

NIIT

NIIT in the News

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Reasons that warm my heart about ISB are the values that make it a market-driven, innovative institution

Rajendra S Pawar

WHEN passion and innovation come together, you get magic. The Indian School of Business (ISB) at Hyderabad is one such magic that I admire.

First, some simple facts. From zero to 425 annual enrollments in a post-graduate management program within five years is a global first. A faculty team comprising 100-plus professors from over 45 international universities is a unique characteristic of the school. A world-class campus that is as good, perhaps better than the very best in the world is a matter of great pride for all stakeholders. A global reputation built in a short span of six years is an absolute first and an enviable one at that. Finally, starting with a generous corpus put together by a passionate team of India's business leaders, the school has already achieved a financial break-even in operations.

While there is a long list of attributes of ISB that I admire, there are three that are particularly noteworthy:

Market Driven: For all those who are nervous about the market being an effective arbiter in professional education, ISB should provide great comfort. The power of the idea has weathered criticisms and pitfalls, and we have a shining example that is a beacon to all stakeholders deeply concerned with professional education. An ever-increasing number of better and brighter students are happily paying an escalating fee (through loans and scholarships) simply because their improved financial status after the course yields a superior return on their investment.

ISB's policy of using merit as the

key criterion is combined with an increasing desire to provide scholarships to bright students who face financial constraints.

Global and world-class: Within a short period since its inception, the entry profile of students has already reached among the top five in the world. I have yet to meet an international visitor to the campus who has not unequivocally agreed that the ISB campus in terms of infrastructure has no parallel. Globally reputed faculty members give their best to students for two reasons — those of Indian origin want to make a contribution to their country while teachers of foreign origin are excited by the calibre and energy level of the ISB Student.

Intense: The one thing that strikes me every time I spend a day or an evening at the campus is the amazing levels of energy on display among students, faculty and staff at ISB. For students, it is a pressure-cooker environment with an 18-hour day, all seven days of the week, not just engrossed in academics, but to a large measure in extra-curricular activities as well.

The story of ISB, then, is not just one of great success as echoed by the *Financial Times* ranking, placing it among the top 20 institutions in this category worldwide. To me, the reasons that warm my heart about ISB are the values that make it a market-driven, innovative, independent, global and world-class institution that thrives on the principles of meritocracy and excellence.

The author is chairman, NIIT



NIIT, CII to help build Africa's IT capacity

While the former will offer training, the latter will provide industry internship

Indo-Asian News Service. Bangalore

NIIT and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) will join hands to "help develop ICT (information and communication technology) capacity in the African continent", the Mumbai-based technology training and software solutions company announced on the eve of the India-Africa Forum Summit.

NIIT and the CII would share "high quality education resources" from India, the company said.

The two organisations also plan to involve "other appropriate players" from the Indian industry to specifically help Africa develop human capital for the global IT industry.

A cooperation agreement has been signed by CII director and Africa head Shipra Tripathi and NIIT chief operating officer P Rajendran.

Several business leaders, government officials and media representatives from African countries are currently in India to attend the first India Africa Summit, being held on April 8 and 9. Several outreach programmes were held ahead of the summit.

NIIT said it would provide "relevant IT curricula in line with international IT trends", and content for IT, soft skills and entrepreneurship for training in universities and colleges in Africa.

CII, on the other hand, will facilitate internship with the Indian industry.

The software education major has been running IT training centres in Africa for over a decade. NIIT, which set up its first African IT education centre in Botswana in 1997, claims that it has trained nearly 150,000 students till date. It currently reaches over 20,000 African learners every year, through 36 learning centres in eight African countries - Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Libya, Sudan, Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

NIIT to open centres in Africa

■ **NEW DELHI:** Information technology (IT) education firm NIIT is going to open at least 12 new training centres in the African continent over the next two years, based on a franchisee model. NIIT has signed an agreement with industry body CII to provide IT education content for developing soft skills and entrepreneurship in higher education institutes in Africa. Therein CII will facilitate the firm in tying up with various African nations to set up the centres. The firm is also working closely with the South African government to come up with an IT roadmap for the country. With an increasing number of Indian companies entering Africa and setting up offices, there is a dire need to enhance the human resource talent of the African countries.

The Economic Times
New Delhi
April 8, 2008

NIIT & CII to build ICT capacity for Africa

■ **NEW DELHI:** NIIT and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) will join hands to "help develop ICT (information and communication technology) capacity in the African continent" the Mumbai-based technology training and software solutions company has announced on the eve of the India-Africa Forum Summit. NIIT and the CII would share "high quality education

resources" from India, the company said. They also plan to involve "other appropriate players" from the Indian industry to specifically help Africa develop human capital for the global IT industry.

Infotech bites: it is not just about filling the skills gap

Venkatesh Ganesh
Mumbai April 20

INDIA PRODUCES approximately 400,000 engineers per year and yet, the country's information technology (IT) industry faces a shortage of about 500,000 skilled workers and companies such as HCL and NIIT have sensed a big business potential in filling this gap.

Both, HCL and NIIT have entered into tie-ups with global tech majors such as Microsoft, Cisco, HP and EMC to train and certify students on various technology platforms.

Recently, HCL Infosystems, a part of the Shiv Nadar promoted HCL Group that sells and distributes IT products like mobile phones and laptops entered into an alliance with Microsoft to train and certify students on technologies such as .NET and Windows that can be used in hospitals, banks, malls and other places.

The company plans to open 100 training centres that will offer training and certification to 50,000 students on these technologies across India in three years.



Similarly, software education company NIIT plans to set up 100 centres to offer programmes in computer networking and related technologies by 2009.

One of the reasons for the tie-ups is to fill up the talent shortage in the Indian IT industry. As per industry body Nasscom's estimates, India's emergence as an outsourcing destination has created the need for about 2.3 million professionals by 2010, based on current estimates, and there is a shortage of 0.5 million skilled workers. The HCL centres will have a mix of those owned by the company and franchises.

The curriculum used will be the Microsoft Official Curriculum that is designed and developed by Microsoft. "The goal of the Microsoft - HCL training initiative is to enhance the employability of students and help the Indian IT industry retain its competitive edge," said Ajai Chowdhry, Chairman & CEO, HCL Infosystems.

Cisco on the other hand has tied up with training majors such as NIIT to expand India's networking workforce capacity to 360,000 engineers in the next five years, a six fold increase over present employment levels. The tie-up includes establishing partnerships and opening testing facilities.

According to a recent IDC report on global skills, India's surging economic development will create a demand for 137,000 more networking professionals by 2009.

"Globalisation will continue to transform India's economy and will require its young workforce to develop skills that are market-driven," Wim Elfrink, executive vice president, Cisco recently told HT at a Nasscom summit in Mumbai.

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The Financial Express
New Delhi
April 17, 2008

CII, NIIT to give Africa an edge in IT

INDIA'S leadership position in IT and ITeS is becoming stronger by the day. CII and NIIT have entered into an agreement to help create ICT infrastructure and provide international software talent in the African continent.

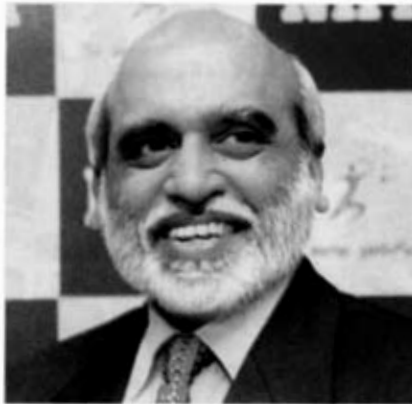
As a part of the agreement, NIIT will provide relevant IT curriculum, soft skills and entrepreneurship training in African universities and colleges. CII on the other hand will facilitate internship with Indian companies.

The idea behind the

agreement, says, P Rajendran, COO, NIIT, is to help Africa develop a human capital for the global IT industry. "There was a stage when India had a huge number of unemployed

people, the economy was weak and there was general unrest. But these gaps closed over the years. We as a company want to share our expertise with another

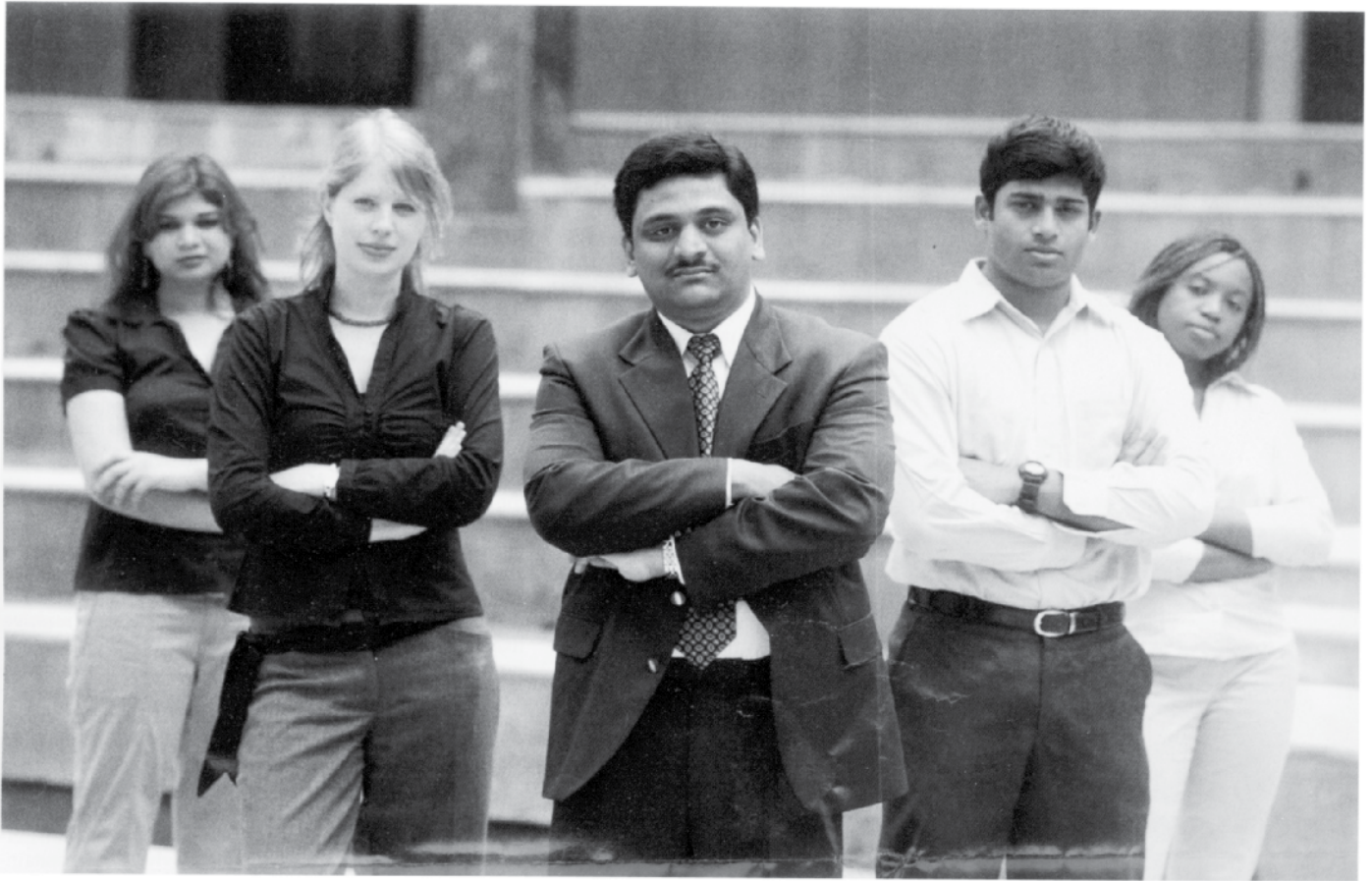
developing country to get them started on the same path." NIIT, which set up its first centre in Africa in 1997, has trained about 1.50 lakh students over the years. With this agreement, says Rajendran, the employment ratio will also grow in Africa. "Skill training always gives people an extra edge," says Rajendran.



India Today Aspire
May 2008



Teaming up : (L-R) NIIT's Vijay Thadani, DU VC Deepak Pental and CII D-G S S Mehta at CII- DU, MoU Signing event at New Delhi



United colours of INDIA

The texture of Indian IT companies' workforce is acquiring diverse hues. Their reaction is to treat the challenges as fun and games

Leslie D'Monte & Shivani Shinde

Joshua Craver, 30, has been working with Satyam Computer Services for two years in Hyderabad. The IT service provider is the first Indian company Craver has worked with. He calls the experience "fruitful" and has decided to stay in India indefi-

nately. "While the initial challenges—both at the personal and professional levels—were about cultural issues, I have become more patient, better at building relationships and a better communicator. But most importantly, I have learned to understand people first, rather than being understood first."

Craver is part of a burgeoning tribe. India has come a long way from its days of being a backpacker's destination. An increasing number is coming from other countries to work here, especially with information technology companies.

Research firm Credence Research and Analytics, in a

study titled Expat-Fluence, puts the number of expatriates currently working in India at 40,000, of which 15 per cent are in top leadership roles.

They do not complain about the heat, food or crowds. The Credence study credits expatriate managers with above-par adaptability, empathy for cultural variances and more patience with their peers than Indian managers. They are also perceived to be more transparent, accountable and open to taking risks.

Earlier, Indian software companies would hire a few foreigners mainly to post them at on-site projects overseas to keep the clients reassured. That has changed. First they came to look after the Indian arms of multinational companies. Now there is a swarm, even at the entry level.

Infosys has a global talent management programme under which it has hired from 82 US colleges (including Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Califor-

nia, Los Angeles, and Columbia). The programme has been extended to the UK. TCS has hired from 24 colleges in the US and Canada, seven in the UK (including London School of Economics), nine in other European countries, six in Brazil and seven in the Asia-Pacific. Wipro has hired 200 from colleges in the US and Europe.

Many of these are being deployed in India, which has become a prestigious location for overseas IT professionals as exposure to the country is increasingly perceived to embellish the CV. Infosys Technologies, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), and HCL Technologies have at least one foreigner sitting on their boards. So do Tech Mahindra, Patni, iGate, iFlex, Mphasis and Moser Baer.

Globalised workforce

The texture of the workforce is not changing in India alone. Indian IT companies plan to increase the number of foreign

employees posted in countries other than India by 10-20 per cent over three to five years. Hiring locals abroad — where they have “near-shore” (with proximity to the client) development centres — will help them tap local markets, serve global clients better, and win more deals in those countries.

Over the last five years, TCS has set up operations in 14 countries including major centres in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, employing over 5,000 professionals and catering to more than 150 clients. Cognizant set up operations in Buenos Aires, Argentina’s capital, last year. Infosys announced its plans last April to set up a software development subsidiary in Mexico to serve US customers.

“As no two countries are alike, the ability to understand the language and culture of a country can make the difference when building long-term relationships with clients and other stakeholders,” says Nandita Gurjar, Infosys vice-president and group head-HRD.

Says Ravi Shankar, global head, talent management group at HCL Technologies, a global workforce brings in different approaches to productivity. Hiring a global workforce helps IT companies understand the client’s requirement.

The accompanying challenges...

Hiring locals is also cheaper than sending Indians abroad. The salaries of international recruits in IT companies have increased by 3-5 per cent in 2007-08, while those of Indians have risen at 13 to 15 per cent. Besides, the rupee has been appreciating against foreign currencies. There are also issues like insurance, family expenses and other expenditures that add up. Moreover, fluency in a foreign language cannot compensate for the cultural understanding native speakers have.

However, the influx of other nationalities in the workforce of Indian IT companies has not only changing the texture of the workforce but also presented human resources challenges and necessitated new man-

agement manoeuvres.

“If the foreign national family doesn’t relocate or feels tough to adapt to the new region, the chances of the hiring going wrong are far higher. It is important to ensure that not only the foreign national is inducted into the new region and culture but efforts are also made to ensure that the family is also taken care of,” says S V Krishnan, global head, Satyam HR.

It’s important to bring people in with the right expectations in terms of work, reporting relationships as well as compensation. “Another challenge is integrating foreign employees into the larger workforce and help them to get accustomed to the culture of the company,” says Gurjar.

... are treated as fun and games

Wipro follows a fun-and-game method that requires people to go through certain exercises. The sales team makes mandatory India visits. They call it the Global Acclimatisation Programme for the sales team that comes from abroad. They come to Bangalore for two to three weeks to get an India experience and understanding of the company. Similarly, fresh MBA recruits from US business schools are brought to Bangalore for a three-month orientation course.

Cognizant has an e-learning tool for foreigners that helps them understand Indian communication styles, social courtesies, body-talk, facial and other gestures, postures and personal and social conversation.

NIIT, which has been recruiting locals abroad since 1999, has a vision document which employees go through when they join. Besides that, they also have things like Annual Day and other events that are followed across the globe

uniformly. All new trainees at Infosys engage in a four-month programme at the Global Education Center on the Mysore campus near Bangalore. After that, the employees are allocated to development centers in India for two months to gain hands-on experience with real projects.

Every trainee who joins TCS undergoes a 52-day Initial Learning Programme. The Indian ILP is conducted at the company’s training centre in Thiruvananthapuram. TCS has established ILP centres in other geographies like the US, China, Hungary and Uruguay. The programme offered to recruits in non-Indian geographies is designed specifically to handle cross-cultural issues.

HCL Technologies’ management believes that besides basic technical know-how the foreign workforce must possess special skills pertaining to their work nature. “We generally have foreign recruitments at middle and senior level management, so years of work experience is an essential requisite for these foreign recruits,” says Shankar. The company is planning to recruit more people from Singapore, Malaysia, Columbia, Brazil and the US.

Hari Iyer N, senior vice-president (human resources) with Sasken says that while hiring foreign workers the company looks at the candidates’ fitment with the organisation’s philosophy and existing structure as well as growth plans.

While at it, the companies will do well to listen to Craver. “To be successful in India you need to be curious. On a personal note, I realise people here love to take you home to make you meet their family or friends. I also took up reading in India. Rather I feel my social life has improved a lot here (laughs).” 🐼

The Pioneer
Lucknow
April 15, 2008

NIIT, CII join hands to help build Africa's IT capacity

NIIIT and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) will join hands to 'help develop ICT (information and communication technology) capacity in the African continent', the Mumbai-based technology training and software solutions company has announced on the eve of the India-Africa Forum Summit. NIIT and the CII would share 'high quality education resources' from India, the company said. They also plan to involve 'other appropriate players' from the Indian industry to specifically help Africa develop human capital for the global IT industry.

A cooperation agreement has been signed by CII director and Africa head Shipra Tripathi and NIIT chief operating officer P. Rajendran.

Several business leaders, government officials and media representatives from African countries are currently in India to attend the first India Africa Summit, being held April 4-9.

NIIT said it would provide 'relevant IT curricula in line with international IT trends', and content for IT, soft skills and entrepreneurship for training in universities and colleges in Africa. CII, on the other hand, will facilitate internship

with the Indian industry.

CII, founded over 112 years ago, has a direct membership of over 7,000 businesses from both private and public sectors, including small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and multinational corporations (MNCs), and an indirect membership of over 90,000 companies from around 362 national and regional associations.

NIIT calls itself 'Asia's No 1 trainer' and says it offers learning and knowledge solutions to five million students across 32 countries.

NIIT Ltd's Shivanjali Singh said the company and CII would work together and explore modalities of "embedding" NIIT's industry-endorsed IT training programs in the curriculum of universities and colleges in Africa.

They will also look at the possibilities of establishing "centres of excellence" for talent development in different African countries.

The software education major has been running IT training centres in Africa for over a decade. NIIT, which set up its first African IT education centre in Botswana in 1997, claims that it has trained nearly 150,000 students till date.

It currently reaches over 20,000 African

learners every year, through 36 learning centres in eight African countries - Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Libya, Sudan, Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe. The government of Botswana has awarded accreditation of Tertiary Education Council (TEC) to NIIT's industry-recognised IT training programs. The company said its flagship DNIIT programme - focussed on internet and e-commerce technologies - was the most popular training program in many African countries.

NIIT offers scholarship programmes, which have gained good responses in countries like Nigeria and Ghana. It says its innovative learning project Hole in the Wall Education (HiWEL) has been implemented in Rwanda, Namibia, South Africa, Botswana, and Mozambique.

It claims to be among the top 20 Indian software exporters, with operations in some 42 countries. It has also tied up with Chinese universities for training engineers from that country.

NIIT said it recently launched the state-of-art training campus in Botswana, which would accommodate 7,000 students in various IT streams by 2010.

IANS

Navbharat
Nagpur
March 8, 2008

एनआईआईटी धरमपेठ सेंटर के 15 वर्ष पूर्ण

नागपुर एनआईआईटी नागपुर, एनआईआईटी लिमिटेड का हिस्सा है। यह आईटी और आईटी-असिस्टेड ट्रेनिंग का स्वीकृत लीडर है जो लगभग 33 देशों में सीखने और ज्ञान अर्जन सोल्युशन प्रोवाइड करता है। आज 5,00,000 विद्यार्थी इनके रोल बुक पर हैं। एनआईआईटी का प्रथम और एकमात्र एशियन एजुकेशन एवं प्रशिक्षण संगठन है और यहां से 20 टॉप ग्लोबल आईटी ट्रेनिंग मार्केट लीडर लगातार 4 वर्षों से कार्यरत हैं। नागपुर सेंटर, एनआईआईटी में उपलब्ध सभी पाठ्यक्रमों को संचालित करते हैं। इनमें से कुछ विशिष्ट पाठ्यक्रम जैसे- जीएनआईआईटी, इंग्लिश स्पीकिंग कोर्सेस, ओस्कल 9इ, तथा इंजीनियरिंग और आईटी स्नातकों के लिए एक्सीलरेटेड एडवांस कोर्सेस भी कंडक्ट करते हैं। इंजीनियरिंग स्टूडेंट को उनके करिकुलम की मैपिंग के साथ-साथ विशेष मॉड्यूलर कोर्सेस भी जैसे एडवांस टेक्नोलॉजी, जिसमें जो कि इंडस्ट्री ओरिएंटेशन से संबंधित है का ज्ञान भी उन्हें यहां प्राप्त होता है। यहां के फैकल्टी मेंबर आईटी प्रोफेशनल्स हैं और इन्होंने फैकल्टी काम्पीटेंस टेस्ट में गुणवत्ता हासिल की है। यह परीक्षा एनआईआईटी लि. संचालित करता है। यह परीक्षा विद्यार्थियों के लिये ऑनलाइन द्वारा कंडक्ट की जाती है जो

कि माइक्रोसॉफ्ट सर्टिफिकेशन एक्जामिनेशन की लाइन पर है और यह विद्यार्थियों को ऑनलाइन पर तुरंत उपलब्ध कराई जाती है। इंडस्ट्री जीएनआईआईटी के इन्डोर्स करिकुलम, तथा एनआईआईटी के फ्लैगशिप कोर्स जो कि आपको दोहरी पात्रता दिलवाता है जिसे आप अपने ग्रेजुएशन के साथ कर सकते हैं और प्रोफेशनल प्रैक्टिस के लिये एक वर्ष तक रकम भी देय है। इस सेंटर के जीएनआईआईटीएन को अमूल, कोलगेट (आई) प्रा. लि. प्रीमियर टेक्नोलॉजी ग्रुप, इन्फोस्पेक्ट्रम आदि में अच्छे पद पर स्थान प्राप्त होता है। धरमपेठ सेंटर ने बहुत से स्नातकों को बीपीओ इंडस्ट्री को प्रशिक्षित किया जो कि आज बीपीओ यूनिट्स जैसे लॉकिम अपस्ट्रीम, विप्रो, स्पेक्ट्रमाइंड, एमफेसिस, एम सोर्स, कान्वरजीस, डेल आदि में उच्च पद पर कार्यरत हैं। जिन विद्यार्थियों ने अपनी उद्भूत कक्षा पूरी की है वे जीएनएनआईआईटी प्रोग्राम के लिये पात्र होंगे। एनआईआईटी के सेंटर धरमपेठ में- 3 री मंजिल, मंगलम् आर्केड, लीला'स रेस्टोरेंट के ऊपर, सदर- 3री मंजिल, 'बजाज विंग', मंगलवारी काम्प्लेक्स, नंदनवन- 1, केशव इनक्लेव, बैंक आफ बड़ेदा के बाजू में स्थित है।

Business Standard (Hindi)
New Delhi
April 3, 2008

द. अफ्रीका में अंतरराष्ट्रीय भारतीय अध्ययन केंद्र खुलेगा

दक्षिण अफ्रीका के विटवाटरखैंड विश्वविद्यालय में सितंबर में अंतरराष्ट्रीय भारतीय अध्ययन केंद्र खोला जाएगा। स्नातक और डिप्लोमा पाठ्यक्रमों के अलावा इस केंद्र में भारतीय साहित्य पर अंग्रेजी में परास्नातक पाठ्यक्रम भी चलाया जाएगा। भारत के महावाणिज्य दूत नवदीप सूरी ने यहां आए भारतीय पत्रकारों को बताया कि विश्वविद्यालय ने परियोजना के लिए आठ लाख 50 हजार रैंड (करीब 1,06,00 अमेरिकी डॉलर) की राशि आवंटित की है। विभाग में राष्ट्रीय शोध संस्थान का भी एक अधिकारी होगा। सूरी ने बताया कि दक्षिण अफ्रीका के विश्वविद्यालय भारत के व्यापारिक माहौल से अवगत कराने के लिए प्रबंधन के छात्रों को छोटे-छोटे कार्यक्रमों के लिए भारत भेज रहे हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि एनआईआईटी जैसे संस्थानों को यहां अपना केंद्र खोलने के लिए आगे आना चाहिए।

भाषा

Veer Arjun
New Delhi
April 8, 2008

एनआईआईटी व सीआईआई ने हाथ मिलाया

बंगलौर(आईएनएस)। अफ्रीकी देशों में सूचना एवं संचार प्रौद्योगिकी (आईसीटी) के विकास में मदद के लिए भारतीय उद्योग परिसंघ (सीआईआई) और एनआईआईटी ने हाथ मिलाया है।

सीआईआई की निदेशक और अफ्रीकी मामलों की प्रमुख शिमा त्रिपाठी और एनआईआईटी के मुख्य संचालन अधिकारी पी. राजेंद्रन ने समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर किए हैं। तकनीकी प्रशिक्षण और साफ्टवेयर सेवा प्रदान करने वाली मुंबई की कंपनी एनआईआईटी ने 9 भारत-अफ्रीका फोरम शिखर बैठक के ठीक पहले उक्त समझौते की घोषणा की। कंपनी ने कहा कि वह सीआईआई के साथ मिलकर भारत के उच्च गुणवत्ता वाले शिक्षा संसाधन अफ्रीकी देशों को मुहैया कराएगी।

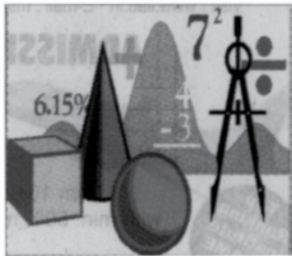
The Statesman
Kolkata
April 4, 2008

CII-NIIT pact

NEW DELHI, April 3: The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and National Institute of Information Technology (NIIT) today entered into an agreement to help create Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure and foster international software talent in the African continent. ■ SNS

Experimenting with Maths

NIIT introduces Math Labs in schools



Cara Gupta Sarkar

The National Council for Educational Research and Training has indicated in its National Curriculum Framework that Maths will be treated as a focus area by 2010. It recommended that all schools set up a Math Lab for promoting the subject and that 20 per cent of the final marks for a student would be from assessments of Lab work.

Keeping in tune with the NCERT's suggestion, NIIT has introduced Math Labs in

schools. It aims to cater to students from classes VI to X.

To bridge the gap between a 'good student' and an 'average' one, the NIIT lab provides the 'three I approach'. The three "Ts" are Imagine (thinking out of the box), Investigate (question and explore) and Interact (to work collectively and share knowledge). A lab will be set up in schools with NIIT's assistance to enable teachers to demonstrate, explain and reinforce abstract mathematical ideas using concrete objects, models, charts, graphs, pictures and posters. The labs will have computers equipped with software like Geometric Sketch Pads — a tool which promotes a child's understanding of geometrical concepts. There will be 31, 57, 30, 70, and 35 activities designed for the VI, VII, VIII, IX and X classes, respectively. ■

SUMMING UP

NIIT has recently rolled out its maths lab, which will enable school students to learn and explore maths concepts and verify mathematical facts and theorems using technology tools such as 'geometer's sketchpad,' along with hands-on activities using a wide variety of mathematical models. The lab will be offering schools multiple teaching and learning aids comprising technology applications, videos, and measuring instruments, among others. The lab will also enable a teacher to demonstrate, explain and reinforce abstract mathematical ideas by using concrete objects, models, charts, graphs, pictures and posters.

Similarly, Kits and Concepts Limited, offers maths labs where children can perform mathematical experiments, play games, solve puzzles and become involved in other activities related to maths. It is activity centered where children are placed in a problem-solving situation. Through self-exploration, they discover mathematical principles, patterns and process.

Kramnik is a tough competitor: Anand

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

MUMBAI, APRIL 25

WORLD chess champion Vishwanathan Anand says rapid chess can be the best way to take the game to a TV audience.

"Chess has a great presence on internet and it is only a matter of translating that following to the small box. I think rapid chess can play a big role here," said the champion on the sidelines of a function organised by the NIIT at the Don Bosco High School, Matunga on Friday.

Anand, however, was happy with the way the game was growing in India. "Even in places like Agartala now have chess being played there. The number of players are growing steadily and it's a good sign that we will have mass following. I'm very much optimistic," said the man who has an elo rating of 2803 according to the latest ratings and that makes him the No.1 player in the world.

Anand stated he was looking to put an extra effort in his preparations for his World Championship match against Russian Vladimir Kramnik that will be played in Bonn, Germany later this year in October.

"I plan to play in as much events as possible as part of preparations for the match against Kramnik," said the man who is only the fourth player in the history of the game to break the



Vishwanathan Anand at the Don Bosco High School, Matunga on Friday—Puneet Chandhok

2800 ranking barrier. "I would also be putting lot many hours on the board," said Anand but denied that he would be involving any specific Indian player for practice.

Anand pointed out that Kramnik was a formidable match-play competitor and he was expecting a very

tough encounter when he defends his title against the Russian.

"Though I don't have cordial relations with Kramnik, I don't consider him an enemy either. He is definitely a tough player and I will need to be at my best to beat him. A lot will depend on my current form," said Anand, who is only the non-Russian player after Denmark's Bent Larsen and American Bobby Fischer to have won a Chess Oscar. In fact, he has won it four times in 1997, 1998, 2003 and 2004.

Anand said he was not too concerned about the ELO ratings, but always aimed to win. "I look to win matches and the ELO ratings would follow".

Regarding the ongoing IPL cricket matches, Anand said he was not following them. "I've been travelling a lot and haven't really had the chance to watch the games," he said, hoping that one day even chess would be able to offer good money to its players.

The genial chess wizard said his all-time favourite sportsperson was former American tennis star John McEnroe.

"I've recently read an study about the line calls made by the line umpires in tennis and it showed that about 40 per cent of the time their calls were wrong. I'm happy to know that McEnroe was right in voicing his view," said Anand.

The Hindu
New Delhi
April 26, 2008

Slum children get free access to computers

Rajasthan launches five Playground Learning Centres in Pink City

Special Correspondent

JAIPUR: Five Playground Learning Centres (PLCs) for children belonging to economically and socially marginalised sections of society were launched here in the Rajasthan Capital on Friday. Conceived as a part of "Minimally Invasive Education", the PLCs provide free and unsupervised access to computers for the slum children.

Mayor Ashok Parnami launched the first of the PLCs at the Jaipur Municipal Corporation's Pink City No. 3 School at Chainpuria in Topkhana Hazuri area. The PLCs have been installed in the remote parts of the city to promote computer education among the school kids. The PLCs encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning.

The PLCs are the outcome of a tripartite memorandum

- The centres offer free and unsupervised access to computers
- 200 PLCs with 400 computers in 200 low-income schools to be set up

of understanding signed in 2007 by the Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC), the Rajasthan Council for Elementary Education and HiWEL (Hole-in-the-Wall Education Limited). The first five PLCs have come up under the partnership of HiWEL, JMC, Michael & Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF) and Rajasthan Council of Elementary Education. HiWEL is a joint venture of NIIT, Global Talent Development Corporation and International Finance Corporation, a World Bank affiliate.

As part of the agreement, HiWEL will set up 200 such PLCs with 400 computers in

200 low-income schools in and around slum locations in Jaipur.

Kids from adjoining slums and underserved communities will have access to educational content and games and learn in an environment that allows them to build and improve their understanding through observation, exploration, discovery, and collaboration, with minimal intervention from adults.

NIIT has installed over 150 HiWEL Learning Stations across the country including far-flung places such as Leh, Jaisalmer and locations in Arunachal Pradesh.

Outside India, these sta-

tions have been set up in Cambodia, Uganda, Rwanda, Mozambique and Botswana and are now being introduced in several other countries in Africa.

Established in 2001, the HiWEL concept is based on the path-breaking learning methodology created by Sugata Mitra, Chief Scientist Emeritus of NIIT. Initially called Minimally Invasive Education, this innovative methodology was first tested in a slum at Kalkaji in New Delhi in 1999.

In this experiment, a computer connected to the Internet is embedded into a slum wall and left for unsupervised use by children.

The experiment suggested that children irrespective of their social, ethnic or educational identity could learn to use computers by themselves, thereby closing the much-discussed "digital divide".

The Hindu
Chennai
April 20, 2008

Indian trainer makes IT happen for the Chinese

Anand Parthasarathy

SHANGHAI: India's best known brand in IT education NIIT has just completed a decade of its operations in China, having teaching centres in 65 cities across 24 provinces.

On Saturday, this correspondent sat in briefly in the largest of three NIIT centres in this city, the one on Nanjing Road, as a Chinese tutor took a computer and smart-board-assisted class in C++ programming.

"On week days, we have 500 students coming here in various batches," explained Centre Head, Anil Nair. The course content of the GNIIT degree in software engineering is identical to what is taught in India. But local demand persuaded NIIT to create two new streams – in Networking and Animation/gaming, he said.

NIIT's China operation now embraces nearly 1,000 teachers, only 30 of them Indians.

The courses are being offered on 131 Chinese university campuses and in many cases, students get credit for GNIIT modules in their graduate studies, Prakash Menon,



CHINESE TECH TAKEAWAY: Prakash Menon, president of NIIT China, and (right) a class in progress on Saturday at the Nanjing Road branch of NIIT in Shanghai. – PHOTOS: ANAND PARTHASARATHY

president of NIIT China, told *The Hindu*.

Having come to China in 1997 to explore IT training opportunities on behalf of NIIT, Mr. Menon never went back. In fact, he moved his family to China.

His wife and two school-going children are, like him,

fluent in Chinese.

In many provinces, NIIT has been invited to go beyond IT training and help restructure and IT-enable school education systems... a tribute to the reputation India enjoys in this arena.

"Growth has been tremendous in recent years; we have

50,000 students taking our courses this year. Sixteen translators are busy at all times, updating and translating material for new courses," says Mr. Menon. "But for us, the real pride comes from the respect and recognition that an Indian company enjoys in China."

Metro Now
New Delhi
April 8, 2008

NIIT, CII JOIN HANDS TO HELP BUILD AFRICA'S IT CAPACITY

NIIT and the Confederation of Indian Industry will join hands to "help develop ICT (information and communication technology) capacity in the African continent". They also plan to involve "other appropriate players" from the Indian industry to specifically help Africa develop human capital for the global IT industry.

The Times of India
New Delhi
April 7, 2008

The Economic Times
New Delhi
April 5, 2008

AGREEMENT ENTERED

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and NIIT have entered into an agreement to help create ICT infrastructure and foster International software talent in the African continent. As part of this capacity building and skill development endeavour, NIIT and CII will share high quality education resources from India and involve other appropriate players from the Indian industry to help Africa develop human capital for the global IT industry.

NIIT to open 12 centres in Africa

■ **NEW DELHI:** NIIT is going to open at least 12 new training centres in the African continent over the next two years, based on a franchisee model. NIIT has signed an agreement with industry body CII to provide IT education content for developing soft skills and entrepreneurship in higher education institutes in Africa. Therein CII will facilitate the firm in tying up with various African nations to set up the centres.

HT Mint
New Delhi
April 8, 2008

India looking to carve out a niche in Africa to counter China's clout

BY JYOTI MALHOTRA
jyoti.m@livemint.com

NEW DELHI

A fortnight ago, as he was flying back from Luanda to Addis Ababa after a tour of Namibia and Angola, minister of state for commerce and power Jairam Ramesh got talking to the Air Angola pilot. The pilot told him that he had two grown-up daughters called Indira and Shrimati.

"I knew Indira had been named after Indira Gandhi," Ramesh says, "but when I asked the pilot why he had chosen Shrimati, he asked me, 'Don't you know that your former prime minister's name was Shrimati Indira Gandhi?'"

The anecdote may be humorous, but Ramesh's visit to Africa was serious business. India is beginning to look at Africa as a trade partner, a source of energy, and a happy hunting ground for its companies that are beginning to look for opportunities outside the country.

This seriousness is evident

mint ANALYSIS

in the importance being assigned by the country to the first India-Africa Forum summit, a two-day meeting that will start on Tuesday and will be attended by 14 African leaders, including South African President Thabo Mbeki and African Union Commission's chairman Alfa Oumar Konare. The summit will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

The government has asked all officers of the rank of joint secretary and above, at least in the ministries of commerce and external affairs, to attend the inauguration at the Capital's Vigyan Bhawan.

India, it is evident, wants to better its economic and diplomatic relations with Africa in a geopolitical game where China is the unnamed opponent.

Discovery of Africa

From medicines to mining, energy to diamonds, and coffee to horticulture, India's dis-

covery of Africa is on.

In Cote D'Ivoire, Tata Steel Ltd is investing \$1.5 billion in an iron ore plant to help source raw material for making steel. In the Arlit region of Niger, a little-known firm from Mumbai called Taurian Resources Pvt. Ltd recently won a contract to mine 3,000 sq. km of the southern Sahara desert for uranium. In Ethiopia, Bangalore-based Karuturi Networks Ltd grows roses for export to the US, among other markets. And nine out of 10 diamonds sourced from Africa's mines are sold to India's vast diamond finishing industry.

India's presence in Africa dates back to the British Raj, when indentured labour from the country was used to work sugar cane farms in South Africa. Gujarati communities followed to set up shop, mainly in east Africa.

Mahatma Gandhi's 21-year stint in South Africa, from 1893 to 1914, when he fashioned the non-violent resistance move-

TURN TO BACK PAGE ▶

India, Africa seek to energize ties

FROM FRONT PAGE

ment called satyagraha, encouraged an independent India to support anti-apartheid groupings such as the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa and the South-West African People's Organization (SWAPO) in erstwhile South-West Africa (today's Namibia).

However, as India embarked on its liberalization programme in the early 1990s, coinciding with the end of white rule in South Africa in 1994, it shifted its focus to the West. And it simply lost interest in Africa. That didn't just happen in terms of diplomatic relations; it happened even in terms of trade and commerce.

"In its engagement with the world, India Inc. has remained far too enamoured of Europe and the US; they simply don't understand the potential of the African market," says Malvinder Mohan Singh, CEO and MD of Ranbaxy Laboratories Ltd, which has the second largest medicine distribution network in Africa after Glaxo SmithKline Plc.

The China angle

The India-Africa summit comes in the wake of similar summits held between Africa and the EU and Japan in recent years. In 2006, when China hosted the China-Africa Forum, which was attended by 41 out of 53 African heads of state, India sat up in alarm.

At FOCAC, Chinese President Hu Jintao promised \$3 billion in preferential loans to Africa, another \$2 billion in export credits and the creation of a \$5 billion fund to encourage Chinese investment in Africa. Hu pointed out that trade between China and Africa amounted to \$40 billion in 2006—up 40% from the year before—and that China had written off the debt of 31 poor African nations.

Deals worth \$2 billion between Chinese and African firms were signed at the summit. In contrast, at the India-Africa business conclave last month in New Delhi, a dialogue focused on business that served as a sort of precursor to the summit that starts on Tuesday, while deals worth \$10 billion were discussed, nothing was signed.

All this makes the India-Africa summit significant.

The summit is expected to end with a declaration that stresses the historical bond between India and Africa, and the growing partnership between the two. An action plan on taking the relationship further on several dimensions, in-

cluding business, is also on the cards. As is an announcement of aid to Africa.

Senior officials from the ministry of external affairs (MEA) say it isn't as if India hasn't done anything in Africa. The officials, who did not wish to be named, point out that the country's trade with Africa has increased from \$5 billion in 2002 to \$32 billion in 2007. They say India extends \$500 million in various lines of credit every year (half of the credit offered by the department of economic affairs worldwide) to Africa. And they add the MEA's Aid to Africa programme has spent Rs80 crore in the last three years.

Incidentally, a survey by an industry body on Monday said India's two-way trade with African nations could double to \$50 billion by 2012 if the government signs more trade pacts and offers incentives to exporters. The survey of 41 companies, conducted by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, also said the government should further enhance the credit lines to African countries as this would only lead to higher exports.

Ramesh says India should not even compare itself with China. "There is no race between us; the Chinese have left us far, far, far behind in Africa." Considering the widespread affection for Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi across Africa, Ramesh adds that he is surprised that the country has been "unable to convert that political goodwill into deep economic partnerships."

In Congo, according to *The Economist* magazine, Chinese state-owned firms are building or refurbishing railways, roads and mines at a cost of \$12 billion, in exchange for the right to mine copper ore, cobalt and tantalum (used in mobile phones and laptops) of equivalent value.

By 2006, the Chinese had poured in as much as \$15 billion in energy-rich Angola and the African country decided it had no need for the International Monetary Fund's many billions that came with strings attached. China's readiness to invest in Sudan's oilfields (the Greater Nile Oil Project has the China National Petroleum Corp., India's Oil and Natural Gas Corp. Ltd and Malaysia's Petronas working in tandem) has been a major reason why the Sudanese have rejected Western attempts to mediate in the Darfur conflict.

If India has to make a difference in Africa, Ramesh says, "it can no longer be stuck in the



INDIA-AFRICA PARTNERSHIP
India-Africa Forum Summit
MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS
New Delhi, April, 2007

Old ties: India's external affairs minister Pranab Mukherjee (second from left) holds hands with his counterparts from African nations in New Delhi on 7 April. The two-day India-Africa Forum Summit begins today.

- India to very soon give Angola a "white paper" indicating interest in hydrocarbons, despite China's stranglehold in that country. This would include exploration by ONGC Videsh as part of a Brazilian-Portuguese-Indian consortium in three offshore blocks, as well as make India an equity partner in the 200,000 barrels per day Lobito refinery. India to also offer a centre for petroleum technology.
- BHEL proposes 300MW power plants in Namibia and Angola.
- In Sudan, ONGC (25%), China's CNPC (40%) and Malaysia's Petronas (30%) are jointly operating four mining leases from which nearly 11 million tonnes of oil is produced every year. ONGC has led the exploration of reserves.
- In Algeria, ONGC has two assets, of which one block is in the Gulf of Suez, where initial discoveries have been made.
- In Libya, ONGC has four exploration projects, of which two are in joint venture with Turkey.
- In Nigeria, ONGC-Mittal Energy Ltd are currently exploring Blocks 279 & 285.
- In the joint development zone of Sao Tome Principe & Nigeria, ONGC is involved in exploration.
- ONGC making "efforts" in Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Cote D'Ivoire.
- Indian Railways to examine feasibility of modernizing the Walvis Bay-Windhoek 300km railway line. Similarly, RITES will expand its role in the Angolan railway system.
- With 170,000 Angolans handicapped from the rampant presence of land mines, India likely to set up a "Jaipur Foot" facility to manufacture artificial limbs in Luanda.
- Namibia wants 60 slots in training personnel in civil aviation in India.

Source: Mint research

SANDEEP BHATTAGAR/MINT

public sector mode of cooperation." While lines of credit are key in winning contracts in power and the railways ("demonstrated sectors of Indian competence," says Ramesh), it is imperative that the government and private sector work together to push the "new India that is enjoying such respect globally."

Private sector's role

Everywhere he went in Namibia and Angola, Ramesh says, he heard the Africans say eloquent about **Tata Motors Ltd** and its cars (both the Nano and the Jaguar), about **Mahindra** and **Mahindra Ltd** utility vehicles (on which Angolan fighters used to mount their 155mm mortar guns during the independence struggle) and **Reliance Industries Ltd**, which is currently seeking oil contracts in Angola.

When economic reforms began in 1991, India's trade with Africa was a mere \$967 million. By 2006-07, Indian imports had touched \$11 billion, while exports stood at \$8.4 billion. And Indian companies were

managing director R.S. Butola. Nigeria is a major market for Ranbaxy, and in South Africa the firm's anti-retroviral drug to combat HIV/AIDS has been a resounding success.

"We have been seen as a trusted brand in Africa since the 1970s," says Ranbaxy's Singh, "so we began to leverage our research and development to come out with novel formulations geared to combat HIV/AIDS."

Ranbaxy's success has meant the price of anti-retrovirals has fallen from \$20,000 a year to \$80 a year, making it hugely effective in the price-sensitive African market. The firm is now working on a new drug for malaria, which will be ready by 2011, adds Singh.

"Not a China copycat"

Harry Broadman, economic adviser on Africa to the World Bank in Washington and author of *Africa's Silk Road: China and India's New Economic Frontier*, says in an email interview that he does not agree with critics who say India is being a "copycat" of China in Africa.

"India has a longer history of economic relations and deeper ethnic ties with many African countries and this may well give Indian firms certain competitive advantages vis-à-vis Chinese firms... Moreover, most large Indian firms are private and tend to operate according to commercial principles, whereas the typical large Chinese firm operation in Africa is a state-owned enterprise and can tolerate inefficiencies and may well have access to government subsidies," Broadman says.

However, analysts say the Indian government's own approach in Africa would indicate that it is spreading itself thin. So, there's a Rs78 lakh small industry information centre in Tanzania, a \$5 million SME project in Zimbabwe, an \$80 million hydroelectric power project in Rwanda, an \$8 million financial package for the Seychelles, and another \$7 million for a railway project in Senegal, among other projects of similar magnitude.

One Indian government official denies the charge. He says some African states are so poor that their capacity to absorb technology is mostly geared towards the small and medium sectors. "Moreover, unlike the Chinese, who are interested in Africa's natural resources primarily to drive their own economy, Indian projects in Africa are geared to help Africa help itself," the official adds.

For instance, India is helping build the Pan-African network, where all 53 African

nations are being connected by a satellite and optic fibre network at an estimated cost of Rs543 crore. Crucially, all heads of state and government in Africa will soon be able to use the network for voice and video conferencing between themselves.

Politics and trade

India will never comment on the current conflict in Kenya, or the fact that in Zimbabwe, India's old friend Robert Mugabe has finally lost the elections, another government official says.

The official adds that the Indian democratic experience is beginning to make an impact in Africa. The Bureau of Parliamentary Studies and Training is in great demand across Tanzania, Ethiopia and Kenya, and former Lok Sabha secretary-general G.C. Malhotra advises several countries on parliamentary democracy. Tanzania's Election Commission has requested help from the Election Commission of India.

Such relationships will come in handy as India struggles to find enough energy to fuel the needs of its growing economy. India imports 11% of its oil needs from Nigeria and is currently renewing a push in energy-rich Angola, sub-Saharan Africa's largest oil producer, where it has lost some ground to the Chinese.

The International Energy Agency predicts that India will overtake Japan, the US and China as the world's largest net importer of oil by 2025.

For relations between India and Africa to improve, Jairam Ramesh says the two must cut out the third-country middleman. In the diamond market for instance, India imports \$10 billion of roughs every year from Africa (which produces 70% of the world's diamonds), which it cuts and polishes and exports for \$14 billion.

And 85% of Africa's diamonds are not bought directly by India, but from Antwerp and London.

"Why can't we establish a direct relationship with Africa? Ramesh asks. He adds that he had offered to his counterparts in Namibia and Angola the chance to do so.

"India could set up cutting and polishing industries in Africa, right alongside the mines. Instead of selling roughs to the Western world, value-added African diamonds would add much more to the national kitty. In turn, Indian craftsmen can source these gemstones for making jewellery," he adds.

Broadman says such joint ventures are the future. Indian firms can "help the continent diversify its exports out of natural resources, as well as develop backward and forward linkages to climb the value chain."

Reuters contributed to this story.

'The UN is incapable of new ideas... I'm going to set up a palace of thinking to provide alternatives, possibilities, new thinking'

■ Hello and welcome to Walk the Talk at the NIIT campus in Gurugram, and my guest today is a very special personality. In fact, it would be more apt to call him a legend — Dr Edward de Bono, whose thinking is shaping the way we should be thinking, all over the world, from the boardrooms in Manhattan to the classrooms in Cambodia. Dr de Bono, so wonderful to have you on Walk the Talk. Welcome to India. You talk about lateral thinking, and this, in some ways, is a land of circular thinking.

(Laughs) Well, interestingly, today people talk about big problems in our climate and all that. What I'm talking about is a much bigger problem, which is the poor state of world thinking: that our thinking is not very good. And we have essentially done nothing about thinking outside mathematics for 2,400 years, since the gang of three — the Greek gang of three (Socrates, Aristotle, Plato) — designed 'software' for thinking, which we've used ever since.

■ **With Buddha somewhere around the same time, as well.**
Okay. And it is very much based on judgment. Now in a conflict situation, we judge who's right, who's wrong. What we don't use enough is design — how to design the way forward. Also, another factor, perception is by far the most important factor in thinking, and research by cognitive psychologists has shown that in thinking, 90 per cent of the errors are errors of perception, not of logic. And if your perception is wrong... your logic can be erroneous.

■ **Because, you know, different cultures also think differently. In India, we take great pride in our innovativeness, in a way, and yet we reverse engineer everything. I'll give you an example. When the US Air Force came here for a joint exercise, the Indian Air Force contingent commander was asked, 'The US aircraft are so much modern, so powerful, how will you handle them?' He said, 'We have very good training, we have very good**

■ **Because he's not one given to lateral thinking. He's... very military.**
But even in those steps you say, in a sense, he was mirroring that.

■ **So tell us about your meeting with Gen Musharraf.**
Well, I was invited by his minister of higher education. And I gave several talks about teachers teaching our work in school. Even in the madrassas in Pakistan.

■ **You advise individuals, you advise states, you advise corporates. Can individuals, corporations, and states think alike? Or think the same way?**
Well, the answer is, 'Yes.' And, again, the point I make is: design rather than judgment. For example, in the Israel-Palestine situation. Here we have two of the most intelligent groups on the earth, and for 60 years, they've been fighting each other. Palestinians know that Israel is not going to disappear; Israelis know Palestine is not going to disappear. So we need to design a way forward. Just a suggestion: you let them vote in each other's elections, let them have half a vote each. So the Israelis will never elect Hamas, the Palestinians will never elect Sharon. They'll end up voting constructive leaders who will design a way forward. And that's design. Instead of saying, 'You're bad and if you don't stop doing this we're going to bomb you.'

■ **Did you ever apply your mind to the India-Pakistan Kashmir situation?**
No. But if you invite me to, I will

■ **Because we've heard the same lines now, for more than 60 years. And anyone who would think differently is called a traitor on either side.**
Yes, yes. Perhaps you need to do what happened with the oil industry. Remember when Paul Getty was in Saudi Arabia, they created the neutral zone. I don't remember what the benefits were, but it was a neutral zone. Maybe we need to create a neutral zone.

