Newspaper Clips
April 26, 2017

Websites of DU, IIT and AMU targeted by 'hackers from Pak'
http://indianexpress.com/article/india/websites-of-du-iit-and-amu-targeted-by-hackers-from-pak-4628460/

The Pakistan Haxors Crew (PHC) claimed responsibility for the hacking. In October last year, they had claimed to have hacked over 7,000 Indian websites.

Several government websites were temporarily hacked on Tuesday, allegedly by a group of Pakistani hackers, with pro-Pakistan and anti-Indian Army messages appearing on their home screens.

Websites of educational institutions, including Delhi University (DU), Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) and the Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi (IIT-D), were among those that were hacked, purportedly through a common server.

The Pakistan Haxors Crew (PHC) claimed responsibility for the hacking. In October last year, they had claimed to have hacked over 7,000 Indian websites. On Tuesday afternoon, as websites — including that of the National Aerospace Laboratories — were hacked one after the other, people took to social media to share images of the message written in white and red ink on a black background. Apart from invoking Kashmir, the message also said that the hacking was in response to "Code-Man's hack of railways.gov.pk".

In an email to all students and faculty members with regard to the hacking, Head of Department of the Computer Services Centre, IIT-Delhi, Huzur Saran, said, "Just to clarify, the IIT-Delhi servers were not hacked but there was a hacking in the Ernet Domain Name System (DNS) servers. Since the name iitd.ac.in is registered with Ernet, anybody trying to look up (the same) will first ask Ernet servers who are supposed to refer the request to IIT-Delhi servers."

"However, for some reason, the Ernet servers data record was changed so that all requests for IIT Delhi, IIT Madras and DU were being redirected to fake outside servers which is outside our control. We have worked with Ernet to correct the relevant DNS referral records immediately. Ernet is also investigating how their DNS referral records were attacked and changed," he added.

DU Registrar Tarun Kumar Das said: "The website of University of Delhi was inaccessible from outside the campus for some time due to some problems in the Domain Name Servers (DNS) pointing incorrectly to another site. The problem was detected and immediately rectified by contacting Ernet, who has provided the Domain Name for University of Delhi."

MHRD's decision to hike fee by 122 per cent to be reviewed by IIT Council
http://indiatoday.intoday.in/education/story/iit/1/937674.html

Under the regime of Smriti Irani, the HRD Ministry had taken a decision to hike tuition fees by 122 per cent and provide financial concessions to special category students. In August last year, concern over the fee hike was first raised at the council meeting.

Under the regime of Smriti Irani, the HRD Ministry had taken a decision to hike tuition fees by 122 per cent and provide financial concessions to special category students. The same will now be revised by the apex coordination body of all IITs which will meet later this week. The IIT Council is scheduled to meet in Mumbai on April 28.

An official source said, "The review of the fee hike and the financial concession announced for special category students last year is likely to top the agenda.''

Purpose of fee hike defeated

In August last year, concern over the fee hike was first raised at the council meeting when the directors of several IITs had said that the financial concessions introduced for special category students had defeated the purpose of fee hike as there has been no revenue enhancement.

Fee waiver to be replaced by reimbursement

It is also expected that the council will discuss a proposal for replacing the fee waiver with reimbursement by either the HRD Ministry or the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

"There is a proposal that either the HRD Ministry or the Social Justice Ministry should reimburse the IITs for the cost of educating students entitled to complete fee waiver. It has also been recommended that students from the economically backward sections should be given interest-free loans instead of full or partial waiver," the source added.

Last April, the HRD Ministry had approved increasing the annual fees for undergraduate courses from Rs 90,000 to Rs 2 lakh, a rise of 122 per cent, for new enrolments. The ministry had also decided to give a complete fee waiver for the differently-abled, students from SC and ST communities and those belonging to families with an annual income of less than Rs 1 lakh.

IIT-Gandhinagar: Research student wins Fulbright-Nehru Fellowship

http://indianexpress.com/article/education/iit-gandhinagar-research-student-wins-fulbright-nehru-fellowship-4628536/

Speaking on her research on Alzheimer's, she said, "AD is primarily caused by the aggregation of certain key brain proteins that is directly related to ageing."

A RESEARCH student of Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar (IITGN) Krittika Ralhan, who is designing a solution to Alzheimer's Disease (AD), has been selected for the 2017-18 Fulbright-Nehru Fellowship. Ralhan, a PhD scholar in Biological Engineering will use the scholarship to conduct a part of her doctoral research work at the University of Rochester, NewYork and has received her Fulbright-Nehru Doctoral Research Fellowship 2017-18 in the neuroscience subcategory.

Speaking on her research on Alzheimer's, she said, "AD is primarily caused by the aggregation of certain key brain proteins that is directly related to ageing. For my project, I plan to work towards development of cure for AD by designing inhibitors that will target the aggregation of these proteins."

Ralhan will leave for Rochester in September 2018 to join Dr Rudi Fasans's lab at University of Rochester, which has expertise in designing macrocyclic peptides.

After HRD intervention, UGC NET test stays with CBSE for now

http://indianexpress.com/article/education/after-hrd-intervention-net-test-stays-with-cbse-for-now-4628446/

The Ministry is learnt to have decided that CBSE will conduct NET until the proposed National Testing Service (NTS) is set up by the government.

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) will have to conduct the National Eligibility Test (NET) until further orders from the government, sources in the HRD Ministry told The Indian Express on Tuesday. The NET is held twice a year for the grant of junior research fellowship and eligibility for assistant professorship in universities and colleges. The CBSE and the University Grants Commission (UGC) have been locked in a tussle over the conduct of the entrance test, forcing the HRD Ministry's intervention this week.

The Ministry is learnt to have decided that CBSE will conduct NET until the proposed National Testing Service (NTS) is set up by the government. Last year, CBSE wrote to the government expressing its inability to organise the NET, saying it was burdened with other tests such as the JEE-MAIN and NEET for under-graduate engineering and medical courses, respectively. "The Board has stretched its resources. For NET, we need to set question papers for 86 subjects. That apart, we incur a loss of Rs 5 crore every year for conducting this test which should ideally be borne by the UGC," a source in school exam board said on condition of anonymity.

After the CBSE expressed inability, the HRD Ministry proposed an independent body called the NTS, dedicated to conducting entrance tests for higher education. The NET was conducted by the UGC till 2014. Repeated hiccups in the testing process forced the HRD Ministry to hand over the responsibility to CBSE. But with the school board expressing reluctance last year, a cloud of uncertainty descended over the test scheduled in July.

No notification regarding the exam has been issued yet. Last year, CBSE had made the notification on April 4 for the NET held on July 10. On Monday, students agitated in front of the UGC office and demanded that it release forms for the July exam immediately. A notification on the exam is expected in the next few days.

NIT Raipur students create social networking site, 'The Tweaks'

http://thehitavada.com/Encyc/2017/4/24/NIT-Raipur-students-create-social-networking-site,-%E2%80%98The-Tweaks-.aspx

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Social networking has become an essential part of human life. Keeping this in mind, a group of students from National Institute of Technology (NIT), Raipur, have launched a new website, 'The Tweaks' from where the students of the institute can avail all the necessary information.

The information shared over the site would not be merely within the reach of their friends but can be accessed by any student who is in need of the same.

The main objective of this site is to connect people over a common platform where they can share important information and have valuable discussions. Through the site you can dig through any concept in academics, news in politics, sports, lifestyle, business, placements and internships etc very easily.
The site has been developed by the students of NIT Raipur such as Rajesh Kumar and his friends Sushil, Prabhat and Deepanshu to extend a better help and guidance towards the students.

Bacteria from India's hot springs could help contain oil spills

http://www.firstpost.com/living/bacteria-from-indias-hot-springs-could-help-contain-oil-spills-3403528.html

Hot springs are popular tourist spots and places of healing for many, but Indian scientists have discovered that they are also a great source of hardy bacteria that can be useful for many applications such as tackling oil spills.

As natural extreme environments with water at very high temperature, hot springs are of special interest to scientists and those engaged in industrial research. The study of living organisms like bacteria that survive in extreme conditions in hot springs is can throw up surprises.

Scientists from Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISER) Bhopal have studied bacterial samples drawn from hot springs at Anhoni (near Pachmarhi in Madhya Pradesh) and Tattapani (in Chhattisgarh) in central India. The Anhoni hot springs have a temperature between 43.5° to 55°, and Tattapani has an extremely high temperature ranging between 61.5° to 98°.

They have uncovered microbial community in these hot springs and their results reveal presence of bacteria which can survive using hydrocarbons such as toluene, benzene and xylene at Anhoni.

This means these bacteria can be used to control oil spills naturally, and also for other industrial applications.

"Future research on the bacteria from Anhoni can enable their utilisation to address oil spills such as the one reported recently from Chennai which led to death of many marine animals and difficulties for the people living nearby. Bacteria

isolated from Anhoni can be utilised to clear the oil naturally in case of such hazardous incidents," explained Vineet K Sharma, associate professor at the Department of Biological Sciences, IISER Bhopal, who led the study.

Sharma said, the presence of many thermophilic genes and enzymes observed at Tattapani hot springs could have industrial applications in processes which are carried out at high temperatures.

This study is the largest exploration of extreme environments in India carried out with seven distinct samples from three major hot springs. The complete genetic sequencing of these samples was carried out on using sophisticated sequencers and by analysing several billion bits of data with advanced computational tools. This research was supported by the Center for Research on Environment and Sustainable Technologies at IISER Bhopal.

Led by Sharma, the study was carried out by doctoral students — Rituja Saxena, Darshan Dhakan,. Parul Mittal and Prashant Waikar. Arundhuti Ghatak and Anirban Chowdhury from Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at IISER analysed geological aspects of Anhoni hot springs. The study results appeared recently in scientific journal Frontiers of Microbiology.

IISc professor's blueprint favours Jakkur model for Bellandur, Varthur lakes

http://www.deccanherald.com/content/608275/iisc-professors-blueprint-favours-jakkur.html

Suggests treatment of sewage through integrated constructed wetlands

Foam all around Heavy foam collected at Varthur Lake on Tuesday.

A blueprint for rejuvenation of Bellandur and Varthur lakes has called for treatment of sewage through integrated constructed wetlands on the lines of the Jakkur lake model. This model has combined secondary treatment plant with constructed wetlands and algae ponds to remove nutrients from the lake.

Prepared by Dr T V Ramachandra and team from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Centre for Ecological Studies, the blueprint also seeks recovery of the area identified for Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) in the region between Agaram and Bellandur lakes. The Revised Master Plan (RMP-2015) had shown this area as 40 acres.

On the suggested Jakkur model, the blueprint said: "Complete removal of nutrients and chemical contaminants happens when treated sewage (secondary treated) passes through constructed wetlands and algae pond, undergoes bio-physical and chemical processes. The water in the lake is almost potable with minimal nutrients and microbial counts."

This model, it said, has been functional successfully for the last five years after interventions to rejuvenate the lake. “This system is one of the self-sustainable ways of lake management while benefitting all stakeholders - washing, fishing, irrigation and local communities.” Other key recommendations are adoption of state-of-the-art technology such as wet dredging to remove deposited sediments, removal of all encroachments without any considerations or political interventions (lake bed, stormwater drains, buffer zone) and banning use of phosphates in the manufacture of detergents. This, the blueprint says, will minimise frothing and eutrophication of water bodies.

Geo-referenced data

The blueprint also talks about the need to digitise land records, particularly those linked to lakes and making available this geo-referenced data with query-based information system to the public. It also wants planting of native species of macrophytes in the buffer zone (riparian vegetation) as well as in select open spaces of lake catchment area.

High built-up areas around lake

On Varthur lake, the blueprint noted that in the 75 m buffer zone, built-up areas have increased from 5% (2002) to 30% (2016) with the decline of vegetation (agriculture, horticulture).

On the valley between Bellandur and Varthur lakes, the blueprint had this to say: “The land fillings have breached both rajakaluve and lakes. Rajakaluves have reduced in width from as high as 35 m to less than 8 m, apart from the loss of natural stream network connecting the lakes and rajakaluves.”