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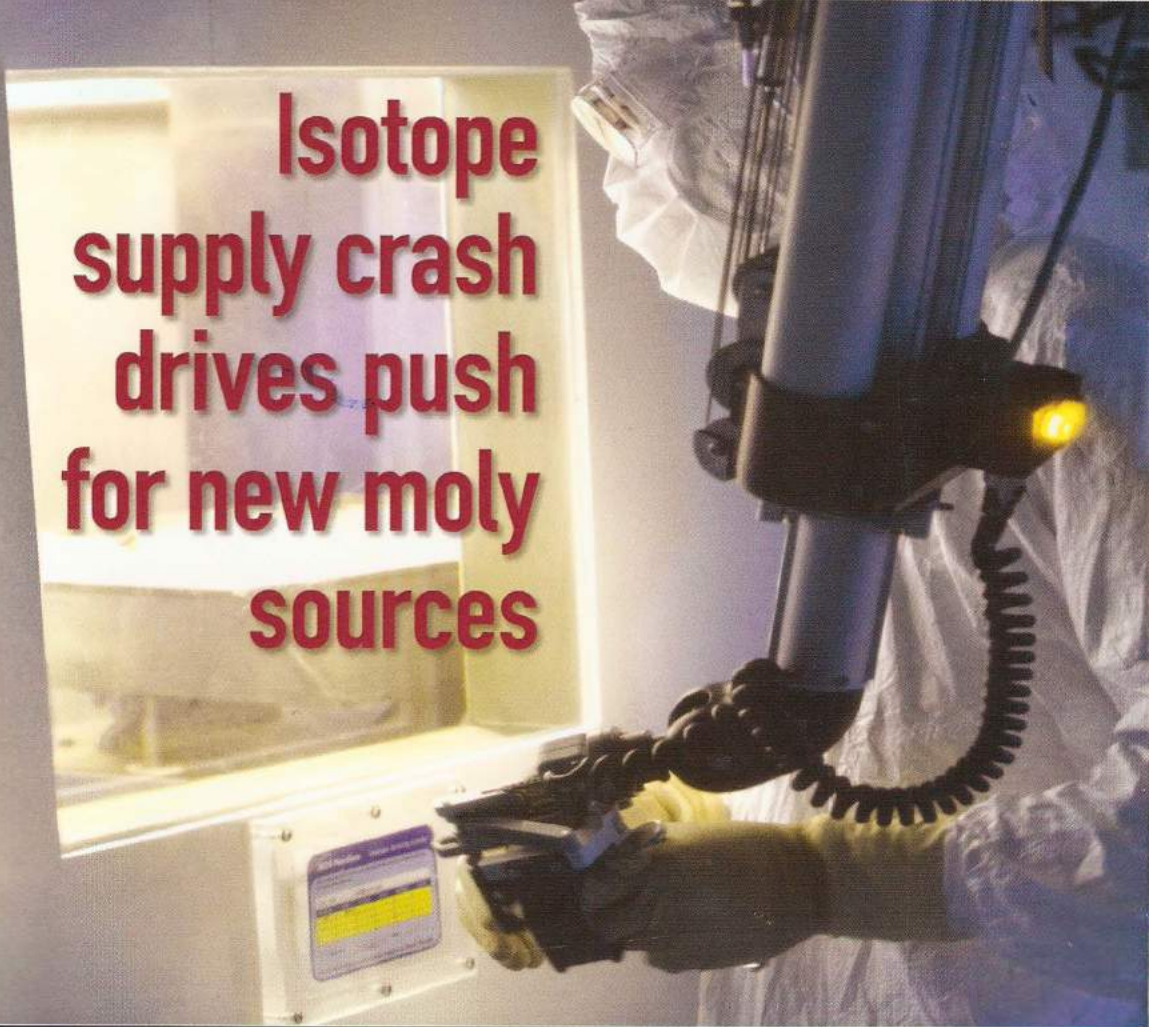
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Telerad school in Bangalore aims at shortage

A Yale-trained neuroradiologist who was born and raised in India has established his home country's first teleradiology training center to address a radiologist shortage so severe that less than one practicing diagnostic radiologist is available to meet the medical-imaging needs of every 100,000 people.

Dr. Arjun Kalyanpur, who gained international notoriety for his groundbreaking teleradiology practice, is applying that experience to the curriculum of Rad Gurukul, a new telerad training center that shares facilities with his Teleradiology Solutions in Bangalore.

The facility boasts wired classrooms, demonstration stations, and a 90-seat auditorium outfitted with state-of-the-art videoconferencing capabilities to connect students—whether onsite or remote—to trainers around the world.

Kalyanpur's training center was inspired by what he saw in the field: a lack of qualified radiologists, technologists, and IT personnel to support operations at hospitals and clinics throughout South Asia. There are 10 times fewer radiologists relative to the population in India than in the U.S.

"There is a global shortage of radiologists, and India is no exception," Kalyanpur said in a phone interview.

Supported with private funding, Rad Gurukul, which in Hindi means residential training facility run by a tutor, is believed to be the first center of its kind in India dedicated to radiology and related IT training. The curriculum is still under development, but classes in the first month on cardiac imaging and emergency radiology drew heavy interest, Kalyanpur said; a two-day PACS and teleradiology symposium in April pulled students

from Singapore and parts of the Middle East.

So while early attention has been positive, the mere opening of Rad Gurukul alone will not significantly ease the universal scarcity of imaging experts.

“Just on a numbers basis, unless it can train hundreds of people, it is dif-

ficult to see much near-term impact on the healthcare systems of countries like India and China with billion-person populations,” said Dr. James Thrall, radiologist-in-chief at Massachusetts General Hospital. “On the other hand, it could become a reference center for especially difficult cases.”

Rad Gurukul does not yet offer a formal degree, but Kalyanpur said he will pursue a recognition program with universities.

For now, students can obtain certifications in PACS via U.S. educational partnerships such as the one with Dallas-based OTech. ■

—By Yomi Wrong