

Newspaper Clips

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IITs give in, JEE, AIEEE to merge

FROM 2013 Formal meeting of IIT Council likely in February; Class 12 marks, entrance exam score to have equal weightage

Chetan Chauhan

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NEW DELHI: The Ministry of Human Resource Development will soon call a meeting of Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) Council to stamp a decision to merge the IIT-Joint Entrance Exam (JEE) and All India Engineering Entrance Exam (AIEEE) conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education.

After much resistance, the IITs have agreed to join the ministry's bid to have a common entrance examination for all engineering colleges in the country. This only happened after there was an agreement that several elements of IIT-JEE will be part of the new national common examination.

"The new entrance examination will have many elements of IIT-JEE as we want to ensure that the best brains join our institutes," said an IIT director

The new combined entrance examination will have many elements of IIT-JEE as we want to ensure that the best brains join our institutes.

AN IIT DIRECTOR

requesting anonymity, after a meeting of select IIT directors with HRD minister Kapil Sibal.

A formal meeting of the IIT Council to stamp the merger is expected in February.

IIT Kanpur director Sanjay Dande made a presentation on features of the new entrance examination aimed to evaluate skills of a student objectively.

A student's Class 12 marks and entrance exam score will have equal weightage.

The new examination will be conducted by a joint committee of IIT and Central Board of

Secondary Education (CBSE), which conducts AIEEE, and will cover all central government engineering colleges and those in seven states such as Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and West Bengal, which had opted to take students on the basis of the AIEEE score.

There are 15 IITs, four Indian Institutes of Information Technology and 20 National Institutes of Technology in the country.

The HRD ministry believes that more states could join in the future and it will try to bring them on board at a meeting of state education ministers on February 15.

Over 15 lakh students, including 4.85 lakh for IIT-JEE, appear for different engineering entrance tests in the country every year.

A student wanting admission in an engineering college has to take three to five entrance exams depending on the stream.

IIT B-schools to have single online portal for MBA applications

Plan a host of measures to make their MBA programmes more attractive and sought after

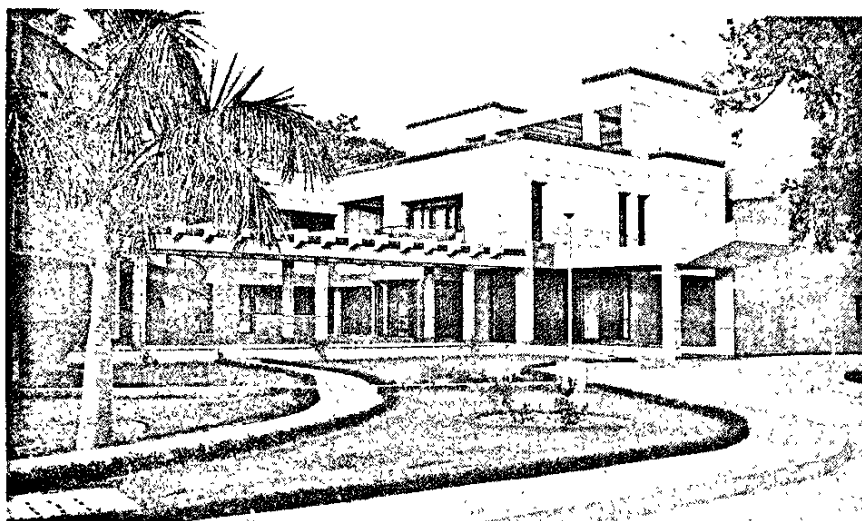
DISHA KANWAR

New Delhi, 28 January

After doing away with the Joint Management Entrance Test (JMET) last year and embracing the Common Admission Test (CAT), the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) are now planning a slew of measures to make their management programmes more attractive and sought after.

Foremost on the list is to merge their application process and adopt a common online portal for admissions in MBA programmes.

"It would be ideal to have a single portal for inviting applications and coordination among all IITs to conduct group discussion and personal interview so that duplication of efforts is avoided and the entire process of admissions is simplified. As 70-80 percent of the candidate pool is common among the IIT B-schools, it will be in a relief for both the institutes and the students. The IITs will end up utilising their efforts and resources in an optimum manner. Also, the candidates will not have to juggle at multiple places, saving time and expenses," said M P Gupta, admissions coordinator at IIT Delhi's Department of



The common portal will be handled by IITs in rotation and in coordination with the IIM organising CAT. Candidates will also be required to mention their preference order for IIT B-schools

Management Studies.

Currently, candidates apply separately to each management programme of IITs, supplying almost the same data to all, with each application costing ₹1,500.

The IIT B-schools which are planning to merge and have common application portals are Sailesh J Mehta School of Management (IIT-Bombay), Department of Management Studies (IIT-Delhi), Department

of Management Studies (IIT-Roorkee), Vinod Gupta School of Management (IIT-Kharagpur) and Department of Management Studies (IIT-Madras). The common portal will be handled by IITs in rotation and in coordination with the IIM organising CAT. In the common process, candidates will be required to mention their preference order for IIT B-schools, probably similar to the B Tech admission process of

IITs. With these plans, the next five years will be a period to watch out for these big-league management schools as the IITs.

These schools are also contemplating the launch of a new dual degree: a five-year course combining their B Tech and MBA programmes. The proposal is at an advanced stage of planning and is likely to be launched in July 2013.

IIT students will be given an option to enter the dual

degree programme in their second or third year, as most will take time to get the necessary exposure for such a decision. Interested students will be required to go through an internal group discussion and personal interview process, before qualifying for the dual degree.

"Since many IIT students are already going on to do an MBA subsequently after passing out of IITs, why not give them an option to do so here? Also, IITs have the entire wherewithal to efficiently deliver MBA education, making it an easy process to implement," added Gupta.

These B-schools are also revamping their curriculum. The B-schools want to make their curriculum more contemporary, with a heavy emphasis on global exposure. Another important change for candidates will be review of the admission criteria, with aim to simplify it and give chance to any graduate, not only engineers.

Discussions are also on for offering MBAs with focus on emerging areas such as infrastructure, healthcare, public sector, international business, real estate, media etc. Executive MBA, a common feature of the programmes of major B-schools, is also on the table.

Hindu ND. 29.01.2012, P-1

Morale of space scientists hit, says space veteran

Special Correspondent

MANGALORE: Eminent space scientist and former Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation, U. R. Rao, on Saturday described as "sad" the Centre's action in the controversial Antrix-Devas deal barring four space scientists from holding government posts and the developments thereafter.

Dr. Rao, now Chairman of the Physical Research Laboratory at Ahmedabad and co-Chairman of the National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research, Goa, was referring to the January 13 order in which the Department of Space sought exclusion of the former ISRO Chairman, G. Madhavan Nair, and three other space scientists from re-employment, committee roles or any other important role under the government.

Talking to journalists here on the sidelines of a seminar organised by the Karnataka



Prof. U. R. Rao

Science and Technology Academy headed by him, he said, "Four scientists have been penalised, or whatever you call it. The way it went on and outbursts...it is a bit unfortunate."

Pointing out that the Space department enjoyed great respect in the country, he said, "Whatever is happening is not good for the country." This, he said, would affect the morale of all the people [scientists]. Not only that of persons being talked about...the organisation gets affected.

After all, one feels proud of an organisation...If morale goes, it does hamper [work]."

Clarifying that he did not want to get involved in the controversy, he said, "The details of this the committee [constituted by the Prime Minister] must have seen."

Asked what should have ideally happened in the case, Prof. Rao refused to comment. "I have no idea. I don't want to get involved," he said.

The controversy had arisen more than 18 years after he retired, he added. "We build satellites in two-and-a-half years, whereas 25 years was the average period taken to build the first satellite. Nobody knew what a satellite was," he said, pointing out how parts of a satellite were taken on a bicycle or bullock cart for testing. "There were classic pictures published saying India goes from bullock carts to space age...It all happened because people believed in us."

Scientists pan govt on Nair ban

Call Decision Harsh, Say Move Threatens Scientists' Credibility

Srinivas Laxman &
Prashanth G N | TNN

Bangalore/Mumbai: Top scientists in India, including chairman of the Prime Minister's scientific advisory council Prof C N R Rao, have asked Centre to revoke its decision to bar four senior Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) scientists from government jobs. They said the decision was too harsh and threatened the integrity and credibility of scientists who have put in decades of work.

Scientists slammed V Narayanaswamy, minister of state in the PMO, for demoralizing remarks and said they should be allowed to work freely, given their integrity, immense experience and talent.

"I am completely upset by the statement that the action is a warning to scientists and the scientific community. Are scientists worse than criminals? Why are you treating scientists worse than the corrupt? This is not the way to handle the issue and not the way to speak about scientists," said Rao.

"Madhavan Nair has been the head of a department. If at all there was an issue, a letter could have been handed to him



MORE SUPPORT: Madhavan Nair

and the matter done with. Something could have been communicated in a dignified, quiet manner. What was the need for such drastic action? Scientists with immense experience and contribution to the country's development should not be barred from work. That's not the right way to go about it," Rao said.

Aerospace scientist and member of space commission Prof Roddam Narasimha agreed with Rao that the matter could have been sorted with a communiqué. "Some such thing could have been done, a letter or written communication," he said.

Former Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) chairman

Anil Kakodkar said any new technology requires fresh bold steps. The Antrix-Devas deal was meant to involve new technologies. "I think there should be willingness to take bold steps," he said. "If bold steps are not taken, it could be disruptive. Yes, I agree, rules have to be adhered to. But if new areas are not explored, it can prove disadvantageous," said Kakodkar.

Reacting to Narayanaswamy's statement, former Bhabha Atomic Research Centre director A N Prasad said, "What sort of a statement is this? Is he aware there are checks and balances in the space and atomic energy departments, and a single chairman cannot take decisions unilaterally?"

Prasad said, "What about the role of ministers, bureaucrats and politicians? Does it mean only scientists can do something wrong?"

Former project director of Chandrayaan-1's moon impact probe, Madan Lal, said, "What are we to make of such statements. It's extremely strong and can be demoralizing and humiliating. It'll demoralize people who work in hi-tech areas. It can certainly prove disadvantageous to future Isro projects."

In the space and atomic energy departments, serious decisions involving major financial implications are not taken by a single scientist, but by the space and atomic energy commissions, which have representatives from different departments. "For example, there is a representative from the PMO and former scientists and a financial representative," said Prasad. "In such a scenario, how can you blame only scientists?" he said.

Former AEC chairman M R Srinivasan refrained from commenting on the minister's controversial remark. He, however, said scientists of departments of space and atomic energy have always acted with integrity. "What has happened in my opinion is only an aberration," he said.

Srinivasan said, "In my opinion, it's a grave omission not mentioning to the Union cabinet that two communication satellites would be used by Devas. It was certainly an extraordinary lapse," he said.

Nehru Planetarium director Arvind Paranjpye called Narayanaswamy's statement unfair. "Professionals know their jobs. Such reprimands are laughable," he said.

On June 1, 2011, shortly after the decision of the Cabinet Committee on Security to annul the Antrix-Devas deal, at the launch of a book *All About Rockets*, at Antrix Bhavan in Bangalore, the headquarters of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), three of its chairmen—past and present—sat together in the company of former president A P J Kalam.

To the undiscerning eye, it looked like business as usual—past chairmen still associated in some form or the other with the country's premier space science agency, rarely touched by controversy, continuing a *guru-shishya* relationship with their successors. On the face of one of the former chairmen, G Madhavan Nair, who already stood accused of not following procedures in a major business deal during his tenure, there was, however, a great deal of unhappiness. In colloquial Malayalam—the language spoken in Kerala, the state where all ISRO chairmen since 1994 came from—the look is sometimes described as like that of a simian who has bitten on a piece of ginger.

It looked like Madhavan Nair, the man responsible for 25 successful space missions during his 2003-09 tenure as chairman of ISRO, including the celebrated maiden moon mission for India, had been forced to be on the dais despite not seeing eye-to-eye with the current chairman K Radhakrishnan—who has not had much visible success with space missions since taking over from Nair in 2009.

ISRO insiders say Nair was present that day only at the insistence of Abdul Kalam, whom he is considered very close to and whom he regards as a guru. To some extent, the event set to rest growing speculation that Nair and his successor were increasingly at loggerheads, especially over Radhakrishnan's alleged failure to put up a proper defence of the Antrix-Devas deal linked during Nair's tenure.

No one, however, quite expected the veneer of respectability that ISRO enjoys to blow away like it did on January 25, 2012, when Nair, barred from taking up government duties by the department of space for his alleged lapses while shepherding the Antrix-Devas deal, launched a tirade against his successor.

After listening to Nair that day accusing Radhakrishnan of carrying out a "personal agenda" and of misleading the government on the procedures followed for the Antrix-Devas deal, a former close colleague of Nair remarked, "It is a sharp reaction, it is something he has been carrying around for a while and he has let it all out now".

IN ISRO circles, there has always been talk of a deep-running, though never openly discussed, feud between Malayali scientists and Tamil scientists, since the organisation is largely dominated by people from Kerala and Tamil Nadu, but it has never blown out in public like the current feud between Nair and Radhakrishnan.

Over the years, ISRO has fostered a management style where a strong chairman commands full authority and allegiance and steers the space agency and its programmes, primarily satellite development for remote sensing and communications, rocket development for satellite launches, and space research.

The chairman works with a group of leaders, mostly scientists, who head the 19 ISRO centres, the cream of them being the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre in Thiruvananthapuram where work on rockets is done, the ISRO Satellite Centre in Bangalore, the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota where launches take place, the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre at three sites where work is carried out on rocket fuel technology, the Space Applications Centre at Ahmedabad and the Antrix Corporation, a commercial arm.

When the chairman and top scientists heading the different centres retire, they rarely go out of service since their expertise is plowed back into ISRO or sometimes even sent upstairs to the department of space or the space commission.

Four of the six former chairmen of ISRO continue to serve space agencies in some official capacity. Madhavan Nair, after the current controversy, was ousted from the prestigious position of the Vikram Sarabhai professor at ISRO, a position created in the name of the founding father of India's space programme and the first chairman of ISRO (1963-72).

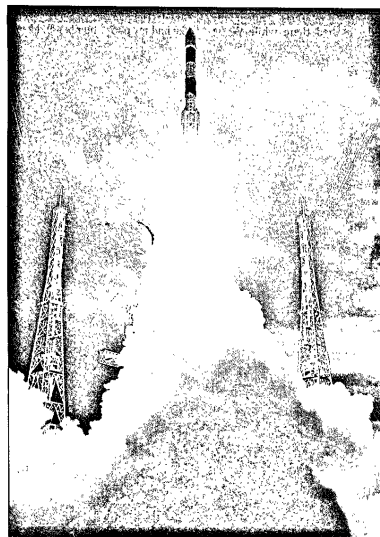
"In ISRO, we are taught to respect our leaders and we have had great leaders. There is an unwritten



(Left to right) ISRO chairman K Radhakrishnan with former chairman K Kasturirangan and G Madhavan Nair during an event in Bangalore in 2010

SPACE WAR

What was till recently a simmering conflict is now an open war in India's premier space agency. **JOHNSON TA** puts together the inside story of ISRO's interneine feud



As ISRO chairman, Madhavan Nair was responsible for 25 successful space missions, including the maiden moon mission for India

code of loyalty to succeed in ISRO. It is this code that has seen the organisation achieve respect and success," says a former ISRO official who worked in various capacities on the managerial side.

The loyalty factor was seen as being invaluable when the organisation was attempting to advance Indian space science in a global environment marked by international isolation.

"ISRO in the early days was a common project for all its scientists to advance Indian capabilities in the face of adversity. A changing commercial atmosphere has changed dynamics," says an ISRO official.

"Passionate, strong commitment and courage to explore newer technical frontiers. Highly demanding technical and managerial skills" are often defined as requisites for ISRO leadership.

Until the recent turn of events be-

ated that ISRO under Nair had failed to "explicitly" tell the Space Commission and the Union Cabinet that two satellites were being given exclusively to Devas. "Kasturirangan should answer it. They (Deutsche Telekom) were not in the picture when the contract was signed on January 28, 2005," Radhakrishnan said at the press conference.

According to ISRO insiders, "there is a deep divide in ISRO at present between people who were loyal to Madhavan Nair and people who are loyal to Radhakrishnan." "It is a divided house. A number of people who were loyal to Madhavan Nair have been moved out of key positions and have been replaced by people trusted by Radhakrishnan," says a source.

While Nair was known to command a lot of power in ISRO and was sometimes considered authoritarian, he was also well-liked. "He also had good relations with the PMO," says sources.

During Nair's tenure as chairman, he wore the hats of the secretary of the Department of Space and was head of the Space Commission. Since his exit and the fallout of the Antrix-Devas deal, the ISRO chairman's role has been clipped and powers have been more distributed.

Radhakrishnan, a Kathakali artiste, is aloof, less communicative and has been labelled more authoritarian than his predecessor. His critics in ISRO say he spends a lot of time on his personal interests, including music.

"You have to be proactive and go all out and get business for ISRO—that proactive streak is now missing. Instead of growing in strength, ISRO seems to be faltering because of the leadership," says Madhavan Nair.

Radhakrishnan has repeatedly refused to comment on his differences with Nair.

According to an ISRO official who has worked with both Nair and Radhakrishnan, the present chairman has not done anything to harm anybody deliberately. "It is a play of circumstances around the Antrix-Devas deal. We don't know if there are issues beyond ISRO and Antrix involving the government," he says.

"This episode (Antrix-Devas deal) has left deep scars on some of us who worked hard with idealism over decades at ISRO. You can ask our vendors and clients whether there has been any corruption in our system. I am left wondering if our system is so fragile and if we are just cogs in the wheel," says an ISRO employee.

ACCOUNT BOOKS

■ For 2011-12, ISRO had a budget estimate of Rs 626 crore, with Rs 4,017 cr for space technology, Rs 848 cr for space applications, Rs 1,085 cr for communication satellite operations, Rs 351 cr for space sciences and Rs 322 cr for administration and other programmes.

■ ISRO earns revenues through its commercial arm Antrix Corporation through activities such as leasing of transponders on communication satellites to satellite television companies like Tata Sky, Sun TV and others;

from sale of remote sensing data; from building satellites on contract and from launch services.

■ In 2010, Antrix reported revenues of Rs 128.02 crore with a profit of Rs 1,058 crore and a profit of Rs 229 crore.

■ The approved employee strength of the Space Department as of April 2010 was 18,249, of which 12,517 are in the scientific and technical category and 5,732 in the administration.

THE DEAL ABOUT ANTRIX-DEVAS

JANUARY 28, 2005: Antrix Corporation signs agreement with private NRI firm Devas Multimedia to launch mobile satellite services using Devas receive technology and ISRO satellite technology.

DECEMBER 2005: Cabinet approves building of Rs 269-crore GSAT-6 satellite

AUGUST 2008: Deutsche Telekom picks up 17 per cent stake in Devas at a cost of Rs 323.25 crore.

MARCH 12, 2011: Chaturvedi Committee submits report to PMO. Cabinet secretary says procedural lapses have occurred.

JANUARY 13, 2012: Department of Space bars appointment of former ISRO chairman G Madhavan Nair and three others from government jobs on the basis of former CVC Pradyum Sinha's report.

report, says Cabinet not informed about dedication of 90 per cent of two satellites operating in S-band spectrum to Devas.

FEBRUARY 9, 2011: PMO appoints high powered Chaturvedi Committee to review deal.

FEBRUARY 17, 2011: Cabinet Committee on Security decides to annul deal for societal and strategic reasons, based on Space Commission recommendations.

MARCH 12, 2011: Chaturvedi Committee submits report to PMO. Cabinet secretary says procedural lapses have occurred.

JANUARY 13, 2012: Department of Space bars appointment of former ISRO chairman G Madhavan Nair and three others from government jobs on the basis of former CVC Pradyum Sinha's report.

BARRED

The four ISRO officials barred by the Department of Space from taking up government assignments for their alleged impropriety in the Antrix-Devas deal

G MADHAVAN NAIR
A rocket systems engineer with the Indian space programme from its earliest days in the 1960s, Nair's tenure as chairman of ISRO from 2003 to 2009, is considered among the most successful phases. A Padma Vibhushan awardee, he was the Vikram Sarabhai Professor at ISRO until last week when he was removed from the position after being barred from government positions by the Department of Space for his alleged role in allowing procedural lapses while facilitating the Antrix-Devas deal.

K R SRIDHARA MURTHI
A mechanical engineer and an IIM-A graduate, Murthi is a former ISRO scientific secretary and was the managing director of Antrix Corporation—ISRO's commercial arm, during a period when the firm's revenues rose from Rs 60 crore to Rs 1,058 crore in ten years. He is the official signatory on the Antrix side for the Devas deal. "I did my job honestly. Innovations were required and we were trying a business innovation. Nobody will risk innovation in ISRO any more if this is the reward," says Murthi, who voluntarily quit from an advisory council to the Prime Minister on innovation after he heard he was barred from taking up government jobs.

DR K N SHANKARA
An electrical communication engineer who formerly headed the ISRO Satellite Centre and the Space Application Centre, he was drafted by ISRO to write up a report on the technical feasibility of the Antrix-Devas deal. "We looked at the technical side of the deal," says Shankara. His committee found that mobile satellite technology like what was proposed by Devas could be useful in reaching remote parts of the country. He has been barred from taking up government positions for his report paving the path for the deal.

A BHASKARARAYANA
An electrical communication engineer from IIT Madras, Bhaskararaya is a former ISRO scientific secretary and a former director of satellite communication programmes. As scientific secretary, he was in communication with the government on the usage of the S-band spectrum for the Antrix-Devas agreement. "I have put in nearly four decades of dedicated work. I don't think I have done any wrong," he says.

IT'S A SLAP ON MY FACE. I SUSPECT A LOBBY IN THIS

The department of space has penalised former Isro chief **G Madhavan Nair** and three other former top space officials by banning them from holding any government jobs for their role in the Antrix-Devas deal. But Nair tells **Srinivas Laxman** that he has not flouted the law

FOR THE RECORD

What was your reaction to the order which you say you had read only in the newspapers?

■ It was a real slap on my face and I was shocked. I am now really sad and disgusted. I will immediately withdraw from all the government posts. The order which I read in the newspapers does not mention the reasons why I have been penalised. If any rules had been violated, there should have been a regular inquiry and a person should have been given an opportunity to state his point of view. All these have been violated. I wonder how the entire exercise could have been carried out in such a secret manner.

How do you plan to respond to it?

■ Once I read the official document, I will initiate measures to ensure that my honour is restored.

The main charge against you is that while clinching the deal with Devas, rules were flouted and you failed to adhere to laid-down procedures.

■ I totally disagree that I did not observe the rules. The agreement was signed by adhering to all the procedures. Antrix Corporation asked Devas to obtain the necessary licences from the department of telecommunications. Isro has nothing to do with the spectrum and spectrum charges. The technology which we were planning to introduce was unique and would have benefited the rural areas. The way things have happened I suspect that there could have been some pressure from some lobby.

What type of pressure and what is this lobby you are referring to?

■ I am convinced that the new chairman, K Radhakrishnan, was not comfortable

with the deal. Within a month after he assumed charge in November 2009, he set up a committee to look into the Antrix-Devas agreement even though an earlier committee had given it a clean chit. Another group chaired by K N Shankara described it as a viable decision. Despite all this, Radhakrishnan sent a communique to the PMO saying the contract should be annulled.

One serious charge against you is that the Union Cabinet was not informed that the two communication satellites GSat-6 and GSat-6A would be used by Devas and this has even been acknowledged by Isro. Comment please.

■ Antrix Corporation is a public sector organisation and as such there is no need to inform the Cabinet. This is clearly stated in the rules and let me reiterate firmly and strongly that we have not flouted the law, rules or regulations. The Devas agreement was signed by conforming to all the rules. There were 18 meetings between Isro and Devas and all authorities were informed.

It is being stated that the deal, if it had materialised, would have caused a major financial loss to the national exchequer. Do you agree?

■ Definitely not. Isro's responsibility stops with the supply of transponders.

Many are of the view that your public attack on the present Isro chairman will considerably damage the space agency's image. Do you agree?

■ I maintain that whatever I have said is factual and my criticism is levelled against only an individual who is the team leader. Isro has nearly 16,000 employees and they are doing a fine job. If a team does not win, then it is the captain who is held responsible. This is what has happened in Isro.

You have repeatedly stated that Isro's future under the leadership of Radhakrishnan is dim.

■ Isro works on a long-range goal and you need a 10-year programme. When I was the chairman I had a profile done till the year 2020. In the last two years, however, there have been no major approvals for new projects, like for example the human space flight programme. Even the

implementation of some existing programmes is very slow. There seems to be a lack of managerial and technical leadership in Isro. Under these circumstances, I can say that the future of Isro is pretty dim. **Some of your own scientists blame you for not giving them credit for the discovery of water molecules by Chandrayaan-1's Moon Impact Probe on November 14, 2008. They say that you also allowed Nasa to walk away with credit for an Indian achievement.**

■ This is totally absurd. There was an agreement that the data will be shared by Isro and Nasa. I do not agree that the delay in announcing the Indian discovery was done deliberately. The findings by our instrument had to be corroborated. So we timed the announcement simultaneously both in Washington and Bangalore.

How has your family reacted to these developments?

■ My grandson is very happy to see his grandfather at home when he returns from school and my wife is happy that I am at home to help her with the domestic chores.



Pioneer ND 29/01/2012

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Post Coal Net scam, prof promoted

CBI, CAG reports indicted Director of IIT Patna

MOUSHUMI BASU ■ NEW DELHI

Former ISRO chief G Madhavan Nair had to resign from the coveted post of Chairman, Board of Governors of IIT Patna in the wake of the Government banning his employment following the Antrix-Devas controversy. However, for the three-year-old IIT Patna, the woes don't seem to be ending at just that. The Director, IIT Patna, Prof Anil K Bhowmick, too is mired in controversy. According to documents in possession with *The Pioneer*, Bhowmick has been indicted by both the CAG and the CBI for irregularities in the Coal Net Project scam.

The CBI, which submitted its report way back in 2007, had recom-

mended Regular Departmental Action (RDA), which includes major penalty by way of dismissal from service. On the contrary, though, Bhowmick got promoted as Director IIT Patna in 2008 and continues till date.

Bhowmick was the Dean,

IN VIOLATION OF NORMS, ANIL BHOWMICK WAS FOUND TO HAVE OUTSOURCED THE ENTIRE JOB TO M/S TCG (THE CHATTERJEE GROUP) OF AN IIT-KHARAGPUR ALUMNUS

Sponsored Research & Industrial Consultancy (SRIC), IIT Kharagpur, which was awarded the Coal Net consultancy service. The duration of the project from 2001 to 2005 was for computerisation of Coal India Limited (CIL) and its subsidiaries.

The documents state that CBI in its course of investigation found that

Bhowmick had violated the work order of the Coal Net Project. Accordingly, all documents were to be kept confidential and not to be divulged to any third party, and no part of the job was to be outsourced without CIL's approval.

However, in violation of these norms, he was found to have outsourced the entire job to M/s TCG (The Chatterjee Group) of an IIT Kharagpur Alumnus Purunendu Chatterjee. He had sub-contracted the work on back-to-back basis, in complete violation of the contract.

Further, even the CAG report of 2009-10 has pointed out that the Coal Net Project could not be completed even after seven years and despite spending ₹39.58 crore

It has blamed IIT Kharagpur, the implementation agency, for inadequate monitoring of the implementation of the project resulting in its slow progress that eventually led to

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Post Coal...

From Page 1

the foreclosure of the agreement with the premier institution.

The CBI had also recommended penalty against two senior IIT-Kharagpur professors — RN Banerjee and the current Dean, SRIC, Professor PP Chakraborti — for their involvement in the Coal Net Project irregularities.

As things stand, the top

brass at the IITs have been coming under scanner for various scams and irregularities. Prof D Acharya, Director IIT Kharagpur is under CBI scanner for the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) scam while serving as its chairman. Prof Madhusudan Chakraborty from IIT Kharagpur, who is on lien to IIT Bhubaneswar as Director, is also facing a CBI probe due to irregularities in appointments, equipment purchase and travel bills.

HindustanTimes

Title :

Author :

Location :

Article Date : 01/30/2012

Lots of science, little sensibility

The action taken by the Union government against some senior Indian space scientists for their alleged role in the Antrix deal has sent out a strong message that no wrongdoing will be tolerated (*Probe panel findings nailed the four scientists, January 26*). But like the 2G scam, the Antrix scam was also highlighted by the media first. While the media must be commended for this, one wonders if there are any checks and balances left in the administrative set-up of this country? I hope this incident will help bring in more transparency in the governance of science institutions in the country.

Bapu Satyanarayana, , via email

Search panel drags feet, UGC still headless

ELIGIBILITY Sources say search committee wants to get age clause relaxed on the position

Pankaj Vohra

pvohra@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The selection of the chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC) has been considerably delayed with the three-member search committee dragging its feet without reaching any concrete conclusions.

The search committee has now sought an appointment with the Human Resources Development (HRD) minister, Kapil Sibal, to seek some “unnecessary” clarifications regarding eligibility criteria of candidates in general and the age clause in particular.

Sources said that the reason for seeking clarification was that some candidates in the age range of 62-64 years also figured in the zone of consideration. The UGC Act, significantly, stipulates that the office of the UGC chairman shall be whole time and he/she shall “hold office for a term of five years or until he attains the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier”.

Accordingly, the UGC chairman has to be appointed on a whole time basis and for the full term. The provision does not allow for interpretation knowingly or deliberately that a person could be appointed chairman for a period, which will not be one term of five years.

The appointment is, therefore, to be guided in that the identified incumbent should be able to serve five years in office and without exceeding the age of superannuation — 65 years. The stipulation in the advertisement given by the HRD ministry on this subject mentioned, “...nominees should be prefer-



Illustration: ABHIMANYU SINHA

ably below the age of 60 years”.

This appears to have also been guided by this principle. Non-adherence to this provision will tantamount to violation of the relevant stipulation in the UGC.

Curtailed of full term due to an intervening factor such as superannuation or some unforeseen reasons of exit from the position would be an exception and not a rule.

The HRD ministry's decision in the appointment of Prof SS Mantha as the chairman, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), made nearly a fortnight ago, supports the principle cited for the position of the UGC chairman.

The AICTE chairman has been appointed for a full term of three years (as per the provision of the AICTE Act) by the

ministry notwithstanding the introduction of the legislation about the National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) in Parliament.

Sources said that attempt to get the age clause relaxed by the search committee could be to bring in some candidates who do not otherwise fulfil the criteria. Hectic lobbying is going on for this coveted position where the names of some vice chancellors who are facing an enquiry also figure.

The long list of aspirants has amongst the front-runners a former vice chancellor who was overlooked for a similar position for the Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University last year.

Deccan Herald ND
29/01/2012 p-6

Next generation 'Aakash' tablets for Rs 1,500 in Andhra

HYDERABAD: In a bid to promote e-learning in the state, the Andhra Pradesh government plans to provide 'next generation Aakash' tablets to students at a subsidised price of Rs 1,500.

A proposal has already been sent to the Human Resources Development (HRD) Ministry.

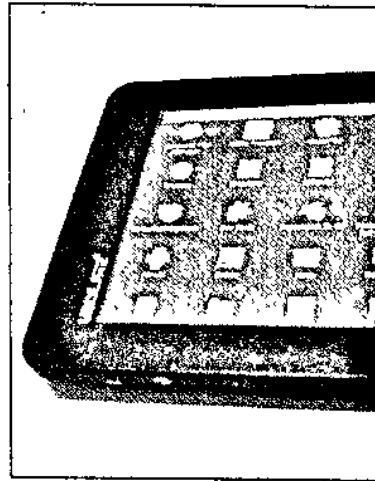
"Once we get the approval, we will implement the scheme. We are planning to procure 10,000 tablets. Initially, they will be made available to the students of the state universities, engineering and polytechnic colleges," the State Commissioner of Technical Education, S Balasubramanyam said.

The second phase of the scheme will see students of private colleges in the state reaping the benefits.

The Union HRD Ministry is monitoring the implementation of 'Aakash' project. Billed as the world's cheapest tablet, 'Aakash' was launched by HRD Minister Kapil Sibal in October last year. The tablet has been designed with an aim to bridge the "digital divide" between the rich and the poor.

Over the next five years, the Centre plans to provide the tablets to 20 crore students.

"The HRD Ministry had asked the state to submit details about the number of Aakash tablets initially required. We plan to procure 10,000 tablets in the begin-



ning," Balasubramanyam said.

The state government is waiting for the next generation of 'Aakash,' expected to be released in April. Plans are afoot to rent out the tablets to college and university libraries for students who can not afford to buy.

The tablet, with a seven-inch touch screen, weighs 350 grams. It runs on Android operating system. There are reports that the existing Android 2.2 has a series of faults. This apart, reports about the tablet's poor battery backup have also emerged recently.

In response, 'Aakash' manufacturer Datawind has decided to launch an improved version with a 766 MHz processor and a longer battery life.

Nonetheless, the product has been welcomed with an overwhelming response, with over two million online orders being placed till January 25.

DH News Service

Tribune ND 29/01/2012

P-24

AP plans subsidised Aakash for students

SURESH DHARUR/TNS

HYDERABAD, JANUARY 28

As a part of the initiative to promote e-learning, the Andhra Pradesh Government is planning to provide Aakash tablets to students at a subsidised price of Rs 1,500.

The state government has sent a proposal to the Union Human Resources Development (HRD) Ministry in this

regard. "Once we get the approval, we will implement the scheme. We are planning to procure 10,000 tablets. Initially, they will be made available to the students in the state universities, engineering and polytechnic colleges," State Commissioner of Technical Education S Balasubramanyam said.

In the next phase, the scheme would be extended to

the students of all private colleges in the state, the official said. The Union HRD Ministry is monitoring implementation of the Aakash project. The tablet has been designed especially for students with an aim to bridge the digital divide between the rich and the poor. Over the next five years, the Centre plans to provide the tablets to 20 crore students.

Indian Express ND 29/01/2012 P-11

SQUEEZED between the Republic Day and the anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination, this Sunday must be rescued as an island free of hyperbole and hypocrisy. Well may we extol the virtues of ahimsa but we have just surrendered to threats of violent rioting in Jaipur. A Republic sixty-two years old is even now unsure of the freedoms it has bestowed upon its citizens and confused as to its identity.

During the mid 1950s, I recall Pandit Nehru addressing a Conference of Newspaper Editors. He advanced the interesting notion that Freedom of Speech and Expression had not been granted to good editors alone; it was most necessary for the bad editors too. It would be easy to say that editors should use their freedoms responsibly and in national interest. Of course, bad editors would do no such thing; they would print scurrilous articles. But then who is to decide who is a good editor and who is bad? If this is left

to the government, then predictably only *chamchas* will survive as editors and the honest ones who spoke the truth to power would be hustled off to jail as bad editors misusing their freedoms.

Nehru's remarks are even more apt now than ever before. I was struck by Justice Katju saying that Salman Rushdie was a poor and sub-standard writer who would have remained unknown except for his scurrilous book *The Satanic Verses*. This, he is quoted as saying, is much more fundamental issue than merely banning him. Of course, every one is entitled to his own literary standards. I hope the Booker Prize authorities take note of what Justice Katju has said and immediately withdraw the original Booker Prize for *Midnight's Children* and its prize as Booker of Bookers of over 25 years.

out of my
MIND

Meghnad Desai



But even a poor substandard writer deserves to be able to write and be read by such tasteless people who prefer him to better writers. A writer's freedom of expression and for all of us the freedom to read and write as we please is not granted on a quality adjusted basis. This is not one of your IIT entrance exams where if you don't score 99 per cent, you may as well jump in the lake. The founding fathers of the Constitution of India gave all such freedoms without even setting a literacy test. Of course the freedom to read implies the freedom not to read if you

don't like someone's writing. It does not imply prohibition on all from reading something which a minority does not approve of.

Over the sixty-two years, India has encouraged the articulation of several identities among its citizens. This can only be a good thing. But some identities especially religious ones are being privileged. This is paradoxically because of the insistence that India is a secular state. Indian secularism treats its citizens as belonging to certain identified religious communities and enjoins others to respect the sensitivities of each such community. But then who is to decide which sensitivities are worthy of more respect and which less.

The taking of insults over the most trivial matter, be it a Bollywood film song, or the dress worn by some group or a biography of

some historical figure has become a large scale industry. PILs are used as a way of blackmailing those who some people do not approve of. Mob violence and political party muscle is enough for the State to abdicate its responsibility.

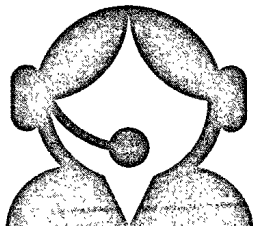
The worst effect of privileging religious or caste groups is that if I am born in one of those groups but wish to reject that identity, I cannot seek protection from the state. But for an apostate Muslim as for a Muslim divorcee, it is the religious gatekeepers who police if they can enjoy their fundamental rights.

All his life Gandhiji was criticised by orthodox Hindus for the simplicity and ecumenical nature of his religious beliefs. He was finally killed by a fellow Hindu, who was hanged for his crime. If Salman Rushdie had come to Jaipur and been shot by one of the many Muslim gangs, would his killer have been tried, if caught, and hanged if convicted?

Do I need to ask?

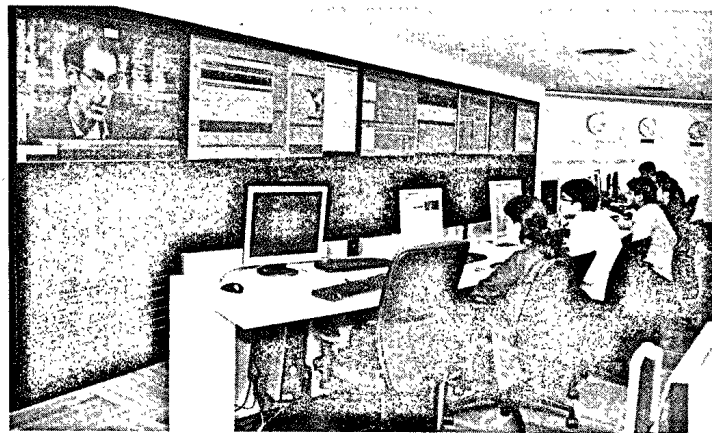
France's Orange May Yet be Red Hot in India

Vivek Badrinath isn't one of those famed 'Indian' global corporate chiefs. But the French telecom major's huge India plans can raise both his and his company's profile



FROM SWEET 60S TO TURBULENT TODAY

- Orange Business Services, the business communications arm of France Telecom, has been in India since 1969.
- In 2001, Equant merged with Global One creating a new entity with France Telecom as the majority shareholder.
- In 2005, France Telecom took full ownership of Equant and created Orange Business Services in 2006.
- In 2007, Orange Business Services successfully acquired the managed and enterprise divisions of Indian network services provider GTL for around \$250 million.
- The acquisition marked a re-entry into India of France Telecom which had earlier in 2003 sold its 26% stake in BPL Mobile, offering services in the Mumbai area.
- In 2008, Orange was awarded the international and national long-distance licence in India and allowed to offer data network services directly to multi-site corporate customers.
- Orange has a large network in India including 12 points of presence across Bangalore, Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Pune, and a major service centre in Gurgaon that employs around 1800 people.
- Orange has a customer base of more than 600 in India. India is in the top emerging markets for the company.



:: Ishani Duttgupta

In France, as they say, everything is a pretext for a good meal. But if the new boss of that quintessential Parisian firm, Orange, has his way, it would be the country of his ancestors that would be gobbling up the "le plat principal" (the main course).

Actually, hardly a head turned in India when Vivek Badrinath took over as CEO of Orange Business Services, the commercial business-to-business (B2B) brand of France Telecom, in April 2010. The 40-year-old's father had moved to France in the 1950s; Badrinath made his bones from the famed Ecole Polytechnique and not from the IIT-IIM circuit unlike many of his ilk with an Indian name. But that's set to change.

Badrinath, formerly executive vice-president (networks) of the France Telecom Group, has already made India central to Orange's growth plans in the Asia-Pacific region. Last November, the firm announced a growth strategy for the region focused on areas such as network enhancements, cloud computing, strategic partnerships and network-related IT services.

A Billion Euros

Altogether, the group made a €750-million investment in network backbone and related IT infrastructure in the region in 2011, and has unveiled plans to generate €1 billion from emerging countries by 2015.

"Since he took over as CEO, he has been visiting India at least once every quarter. His deep knowledge on networking ties in very well with our big plans for the emerging markets of which India is an important part," says Bala Mahadevan, CEO (India), Orange Business Services.

As for Badrinath, he says he is no stranger to India. He worked here from 2000 to 2003 as the CEO of the Indian subsidiary of consumer electronics firm Thomson. "I see India as a huge engineering talent pool for our globalised Orange workforce. Our staff in India is being given opportunities to take on global roles all the time," Badrinath told *ET on Sunday*.

Over the past two years, Orange has made substantial investment in people and has hired around 550 people laterally.

China to Africa

Orange's major service centre in Gurgaon employs around 1,800 people and is one of the biggest units of the company that has customers around the world. Orange employs around 600 engineers for its Indian operations and has been rapidly scaling up.

"India is also a production base and a talent pool for engineers. We are also looking

Orange has grabbed long-distance licences, but it won't be an easy task to pip home giants like Bharti

Squeezed Orange?

Yet, India, a communications services market that oscillates between saturation and expansion, may not be all juice for Orange. The company has been awarded international and national long distance licence to offer data network services directly to multi-site corporate customers in the domestic market and across the world. But in the domestic market, firms such as Bharti Airtel enjoy a huge home advantage even in the enterprise space since they are present across the gamut of services.

"They can offer integrated end-to-end services across the board than just niche carrier services. In terms of cost, niche players such as Orange will face a very competitive scenario in the price-sensitive Indian market," says Romal Shetty, partner and head of telecom at KPMG, a consultancy. He, however, adds that global companies that use Orange services for their worldwide operations would prefer to remain with the company for their Indian operations as well.

Orange seems to be banking on telecom services for large enterprises, a high-growth area in India. According to Sandip Biswas, director, Deloitte India, an accountancy firm, B2B ICT services domain is opening up in a big way in India with large companies moving out of such non-core areas for cost advantages. "Large players, Indian and global, will find huge growth in offering customised enterprise solutions not just to large companies but also to smaller ones in the coming years," he says.

Badrinath may yet become a familiar India-origin global CEO in India. ■

India provides us a base of IT-savvy customers that are looking at solutions to connect their entities globally

VIVEK BADRINATH, CEO, Orange Business Services



Publication: The Times Of India Delhi; Date: Jan 29, 2012; Section: Times Global; Page: 22;

Twitter's new plan for censorship stirs global outrage

New York: Twitter, a tool of choice for dissidents and activists around the world, found itself the target of global outrage on Friday after unveiling plans to allow country-specific censorship of tweets that might break local laws.

It was a stunning role reversal for a youthful company that prides itself in promoting unfettered expression, 140 characters at a time. Twitter insisted its commitment to free speech remains firm, and sought to explain the nuances of its policy, while critics — in a barrage of tweets — proposed a Twitter boycott and demanded that the censorship initiative be scrapped.

In China, where activists have embraced Twitter even though it's blocked in-

In a barrage of tweets, critics proposed a Twitter boycott, demanded the censorship of content following laws in various countries be done away with

side the country, artist and activist Ai Weiwei tweeted in response to the news, "If Twitter censors, I'll stop tweeting." One often-relayed tweet bore the headline of a magazine technology blog item, "Twitter Commits Social Suicide."

Responding to the furor Alexander Macgillivray, Twitter's general counsel said critics were jumping to wrong conclusions. AP

HindustanTimes

Title : India creates Vivekananda chair at Chicago varsity

Author :

Location : NEW DELHI:

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India creates Vivekananda chair at Chicago varsity

HT Correspondent

■ letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Throwing open a new opportunity for the West to know India, New Delhi on Sunday created a faculty chair — named after Swami Vivekananda — at the University of Chicago. Supported by a \$1.5 million endowment grant from the ministry of culture, the University of Chicago will establish “the Indian Ministry of Culture Vivekananda Visiting Professorship” for Indian studies.

Finance minister Pranab Mukherjee on Sunday made the announcement at the Fullerton Hall of the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC), where

Vivekananda had delivered his famous speech 119 years ago.

Last month, HT had reported about the creation of this chair.

According to a University of Chicago release, “The one-quarter visiting professorship will be given to distinguished scholars from a variety of disciplines with an interest in the fields of study most relevant to the teachings and philosophies of the Swami, such as Indian philosophy, politics and social movements.”

Dedicating a plaque of Vivekananda at the AIC, Mukherjee said, “Swami Vivekanda was practically India’s first cultural ambassa-

dor to United States.” He also inaugurated an art exhibition of Rabindranath Tagore at AIC.

In a release, university president Robert J. Zimmer said, “The ministry’s generous support will allow us to expand on the university’s tradition of rigorous scholarship in Indian studies.”

Martha Roth, dean of the Humanities, said: “The University of Chicago is proud of our exceptional group of faculty and students with interests in the scholarship of South Asia.”

This will be New Delhi’s second chair at an American university after the Bhim Rao Ambedkar chair at Columbia University.

HindustanTimes

Title : BREAKTHROUGH 16 years on, cloning scientists now create human brain cells

Author : Guardian News Service letters@hindustantimes.com

Location : EDINBURGH:

Article Date : 01/30/2012

BREAKTHROUGH

16 years on, cloning scientists now create human brain cells

Guardian News Service

■ letters@hindustantimes.com

EDINBURGH: The news that Edinburgh scientists had created the world's first cloned mammal, Dolly the sheep, at the university's Roslin Institute made headlines around the world 16 years ago. Her birth raised hopes of the creation of a new generation of medicines—with a host of these breakthroughs occurring at laboratories in the university over the following decade.

And now one of the most spectacular has taken place at Edinburgh's Centre for Regenerative Medicine, where scientists have continued to develop the technology used to make Dolly. In a series of remarkable experiments, they have created brain tissue from patients suffering from schizophrenia, bipolar



■ Scientist Ian Wilmut with Dolly, the world's first cloned sheep, at the Roslin Institute near Edinburgh in 2001. GNS

depression and other mental illnesses.

The work offers spectacular rewards for doctors. From a scrap of skin taken from a patient, they can make neurones genetically identical to those in that person's brain. These brain cells, grown in the laboratory, can then be studied to reveal the neurological secrets of their condition.

"A patient's neurones can

tell us a great deal about the psychological conditions that affect them, but you cannot stick a needle in someone's brain and take out its cells," said Professor Charles French-Constant, the centre's director.

"However, we have found a way round that. We can take a skin sample, make stem cells from it and then direct these stem cells to grow into brain cells.