

For MIT students, India is hot for projects in '07

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IT IS that time of the year when students of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Global Entrepreneurship Labor G-Lab, fan out to different parts of the world with the objective of industry-academia interaction through on-site projects.

If the number of teams visiting a country is any indication of how the MIT's Sloan School of Management evaluates the relevance of companies and countries in the global scheme of things, India is the hottest destination this year, alongside Brazil and New Zealand, with the trio edging out China.

This year, 38 teams of four students each from G-Lab have flown out to various countries for projects in 18 countries with India, Brazil and New Zealand attracting five teams each and China getting four. The import of that statistic is only enhanced by the fact that India does not even figure in Global MIT Sloan's web page which features initiatives in China, South Korea, and Singapore among other Asian countries.

Members of one of the G-Lab teams in India told ET that the choice of companies and projects was a "sort of marriage that was arrived at considering the scope for making a difference to a particular corporate and the challenge involved". About 50 companies were in the fray for students to choose to do their projects at, from which the students picked the 38 that they thought were "best-fits".

One of the teams, working with transaction billing solutions major SunTec based here, said a variety of reasons had prompted them to pick the Kerala company to do their project with. While Kranti K Vistakula liked the idea of working with an IT product company like SunTec rather than an IT services oriented company, Kielo Ahomma said this was an opportunity to work with a small company with global operations.

Their colleagues Andrew Conrad and Vikas Sharma said they were respectively excited about the fact that the project enabled them to offer solutions and that it concerned a company rated among the fastest-growing in the Asia-pacific. Team members said they hoped to present suggestions for a product range straddling a wider industry spectrum, at the end of their project stint.

Through the project experience, students could realise first-hand that entrepreneurship is not always romantic, and in the words of MIT professor Richard Locke, G-Lab also helps students "shed the belief that the US is the centre of the world economy".

In 2006-07, G-Lab projects are being taken up in Argentina, Brazil, Cambodia, Chile, China, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lesotho, New Zealand, Philippines, Russia, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, Turkey, and Vietnam.