

Newspaper Clips

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Thales-IIT Delhi sign MoU for PhD fellowship

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Thales-IIT-Delhi-sign-MoU-for-PhD-fellowship/articleshow/54549519.cms>

New Delhi, Sep 27 (IANS) Defence major Thales and the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi (IIT-Delhi) on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to create a jointly supervised IIT Delhi-CNRS PhD fellowship programme.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Alexandre Ziegler, Ambassador of France to India, said a company communique.

"Through this fellowship programme, Thales and IIT-Delhi intend to facilitate scientific collaboration between Indian and French laboratories and boost industrial research by strengthening industry-academia relations," the communique said.

With its presence in 56 countries, and reported sales of euros 14 billion in 2015, Thales is a global technology leader in the areas of aerospace, transport, defence and security markets.

The Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS/National Centre for Scientific Research) is a public organisation under the French Ministry of Education and Research and is the largest fundamental research organisation in Europe.

Welcoming the MoU, the French envoy said: "France is a country synonymous with creativity and innovation, and is at the forefront of cutting-edge technologies. We are delighted that brilliant Indian students choose to study in France and we wish to welcome many more. The Thales IIT Delhi-CNRS PhD fellowship programme is another testament to the robust scientific cooperation that is such an essential part of the excellent bilateral relations between France and India".

Twelve students fail, told to leave, IIT-Delhi tries to find out why

<http://indianexpress.com/article/education/iit-delhi-students-fail-poor-performance-reasons-3053521/>

Language barrier main reason, but trying to figure out if low attendance also a factor, say IIT authorities.

After 12 IIT-Delhi students were expelled for failing to get a 5 CGPA (cumulative grade point average) out of a maximum of 10 for the second time in a row, the institute is trying to ascertain the reason for their poor performance.

The institute had also held a meeting parent-teacher meeting for the first time last week to apprise parents on the performance of their children.

Last year, nine students were expelled for poor performance. This year, another 400 students from the BTech batch were put on probation because they did not have satisfactory scores.

IIT director V Ramgopal Rao said language barrier is the main reason why most students at the institute failed. He added that most of the struggling students had completed their school education in Hindi.

However, the director did not say how many of the expelled students were from Hindi-medium schools or what their backgrounds were. "We don't interact with each student," he said.

Last year, 73 IIT Roorkee students had faced expulsion for poor scores and ninety per cent of them were from reserved categories. They were given a second chance after protests. Officials at the institute said IIT Delhi is working to avoid a similar situation.

“A majority of students who don’t perform well in the first year suffer because of a language barrier. Many times, even the good students can’t make it. The Joint Entrance Examination for IITs can be taken in both English and Hindi. Many Hindi-medium students come after clearing it but struggle because most of the instruction is in English. We are setting up a support group to help these students,” said Rao.

The group will include staff from the institute’s Hindi Cell, which has been looking only at official communication until now. “Teachers who can teach comfortably in Hindi and students who can pitch in are being identified and their help is being sought,” said Rao.

IIT Delhi has a probation system in place where students with poor scores are assigned teacher mentors who meet the students regularly and discuss any problem that they might be facing. Students who manage to score a shade over a 5 CGPA are usually the ones to be put under probation.

University officials said the Humanities and Social Sciences department has also been roped in to look into why students fall behind, especially in the first year.

The institute has also decided to introduce mandatory biometric attendance for all students to see if there is a link between low attendance and poor performance. In the current system, it is up to a teacher to either not set minimum attendance or to ask for 80 per cent.

“We want to de-link attendance from professors. We are introducing a biometric system for every student for each class. Our final aim to to see if there is a correlation between attendance and performance,” said Rao.

Talking about the parent-teacher meet, Rao said it was for those students who were lagging behind. “Parents need to know how their children are faring and what needs to be done. The interaction was important and several parents turned up,” he said.

IIT-Delhi shines in debate competition

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/chandigarh/education/iit-delhi-shines-in-debate-competition/301379.html>

Agahi, the annual parliamentary debate competition organised by the Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Punjab, has always witnessed huge participation from teams across the country and other SAARC nations. Agahi’16 is now in its sixth edition.

The competition witnessed an overwhelming participation from 34 teams and 9 independent adjudicators, competing for five awards - the best team with a cash prize of Rs 31,000, the runners up with a cash prize of Rs 11,000, the best speaker and the best adjudicator carrying cash prizes of Rs 7,000 each. The most congenial team in the competition is awarded the fifth award- The Spirit of Agahi.

The success of a debate depends substantially on its core adjudicators. Agahi 2016 has had the honour of having Shaurya Upadhyay, Siddhartha Thygarajan and Ira Regmi as its core adjudicators who ensured and aided the smooth functioning of the debate. The RGNUL adjudicator pool consisted of Surabhi Grover, Dhairya Sharma, Raunak Mohta, Kriti Priyadarshini, and Nishtha Shukla.

The debate was spread over three days. The semi-finals brought us a step closer to culmination of Agahi'16 with IIT-Delhi and LCD breaking into the final rounds. IIT-Delhi won the debate and Law College, Dehradun, finished at the second place. Akshita from Punjab Engineering College, Chandigarh, was awarded the best adjudicator. Shrome Khanna was awarded the best speaker. The award for Spirit of Agahi was won by Hidayatullah Law University, Raipur.

The valedictory ceremony of the event was graced by SS Boparai, IAS (retd), former Vice-Chancellor, Punjabi University, Patiala, Punjab and Kirti Chakra Awardee, who was the chief guest for the event. Boparai distributed the prizes among the winners and all participants.

Economic Times ND 28.09.2016 P-04

Single-window Funding Makes its Imprint on Campus R&D

Centres for Big Action

Health ministry to co-fund 62 projects, pitch in with ₹6,662 lakh

DRDO to support 43 projects with ₹5,103 lakh funding

MEITY has proposed 21 projects

Power ministry, Urban Development and Renewable Energy ministries have supported 11 projects each

The Dept of Science & Technology wants to help fund 24 projects

ISRO has identified 7 projects

PROJECT IMPRINT Govt depts propose to co-fund 229 research projects worth ₹59,589 L at IITs and other premier institutes

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New Delhi: Nearly a year after its launch, Modi government's single window funding mechanism for boosting India-specific research, Imprint, has begun to yield results. 31 ministries and government departments have proposed to co-fund 229 research projects worth ₹59,589 lakh at IITs and other premier Indian research institutes.

The apex committee on Imprint will meet today for final approval to these projects. Health, Defence, IT departments have taken the lead with maximum projects proposed. Some of the proposals on the table are to develop autonomous drones for crop water management, wireless covered sensor nodes for a hostile environment, improved communications and surveillance systems in border areas and so on.

While the health ministry has proposed to co-fund many as 62 projects worth ₹13,325 lakh across India's research institutes, pitching in with ₹6,662 lakh, the Defence and Research Development Organisation (DRDO) has offered to support 43 projects of its interest area contributing ₹5,103 lakh towards the total project cost of ₹10,206 lakh. The Department of Science & Technology wants to help

ONE-YR-OLD NOW

Imprint—a brainchild of the HRD ministry under Smriti Irani—was launched jointly by PM & President last year

while Power ministry and Urban Development and Renewable Energy ministries have associated themselves with 11 projects each.

The Imprint is riding currently on a corpus of ₹50 crore and plans are afoot to move the finance ministry to increase funding over the next three years. Most of the projects proposed are of a three-year duration.

The move to set up a one-stop funding system had been made after a number of scientists and researchers conveyed how the current bureaucratic systems were coming in the way and delaying projects as well as discouraging institutes from taking them up. The drill of getting clear-

ances and approvals through various ministries was another dampener. The idea is also to encourage a research environment and also drive institutes to take up research that is socially and technically relevant to India's needs across sectors.

Imprint—a brainchild of the HRD ministry under Smriti Irani—was launched jointly by PM Narendra Modi and President Pranab Mukherjee last year. A largely pan-IIT and IISc joint initiative to develop a roadmap for research to solve major engineering and technology challenges in 10 technology domains relevant to India and where the country is heavily dependent on foreign technology

Times of India ND 28.09.2016 P-11

Indian univs go headhunting abroad

In Last 5 Years, IIT-M Has Recruited 168 Profs, IIT-B 96 From Foreign Institutes


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Coimbatore: Dr Arvind Peethurath was a successful physician at Albany Medical Centre, New York State University, until a couple of months ago. Last month, he returned to India to join Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Kochi.

Like Arvind, many Indian academicians and professionals working abroad are returning to India to join as faculties in premier educational institutions. Given the increasing competency levels and stringent eligibility criteria, it has been tough for Indian institutions to find enough teaching talent within the country. So, they have now started hunting abroad.

"From a materialistic point of view, I had everything. However, deep within, there was a vacuum, which I realised could only be filled by something higher than all the material comforts. After hearing about Amrita's research work, I decided to move,

REVERSING THE TREND



Growing trend of Indian academicians and professionals returning to India to pursue a career in Indian universities

Institution	Indians hired from abroad in last 5 years
IIT-Madras	168
IIT-Bombay	96
Amrita University	198
SASTRA University	40
SRM University	36
Manipal University	11

Countries from where they were recruited: USA, UK, Canada, Germany, Australia and other European countries

and in the short span that I have spent here I have found my experience rewarding," Arvind said.

Public-funded institutions like IITs have been recruiting Indians settled abroad in big numbers. At IIT-Madras, a total of 168 professors were recruited from abroad in the past five years, while 96 joined IIT-Bombay during the period.

Apart from newspaper and magazine advertisements, alumni networks come in handy while identifying potential recruits.

"We have a good alumni network in foreign universities and it helps us to connect with prospective candidates," dean of administration, IIT-Madras, P.Sriram said.

"We advertise for faculty positions. We also meet Indi-

an students and post-doctoral fellows in the US and Canada and inform them about positions," said dean, faculty affairs at IIT-Bombay, J.K.Verma.

Deemed private varsities like Amrita University believe in meeting potential candidates during their chancellor's trips abroad. "A team of senior academicians accompany our chancellor for programmes abroad to scout for

candidates," said the vice-chancellor of Amrita University, Venkat Rangan.

When it comes to salary, most public institutions pay according to the UGC scale. Some deemed private universities follow a pay parity rule. At SRM University, Chennai, they follow the purchasing power parity model. "For example, if we are recruiting a faculty from the US, we will compare the salary he/she was receiving there and the standard of living in the US. We will rationalise it with Indian rupees and then to the standard of living in Chennai and fix their remuneration," said the vice-chancellor of the university, Prabir K Bagchi.

SASTRA University, Thanjavur, has created a special designation called assistant professor (research). The pay scale is higher than of an entry-level assistant professor but with reduced teaching responsibility, so as to facilitate research, said dean of planning and development, S.Vaidhyasubramanian.

Hindustan Times ND 28.09.2016 P-21

IITs, NITs and universities likely to get Sanskrit cells

Gauri Kohli

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All IITs, NITs, IIITs, Indian Institute of Science, Central universities and AICTE-approved technical colleges are likely to get Sanskrit cells to facilitate study of science and technology in Sanskrit literature.

An expert panel set up to assess and accredit Sanskrit universities and institutions across the country will consider this option soon. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has also been given the task to develop a separate set of norms for assessing Sanskrit institutions.

“This is in view of the recommendations of the N Gopalaswami Committee set up by the ministry of human resource development to suggest a long-term vision and roadmap for development of Sanskrit language,” says a senior NAAC official.

The six-member committee has Prof Radhavallabh Tripathi, former vice chancellor, Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan,



■ **A long-term vision is being developed for the institutes.**

New Delhi, as the chairperson and Prof HK Satpathy, former vice chancellor, Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, Tirupati, as co-chairperson.

The panel held a meeting in Bengaluru last week to discuss the modalities in formulating norms for assessment and

accreditation, keeping in view the Gopalaswami Committee recommendations. Members discussed the criteria and key aspects to be included in the assessment manuals of NAAC. The report is expected to be submitted within three months. As per the N Gopalaswami Committee's ten-year perspective plan to develop the language, all Sanskrit universities can be considered for special grant for starting new courses for skill development, irrespective of their status. The plan also aims to allow earning of simultaneous dual degree programmes in Sanskrit as well as modern disciplines. Special grants for postdoctoral fellowships for scholars in Sanskrit institutions have also been proposed. Elective courses in Sanskrit for credits are likely with the All-India Council for Technical Education given the task to develop these. Fellowships and teaching positions for Sanskrit scholars in technical institutions for research and teaching have also been proposed.

IIT-Bombay start-up incubator goes for expansion

http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/iit-bombay-start-up-incubator-goes-for-expansion-116092700832_1.html

At present, SINE is being operated out of IIT-Bombay campus. The incubator has recently leased another facility in Hiranandani, Powai

A new building is coming up in IIT-Bombay that will have fully equipped labs, says Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (SINE), the incubation centre at IIT Bombay, is looking to expand its operations as it sees steep rise in number of student-start-ups vying for space.

The 12-year-old incubator has 28 start-ups. It expects the number to rise to 50-60 by next year and to 200 over the next six years, said Milind Atrey, chief executive, SINE.

Of the 28 start-ups being incubated at SINE, 20 are housed in the facility and the remaining eight are being virtually mentored. Over the last decade, SINE has taken 82 start-ups under its umbrella, of which 40 have been graduated.

“We are open to our alumni and students. At least one co-founder should be from our institute. That is because we are running short of space. Suddenly, so much of enthusiasm has come that right now we are incubating 28 companies and 15 are on waiting list,” said Atrey.

At present, SINE is being operated out of IIT-Bombay campus. The incubator has recently leased another facility in Hiranandani, Powai, which has emerged as the local start-up hub. “We have a new building coming up (in IIT-Bombay), which will have fully equipped labs,” he said. “With this, we will have close to 50-60 start-ups over next one-and-a-half years and about 200 companies over next six years.”

“Right now, we have almost 250 people working in these 20 companies. These 50 start-ups may have 1,000 people over the next one-and-a-half years,” he added. SINE, which has been selected as Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship, will invest a part of the Rs 50-crore fund in the new building. It is also expanding its start-up ecosystem by collaborating with private companies and the government.

Under its recently launched accelerator programme with Department of Science and Intel, it will incubate 20 firms related to electronic hardware for a year, which will involve focused training and one-to-one mentorship. Earlier this month, SINE partnered with Russia’s Global Venture Alliance, which provides business services, training programmes and seed funding for start-ups to launch “India-Russia Bridge for Innovations”, a bilateral entrepreneur exchange programme.

Under the program, ten start-ups from India are participating in a 2-week accelerator program that will introduce them to the Russian market.

The incubator is in talks with Russia’s GVA for further collaboration, said Atrey. SINE, on behalf of Indian government, is also working with government of Switzerland to organise the second edition of Academia Industry Training, Swissnex India, a program aimed at supporting researchers from top Swiss and Indian universities in transforming their applied research into market application. Currently, SINE is in process of choosing 10-20 people, who will participate in the workshop at Bangalore, of which 2-3 people go to Switzerland.

“We are seeing a lot of interest from countries like Switzerland, Russia, England, EU, US, Canada and Israel,” said Atrey. “Though nothing concrete has come out of it yet, but the attempts have already started and fruits of that will come in 2-3 years.”

“Foreign companies, governments and incubators are looking at India as a possible innovation and talent hub, where they can collaborate. As soon as something significant comes out of these attempts, things will get accelerated,” he added. “We expect this to happen over next five years.”

IIT-Kharagpur works on projects to strengthen rail safety

<http://indianexpress.com/article/education/iit-kharagpur-works-on-projects-to-strengthen-rail-safety-3051841/>

The Railways has awarded 12 research projects to the IIT's Centre for Railway Research

Meanwhile, the department of electronics and electrical communications engineering has developed a "bridge health monitoring system with wireless sensor networks".

THE RAILWAYS has roped in Indian Institute of Technology-Kharagpur to develop technologies to ensure rail and passenger safety.

Through its Research Design and Standards Organisation (RDSO), the Railways has awarded 12 research projects to the IIT's Centre for Railway Research. While many of the projects are underway, several are near completion and have reached the delivery stage, said a statement by IIT-Kharagpur, which offers a two-year MTech programme in railway engineering every year to 20 Railway personnel.

Researchers from IIT's metallurgical, mechanical and chemical engineering departments have developed a "high strength bainitic steel" for railway tracks, which could significantly improve its tensile and impact properties as well as strength. "The use of this steel is expected to reduce wear and fracture of tracks... We are currently evaluating the new steel in detail to determine its suitability for industrial production. The obvious next step will be to look for industrial partners for the production of this steel," said Prof Shiv Brat Singh, the lead researcher on the project.

Meanwhile, the department of electronics and electrical communications engineering has developed a "bridge health monitoring system with wireless sensor networks". While India currently has around 1.3 lakh railway bridges, many of these are over 80 years old and are in a distressed condition.

"These bridges need to be monitored for the safety of the trains. At present, these are monitored manually through periodic on-site checks with the help of wired sensors. It has been observed that manual checking is not sufficient and human errors can lead to a disaster. Therefore, there is a need to develop automatic bridge health monitoring system," said Prof Raja Dutta, the lead researcher.

"Such monitoring can now be done through wireless sensor networks, which we have developed. The system can detect whether the bridge is damaged and subsequently, assess its longevity. The sensors fixed on the bridge will collect parameters, which will be sent to operators at stations. All this will happen online," he added.

To conserve energy, the sensors on a bridge will be put on sleep mode, to be activated by another sensor on the track just before a train approaches. The IIT is testing this technology at a bridge at Narayangarh near Kharagpur.

Besides, the team has also developed sensors to monitor water levels at bridges. "Use of radar water sensors to monitor water in the river underlying a bridge is being looked into. Sensors have been placed on bridges to collect data. These will send warnings before water reaches the danger level," said Dutta.

The IIT's engineering department has, meanwhile, developed "membranes made of geo-synthetics" to improve the stiffness of the ground below the ballast. This is particularly useful in parts of the track where the ground is soft due to the presence of soft soils.

Besides, the department of electrical engineering has developed an automated visual inspection system to monitor height, stagger and diameter of overhead electrical traction line. The system uses camera-based image processing techniques to scan overhead wires for maintenance.

In addition, the mechanical and civil departments, along with IIT's Rubber Technology Centre, have secured a Rs 5-crore grant from the Centre to come up with improved bogie design and rail-wheel traction control for Metro Railway coaches.

Apart from developing new products, teams of IIT-Kharagpur have also made recommendations to enhance safety, reduce costs and improve life of wheels and brake blocks. These include incentives for drivers who run trains "smoothly" with little use of brakes.

The department of civil engineering is also working on a project to make "the seating and sleeping arrangements in compartments less injury prone during a collision or heavy braking". The team has recommended the use of "aluminium foam padding" on the train surface.

IISC' innovation hub to help researchers and startups

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/bengaluru/IISC-innovation-hub-to-help-researchers-and-startups/2016/09/28/article3631294.ece>

BENGALURU: Indian Institute of Science (IISc), one of premier institutes in the country, is setting up an Innovation Hub in its Bengaluru campus.

The Innovation Hub, according to an official at the IISc, will encourage startups. The IISc will allow partnerships with established private firms. Though the main idea of the project is to encourage research activities, along with IISc students, even the students outside IISc who are interested in research activities can apply. For this, IISc has got the financial assistance of `70 crore from Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and Union Ministry for Information and Technology.

Recently, MHRD had chosen some Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) to encourage research activities and announced financial assistance to further it. Under this scheme, along with IITs, the IISc Bengaluru was also chosen. MHRD had identified Delhi, Kanpur, Guwahati, Gandhinagar and Hyderabad IITs.

However, utilising the funds provided by the central ministry, IISc is setting up an Innovation Hub with all the basic infrastructure in a 1 lakh square feet area within its campus.

IIT Hyderabad introduces 'Madhubani' under Creative Arts Course

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-metroplus/iit-hyderabad-introduces-madhubani-under-creative-arts-course/article9155338.ece>

In a move to emphasise on the significance of subjects that focus on culture, the Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad, is offering 'Madhubani Painting', a free, one-credit course this month. Spearheading this is artist Shalinee Kumari from Madhubani.

This course is offered to all students of IIT Hyderabad as part of Creative Arts programme. 'Madhubani Painting' was initially offered at IIT Hyderabad from January to February 2016. Nearly 95 students took up the course over three days. With positive feedback from the students, the institution decided to introduce the course again in September and over 120 students registered.

Students get to learn about the core traditional methods of Madhubani painting style and are taught fabric painting as well.

Says Shalinee Kumari, “Teaching Madhubani painting to students at IITH has been an amazing experience. Students are creative and easily grasp colour combination, which is the most important aspect of Madhubani painting.” Some students have even explored new art forms, after doing the course, she adds.

Shalinee’s paintings have been exhibited both in India and abroad.

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IIMs to focus on quality PhD programmes

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The ministry of human resource development and the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) are working on the possibility of expanding doctoral programmes. Prakash Javadekar, union HRD minister, said last week that creating more quality PhD programmes will address the problem of faculty shortage in institutes.

And for creating more PhDs, better avenues of fellowship will be offered to willing candidates. The minister also said that in line with the IIT Council, where it has been decided to award PM’s scholarship for PhD programme, government approval will be sought for PM’s scholarship for best of PhD scholars in IIMs.

A final decision will be taken with the Cabinet’s approval. IIMs will actively participate in creating content for SWAYAM which is an information technology platform hosting open online courses.

The institutes will also provide high quality education on various subjects from Class 9 to undergraduate and postgraduate students covering all disciplines.

SWAYAM is a free course which can be availed online and shall be a complete channel of new open learning system comprising of lectures, reading materials, tutorials, mid exams, final exams and certification.

The IIMs have also been asked to submit plans for expansion of their intake capacity, so that more students get the opportunity to enroll themselves.

Directors of IIMs have discussed this possibility in a meeting with the HRD minister last week. IIMs will also participate in a new government initiative to make 20 world-class universities/institutes.

**QUALITY PHD
PROGRAMMES WILL
ADDRESS THE PROBLEM
OF FACULTY SHORTAGE
OF INSTITUTES**