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Hindustan Times (Mumbai)

IIT-B senate objects to changes in JEE

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MUMBAI: The IIT-Bombay senate has objected to proposed reforms in the IIT joint entrance exam, set to be implemented in 2013.

At a special senate meeting convened on Wednesday, members of the senate argued that any changes to the admissions process must first be approved by it.

A draft resolution circulated

after the meeting stated that “the house felt that the [proposed reforms] were not acceptable on several counts... and that making a significant change in the admission process for 2013 was not advisable considering the short time available.”

Among the proposed changes was a move to give 40% weightage to students’ board exam marks during admission, using a percentile formula to normalise scores across different boards.

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DU 'meta college' to mix-n-match subjects

Himanshi Dhawan | TNN

New Delhi: From this July, Delhi University is likely to introduce a "meta college" that allows small batches of students to mix and match

► Rollout this year, P 15

courses that interest them from options available in DU colleges as a pilot project.

This will mean students are not bound to either the courses available in one college or even one discipline. For instance, a student can

pick a major from a college from the liberal arts stream and combine it with a pure science or commerce stream offered by another college. The student will be eligible to a certain number of credits in a four-year course.

The concept of a "meta college" sounds similar to the term metadata, often defined as "data about data". To some extent, the principle of managing and organizing seemingly disparate information to build linkages is the thinking behind the meta college.

Chart your own course this year at Delhi Univ



Students at St Stephen's college, which is a part of the meta college project.

By Ritika Chopra
in New Delhi

EVER imagined designing your own college education? This July, 20 undergraduate students handpicked by Delhi University (DU) will do just that as the varsity prepares to host the country's first meta college.

The meta college will serve as a collaborative platform for all of DU's affiliated institutions and will allow one to stitch their own curriculum from a plethora of courses offered in the DU colleges.

So, the present model of compulsory and elective courses would be replaced by a customised programme according to the interest of the student.

For instance, you could study journalism from Lady Shri Ram College and also enroll for the economics course taught at St. Stephen's College. Or attend English lectures delivered at Miranda House along

META COLLEGE DECODED

A meta college allows students flexibility in designing their curriculum and pursuing subjects and combinations of their choice. **DU's meta-college starts functioning from the academic year beginning in July**

- It will enroll 20 students selected through an entrance test

- DU, JNU, IIT Delhi and Jamia Millia Islamia will come together to offer a PG Diploma in public health this year as well

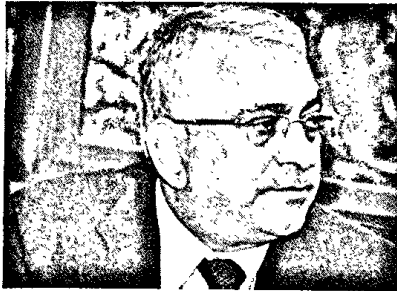
with a combination of the geography course offered at Kirori Mal College and mathematics at St Stephen's College.

The university's V-C Dinesh Singh unveiled this ambitious plan during a presentation made to the human resource development (HRD) minister Kapil Sibal, on Saturday.

"The meta college is a 'college of colleges'. The institution will leverage the power of the web through the National Knowledge Network which is being implemented to connect universities, research institutes and agricultural institutes across the country with a high speed fibre-based broadband network," a senior HRD official said. The project is part of the ministry's larger plan to launch a meta-university in which DU, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jamia Millia Islamia University and IIT Delhi will participate.

"The meta college will start with a small batch of 20 students. Candidates keen on pursuing an undergraduate degree from here will have to appear for an entrance test. There is a group of people working on the admission process and other details," Dinesh Singh said.

'Corruption? Me? Never!'



:: Ullekh NP

Ravi Rishi, boss of the UK-based \$800-million Vectra Group that sells the now-controversial Tatra army trucks, is a Haryana boy who got his big global break after the Cold War. The IIT-Delhi alumnus seems to rather enjoy the interrogative attention he's getting

Ravi Rishi lights his cigarette after taking permission from others in the room, and he does it without looking at the cigarette, focusing on you like a kung fu artist in a spar. He stares you in the eye even while cracking randy jokes and when his guffaws become infectious.

"I have never ever been chased like this by journalists," says the 57-year-old NRI who starts off by referring to Army chief VK Singh: "I was born in Rohtak in Haryana, not far from Bhiwani where my good friend comes from." And he guffaws.

With the probe into the alleged bribe offered to Singh leading to him, Rishi, chairman of the UK-based \$800-million Vectra Group which sells Tatra trucks, appears to relish the publicity. "I just told a TV channel that Singh is suffering from 'menopause syndrome', with weeks left for his retirement," Rishi declares with faux anger, which soon gives way to more guffaws and cigarettes.

Tatra Imbroglio

The Indian Army has used Tatra trucks for nearly 26 years, of which for the past 19 years the company has been under Rishi's ownership.

General Singh recently said "the expensive" Tatra trucks were "substandard". He also said he was offered ₹14 crore, apparently to sanction the purchase of 600 Tatra high-mobility vehicles through public-sector Bharat Earth Movers Ltd, in 2010.

"Previous chiefs of army staff [such as] JJ Singh and Shankar Roy Chowdhury had great things to say about Tatra trucks. Singh had compared the Tatra to Mercedes. Chaudhary was mightily impressed when he came to Slovakia to visit a Tatra factory," claims Rishi.

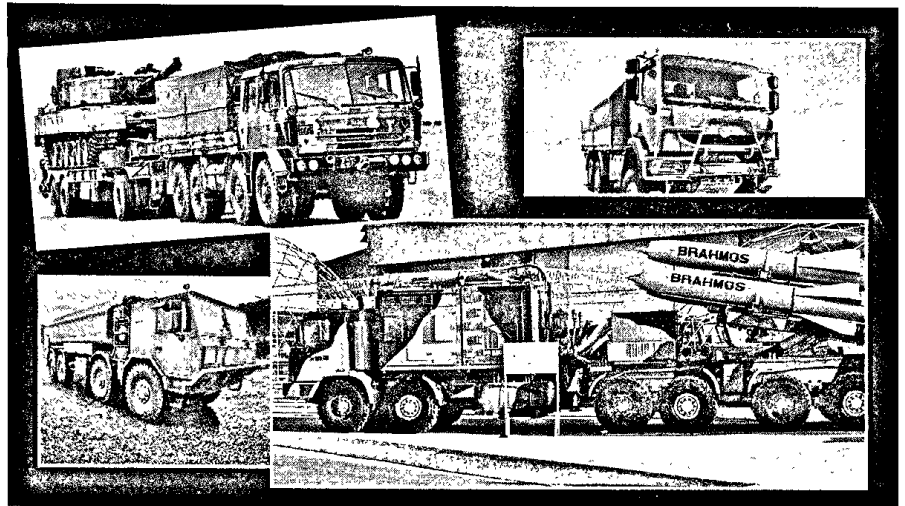
"This chief has some ulterior motive," he alleges, adding he has never known Lt Gen Tejinder Singh, former director general of India's Defence Intelligence Agency, whose name has done the rounds as the person who tried to bribe VK Singh on behalf of Tatra.

Batch of 1977

"We work only with BEML in India," says Rishi, who studied electrical engineering at IIT Delhi. "I am from the batch of 1977 that dreamt big," he adds. "Of the 24 boys in our batch [which graduated in 1977] 18 went abroad," he says.

Born to a business family (his father JC Rishi was a contractor), Rishi always wanted to be a businessman. After IIT, he ended up being one, in Hong Kong, then a hub for electrical goods.

Rishi made his first million by selling electrical goods and consumer electronics products. "Most of my exports - TV, camera, flash bulbs, etc - were to East Europe. I was known since then as a trader to East Europe,"



he says. Three years later, he shifted base to Singapore as he figured out that "the city you lived in as a bachelor isn't good after marriage". He guffaws. According to Rishi's own confession, his business grew manifold in the next five years. And then came the need to be closer to "your customers". In 1985, he relocated to London, which he believes, is "a second home to any Indian".

"East Europe was still under communist rule. We couldn't have lived there and we wanted to send our children to good schools," says Rishi, an alumnus of DPS Mathura Road.

So he and his wife settled in London, which continues to be his home. In 1986, he set up the Vectra Group - which is present across sectors such as defence, aviation, IT, real estate and construction, among others. "Slowly, we picked up," says Rishi.

Hot After Cold War

After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Rishi started picking up "business assets" from Czechoslovakia either to "turn them around and then sell to make good profit or to retain them", he says. "We acquired 17 factories in 1991-92 alone. Czechoslovakia was well-known for automotive engineering units. So we picked up factories making bearings, wood-working, cranes, etc," says he. "We got into trucks the year Czechoslovakia was divided into Slovakia and Czech Republic - in 1993," says the man who has never lived in East Europe. "You have great incentives in going

there, but not in living there." He guffaws and then settles for a bland smile.

Vectra owns 100% of Tatra Slovakia and nearly 66% of Tatra Czech Republic, claims he. "The undercarriage [for Tatra trucks] is made in Slovakia. Engines, cabin etc are made in the Czech Republic," he says of the vehicle that is in the eye of a storm in India. "We sell Tatra trucks to 58 countries and 38 armies and they include the US, Russia, Israel, Brazil, UAE and others," Rishi says. Interestingly, on Tatra Czech Republic's website, Rishi finds mention only as a member of its supervisory board.

Money Money

Rishi makes light of the charge that Tatra trucks are exorbitantly priced: "I make more money selling them to the US or to Israel or to Malaysia or Brazil than to India."

"If you want money out of defence deals, it comes from there," says the father of four - three daughters and a son. His eldest daughter is a lawyer, the second a banker, the third head of his aviation business and the son an engineering student.

A defence official says Rishi had it all going smooth for him so far. "He is a player. He is clever, and he is capable of overcoming all hurdles," the official says without elaborating. He asked not to be named because he is not authorised to speak to the media. For his part, Rishi says he isn't much worried about the negative publicity in India. "It is part of the game of being in this business," he says.

"You know, the real problem with India is that there is too much corruption in this country," Rishi says.

Then he guffaws. ■

Chain-smoker
Rishi made his first
million in 1970s
Hong Kong
exporting electrical
goods to East
Europe



NITs to impose curbs on recruiting own scholars

Express News Service
The New Indian Express

COIMBATORE: Following in the footsteps of leading world universities, National Institutes of Technology (NITs) would soon impose curbs on recruiting its own doctoral scholars and postgraduates as faculty members.

The Draft NIT Faculty Recruitment Rules notified by the Union Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry broadly advocates against "in-breeding" of faculty members. "Candidates who have obtained or are expected to obtain their most recent degree (PhD or MTech) from the institute will normally not be considered for recruitment, except where there is a three years' gap (approximately) between leaving the institute and the expected date of joining," the Draft Rules said.

However, this rule would not be applicable to candidates who are already members of the faculty, either on regular rolls or on contract, and are pursuing a higher degree in the institute. In exceptional cases, a student including a doctoral scholar can be inducted as faculty provided the Board of Governance approves the same.

"The reasons for making an exception will have to be explained. However, candidates with MTech degrees can be appointed as assistant professors, on contract basis and subsequently encouraged to complete their PhD. In case the NITs were to recruit those with substantial professional and R&D experience, they need not insist on a PhD degree. Also for candidates with good number of publications, the requirement of PhD can be waived. In all other cases, such a candidate may be taken on contract till he completes the PhD," the rules said. The rules also mandate that a PhD degree shall be the minimum qualification for a regular faculty.