

Significant Milestone



■ (left to right) Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for HRD, Communications & IT; Rajendra S Pawar, Chairman, NIIT and Hemant Sethi, President, School Learning Solutions & HiWEL, NIIT at NIIT University, Neemrana

NIIT, on October 7, achieved a milestone in its mission to take computer proficiency to the grassroots, by imparting computer-based learning to 10 million students across India. Through its 'NIIT@School' programme that offers computer education in government and private schools, NIIT has been shaping the future of Indian students for over a decade now. NIIT's computer education movement, introduced for the first time in 371 Government schools in Tamil Nadu in 1999 through the Public Private Partnership model, now covers nearly 16,600 educational institutions across 18 states in the country. From Keylong (Himachal Pradesh), to Rameswaram (Tamil Nadu), and from Vandh (Gujarat) to Agartala (Tripura) the programme reaches out to students in the farthest and remotest corners of India.

At an event held at the not-for-profit NIIT University campus in Neemrana to mark the 10 million milestone Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resource Development and Communications and IT, delivered the keynote

address and felicitated outstanding students and teachers from across the country. Rajendra S Pawar, Chairman, NIIT, leading academicians, principals of various schools, bureaucrats and members of NIIT and NIIT University were also present on the occasion.

Congratulating NIIT, Sibal said, "It's a very proud moment for us, because for one institution...just one institution...to provide computer education to 10 million students is a milestone I don't think any other institution could have reached anywhere in the world.... It's a monumental task, done with great passion."

Sibal further acknowledged NIIT's contribution in bridging the digital divide, by bringing the light of IT literacy into the lives of people who would never even have seen a computer. Sharing words of encouragement with students and teachers from Assam, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi NCR and other parts of India, Sibal said that the objective now is to take the 10 million number to many more millions and reach out to the entire community of India's school going children.

Children recognised for their exemplary performance included Mahasweta Kumar from Mangaldoi Govt Girls Higher Secondary School, Darrang, Assam, who is the National winner of MindChampions Academy 2011 (a joint initiative with Viswanathan Anand for developing young minds through Chess). Anirudh Iyengar from Pune was also felicitated for completing the first Ignou certificate programme in chess as a mind booster.

Touching the 10 million student count, involved creating 23,936 hours of content, setting up 1,07,209 computer-based learning nodes, selecting, training, certifying 3,96,449 computer teachers, across government and private schools. NIIT has indirectly made a positive contribution to the general development of the villages where children are being taught computers.

These villages in remote locations now enjoy power supply, telephone and Internet connectivity. The schools programme is based on NIIT's founding vision of Bringing People and Computers Together — Successfully.