

Low-cost revolution: Quality education runs on DVDs

WELCOME IT city is yet to happen. But, some outfits have already begun the makeover with enviable results to their credit

handshake with IT

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LUCKNOW: More than 80% of the school-going children in UP are served by government schools which lack the basic amenities, let alone the high-tech stuff like computers, projectors, smart boards and Internet. And even if the government wants to incorporate information and technology in these schools, the cost effectiveness is the biggest hurdle. Add to that the low rate of computer literacy among the teachers and the patchy supply of electricity to these government schools in remote areas.

So the question is - how does one use IT to improve the quality of education when there are no funds, no electricity, no knowledge of computers and the teaching material has to be in the local language?

Well, Digital Study Hall (DSH), an organisation that runs in a rather mundane part of Gomti Nagar area in Lucknow, seems to have found an answer to the problem. It works on a simple idea of using available and cost effective technology to improve quality of education in rural and underserved areas. The beauty of the entire initiative lies in the low cost model that it has managed to gauge. DSH records classes of good teachers in the city, burns them on a DVD and then distributes the same in rural and semi-rural areas. These discs are

run on DVD players and shown at schools. As the course content changes, DSH promptly provides the school with the revised DVD. To overcome electricity shortage in rural areas, schools have an inverter for backup. DSH is also working on a device that will run on solar energy. The organisation also trains teachers to operate and mediate the video lesson.

DSH, which started in 2005, is a brainchild of Urvashi Sahni, president, Study Hall Educational Foundation and Randolph Wang, ex-computer science professor, Princeton University, Sahni says, "The purpose of DSH was to use technology in a very cost effective way to provide quality education in areas which are very resource starved."

"We knew that things like Internet and computers were a distant dream for these government schools, so we used a simple DVD player, a TV and a battery to run setup which showed lectures from top notch teachers in local languages," added Urvashi. Vikas Misra, who is currently heading the project, said:

"We are working towards developing an online platform for students to access quality education and for teachers to learn best pedagogical practices by streaming recorded videos. The entire DSH content will soon be available on YouTube and upcoming version of our website."

"We are currently working with 70 district institutes of education and training, which are government teacher training colleges, to spread best practices in pedagogy and teaching. They are also shown videos and taught how to use the DSH apparatus in their classrooms," he added.



Rural kids being taught a lesson through DVD running on various terminals.

HT PHOTO

LIMITED RESOURCES, HIGH ACHIEVEMENTS!



HOW DSH WORKS

- Digital Study Hall (DSH) is an innovative approach to improve quality of teaching in rural and slum schools.
- Live classes by the best teachers are recorded digitally on discs. These lessons, taught in local languages and according to local curricula, are collected in a large database.
- DSH distributes these lessons on DVDs to slum schools, where teachers are coached to "mediate" DVD lessons by mimicking the content on the video.

WINNING TRACK

- 2011 3rd place winner for Peter Drucker Innovation Award
- 2009 Ashoka Fellows to both Urvashi Sahni and Randolph Wang
- 2008 Tech Awards by the Tech Museum
- 2007 ACM Eugene Lawler Award

DIGITAL POLYCLINIC

On DSH lines, Digital Polyclinic (DPC) is a community-generated video sharing project for spreading health knowledge in rural India.

It partners with hospitals and NGOs that have a track record of running rural outreach programmes. It films these presentations and discussions. The resulting videos are organized in a digital database then burnt onto DVDs. They then train locals with to be 'mediators'.

70 DIETs working with DSH.

38 KGBVs have intervention programmes for women.

2,000 is the number of videos DSH content repository has.

6,000 is the number of students DSH caters to.

IT'S GOT MAIL

SMART MOVE, BUT STATE GOVT'S ROLE IS CENTRAL

Putting Lucknow on the map of technologically empowered cities will lead to a healthy economy. It will discourage the 'brain-drain' which takes place because of lack of employment opportunities and decent pay packages in Lucknow. But the mere presence of an IT city will not benefit us unless the government promotes it as a viable hub of growth, undertakes the task of its upkeep, provides it with professional maintenance and fills the abyss between demand and supply of highly qualified labour. To enable citizens to take full advantage of this cornucopia, the IT city should be made efficiently accessible to all areas of the city. Seeing the pace of the mammoth development, I am sure that our city will stand out as a resurgent star in India's ever growing economy!

-MANTASHA HUSAIN, LUCKNOW

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Boy resisting robbery attacked with bomb, dies

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LUCKNOW: Shouting for help against robbers proved brutally fatal for a teenager on Saturday. In a shocking incident, an intermediate student was killed after being attacked by a crude bomb by armed robbers who stormed into his house in Chihat's Saraseikh village during the wee hours. The bomb's impact was so massive that the left part of the victim's body was damaged completely and his flesh scattered into 20 metre of area.

Police officials, though panicked immediately after the incident, tried to water down the severity of the crime and registered the case under IPC's section of murder instead of murder during robbery.

The victim was identified as Ankush Soni, 16, who used to stay with his widow mother Rekha Soni and younger brother Luvkush, 12.

The victim's uncle Anil Soni told HT at least five robbers entered into the Soni residence around 2.30am when the family was asleep. The robbers initially held them captive in a room but Ankush somehow managed to free himself and came out of the house shouting for help.

At this, the robbers hurled a crude bomb at Ankush. He was badly injured and died while being taken by the villagers to a hospital. The villagers came to the family's rescue after hearing the massive sound of bomb explosion but the robbers fled before it.

Anil accused the cops of arriving very late at the spot despite repeated calls made to the district police control room and local police station. He said they did not even examine the spot properly and in turn starting cross-questioning the victim's family.

Cops allegedly mounted pressure on the victim's father to write down the application according to them. The police even floated the theory of a fam-

WATERING DOWN CRIME IS NOTHING NEW

City police used the tactic of watering down of crime in the daylight murder of a history-sheeter Mohd Younus on crowded La Touche road on Wednesday. They made the victim's family name three youths of another family who the deceased had an enmity with around 16 yrs ago.



Grieving family members.

THE UNSOLVED PAST

Mar 20: Retd DySP's wife murdered in Paper Mill Colony.
Mar 23: Property dealer shot dead in Gosaiganj.
Mar 29: A woman robbed of ₹3 lakh jewellery.
Mar 30: Five stabbed in Gomti Nagar and Ghazipur area.
Apr 2: Girl's charred body found in Alambagh colony.
Apr 15: Injured girl found in Indira Nagar house.
Apr 17: Youth's body found in Madiaon farm.
Apr 25: A history-sheeter shot dead at La Touche road.

THREE THEFT S IN A ROW

In separate incidents, thieves broke into seven houses in Chihat's Lollai village on Friday night and injured a woman when she resisted them. However, the police registered cases against only three persons.

ily rivalry behind the crime. Chihat police station in charge RP Yadav could not give a satisfactory answer when questioned why the case was registered under murder and not murder during robbery.

Haemophilia: Biz interest affects factor supplies

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LUCKNOW: Purchase of the haemophilia factors at the CSM Medical University has been hampered due to business interest of a few traders.

The tender that could have been finalised way back in August 2011 in one go had to be done thrice, which delayed the process till April 2012. As a result haemophilia patients coming to CSMMU had to either wait for weeks or manage costly factors on their own.

As a result factors are purchased in small quantity that is

WHAT ARE FACTORS

- Haemophilia factors are required by those born with haemophilia.
- The patient has little or no clotting factor in the body, which is a protein needed for normal blood clotting.



- Lack of clotting results in profuse bleeding and even death. In severe haemophiliacs even a minor injury can result in blood loss lasting days or weeks.
- About 80% need factor 8.

not enough to cater to all the patients coming here from different parts of the state.

"In the first tender the company that was declared L-1, which means best suited for the

supply, was not handed over the order for supply as representatives of another company raised objections. And this continued in the next tender too," said a university official.

Roughly ₹10 lakh was provided by the government to the university for haemophilia factor a year before and the tender process is a must for the purchase. "We went through the

normal course of purchase rules but due to vested interest of suppliers the procurement got delayed," said the official.

As there are very few suppliers of haemophilia factors, owing to poor profit margin the university could do nothing but re-tender each time for the same. And this kept on delaying the purchase. Meanwhile, the supply of factors was ensured through purchases in small quantity.

The university has again started process for buying factors worth ₹40 lakh, which will cater to patients for the next eight months.

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LUCKNOW: Property worth ₹1 crore was gutted when a major fire broke out in two plywood-manufacturing units in Bazarkhala's Aishbagh locality here during the early hours of Saturday.

It took firefighters around seven hours to extinguish the flames.

The units were owned by one Ajit Singh and his nephew Ravindra Singh in Mall Godown. Fire officials said short circuit could be the cause behind the incident. However, investigations are on into the incident.

Sources said the fire began



Factory workers look on as fire engulfs the plywood factory.

around 2am from the godown of Ajit Singh's plywood unit where huge stock of expensive wood was stored. They said the fire soon engulfed the entire unit. It was spotted when some unit labour-

ers sleeping close by saw dense smoke coming out of the unit. The labourers alerted the owner who called the fire service control room. By the time rescue operation could begin, the flames had engulfed the adjoining unit owned by Ravindra Singh. Chief fire officer (CFO) Rajendra Tiwari said the operation was delayed in absence of a proper entry passage to the plywood units.

He said the fire fighters had to struggle a lot to douse the flames and at least 30 water tenders were pressed into service for the task. "Thankfully, the firefighters managed to control it otherwise it would have spread to other adjoining units too, he added.

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Date: 28.04.2012 Zonal Manager, Zonal Office, Lucknow.

UP Electricity Regulatory Commission
2nd Floor, Kisan Mandi Bhawan, Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow - 226010

Ref: UPERC/D/L/2012/153 dated: 27th April, 2012

Public Notice

M/s Western UP Power Transmission Company Ltd. has filed an application for grant of Intra-State transmission license within the state of Uttar Pradesh. The salient features of the application were published by the applicant in daily newspapers 'Hindustan Times' (English), 'Indian Express' (English), 'Hindustan' (Hindi), & 'Rashtriya Sahara' (Hindi) dated 14th February, 2012. The public notice also invited comments of various stakeholders on the application.

The applicant has complied with the provisions of UPERC (General conditions of Transmission License) Regulations, 2005 for grant of intra state transmission license. The STU has also recommended grant of transmission license to the applicant. The commission is prima facie of the view that the applicant satisfies conditions for grant of license for proposed intra state transmission system.

Before granting the license, the U.P. Electricity Regulatory Commission (UPERC) proposes to hear various interested stakeholders on the application of Intra-State Transmission License by M/s Western UP Power Transmission Company Ltd. on the 17th May, 2012, at 11:00 hours, in the office of the Commission at II Floor, Kisan Mandi Bhawan, Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-226010.

Interested stakeholders may take this opportunity to present their concerns/objections to the Commission and may give a copy of the same in writing.

Ph: 2720426 Fax: 0522-2720423
Website: www.uperc.org
E-mail: secretary@uperc.org

Secretary

short stories



Children's Academy College prize distribution. LMC TO SERVE NOTICES ON ROAD GRABBERS

LUCKNOW: The LMC has planned a massive anti-encroachment drive near all the busy crossings to ensure smooth flow traffic. The LMC chief has directed all the zonal officers to prepare a list of encroachers and serve them notices to vacate the road for the movement of vehicles or else they would be removed by the LMC and cases filed against them.

Lecture on Indian judiciary
LUCKNOW: Faculty of Law, Lucknow University, organised Dr VN Shukla memorial lecture-2012 on '60 years of Indian judiciary: Its achievements and failures' at the varsity on Saturday.