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IIT scientists to develop stem cells

Vanita Strivastava

A team of scientists at IIT Madras are developing stem cells to grow into cardiac cells, which can eventually lead to treatment of severe heart problems.

The cells will now be surgically administered into specifically created rat models at the Central Drug Research Laboratory at Lucknow. The project is being funded by the Department of Biotechnology.

"We have developed cardiac patches isolated from biological material and proved the functionality of the cells. The patches when put into the ischemic heart can help reverse the dying cells," says Rama S Verma, professor, department of biotechnology, IIT-M.

Stem cell therapy holds a lot of promise in the field of medical science, he said adding: "Besides opening new avenues this may also help in preventing an organ tansplant."

After the patches are surgically administered in the rats, he said: "We will check for all the physiological parameters like heart rate and blood flow. This will then help us in analysing the survival rate among the rats."

मार्च के दूसरे सप्ताह से होगी शुरूआत, विद्यार्थी फिलहाल अपने वाद्ययंत्रों से ही इन बच्चों को प्रशिक्षण दिया करेंगे

आईआईटी छात्र गरीब बच्चों को सिखाएंगे संगीत

नई दिल्ली | सुशील राघव

आईआईटी दिल्ली के कुछ छात्रों ने गरीब बच्चों को संगीत सिखाने का फैसला किया है। इसके लिए 'म्यूजिक मस्ती' नाम से एक प्रोजेक्ट शुरू किया गया है। इसका मकसद गरीब बच्चों की पढ़ाई के साथ-साथ उनके कौशल का विकास करना है।

अगले हपते से कक्षाएं शुरू : नेशनल सर्विस स्कीम (एनएसएस)-आईआईटी दिल्ली के इस प्रोजेक्ट के संयोजक सिद्धार्थ रंजन ने बताया कि संगीत की कक्षाएं मार्च के दूसरे सप्ताह से शुरू होंगी। ये कक्षाएं मुनिरका और आईआईटी कैंपस में मौजूद केंद्रीय विद्यालय (केवी) में लगेंगी। गौरतलब है कि आईआईटी



आईआईटी छात्र सिद्धार्थ रंजन (बाएं)। संगीत सीखने वाले गरीब बच्चे। ● हिन्दस्तान

के विद्यार्थी मुनिरका और आईआईटी केवी में फिलहाल गरीब बच्चों को शिक्षित करने का काम कर रहे हैं। कैसे देंगे शिक्षा: आईआईटी दिल्ली से इलेक्ट्रिकल इंजीनियरिंग

कर रहे सिद्धार्थ के मुताबिक इस प्रोजेक्ट के तहत हम कंठ और वाद्य (वोकल एंड इंस्ट्रूमेंटल) संगीत की शिक्षा देंगे। इनमें से जो बच्चे अच्छा करेंगे उन्हें आगे बढ़ाया जाएगा अनोखी पहल

40 बच्चों से शुरू किया जाएगा म्यूजिक मस्ती प्रोजेक्ट

- हर शनिवार और रविवार को लगेगी संगीत की कक्षा
- दोपहर 1 से शाम 5 बजे तक सिखाया जाएगा संगीत

ताकि भविष्य में वे इसके जरिये कमाई भी कर पाएं।

शुरुआत में बच्चों को आईआईटी के विद्यार्थी अपने वाद्य यंत्रों से सिखाएंगे, लेकिन बाद में बच्चों के लिए अलग वाद्य यंत्र लाए जाएंगे।

संगीत से असली खुशी: सिद्धार्थ का कहना है कि गरीब बच्चों की जिंदगी बहुत नीरस होती है। हम उन्हें किताबी ज्ञान तो दे रहे हैं, लेकिन इससे उन्हें जिंदगी की असली खुशी नहीं मिल पा रही है। संगीत की शिक्षा से ये बच्चे अपनी दुनिया को एक नई नजर और नए ढंग से देख सकेंगे, जो इन्हें रोमांचित करेगा।

म्यूजिक क्लब देना सहयोग:
प्रयाग संगीत समिति इलाहाबाद से
तबला बजाने में स्नातकोत्तर उपाधि
हासिल करने वाले सिद्धार्थ ने
बताया कि आईआईटी दिल्ली का
म्यूजिक क्लब और एनएसएस के
स्वयंसेवी इस प्रोजेक्ट को आगे
बढाएंगे।

THE TIMES OF INDIA

IIT-Kharagpur designs blueprint for clutter-free Gariahat hawker zone

TNN | Mar 4, 2014, 01.43 AM IST

KOLKATA: The pavements on both sides of Rashbehari Avenue are soon going to get a new look. The architecture department of the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur has taken it upon itself to give an international facelift to four stretches of Gariahat.

The project is sponsored by the Union ministry of human resources development and is being supported by the state urban development department. Interestingly, while hawkers have generally been considered encroachers in Kolkata, this is perhaps the first time when a state-backed project aims at formalizing the status of hawkers and talks about a creative economy around Gariahat.

"The hawkers of Gariahat are a post 1947 phenomenon. They exist alongside regular shop owners on the same stretch. They have been part of the city's economy for long despite efforts to evict them, some of these efforts being state sponsored. Now, both the Centre and state have decided to accept the existence of hawkers as a community that generates its own income and need to be formalized," said Joy Sen, a

faculty of the architecture department of the institute. The idea is to make Gariahat a habitable and serviceable zone and turn the hub of shoppers into a tourist attraction.

Models of hawkers' zones in Tokyo in front of the Asakusa Temple and those of Malaysia and Thailand are being considered to come up with a unique design at the architecture labs of the institute. The design aims at creating zones based on different categories of items on sale. It will showcase Bengal specific urban and rural architecture in the stalls that will be uniform with specific areas for selling and storing to avoid any type of clutter.

"We are dividing the items to be sold broadly into categories such as textiles, home linen, handicrafts, houseware, eatables, etc. These will be under specific zones. Proper street furniture, uniform and attractive lighting, landscaping to punctuate the stalls are planned to make the zone lively and entertaining," Sen said, adding that the project cost of Rs 5 crore is being borne jointly by the Credai and Indian Chamber of Commerce, under the aegis of the MHRD.

State urban development minister Firhad Hakim welcomed the IIT initiative to give a decent look to Gariahat pavements. Debasis Kumar, member, mayor-in-council, who is overseeing the KMC parks department, felt that the initiative would bear fruit only if the hawkers are consulted. "It is a very positive move on the part of the Union human resources development ministry. It will definitely make Gariahat a better place for pedestrians as well as hawkers. But, we need to take the hawkers into our confidence and listen to them before implementing the project," Kumar said. Hakim said that he was yet to get details of the project.

Mayor Sovan Chatterjee said that the Kolkata Municipal Corporation was providing kiosks to hawkers in some areas to prevent pavement encroachment. "We have introduced model kiosks at Harish Mukherjee Road, opposite SSKM Hospital. The same model could be followed at Gariahat too," Chatterjee said.

Why very few Indian institutions make it to global rankings lists

Tuesday, 4 March 2014 - 8:00am IST | Agency: DNA Every year, only a few Indian institutions feature among the global top 50 ranking. Gauri Rane finds out why



This year, only four Indian institutions feature among the global top 50 in the recently released QS World University Rankings. The institutions- IIT-Bombay, IIT-Delhi, IIT-Madras and Indian Institute of Science (IISc)- have been rated by subject area. While there is cause to celebrate this, experts and academicians say that these rankings aren't of much significance. They are of the opinion that it is not that our universities are not up to the mark, or cannot compete with their global counter parts. "It is just that the ranking criteria are more based on western norms and not the nuances of the emerging markets," explains TV Mohandas Pai, chairman, Indian Centre for Assesment and Accreditation. Professor RK Shevgaonkar, director IIT-Delhi, agrees. "Parameters used by ranking organisations are more suitable for the western education system and hence though there is certain joy about being ranked we will fall short in some way or the other," he says.

The global rankings are usually based on various parameters like student-faculty ratio, citations by faculty members, international student and faculty exchange and, academic and employer reputation of the institute. Going by this it is hard to believe that only a few Indian universities make it to the list. And when they do, they make a mark only in certain disciplines.

Although India has 42 central universities, 285 state universities, 130 deemed universities and 125 private universities, why is it that only a few make it to the coveted list? Critics attribute this to a lack of international standards in our institutes. They say that more institutions should benchmark themselves against the best in the world and endeavour to get into the top slot. "Our big universities have become too narrowly focused as many institutions have become separate specialised entities," observes Pai. Shevgaonkar adds, "There is no

collaboration/ coordination within the university departments, hence the progress of one is not the progress of all."

Danny Byrne, senior education editor, QS gives a lowdown on the QS world rankings by subject. "Launched in 2011 these rankings provide a targeted exercise that is more responsive to the strengths of smaller institutions and those that specialise in a particular field or range of disciplines," he informs. The rankings look at 30 different disciplines, and ranks the top 200 institutions in each based on a combination of academic reputation, employer reputation and research citations. Shevgaonkar disagrees with Byrne. "There needs to be a better understanding of what the institute can contribute. We would like to be recognised for the institution's contribution to the country," he says.

Why is it that not even a single Indian institute features in the "all-round top institutes" category? Byrne explains that institutes do not apply to get ranked. "Our data comes from two main sources: our reputational surveys, in which over 90,000 academics and employers worldwide tell us their views on the best institutions within a given subject area, and research citations." Academics, he says, are not allowed to nominate their own institution.

Experts however, sing a different tune. They say that usually the data used for ranking is collected from the websites of the institutes, and not many institutes have comprehensive websites. Pai agrees, "We need to improve the quality of data that goes online, market our institutions better, open up to global faculty and global students." Shevgaonkar says, "While it is not our policy, we need to encourage international students for admissions."

Despite limitations, the four institutes have managed to make a mark. So what is it that other institutes should do to achieve this feat? Academicians suggest that institutes should focus on being the best in academics. "It is not that we lag far behind from our foreign counterparts, but there is a definite need to improve in more than one area," advises Shevgaonkar.

Shegaonkar is bang on dot. Obviously we should not yet compare our institutions to a 378 year old Harvard or an 805 year old Cambridge, but surely we may aim to get there soon.



IIM, IIT and several varsities to come up in Seemandhra

V RISHI KUMAR AMIT MITRA

A Central university, a petroleum university, an agricultural university and a tribal university have also been proposed Hyderabad, March 3:

Indian Institute of Management, Indian Institute of Technology, AlIMS, IIIT and several universities, including the Central and tribal universities, are proposed to be set up in the Seemandhra region.

These institutions will be set up by the Centre in the to-be carved out residual state of Andhra Pradesh (Seemandhra region).

The AP Reorganisation Bill 2014, which received Presidential assent last week, has many provisions that seek to address the Seemandhra concerns. They cover issues such as Hyderabad as a common capital for 10 years, special responsibility of Governor and retention of existing admission quotas in the educational institutions for a period of 10 years.

During a recent interaction here, Union Minister for Rural Development Jairam Ramesh said the Centre had put in place many provisions that ensure that the See mandhra region is not affected by the division. These include special status for five years, tax subsidies for new industries for 10 years, and setting up of several major institutions.

Apart from bridging the finance gap and also making provisions for funds, as a part of the overall package and to provide a boost to the Seemandhra region with quality higher education facilities, it is proposed to set up one Indian Institute of Technology, International Institute of Information Technology, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, National Institute of Technology and National Institute of Disaster Management.

It is also proposed to set up four universities – a Central university, a petroleum university, an agricultural university and a tribal university.

With the Andhra Pradesh Government seeking to develop the Kakinada-Visakhapatnam as a petrochemical hub and corridor, the setting of a petroleum university will help meet the requirement of the region.

With most of the super-speciality hospitals located in Hyderabad, the government has also proposed to set up an AIIMS-type super-speciality hospital-cum-teaching facility.

In the recent Union Cabinet meeting it was also decided to set up a National Institute of Design in Seemandhra. This was initially proposed to be established close to Hyderabad.

(This article was published on March 3, 2014)

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A prescription for the ailing education sector

The Supreme Court has missed an opportunity to clean the dirt that stains the University system, both public and private

R. Sethuraman

The Supreme Court's 2014 new year order in the form of a University Grants Commission (UGC) review of 44 deemed universities has ensured more mental trauma for lakhs of students and applicants. Though it has not approved or disapproved of the infamous Tandon Committee, it has made a statutory body, the UGC, subservient to the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD).

In June 2009, the MHRD rightly empowered the UGC, which had inspected the deemed universities before, to review the maintenance of standards in these institutions. The UGC had appointed different committees consisting of former vice-chancellors, senior professors from IITs and nominees from relevant statutory bodies. The committees visited all the deemed universities, and after a comprehensive analysis, submitted detailed reports on each university to the UGC. The inspection reports were accepted in the UGC's meetings in October and November 2009, and copies were sent to the concerned universities for immediate follow-up action and compliance within three months. The joint secretary of the MHRD represents the Ministry at the UGC meetings and is party to all these proceedings.

An arm-chair report

Despite the UGC having solitary statutory power as specified in the UGC Act of 1956 to review functioning of universities, including the deemed universities, the MHRD arrogated itself the authority, and during July 2009, constituted the Tandon Committee comprising four retired aca-The Tandon Committee directed the deemed universities to make an oral presentation in New Delhi for 20 minutes and interacted for about 10 minutes with the representatives. The committee considered nine parameters for review and awarded scores of 5, 3, 1 and 0. It did not visit any institution and, on an arm-chair basis, categorised the universities as either 'A' (scores greater or equal to 30), 'B' (greater or equal to 18), or 'C' (less than

The details of the entire process was not shared with the universities. Only when the committee recommended withdrawal of the deemed university status for those placed in the 'C' category were the universities rudely informed of the decision. They



immediately filed writ petitions in the Supreme Court in 2009 challenging the constitution of the committee and the method adopted by it in awarding grades, alleging arbitrariness and discrimination. The Supreme Court restored status quo ante in its order in January 2010. Since then, the matter has been heard over 20 times and over two dozen interim orders have been passed with no conclusive decision in sight.

Based on one of the orders passed by the Court in April 2011, the MHRD constituted another committee - the Thakur committee — headed by the Secretary of the Ministry, Ashok Tha-kur, to individually kur, to individually review the 44 deemed universities and submit a report. The MHRD ensured that the process adopted by the Thakur Committee had the direct effect of the Tandon Committee's findings. This was a rude shock to all the deemed universities as the Thakur Committee pointed out a fundamental flaw in the Tandon Committee's scoring. It wrote in its report: The rationale of weight of 5, 3, 1 and 0 for 'very good', 'good', 'fair' and 'unsat-isfactory' was also looked into carefully. Since this had a deficiency - that [the] 'fair grade' was only one point ahead of the 'unsatisfactory' grade whereas other grades had a two-point difference with their next lower grade

— instead of assigning 5, 3, 1, 0 weights to the four grades, 4, 3, 2, 1 weights have been assigned to all the points calculated for the 126 deemed universities."

Unfortunately, the Thakur Committee did not set right the "deficiency" by recategorising the deemed universities based on the new scoring. Having reduced the maximum possible score from 45 to 36, the committee stunned everyone by choosing to retain the Tandon Committee's minimum score of 30 for 'A', 18 for 'B' and less than 18 for 'C This was supported by unacceptable and inaccurate theories and clearly indicated that the committee did not wish to alter the findings of the Tandon Committee. Will anyone accept a theory where the maximum marks are reduced considerably but the passing mark is not reduced in the same proportion?

Acting strange is not new for the MHRD which embedded the innocuous Thakur Committee report as a 'bystander entity' in the Tandon Committee's chaotic report of glaring arbitrariness and bias, some of which have been highlighted.

An institution which was conferred with the deemed-to-be-university status in March 2009 was granted the 'A' grade (maximum score of 5 for admission), even when it said voluntarily that it did not admit any students under the

deemed university mode. Likewise, in the research parameter criterion, impact factors or h-index are taken into account along with SCOPUS/SCI data for assessing an institution for its research output.

The Tandon Committee convenientlyignored these parameters and awarded institutions with higher impact factor and/or h-index scores of 3 and 1 and those with lesser impact factor with a maximum score of 5. The partisanship continues. In the case of one deemed university, a member of the committee declared it unfit to be granted that status and asked for it to be an autonomous institution. However, to everyone's shock, the university was placed in the 'A' category.

The entire Tandon Committee mechanism was kick-started because of a media sting operation exposing the admission malpractice in two deemed universities in Tamil Nadu, now being investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation. To these universities, the committee awarded the 'B' grade for their admission procedure. The ongoing second review to upgrade them from 'B' to 'A', despite the matter being sub judice, is liable for contempt of court, and is also infested with faults.

The Supreme Court missed an opportunity to clean the dirt that stains the university system — public & private. Passing an interim order on January 9, 2014, the Court ordered review of the 44 'C' category universities and made it abundantly clear that the MHRD is not bound by the UGC review findings, thus reducing the UGC, a statutory body, to an advisory one. It may be legally correct but it has provided the much needed oxygen for the Tandon Committee, which submitted its resignation.

The country needs a systemic overhaul. The Supreme Court has prolonged the issue without reaching any finality. The MHRD must order for review of all the deemed universities, as undeserving ones have been placed in the 'A' category and deserving ones in the 'B' and 'C' categories. Also, the Tandon Committee's report is not an elixir of immortality. It has expired but is still used, causing damage to policy making. Before policy making dies of harmful dosage of expired academic steroids, the MHRD must provide the antidote and reform the entire deemed universities and public universities system. The right prescription needs to be written.

(Professor R. Sethuraman is vicechancellor, Sastra University.)

Standardize fuel to improve city air: Experts

Jayashree Nandi | TNN

New Delhi: The Delhi government has kept mum on dealing with severe air pollution in the city, likely to be as bad as Beijing's. Environmentalists are now hoping that the national auto fuel policy, which is expected to be ready in a couple of months, will bring down the pollution level by implementing uniform and superior fuel emission norms throughout the country.

Delhi is likely to benefit considerably, experts point out, as most of over 30,000 commercial vehicles like trucks and buses that pass through the city every day do not use Bharat Stage (BS) IV-compliant fuel. These vehicles still use BS III fuel, which pollutes air more during combustion. BS IV-compliant fuel has been in use in only 13 major cities, including Delhi, since 2010.

"BS IV fuel is not available everywhere. Most of the vehicles from outside are running on BS III fuel. To address air pollution effectively, we need BS VI norms across the coun-

STRICT FUEL NORMS FOR CLEANER AIR

- More than 30,000 heavy duty vehicles enter or pass through Delhi every day, according to Environment Pollution Control Authority (EPCA)
- Most of these use Bharat Stage (BS) III fuel
- > In 2001, Supreme Court had ordered that

5

gm/kwhr 3 5

- no heavy, medium or light vehicle plying on interstate routes will pass through Delhi
- > Only vehicles that pay toll tax and carry goods to or/and from Delhi will be allowed to enter the capital, says the order
- According to EPCA, the order is far from being implemented

■ NOx

PMX 10

How change in fuel is going

to reduce air pollution from

each heavy duty vehicle



What experts recommend to auto fuel policy committee

- ➤ Implement BS IV norms nationwide by 2014-15
- > Cars should move to
- BS V between 2015 and 2017
- ➤ Commercial and heavy duty vehicles should move to BS IV+ by 2015-17
- ➤ All vehicles move to BS VI by 2020

try immediately," said a member of Environment Pollution Control Authority (EPCA).

In 2001, the Supreme Court had directed that vehicles plying on interstate routes will not pass through Delhi. However, EPCA says the capital continues to act as a corridor for all. The municipal corporations usually don't check documents strictly as that would lead to long queues and congestion at the checkpoints. The eastern and western peripheral roads, which these vehicles could have used to bypass Delhi,

have missed their 2009 deadline and are far from being ready.

A study by IIT Delhi and Desert Research Institute, published in February, has found that total vehicle exhaust emissions can be maintained at current levels only if BS V fuel is introduced across the country immediately. If no interventions are made, the emission level is likely to double by 2030, it says.

The study also slams the government for always giving the excuse of high costs for not implementing superior fuel norms. "According to the government, refinery upgradation can cost over Rs 50,000 crore and, therefore, fuel quality cannot be improved in a hurry. But considering the adverse effects of air pollution on health, annual health costs translate to at least Rs 20,000 crore per year."

Anumita Roychowdhury of Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) says India is seven years behind Europe in terms of introducing fuel norms. "This approach of having different fuel norms for different cities is not helping in addressing air pollution. Also, why should citizens of some cities get inferior fuel? BS IV needs to be rolled out throughout the country by 2015, and we should start shifting to BS V immediately after that," said Roychowdhury.

Consulting loses to e-comm at B-schools

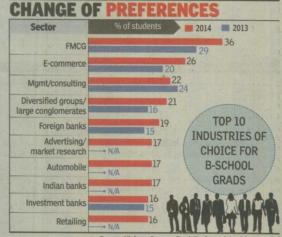
Every Fourth MBA Grad Wants To Work In Online Industry | FMCG Stays Top Choice

Samidha Sharma & Hemali Chhapia-Shah TNN

Mumbai: In a stamp of approval for the fast-growing startup ecosystem in the country, one-fourth of MBA students from across India's toptier business schools, including the IIMs, said they would prefer working for the fledgling e-commerce sector, pippingtraditional favourites like consulting and financial services jobs. The sector which has been flush with funds, on the back of growing adoption of online shopping, is now the second most preferred job avenuefor B-school grads after the FMCG industry.

Continuing with its rapid acceptance among management graduates, e-commerce has dethroned management consultancy from the second spot for the first time this year even as sectors such as manufacturing, software and IT services fell out of the top 10 league, said findings from a survey conducted by global market research firm Nielsen and shared exclusively with TOI. Investment banking, a much coveted sector for MBA grads in the pre-economic crisis days, is now at a lowly 10th spot, having lost its sheen internationally and in India among MBAs. I-banks with fat bonuses on offer were a big draw before the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008.

What is significant though is that despite economic uncertainty still looming large, the trend of young MBA grads looking to board the startup bandwagon has only gone up over the past couple of years in India. "One in five respondents indicated that they might consider a startup after gaining experience at their first job, and are open to the risk and challenge that come with working independently or on board an online/e-commerce set up. This is a trait seen largely in toppers from premier campuses, who aim to operate as young entrepreneurs in the near future," said Surjya Roy,



Source: Nielsen, Campus Track Business School Survey 2013

director, Nielsen India.

Nielsen India's Campus recruiter Index, an annual survey mapping preferred career choices of 1,600 MBA students from the top 35 management institutions, ranked Hindustan Unileveron top of the list of recruiters followed by Procter & Gamble and Google.

V K Menon, director-career advancement services, Indian School of Business (ISB), Hyderabad, said the premium set of top companies in FMCG and consulting were hiring in large numbers and that had allowed them to maintain their top positions in the pecking order. However, the e-commerce startups from a few years back have now grown to become fairly sized companies and their capacity to hire has also grown over time. Manufacturing, on the other hand, Menon said, witnessed flat hiring owing to the continued sluggishness in the sector.

E-commerce companies made a total of 81 offers constituting about 28% of the overall technology offers at ISB, where leading the pack were Amazon, Flipkart, InMobi and Myntracom. The year witnessed a 50% increase in the number of startups participating in the placements process, Menon said. Many new startups like Silicon

Valley venture capital fund Sequoia Capital-backed BankBazaar.com and Zomato came to ISB for the first time. At IIM-Calcutta, the world's largest online retailer Amazon made the highest number of offers on campus at 16 for leadership and operations roles.

Two years back, students graduating from top B-schools like the IIMs would ask if there was job security in e-commerce. They wanted jobs in consulting and I-banks. But things have changed quite dramatically as these youngsters realize jobs in startups offer a larger canvas for them to make an impact," said Kunal Bahl. co-founder, Snapdeal, which is backed by eBay and other top VC funds. Bahl, a Wharton graduate, said Snapdeal hired around 25 MBA graduates from different IIMs this year.

Sankarshan Basu, chairperson, career development services at IIM Bangalore, said consulting and finance occupied the top spots with close to half of the graduating batch joining them while FMCG, e-commerce and technology companies hired the remaining 50%. XLRI's placement chairman Rajiv Mishra said FMCG had maintained its pole position at the B-school this year.