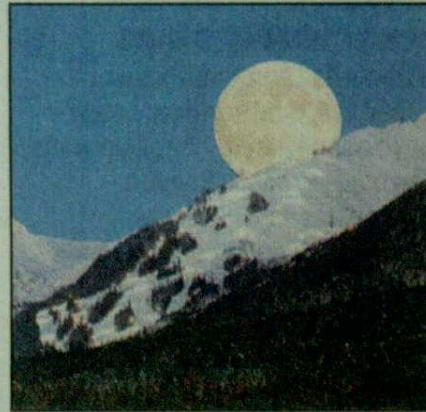
American geochemist Richard Carlson of the Carnegie Institution of Washington studied the age of lunar rocks collected during the Apollo missions using radioactive dating.

"We know that the solar system is 4.568 billion years old. So the Earth may have had two phases of its life — one before the giant impact and another modified by the impact," Carlson said.

The daily and monthly rhythms of the moon have guided timekeepers for thousands of years. Its influence on Earth's cycles, notably tides, has been charted by many cultures. The moon moderates Earth's wobble on its axis, leading to a relatively stable climate over billions of years.

Nasa says the leading theory of the moon's origin is that a Mars-sized body collided with Earth approximately 4.5 bil-

© Randy Brandon/AlaskaStock/Cor



MYTH BUSTER: An American geochemist studied the age of lunar rocks collected during Apollo missions using radioactive dating

lion years ago, and the resulting debris from the impact accumulated to form the moon. The newly formed moon was in a molten state. Within about 100 million years, most of the global "magma ocean" had crystallized, with less-dense rocks floating upward and eventually forming the lunar crust.

Carlson said, "There are several important implications of this late moon formation that have not yet been worked out. For example, if the Earth was already differentiated prior to the impact, would the impact have blown off the primordial atmosphere that formed from this earlier epoch of Earth history?"