Newspaper Clips

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Hindustan Times, ND 30-Dec-10 p-9

Students can access question papers of competitive exams

HT Correspondent
■ htreporters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: In a significant ruling on Wednesday, the Delhi high court, said the students appearing for competitive exams at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) can access the certified copies of old question papers.

The judgment becomes important as students appearing for IIT-JEE, CAT and other such exams can also site it as a precedent and get access to the question papers, which were till now barred.

"Unless the public authority (AIIMS) is able to show that the information sought is exempted from disclosure under RTI, the information sought is required to be disclosed to the applicant", said justice S Muralidhar dismissing an appeal filed by AIIMS, which challenged a Central Information Commission order asking it to provide certified copies of the question papers to one Vikrant Bhuria.

AIIMS had challenged the order, saying question papers are its 'intellectual property' and that the larger public interest does not warrant their disclosure. It said many experts had contributed their time and expertise to develop the question bank and it should be "considered as having been given to the students by such experts in confidence".

The court said the grounds raised by AIIMS for denying the questions papers to aspiring students are tenable in law.

Hindustan Times, ND 30-Dec-10 p-10

AMAZING RECORD

10-year-old prodigy joins Lucknow University BSc course

■ Sushma Verma with her parents in Lucknow on Wednesday.
AZAM HUSSAIN/ HT PHOTO

HT Correspondent
■ letters@hindustantimes.com

LUCKNOW: Ten-year-old Sushma Verma, daughter of a daily wage labourer and an illiterate mother, has the chance of becoming India's youngest graduate three years from now.

The whiz kid already holds the distinction of being India's youngest matriculate at 7. After clearing her class 12 examinations from the Uttar Pradesh board this year, she got provisional admission in Lucknow's CMS Degree College as a science student.

Her admission to B Sc — with zoology, botany and chemistry as her subjects — has now been confirmed, with Lucknow University giving her the green signal to pursue as graduate degree.

"...Now it's time to concentrate hard and complete my graduation with good marks," said a delighted Sushma.

The university authorities are pleased to have the wonder girl in their fold.

"We should encourage every talented girl like Sushma. We hope with our decision the girl would inch closer to realising her dreams," Lucknow University spokesperson SK Dwivedi said.

A high level of intelligence seems to run in her family. Sushma's brother Shailendra became the country's youngest computer science graduate in 2007 when he passed the Bachelor of Computer Applications degree from Lucknow University with 75% marks at the age of 14.

Sushma now has an opportunity to surpass her brother by passing the 2013 examinations at 13.

Business Standard ND 30/12/2010
P-6

After satellite launch fiasco, allegations galore

Probe should detail reasons by weekend, says Isro

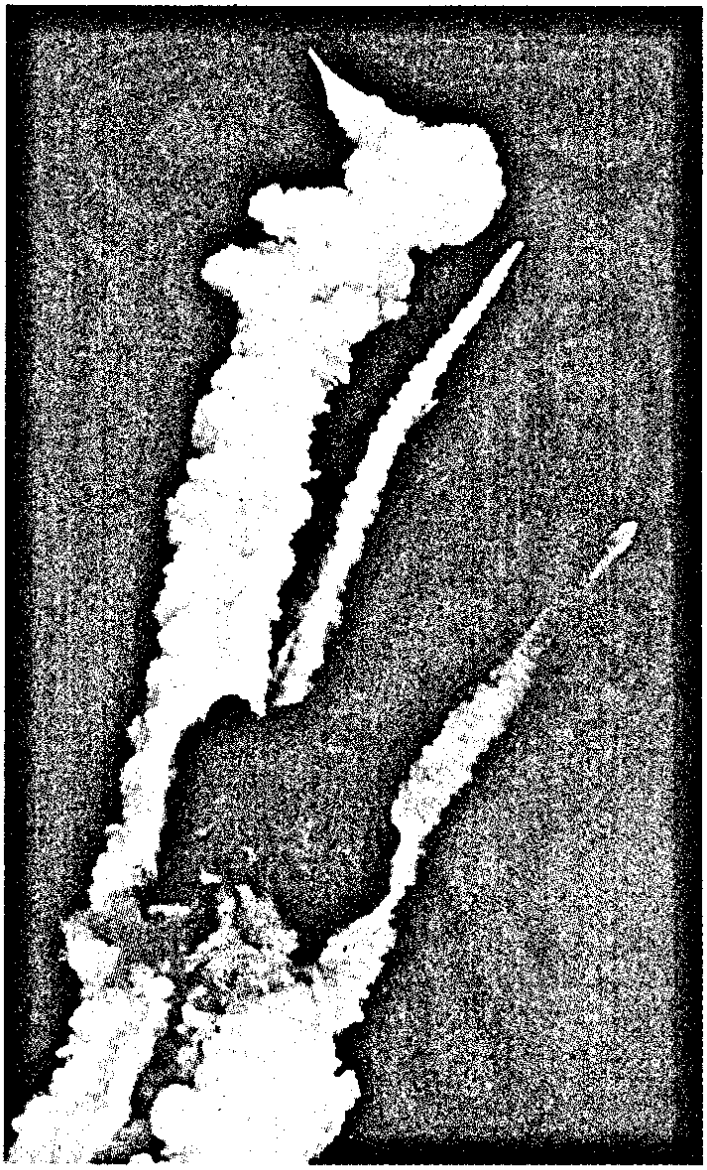
PRAVEEN BOSE
Bangalore, 29 December

What caused the failure of the Indian Space Research Organisation's latest mission to launch an advanced communication satellite, GSAT-5P, a consecutive failiure of a launch? Allegations and accusations are said to be flying between the three divisions of Isro, according to sources.

Isro Chairman K Radhakrishnan had said at a post-launch press conference on Christmas Day that cables carrying control signals from the on-board computer to the first stage snapped. The mission control could not send commands to the vehicle, as a result. The uncontrolled vehicle started deviating from its flight path and had to be detonated. Isro's routine post-launch press release gave no details, but only made a cryptic announcement that the "launch of GSLV-F06/GSAT-5P mission (was) not successful".

Isro's official spokesperson told *Business Standard* the space agency was trying to find out why it happened, from all possible angles. "We know what happened and when it happened. We are trying to find out why it happened," he added.

It is being speculated that the snapping of connectors between the second and third stage of the Indian rocket GSLV might have led to the failure, according to a scientist. But, it's mere speculation, added the spokesperson. He said in a day or two, Isro would come out with reasons for the mishap.



The three divisions involved in the project — the Isro Satellite Centre (ISAC) in Bangalore, Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) in Thiruvananthapuram and the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (Shar) at Sriharikota — had been pointing fingers at each other. Was the payload the problem or the design and manufacturing or the assembly? The inquiry is now trying to figure if the problem occurred at the ISAC, where the satellite was assembled, or at the VSSC, where the rockets are made or at the Shar, where the whole GSLV, the launch vehicle, was assembled with the satellite.

According to a retired Isro official in the know of things, the scientists were sceptical from the beginning about the launch. The capacity of the third stage of the GSLV had been increased to be able to launch a heavier satellite. A team of Russian engineers are said to have come here to help raise the capacity of the launch vehicle.

At 2,310 kg, the GSAT-5P communication satellite carried aboard the ill-fated mission was the heaviest payload ever lifted by a GSLV. It was 180 kg heavier than the Insat-4CR launched successfully by a GSLV in 2007, 400-kg heavier than Edusat, launched in 2003, and about 800 kg heavier than GSAT-1, launched in 2001.

SNAPPING OF CONNECTORS between the second and third stage of the Indian rocket GSLV may have led to the failure

Instability introduced by the excessive weight of the payload was most likely responsible for failure of the launch, according to a source. "The cable joints cannot snap just like that," he said. He said the connectors are locked so well they cannot snap unless the vehicle itself breaks. According to the source, the GSLV most likely broke due to instability caused by the heavy payload.

The snapping of connectors between the second and third stage of the GSLV led to the failure, according to a scientist.

Tests and retests, an analyst said, were the only way to overcome any possibility of failure in future.

Business Line ND
30/12/2010 P-7

Now, ultra-fast chip that makes computers work 20 times faster

Press Trust of India

London, Dec. 29

In what could be called a major technological innovation, scientists have unveiled an ultra-fast chip which they claim could make desktop computers 20 times faster than the current ones.

Modern computers have a processor with two, four or sometimes 16 cores to carry out tasks. Now, a team, led by the University of Glasgow, has developed a central processing unit which effectively has 1,000 cores on a single microchip.

The developments could usher in a new age of high-speed computing in the next few years for home users frustrated with slow-running systems; the new "super" computer is also much greener than modern machines, despite its high speed, say its developers.

The scientists used a chip called a Field Programmable Gate Array (FPGA) which like all microchips contains millions of transistors — tiny on-off switches that are the foundation of any electronic circuit, the *Daily Mail* reported.

But FPGAs can be configured into specific circuits by the user, rather than their function being set at a factory.

Indian Express ND 30/12/2010 P7

CBI to probe fake institute at IIT

ANUBHUTI VISHNOI
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

THE Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) will probe the fake institute scam that was allegedly run from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, by some of its faculty members.

Highly placed sources told *The Indian Express* that the Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry will refer the case to the CBI for a thorough probe.

HRD Minister Kapil Sibal is learnt to have decided that a CBI probe was the best course to follow and the issue would be formally referred to the agency in the next few days, the sources said.

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) had asked the Ministry to institute an inquiry committee and submit a report in four weeks. But the ministry thought referring the case to the CBI was a more appropriate step.

At the centre of the controversy is the Institution of Electrical Engineers (IEE) — the fake institute that was allegedly run from the IIT campus in connivance with some faculty members.

The racket came to light when 22 students of the institute complained to IIT Kharagpur Director Damodar Acharya.

The unrecognised and unauthorised institute was founded, operated and run by Prof Amit Kumar Ghosh, a professor of IIT Kharagpur's Department of Aerospace Engineering, since 2006. Ghosh was also Chief Vigilance Officer of IIT Kharagpur.

Ghosh used to personally conduct the entrance examination of applicants seeking admission to the fake institution from his official chamber, giving the impression that IEE had links with IIT Kharagpur.

He also signed documents indicating the grades for admission using his official IIT seal.

The certificate of IEE projecting it as a recognised academic institution bears Ghosh's signature. It contains a false declaration that the certificate was granted on the "recommendation of the All India Council IEE and the Board of Governors of the Faculty of IIT Kharagpur," when there are no such bodies.

This institute was registered as a society in 2001. On the basis of forged documents, it managed to get a quarter within the IIT campus in 2004.

On June 20 2007, the IIT administration figured that the rooms were being misused and cancelled the allotment.

The role of IIT Kharagpur's current Registrar T K Ghoshal is under scanner. Ghoshal is also learnt to have issued an IIT identity card to Jugal Kishore Tiwari, director general and secretary of the fake institute, even though he is not an IIT employee.

IIT Kharagpur

THE FAKE INSTITUTE
The Institution of Electrical Engineers was run illegally from IIT-KGP campus.

THE MAIN ACCUSED
Prof Amit Kumar Ghosh, Professor of Department of Aerospace Engineering (under suspension).

WHAT HE DID
Misused his official position to give the impression that IEE had links with IIT.

Indian Express ND 30/12/2010 P1

HRD sets February deadline for AMU probe committee

ANUBHUTI VISHNOI
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

FOLLOWING months of delay, the Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry has asked the inquiry panel examining a series of allegations against Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University Prof P K Abdul Azis to expedite the process and submit its final report by February next year.

The two-member committee of Justices B A Khan and A N Devicha, which is examining the alleged financial irregularities committed by the Vice Chancellor, has been told that there is no scope for further delays on any account.

While this inquiry panel was constituted in February 2009 and asked to submit its report within two months, there has been little progress so far. In fact, earlier this month one of the members, Justice Devicha, even expressed desire to resign as he felt that he was being misled.

A Right to Information application filed by a former AMU professor had further revealed that Rs 43 lakh had been spent until September 15 on the expenses related to the panel although there was little progress in its inquiry.

Meanwhile, the issue has caused a lot of unrest on the AMU campus. On Wednesday, a member of the AMU Court and former MP Wasim Ahmed also met HRD Minister Kapil Sibal demanding that the probe be expedited.

Tribune, ND 30-Dec-10 p-4

A virtual varsity by 2012

CHARU SINGH
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

India is all set to get its first virtual university complete with virtual classrooms, lectures and even instructors by 2012.

The virtual university is a combined initiative of the seven Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and the Indian Institute of Science and to date has been running as the National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL).

However, what began as NPTEL programme is now transforming into a virtual university.

The programme was introduced in 2003 to help engineering students. The programme, spread across 17 countries, was highly successful, registering over 4 million hits.

Now, NPTEL is being converted into a virtual university which will run many more courses than originally envisaged and will also be able to hand out degrees and diplomas to its students.

Beginning 2012, the number of disciplines available with the online university will be increased from five to 20 and the number of courses from 260 to 1,000.

Usha Nagarajan, principal project officer of NPTEL, says "By 2012, we would be able to convert the highly successful NPTEL programme into a full-fledged virtual university equipped with virtual classrooms and lectures will be available online. Teaching and course work will also be conducted online and we have already applied for sanction from the Human Resource Development (HRD) ministry."

Nagarajan further adds, "The virtual university is being established online in two phases. In the first phase, which is currently underway, the university will offer only undergraduate courses. In the second phase, which will commence soon, the university will offer postgraduate courses. Further, we currently offer 135 video-run courses and 125 web courses, but by 2012, we expect to have over a hundred undergraduate and postgraduate courses on offer."

Meanwhile, project directors have sought approval from the Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry so that the online varsity can provide a virtual degree or diploma to students enrolled at the virtual university.

The idea for virtual university and NPTEL was conceived as back as 1999 for facilitating technical education in certain areas and has since grown much in popularity. The programme includes recordings of lectures given by IIT faculty members and other top faculty members of leading universities and then making them available online for students.

Hindu ND 30/12/2010 P2

A New Year gift for sky-watchers

The first eclipse -- a partial solar eclipse -- of 2011 takes place on January 4

Madhur Tankha

NEW DELHI: The first eclipse -- a partial solar eclipse -- of 2011 will take place on January 4.

Non-government organisation Science Popularisation Association of Communicators and Educators (SPACE) has decided to show a live webcast of the celestial event for the benefit of sky-gazers.

The NGO in association with Nehru Planetarium will video record the partial solar eclipse at Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in Teen Murti House here this coming Tuesday. Solar telescopes with filters would also be installed at the venue on the day.

- **"Only a smaller partial solar eclipse would be visible from the northern part of the country"**
- **"Will be visible over most of Europe, the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa and West Asia"**

According to SPACE president C. B. Devgun, only a smaller partial solar eclipse will be visible from the northern part of the country. "A solar eclipse occurs when the moon passes between the earth and the sun, thereby totally or partially obscuring earth's view of the sun. The obscuration will be minimal. In fact from Delhi, the sun would hardly be one per cent covered by the moon. The eclipse will be visible over most of Europe, the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa and West Asia."

Total solar eclipse

Noting that a number of eclipses will occur next year, Mr. Devgun said people across the globe will witness six eclipses in 2011 -- four solar and two lunar. "However, sky-gazers will have to wait till 2012 to witness a total solar eclipse."

Viewing the sun during partial solar eclipse requires special eye protection or indirect viewing methods.

"The sun's disk can be viewed using appropriate filtration to block the harmful part of the sun's radiation. Sunglasses are not safe since they do not block the harmful and invisible infrared radiation which causes retinal damage. Only properly designed and certified solar filters should ever be used for direct viewing of the sun's disk. Self-made filters using common objects like a floppy disk removed from its case, a compact disc and a black colour slide film must be avoided," said Mr. Devgun.

Pointing out that the safest way to view the sun's disk was by indirect projection, the SPACE president said this can be done by projecting an image of the disk onto a white piece of paper using a pair of binoculars (with one of the lenses covered), a telescope or another piece of cardboard with a small hole in it (about 1 mm diameter), often called a pin-hole camera. The projected image of the sun can then be safely viewed. This technique can be used to observe sunspots, as well as eclipses. However, care must be taken to ensure that no one looks through the projector or pinhole directly."