

Newspaper Clips  
September 30, 2010

**Hindustan Times, ND** p-9

**30-Sep-10**

**'Columbia, Berkeley keen on educational ties'**

**NEW DELHI:** Columbia University and the University of California, Berkeley are keen to enhance educational ties with India, HRD minister Kapil Sibal said on Wednesday. Sibal, who returned two days back from a week-long trip to the US, said the two varsities had indicated willingness to collaborate not only in research programmes but even in undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

Hindustan Times, ND p-11  
30-Sep-10

# Common test gets VCs' nod

## DOUBTS Reservations remain about acceptability of mechanism

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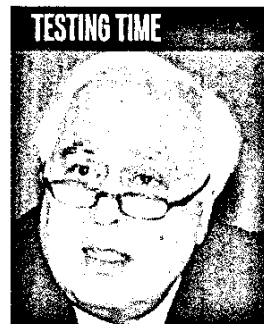
**NEW DELHI:** Vice-chancellors of India's 40 central universities on Wednesday agreed "in principle" to use a common aptitude test combined with marks in the Class XII qualifying examinations to admit undergraduate students, despite a panel of VCs emphasising admission autonomy.

But the new admission mechanism for the central universities — which human resource development minister Kapil Sibal said could be in place by next year — may not be accepted easily by all varsities, government officials conceded.

Some VCs also admitted to *HT* that they harboured reservations about the acceptability of the admissions mechanism to all stakeholders at their universities. "It is one thing for us to nod our heads and agree in a closed-door conference and another for our universities to accept the plan," one VC said.

A panel of VCs headed by outgoing Jawaharlal Nehru University VC B.B. Bhattacharya had said in its final report that a common entrance test was needed. But it had added that each institution should have the "autonomy" to choose how to admit students, and suggested that the common test be used more as an eligibility test — like the National Eligibility Test conducted by the University Grants Commission — as reported by *HT* on Tuesday.

"The Bhattacharya panel did not propose any role for the Class XII Board examination marks and instead stressed on a common entrance test. This was not acceptable to several other VCs who felt that a subject-based test would add additional pressure on students," Sibal told reporters after a meeting with the VCs on Wednesday.



■ HRD Minister Kapil Sibal

■ Proposed common aptitude examination will not test subject knowledge but general awareness and critical thinking.

■ Students will not need to appear for multiple entrance examinations and will instead be admitted on the basis of a combination of their board examination marks and scores in the aptitude test.

The proposed common aptitude examination will not test subject knowledge but general awareness and critical thinking, Sibal said. Students will not need to appear for multiple entrance examinations and will instead be admitted on the basis of a combination of their board examination marks and scores in the aptitude test, he said.

Each central university will be free to decide the weightage to give to board examination marks and aptitude test scores, Sibal said. But details of how the plan is to be implemented are yet to be worked out.

Asked about possible opposition from within universities like JNU or Delhi University, the HRD minister accepted that the idea could face criticism. "The universities will each finally have to decide whether or not the plan is acceptable to them," he said.

Hindustan Times, ND 30-Sep-10 p-15

# Ramesh rejects Bt brinjal report

**SLAMMED** Says the ban won't be lifted in a hurry

Zia Haq'

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**NEW DELHI:** Environment minister Jairam Ramesh on Wednesday said the moratorium on Bt brinjal — India's first genetically modified food — could not be lifted until there was a broad-based scientific consensus, acceptance by state governments and before a new regulatory mechanism takes shape.

Ramesh called a report by six premier science academies on Bt brinjal, which he ordered and *Hindustan Times* reported first on September 24, "disappointing".

The report has been criticised roundly for lacking "scientific rigour" and appears to have damaged, rather than salvage, the transgenic eggplant's reputation.

## CONTENTIOUS

■ The environment minister called the report by six premier science academies on Bt Brinjal "disappointing".

■ The report has been criticised for lacking "scientific rigour".

■ The report, signed by the chiefs of six topmost science bodies, lacked citations, references and even footnotes, exposing its authors to charges of plagiarism.

"It is disappointing and I hope for a more broad-based scientific report. It needed not have political arguments but should be scientifically robust," Ramesh told *HT*.

"It is almost like a PR job," the minister said.

The report, signed by the

chiefs of six topmost science bodies, lacked citations, references and even footnotes, exposing its authors to charges of plagiarism and of doing a rush job.

Ramesh criticised the report for being, on the one hand, "measured and circumspect" on GM crops overall, but going "overboard" specifically on Bt brinjal, on the other.

Lack of citations has shown the report in poor academic light, plunging some of India's most respected institutions into disrepute.

"Citations are critical. Sometimes, the footnotes are more important. That's what differentiates an academic work from journalism," said S. Mahendra Dev, vice-chancellor of the Mumbai-based Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research.

Times of India ND p-1  
30-Sep-10

# Coming up: A common test to enter college

## Class 12 Marks Will Continue To Be A Factor

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** In a move that's likely to further stress out students, a committee of vice-chancellors has proposed a common entrance test for admission to undergraduate and post-graduate courses for all central university colleges and institutions.

This results of this test, being justified as an aptitude test, will be factored in over and above the school board results to determine admission into university. The committee has proposed that the weightage of school results and the common test be fixed by individual universities.

Funnily, there hasn't been a problem yet with the current system. So apart from trying to fix something that ain't broke, the committee's proposal will be adding another burden on students.

### Added Burden

► Weightage of Class 12 and common test results to be decided by each university

► Proposed system could lead to junking of subject-based entrance exams

► 'Minority institutions' like St Stephen's and AMU will be excluded from common test

The proposal has the backing of HRD minister Kapil Sibal and stands a good chance of going through.

If implemented, this system will lead to the emergence of a formal hierarchy of central universities. It will also lead to junking of successful subject-based entrance tests of universities like JNU.

HRD minister Kapil Sibal maintains that the proposal will be fine-tuned, wider consultation will take place and universities will have the freedom to take it or leave it. In two months, the committee headed by JNU V-C B B Bhat-tacharya will give its report.

► Sibal backs move, P 16

## Sibal backs move for common test for central universities

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** A committee of vice-chancellors has proposed a common entrance test for admission to undergraduate and post-graduate courses for all the central university colleges and institutions.

HRD minister Kapil Sibal thinks it's a good idea, although he maintains that the proposal will be further fine-

tuned and wider consultation will take place and universities will have the freedom to take it or leave it.

"Aptitude test is a good idea. It will prepare a child for the real world and de-stress him from so many entrance tests," Sibal said. Fifteen new central universities already have a common entrance test but these do not have undergraduate courses.

Times of India ND  
30-Sep-10 p-8

## **DU teachers not to mark attendance**

**New Delhi:** Adopting a confrontationist stand against the vice-chancellor, the association of Delhi University teachers today said they would refuse to sign the attendance register necessitated after the administration's directive to cut salaries of 'absent' teachers.

An emergency meeting of the executive committee of the DU Teachers Association discussed the response to the administration's promulgation of the 'no work no pay' system to quell the increasing number of strikes by DUTA against the semester system and Deepak Pental's continuation as VC even after expiry of his term. PTI

Times of India ND p-13  
30-Sep-10

# Private med college admissions rigged?

Hemali Chhapla | TNN

**Mumbai:** Thousands of candidates who made it to private medical and dental colleges this year have given the government-conducted entrance exam a go-by. Have the expensive private colleges become more attractive than the prestigious government ones? Or have admissions been rigged? What else could explain the reason behind a total of 1,975 successful medical aspirants skipping the state CET? For the record, the syllabi for both the tests are the same.

In the private space, there are 11 medical colleges, with a total student intake of 1,120 and 21 dental colleges with 1,680 seats. "It is surprising that over 70% students have not taken the government test. Anyone with a bit of seriousness and commonsense would take the Maharashtra CET," said Rajesh Jain of the Parents' Association of Medical Students.

Interestingly, such a trend has been observed for the first time; last year, almost all the students who got into the pri-

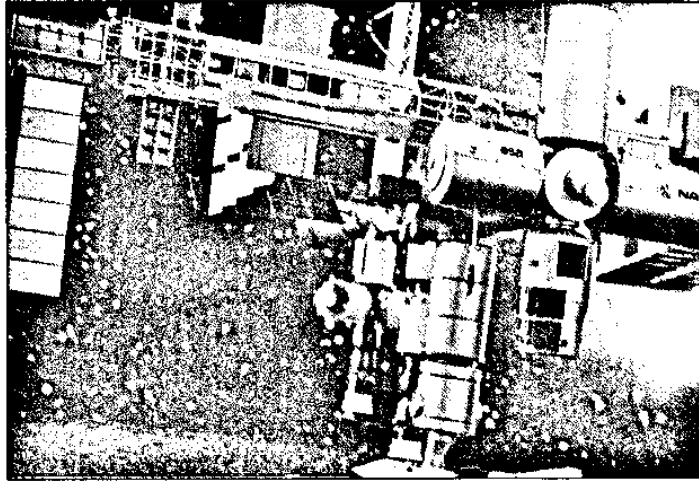
vate colleges had also taken the government exam, although there were some students whose performance in the two CETs was drastically different. "We have noticed students being selected from the private CET are below average. There is a vast difference in many candidates' Class X, Class XII and CET scores. A student who has scored say 55% in Class XII, has scored 90% in the private medical entrance exam. There is something that has gone terribly wrong," said Arvind V Bhole, dean of Sinhgad Technical Education Society's (STES) Kashibai Navale Medical College, a private college at Narhe, Pune.

Some students, who did not wish to be named, confessed that they had merely taken the exam conducted by the AMUPMDC because some private agents had assured them a seat even before the exam. However, Kamal Kishore Kadam, AMUPMDC chairman, said that the cream of the meritorious students would naturally join the government colleges.

Times of India ND 30-Sep-10  
p-23

# Russia co to offer space tourists orbiting hotel

© Peter Ginter/Science Faction/Corbis



The 'space hotel' would be more comfortable than International Space Station as there won't be any scientific equipment

**Moscow:** A Russian firm on Wednesday announced an ambitious bid to fill the vacuum in the space tourism market by stationing an orbiting hotel in the cosmos.

The Moscow-based Orbital Technologies has sky-high hopes that its planned Commercial Space Station can serve as a tourism hub for well-heeled travellers and offer over-spill accommodation for the International Space Station and workspace for science projects.

But it's unlikely to come anytime soon — the company wants to launch a seven-room station by 2016 but may increase or decrease that capacity based on customer demand.

It also remained unclear whether the state-controlled RKK Energia company, named as the general contractor for the project, would have enough funds and capacities to carry out the plan. Energia builds

Soyuz crew capsules and Progress cargo ships to deliver space crew and supplies to the International Space Station that would be the only link to space after planned retirement of the US shuttle fleet next year.

Sergey Kostenko, Orbital Tehcnologies' chief executive, said the planned station would be "a comfortable hotel in orbit, designed specifically for tourists". "But it will be more comfortable than the International Space Station because there won't be any unnecessary scientific equipment," he said.

Until now, space tourists — a handful of megarich CEOs and philanthropists — have had to suffer the indignity of hitching a ride with astronauts and cosmonauts to the International Space Station and float around the space laboratory trying not to break anything. AP

## Times of India ND 30-Sep-10 p-3 carrier

### AT A GLANCE

#### Top of the line

Though a baby among the stalwarts, Scholar's Academy created history when their 40 students cracked IIT-JEE 2010 out of 107. This is the highest selection ratio obtained from classroom program of any coaching in the country. This unparalleled performance is best in terms of the percentage of successful students churned out by any brand in the business. The academy was conceived with the dream to give the aspiring IITians a cutting edge, with the hard work. A perseverance on the part of administration and faculty, it is a hard core reality now. The essentials incorporated in a Scholar's pupil is discipline, hard work, all round growth & practice to have the eye and aim of Arjuna to hit the bulls eye. What makes this success remarkable is the fact that Scholar's Academy have managed to extract results from not so brilliant lot as it all goes to the corporate. It could have been a 10 on 10 performance if the scene was other way around. This success will ambient upon new schemes to emblaze on the institutes reputation. Institutes administration has the gumption to make success a habit. It would be intrinsic to maintain the same enthusiasm and invent more effective methodology to achieve perfect score. The top ranker Saurav Sahu AIR 379 told that he was fully ecstatic when he saw his result. A jubilant Saurav told that the success mantra lies in making the basics very clear and doing an intensive practice, and that is what they had been taught. Jha quoted that he never felt like preparing for such a difficult exam as the teachers made the topics and preparation so easy for him. Scholar's Students has done fairly well in CBSE also their average being 87% and the highest reaching to 95.8%. The topic wise analysis score card specifically designed for their board exam preparation has helped them to improve their performance. Sudhanshu Bajaj the director and Physics Faculty, is among the best and most renowned in the industry, when it comes to motivating, grooming & imparting knowledge, an IITian himself, is committed to ascertain success of every student of the academy.

#### The right choice

Finally, results are out, the cut off are exceptionally high, students are on the look out for good courses and institutions in today's world of stiff competition. But often, this crucial decision is taken giving a thought to the child's preference and capability. There is a desire and zeal amongst the women of our nation to stand on their own feet and to become financially independent and more confident. Several academic and professional institutes are spread all across the country to impart quality education to girls and women. Choosing the right institution and the right course is not an easy task. International Women Polytechnic (IWP) has been established with the objective of providing not only quality education to girls in various vocational fields but also with the motto of developing their confidence and overall personality to make them complete Professionals. Since 1998, it has been working successfully towards the achievement of these goals. The Director, the staff and the students of IWP are responsible for the success of this organisation. In 1998, it had only one branch in Janakpuri, but now, the branches are also opened at Model Town and Gagan Vihar. The greatest advantage of IWP

lies in the fact that all courses are Computer Aided. The faculties give personalised attention to motivate and encourage them to become thorough professionals. The curriculum of all the courses is of top most quality. The long term courses include: Nursery Primary Teachers Training, Fashion Designing, Interior Designing, Advertising, Marketing, PR & HRM, Secretarial Practice, Stenography, Beauty Culture & Hair Dressing, Computer Science & Multimedia. The institute also provides Correspondence Courses in Nursery Primary Teachers Training, Advertising, Marketing, PR & HRM & Fashion Designing for the benefit of working women & students & also for the outstation candidates.

#### Experience speaks

The Aakash has 22 years of experience in preparing students for Boards as well as Competitive Exams. Since 1988, over 20,000 students from the institute have been selected in various medical and engineering colleges in India. Every year, more than 35,000 students study under the brand in its country-wide network of 45 study centers and over 100 examination centers. Keeping with its tradition of excellence, Aakash IIT-JEE's distance learning program student, Nitin Jain, bagged the All India 1st rank in the IIT-JEE 2009. Besides this, a total of 3617 of our students were selected in IIT-JEE 2009. In addition, our students shined beyond excellence in AIEEE 2009, with total selections of 3,797, with 5 ranks in top 10 (AIR), including AIR 1st. Aakash Institute students secured 1st Ranks in some of the toughest medical competitive exams like CBSE-PMT/PDT, R-PMT, Delhi-PMT, CG-PMT, Haryana-PMT, MGIMS-Wardha, WB-JEE etc. In CBSE-PMT / PDT - 2009 over 1034 of our students were selected, with 6 ranks in top 10 and 45 ranks in top 100. Institute's quality study material and the teaching methodologies have benefited thousands of students over the years. Specific classroom courses are offered for Class XI & XII studying students, keeping their needs in mind. Highly focused courses are also offered for XII passed students, who are repeating a year so as to ensure and enhance their chances of selection. Specialized all India level test and material programs like All India Aakash Test Series program and Correspondence Courses/ Distance Learning Program for Engineering Entrance Exams are also offered to suit the needs of students.

#### Design's dream merchant

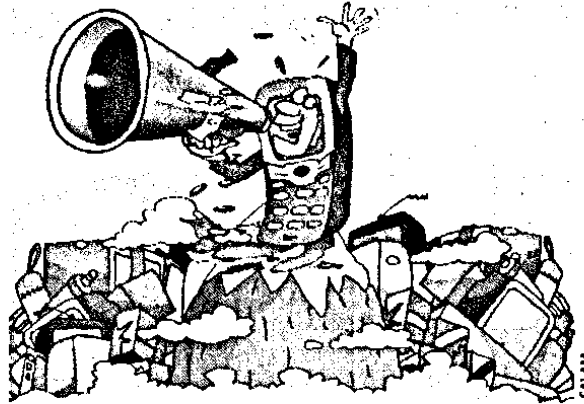
Designing is increasingly becoming a meaningful option for a large section of India's discernible career aspirants. The country offers dream-chasers a wide spectrum of centers of learning to choose from, but few can claim to be pathfinders in charting the right course for them and be in step with the finely tuned career goals in design. Raffles Millennium International is one such school of learning that combines creativity, style and ideation to help its students open newer vistas in the sphere of design. For those possessing that extra edge in outlook, RMI is just the right place to be in - a one-stop solution point offering management courses in interior design, fashion design, Jewellery design, multimedia design, product design, visual communication, commerce, wealth management and Masters in design.



**POWER TO FIELD FORCE**

Mobiles are helping firms gather data on sales, inventory & service

# Cos go mobile to capture real-time data



Vikas Kumar  
NEW DELHI

EVERY night at nine, Sudhir Sharma, an Onida salesman assigned to a multi-brand outlet, wraps up his work by sending an SMS from his mobile phone. The message, containing his product-wise sales for the day, gets routed to Onida's central server in Mumbai, where it gets stored with similar messages from 1,000 other such salespersons from across India. The next morning, everyone who matters in Onida — from the marketing chief to category heads, from regional managers to branch managers — gets an auto-generated email on the previous day's sales.

Till five months ago, Onida's sales figures used to take two weeks to a month to trickle in, especially from smaller towns. Now, thanks to an application on mobile phones and some back-end software connections, it happens daily. As a result, Onida is able to manage the movement of its goods better, replenish stocks faster and tweak production based on daily sales patterns. "After we introduced mobile-based reporting, sales by in-shop demonstrators (Onida salespersons in multi-brand outlets) have increased 15%," says Sriram Krishnamurthy, VP-marketing, sales and service at Onida. "It's a leap forward in MIS (management information systems)."

From the field force to in-store executives, the ubiquitous mobile is emerging as a silver bullet for companies struggling to capture data on sales, inventory, service and delivery in real time. As a feedback tool, it allows brand owners to measure consumer response to advertising or promotional campaigns on a daily basis.

► Applications simple and affordable: P 28

# Central varsities agree on new admission process

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI

**U**NIVERSITY education is set to undergo a change. Vice-chancellors of central universities have agreed on new admission process for undergraduate and post graduate courses, faculty and student mobility within central universities and a code of conduct for faculty, staff and researchers. In order to improve quality, they have agreed to the idea of global benchmarks, in order to be considered as a "navratna" university.

The new selection process would mean that admission could be done on the basis of a combination of marks obtained in class XII and scores obtained in a common aptitude test to be conducted nationally, said HRD minister Kapil Sibal. Weightage given to each of these would be decided by the individual universities. Mr Sibal said that consensus on the new admission process at the undergrad-

## A NEW ORDER

**Universities have also agreed on faculty and student mobility within central universities and a code of conduct for faculty, staff and researchers**

uate level was reached keeping in mind the provisions of the new central university statute which says that admission shall take place on the basis of all-India test.

"There was a consensus among vice-chancellors of all the central universities to this admission process as the present process puts an immense burden on students," Mr Sibal said. A detailed report would be presented within two months by a core committee as to how to implement the decision "so that we attempt to start this process in the next academic session".

The minister said that the new system would ensure that the students give equal importance to plus two and discourage the rote learning process. For admission to post-graduate level in these universities, he said the VCs agreed on a "admission process which could again be a combination of marks obtained at the graduate level and a common test having some subject component". The modalities would be worked out by the central universities keeping specific requirements in mind.

Seven of the 15 new central universities have already adopted a common entrance test for admission. Mr Sibal said though the VCs have agreed on this system, unwilling universities can continue with their existing admission process. In an effort to ensure greater student mobility, the system of credit transfer was discussed. This would be in place by the next session. Collaborating universities would enter into bilateral agreements allowing credit transfer and student mobility.

Indian Express ND  
30/09/2010 p-11

# V-C meet clears streamlined admission, common test

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 29

SCORES attained on a national level aptitude test besides Class XII marks could soon decide on admissions to undergraduate courses across the 40 odd Central universities in the country. A similar common test with a subject component along with marks attained in graduation could also be the basis for admission to postgraduate courses. That apart, 'Navratna' status to varsities that meet certain criteria, faculty and student mobility besides credit transfer across central varsities and a four year integrated BA BEd/BSc programme were approved as part of academic and administrative reforms for Central universities on Wednesday.

Vice-Chancellors of all Central universities on Wednesday met in New Delhi and approved in principle a proposal that is envisaged as a streamlined admission system to the universities and colleges affiliated to them. While the modalities of the proposed aptitude test/common entrance exam and the normalisation of Class XII board exam results have yet to be worked out, Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal said that a committee would submit a report on the same in two months and attempts would be made to implement this system by the next academic session after due consultations. Sibal added that concerns of varsities with special categories like

Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi University, Aligarh Muslim University and Jamia Millia Islamia University would be factored in before the proposal is implemented.

Incidentally, the 14 new Central universities that have come up since last year are mandated to admit students on the basis of an all-India level entrance examination. While seven of the new varsities admitted students through a common entrance exam this year, the idea is

**The meet also decided to accord 'Navratna' status on varsities that meet stringent standards. Such varsities will have more financial, academic autonomy**

to extend the format across all Central varsities for uniformity and space for critical thinking skills and aptitude in determining admissions. The HRD Ministry is also working on a plan for single

national level entrance examination/ aptitude test after Class XII to determine admissions to engineering colleges including IITs.

The V-C's conference also decided that the status of a 'Navratna' University can be conferred on varsities that meet some stringent standards. These varsities will be given more financial and academic autonomy. That apart, extending credit transfer and faculty and student mobility to all Central varsities based on bilateral MoUs between them, developing a code of conduct for V-Cs, varsity faculty, staff and students covering diverse issue like plagiarism, awarding of doctorates and so on. The proposals, approved on Wednesday by the V-Cs will, however, be examined further by committees that will submit reports on these issues, Sibal said.

**Indian Express ND  
30/09/2010 p-7**

# 497 Andhra engg colleges to be served closure notices

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**

**HYDERABAD, SEPTEMBER 29**

**THE Council of Higher Education will issue notices to 497 engineering colleges in Andhra Pradesh, asking why they should not be shut down for not having proper infrastructure and enough teachers and students.**

**The move comes after the K Lakshminarayana Committee that was set up to find out if the state's 672 engineering colleges had proper infrastructure and faculty reported that 497 colleges did not.**

**These colleges mostly employ part-time teachers and do not have the required infrastructure, the committee found. At least 200 of them "do not have enough students to make running of the colleges viable".**

**Secretary for Higher Education M D Christopher said these colleges will be told "to take immediate steps to recruit faculty or shut down".**

**"The quality of education in these colleges is really not up to the mark," he said. "The state government has taken a serious view of complaints of Vice Chancellors at the conference where Governor E S L Narasimhan was present."**

Hindu ND 30/09/2010 P-14

## Nasscom heaves a sigh of relief, hopes free trade will go on

Sandeep Joshi

**NEW DELHI:** India Inc. on Wednesday welcomed the blocking of anti-outsourcing Bill in the U.S. Senate even as a senior U.S. administration official said economic engagement between India and the U.S. would continue to rise.

The National Association of Software and Service Companies (Nasscom), which has

been lobbying hard against the bill, heaved a sigh of relief over the development and hoped that the U.S. government would not take any step which hampered free trade between the two nations. Notably, of India's \$50 billion IT and ITES exports, the U.S. accounts for about 60 per cent.

"The anti-offshoring bill was more of an electoral rhetoric. We had met the Con-

gressmen, key government officials and the American industry last week and expressed our concerns against the protectionist measures," Nasscom vice-president Ameet Nivsarkar said.

A high-level Nasscom delegation was recently in the U.S. and met several senior officials regarding the proposed legislation.

Reacting to the develop-

ment, FICCI Secretary-General Amit Mitra said: "We have been emphasising that protectionist measures of any kind are not in the long-term interest of anyone. They would only weaken the foundation of free and fair trade."

"We believe that the majority of the U.S. Senate has appreciated this reality and kept in mind the larger interest of the U.S. economy, its

corporations and global economy."

Similarly, Assocham president Swati Piramal said the anti-outsourcing bill was against free trade and a non-tariff barrier. Offshoring creates job opportunities for both the countries — those which outsource and the suppliers of services, so its win-win situation for both the parties, she added.

Mint ND p-1  
30/09/2010

## Single test for entry to Central universities from next year

BY PRASHANT K. NANDA  
prashant.n@livemint.com

NEW DELHI

The process of college admissions in India is set for a radical change, with the country's Central universities agreeing to conduct a common entrance test for selecting students from across the country. India's education minister, who previously scrapped class X exams in favour of grades in an attempt to foster real education and not just learning by rote, said the move was part of an attempt to reform the education system and assess students holistically.

Vice-chancellors of 40 Central government-funded universities also agreed to create an inter-university credit transfer system to help students transfer from one university to another.

"The Central universities have decided in principle to have a common aptitude test. The score of the class XII exam and that of the aptitude test will be combined while admitting students to the undergraduate courses across these Central universities," human resource development minister Kapil Sibal announced after a meeting of the vice-chancellors in the National Capital.

The minister added that the new admission process, which will come into effect next year, would not infringe on a university's autonomy.

Central universities such as the Delhi University, Jamia Millia Islamia and Banaras Hindu University will also be allowed to retain their unique admission procedures.

For example, Jamia can continue 25% of its intake from its own schools.

"The unique features will remain. There is going to be wider consultations on the modalities to be followed," Najeeb Jung, vice-chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia, said.

The aptitude test will help measure the general knowledge and personality of the students.

## A single test to enter central universities

► FROM PAGE 1

Sibal said the effort is to take forward the reforms in higher education and to ensure that students are judged holistically rather than on the knowledge they have gleaned from books.

Hundreds of thousands of students study in Central universities, considered elite institutions of learning.

Sibal and the vice-chancellors also decided to launch four-year integrated BSc-BEd (bachelor of science-bachelor

of education) and BA-BED (bachelor of arts-bachelor of education) courses in order to address the shortage of school teachers.

"Students will have the option to get out of the college after three years with just a BA or BSc degree or stay for one more year and get a dual degree. This will help create a pool of quality teachers," he said.

India is facing a shortage of more than 250,000 teachers in schools and the additional BEd degree would widen the pool of teaching talent.

Mail Today ND 30/09/2010 p-35

# Anti-outsourcing Bill blocked in US Senate

## Republicans & business groups had dismissed the Bill as political stunt

IN A move that augured well for India, senate Republicans successfully blocked the passage of an anti-outsourcing Bill that denied tax breaks to US companies which move jobs overseas, dealing a blow for US President Barack Obama.

Republicans, in a 53-45 vote, blocked the Bill which fell six votes short for passage. At least 60 votes were needed to clear the Republican procedural hurdle to the Democrat Bill.

The Bill envisaged a ban on government contractors from using American taxpayers' money to move jobs offshore.

### Globally, India holds 50% of outsourcing mkt

As part of efforts to boost employment in the US, Obama is vigorously pushing to end tax break for companies which ship jobs overseas, saying it should go to firms which create jobs in America.

India, which holds at least 50 per cent of the global outsourcing market, has become the world's back office as Western firms set up call centres, number-crunching and software development outlets in India to cut costs.

Democratic backers claimed that Republicans have undermined their efforts to create jobs.

Republicans and business groups dismissed the Bill as a political stunt that would increase taxes on companies and undermine job growth.

The Creating American Jobs

and End Offshoring Act is aimed at small manufacturers and includes a payroll tax exemption for firms that move jobs to the US. The Bill also contains provisions to prevent businesses from deferring US taxes on the income they make from foreign subsidiaries.

Indian IT honchos have maintained that the Bill won't have much impact on India. However, they warned that US companies operating in other countries may be beaten by the same stick.

Several business groups, such as the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), were opposed to the legislation. It had sent a letter to senators arguing the measure would make US corporations less competitive and hurt job creation.

Terming the Bill as an election gimmick, Republican senator Orrin Hatch slammed the Democrats for their irresponsibility that could put the US economy at greater risk.

Hatch said, "Raising taxes on companies' overseas profits will just incentivise them to move their domestic facilities to another country... That is not the prescription that will cure our ailing economy."

Meanwhile, two amendments moved by a US Senator on restricted hiring of foreign workers and another aimed at preventing fraud and abuse of H-1B and L1 visa also could not pass the Senate floor as it was blocked by the Democratic Party.

The two amendments were moved along with the Creating American Jobs and End Offshoring Act. *PTI*

**BIG SETBACK:** As part of efforts to boost jobs, US President Barack Obama is vigorously pushing to end tax break for firms shipping jobs overseas.

## INDIA INC RELIEVED

India Inc, which earlier protested the protectionist move against the Indian IT industry, welcomed the move by the US Senate, saying it is in the larger interest of promoting free trade between the two countries.

"This is a welcome move. The Bill (anti-offshoring Bill) was more of an electoral rhetoric. We had already met the Congressmen, key Government officials and American industry last week and expressed our concerns against the protectionist measures," said Ameet Nivsarkar, vice-president, Nasscom.

According to Phaneesh Murthy, (CEO, IGATE Global Solutions), "The fact that this Bill has been defeated clearly implies that the Republicans, who are more pro-business than the Democrats, are starting to exert their influence. And to a certain extent, if the balance of power shifts in the November elections I think it could auger well for the IT industry."

The defeat of the Bill comes a week after a Nasscom delegation, comprising representatives of top IT firms such as Infosys, Wipro and TCS, visited the US and lobbied with key Congressmen and corporations.

According to the Ficci the move was in the larger interest of the Indo-US trade.

"We believe the majority of US Senate has kept in mind the larger interest of

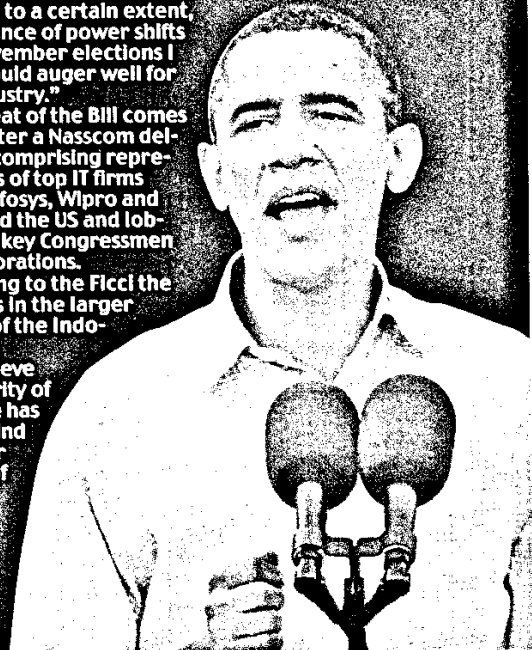
the US economy, its corporations and global economy," Amit Mitra, secretary-general, Ficci, said.

Mitra added, "Opposition from several US business groups showed that they realised that such measures would only hurt the competitiveness of US firms."

Assocham president Swati Piramal said the Bill was against free trade and is a non-tariff barrier. "Offshoring creates job opportunities for both countries — those which outsource and the suppliers of services," she said.

Ganesh Natarajan, CEO, Zensar Tech, said, "Unemployment is a concern in the US. But they should understand that any protectionist barrier will deepen the recession. This kind of measures will not help create job there."

— Mail Today Bureau



Pioneer ND 30/09/2010 P-5

# XII marks not enough, clear aptitude test for UG courses

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

Vice-Chancellors of Central Universities in a meeting with HRD Minister Kapil Sibal, on Wednesday, arrived at a consensus on holding a common national level aptitude test, which combined with the weightage of Class 12 marks would be the key to students' admissions to Central universities. The decision, in principle, by the heads of 33 universities, would be finalised after a core committee submits its report in two months.

"The aptitude test is aimed at opening the window of the outside world before the child and enabling to develop his critical skills. One may simply pass the Class XII exam by

**The in-principle decision by the heads of 33 varsities would be finalised after a core committee submits report in two months**

memorising the text books but an All India level aptitude test would relieve him of the stress of having to appear for innumerable examinations taken by universities during admission apart from ushering a uniformity in the system of entrance tests in universities across the country," Sibal told mediapersons.

He also informed that sim-

ilar discussions took place on the admission procedure for post-graduate courses. But being specialised courses, this common subject would have the respective subject component.

There was also consensus on four-year integrated courses for BA and BSc with a flexible combination with B Ed courses. The meeting also agreed on the novel concept of 'academic managers' besides introduction of a special subject of management of academics. This specialised programme would improve the quality of services of the candidates at the levels of Registrar and financial officers. The meeting also agreed on the proposal of in-service training of teachers.

Deccan Chronicle Hyderabad 29.09.10 p-13

## IT outsourcing: Our companies need to innovate, learn lobbying

By N V Krishnakumar

**A**s sitting governor from the state of Ohio, a swing state in presidential elections, who is 10 per cent behind his opponent in pre-election polls bans Information Technology related outsourcing. An equally embattled President of United States eloquently argues against outsourcing and appeals to American companies to create more jobs in the US. Coming close on the heels of the US government decision to hike visa fee for H-1 and L-1 visa holders, the executive order by democratic Governor Ted Strickland and the rhetoric of Obama - both considered as a measure to restrict outsourcing have sent the Indian IT industry into a tizzy, causing ruffles in corporate boardrooms and diplomatic circles.

Advocating protectionist measures by candidates during an election campaign in the US is not new. Campaigns, especially ones during recessions have always been filled with promises on how to protect American jobs and wages. During the

1991 presidential campaign which was conducted in the midst of a deep recession, presidential candidate Ross Perot was adamantly opposed to the North American Free Trade Agreement (Nafta) and coined the phrase 'Giant Sucking Sound' while referring to the American jobs heading to Mexico. Ultimately Perot lost the election but helped elect Bill Clinton who signed Nafta into law.

During the 2000 presidential campaign, Al Gore wanted stringent conditions imposed on China for granting permanent normal trade relations status, while Pat Buchanan wanted 100 per cent tariffs imposed on Japanese and Chinese goods to save American jobs. None of the proposals succeeded.

In the 2008 campaign, candidate Obama was pandering to Big Labour by promising to renegotiate Nafta with Canada. This made Canadian government officials nervous. President Obama has not talked about renegotiating Nafta since assuming office. The congressional and senate campaigns in non presidential election years



also follow a similar pattern.

But what is new is the current global economic environment? With the world economy entering a new growth phase or 'New Normal' as many economists have termed it, Indian IT companies have failed to recognise the challenging political and economic environment in countries of their operation. They continued to rely on rosy growth and earnings projections for their industry and were ill-prepared for regulatory actions in developed world. There are plenty of options the Indian

IT industry can explore to overcome this imbroglio. One is to sit tight and wait for the campaign to be over and pray that the Republican wins the election. It is entirely possible that the republican gubernatorial candidate John Kasich, a former congressman and budget committee chairman, who has a penchant to cut government spending and has an impeccable record on free trade, could get elected and reverse the ban on IT outsourcing.

Some of the other options for Indian IT companies include mimicking the Japanese automobile industry or to increase their presence in developed countries through inorganic growth. The Japanese automobile industry shifted their manufacturing base to the source of business when the going got tough in the 1990's.

The Indian IT companies too could do the same by shifting some of their operations to the US and western Europe and open development centres in those countries.

Infosys has already set a precedent by opening a global development centre in

Canada and others should follow suit. Indian IT companies are also flush with cash and with valuations being cheap, could mop up companies in developed world and become global companies in a short period of time.

### Failure to anticipate change

But the most important lesson for Indian IT industry from the visa fee increase and the ban on IT outsourcing debacle was their failure to anticipate regulatory changes in the US. They should better learn to predict such changes in future and lobby hard before these legislations are signed into law.

Unlike in India where most companies have a tendency to appeal to the ministries for a rollback or withdrawal of part of a draconian piece of legislation after it becomes law, the political environment in the western world is different. Intense lobbying has to start before the legislation is framed. It is a futile exercise to appeal in international forums through Government of India after such legislations be-

come law.

Much of the damage to the industry would have already been done by the time disputes are resolved. Indian companies have to recognise the fact that they need to be pro-active in stopping legislations that are unfavourable to them before it becomes law.

IT outsourcing is irreversible as long as Indian companies maintain their labour cost advantage over competitors. But it has to dawn on the Indian IT industry that hyper growth of last two decades is over.

With the United States and western European nations set for anemic economic growth over the next decade and unemployment expected to remain high for the foreseeable future, Indian IT industry is likely to face more political challenges and trade barriers in future.

Apart from being adept at public relations and lobbying, they need to innovate, strengthen their presence in the developed world and add value to customers in order to overcome those challenges.



# IIT-M students create 'robofish'

**N. ARUN KUMAR**

DC | CHENNAI

**Sept. 28:** A group of four mechanical engineering students from IIT-Madras have developed a robotic fish, which can be used for under water surveillance, besides identifying obstructions and pollution in water.

Ashish Ranjan, a third year mechanical engineering student and one of the team member said RoboFish is one of the innovation is that

promises to revolutionise underwater reconnaissance and ocean exploration.

"The main challenge involved in building this robot was designing it's complicated tail motion, which we accomplished by using a single servo motor," he said.

The tail is made of blocks connected by links, so designed that controlling just one of them results in a natural tail motion. An acrylic casing, that houses a

## brilliant minds

**product** The RoboFish has been designed to detect obstacles, avoid them, choose the less hindered path and in short mimic the real life fish in every possible aspect.

water proof compartment inside which is placed the circuitry, forms the body.

Ranjan pointed that the RoboFish has been designed to detect obstacles, avoid them, choose the less hindered path and in short mimic the real life fish in every possible aspect.

Another set of students developed an accident prevention system, which is aimed at attempting to reduce the number of accidents by developing an intelligent system to warn drivers when they are at high risk.