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Pact signed by Raju's team with Mauritius under cloud

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New Delhi: Even though the HRD ministry has not yet confirmed if an official of the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) was made to sign an agreement with Tertiary Education Commission in November 2013 while sitting in Mathura when a full-fledged Indian delegation was already in Port Louis, TEC has said the AIU signatory was not in Mauritius.

This raises the serious question why no one in the Indian delegation, led by then HRD minister MM Pallam Raju, was willing to sign on behalf of AIU. AK Bakshi, TEC director, told **TOI** that AIU official Durg Singh Chauhan who signed the pact

Why was no one in the delegation to Port Louis, led by then HRD minister MM Pallam Raju, willing to sign on behalf of AIU? It was signed by an official sitting in Mathura

was not present in Mauritius. However, Bakshi said, "Signing was done through exchange of agreement which is the current practice in many organizations."

What has made the TEC-AIU agreement even more mysterious is that the University Grants Commission that signed another agreement with TEC in January 2014 re-

ferred to TEC-AIU agreement but now says it does not even have a copy of it.

Also, while AIU has not given any explanation as to why agreement was signed with TEC in 2013 when the existing agreement was valid till 2015, Bakshi said, "Since Mauritius wants to position itself as a knowledge hub, it felt the need to revisit the agreement." Meanwhile, the HRD ministry that is looking at TEC-AIU and TEC-UGC agreement has gone slow.

Meanwhile, Bakshi is facing allegations of having manipulated the TEC-UGC pact, a charge he denies. Bakshi is also facing allegations of sexual harassment from a colleague in TEC. Bakshi says, "This is baseless, unfounded and malicious."

Dainik Bhasker, ND
26/07/2014 P-1

आईआईटी में डीआरडीओ खोलेगा टेक्नोलॉजी सेंटर

नई दिल्ली | आईआईटी बॉम्बे और जादवपुर यूनिवर्सिटी समेत देश के प्रमुख इंजीनियरिंग संस्थानों में डीआरडीओ अपने एडवांस टेक्नोलॉजी सेंटर खोलेगा। इनमें मिसाइल और ऑटोमैटिक सैन्य टेक्नोलॉजी में शोध की सुविधा मुहैया कराई जाएगी।

Chennai's Marina crowds to be part of communication experiment

An IIT-M, Japan pilot can change the way emergencies are managed

KV KURMANATH

Hyderabad, July 25

Weekend crowds on the famed Marina Beach in Chennai are going to be part of a communication experiment, which may change the way the world responds to emergencies.

The Chennai police are going to use a communication system developed in an Indo-Japanese collaborative project that works on a GSM spectrum different from what we use in our phones.

A team of Indian Institutes of Technology, the National Geophysical Research Institute, the India Meteorological Department, and Tokyo University has developed a GSM, GPS-

based communication system that can quickly be deployed in an emergency situation.

As it works on a different layer of transmission, the congestion in the local communication networks that we generally see in times of disasters and other emergencies can be done away with.

Crowd management

"The Chennai police would use it for crowd management on the beach as a pilot. The police will use the GSM bandwidth of the railways to communicate with the team members to keep an eye on the teeming crowds. They might allow others, such as NGOs or



Going hi-tech RD Koilpillai and Devendra Jalihal of Electrical Engineering Department, IIT-Madras, explaining the point at research meet in Hyderabad. MOHAMMED YOUSUF

journalists, if need be," R David Koilpillai, Dean of IIT (Madras), told *BusinessLine*.

If we allowed (like the police in the upcoming pilot), people can look for the exclusive network in their phones and call an emergency number to send an SOS (alert). It also allows

you to send a voice message that will be made available on a website," he added.

The system has been developed as part of the DISANET (Information Network for Natural Disaster Mitigation and Recovery), a five-year (2010-15) project taken up by India and the

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The ₹35-crore project, involving 50 researchers, has been working on weather monitoring, pre and post-disaster management, a sustainable communication infrastructure and an ICT platform that can give you a bankable communication medium in times of emergencies.

The stakeholders of the project have met here to take stock of the outcomes so far.

"This project involves a wide variety of disciplines in engineering, environmental sciences, software and communications. The 100 smart cities we are talking about should factor in the outcomes of this project to build safer cities," UB Desai, Director of IIT (Hyderabad), said.

Engineering college exclusively for women in Maharashtra: Smriti

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/education/story/engineering-college-exclusively-for-women-in-maharashtra-smriti/1/374109.html>

An engineering college exclusively for women in Maharashtra has got approval from the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Union Human Resource Development Minister Smriti Irani has said.

"According to the information furnished by the All India Council for Technical Education, it has approved one women's engineering college during the academic year 2014-15 in the name of 'New Horizon Institute of Technology and Management'," she said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha.

Irani also said the central government has not sanctioned any funds for the college in Thane as it is being set up by the New Horizon Education Society from its own funds.

Irani also informed Parliament that the government has planned to set up four new central universities in the country and teachers shall be re-employed at the varsities on contract beyond the age of 65 years and up to the age of 70 years to meet faculty requirement of 6,251 vacant posts.

At present, there are 40 central universities under the purview of the ministry.

Irani said a scheme called "Operation Faculty Recharge" has been initiated for augmenting the research and teaching resources of universities to tackle the shortage of faculty in the university system.

NAAC finally moves towards autonomy, to come out of UGC's shadow

Hemali Chhapia, TNN | Jul 26, 2014, 03.46 AM IST

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/education/news/NAAC-finally-moves-towards-autonomy-to-come-out-of-UGC's-shadow/articleshow/39010429.cms>

MUMBAI: After dilly-dallying for six months, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has been pushed to start the process of autonomy.

READ ALSO: [NAAC to move out of regulator UGC's shadow](#)

At the NAAC's 66th executive council meeting, it was decided that the country's accreditation body for higher education institutions would snap ties with the University Grants Commission (UGC), thus ending the commission's two-decade-long supremacy.

In the EC meeting that took place on Thursday, it was also decided that the HRD ministry will take the NAAC under its wing. Currently, the NAAC functions under the UGC, but the ministry had, in a letter, bluntly asked the accreditation body and the regulator to keep each other at "an arm's length".

Despite that, there was enormous internal resistance from within the NAAC.



The divorce will require the NAAC to draw up new byelaws, besides amending its memorandum of association. HRD ministry sources said that besides routine administrative changes, the NAAC, whose inspections have been the subject of intense scrutiny and debate with allegations of favours taken and

given, has to be revamped and "sanitized".

"After the UGC made accreditation mandatory, the idea of making the NAAC an independent body has been stressed upon in several meetings," an HRD ministry official said. Across the world, such a separation is the norm. "Yet, despite several reminders, the ministry's suggestion was not being acted upon," he added.



Many in the HRD ministry blame the UGC for the NAAC's limited growth. Officials said the National Board of Accreditation (NBA), which grades technical courses, underwent a transformation "financially and functionally" after it was separated from the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

The process of making the NBA autonomous and independent of the AICTE was driven by the goal of making the NBA a member of the Washington Accord, which is seen as an international platform for governing quality in undergraduate engineering programmes. "Thus, keeping in view the existing requirements of a globally accepted quality regime for enhancing student mobility, it is requested to work out a copy of the draft MOA and rules to make the NAAC autonomous in relation to the UGC," the letter dispatched by the HRD ministry stated.

"The regulator and the assessor cannot be the same body; they must be independent," NAAC's former executive council chairman Goverdhan Mehta said. "How can assessment be carried out by a body of your own creation?"

He said that assessment and accreditation in the country were late starters, but now the NAAC was mature enough and had the requisite experience to function independently.

Won't allow injustice to UPSC students: govt.

'UPA govt. had introduced aptitude test in English'

Gargi Parsai & Smriti Kak
Ramachandran

NEW DELHI: With Union Public Service Commission examination candidates intensifying their agitation against the C-SAT (Aptitude Test) paper in English, the government assured Parliament on Friday that it would not allow any injustice to any group of students on the basis of language.

"We do not wish to link language with skill," Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office Jitendra Singh told the Rajya Sabha.

He, however, declined to intervene for now to cancel the admit cards issued for this year's examination saying the procedure was as per the UPSC's calendar. "The issuance of admit cards by the UPSC is not a government decision and is not going to influence our further course of action," he said.

The House was adjourned twice on the issue as members demanded a statement from Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In the Lok Sabha,

Samajwadi Party, Janata Dal (United) and Rashtriya Janata Dal members stormed into the well alleging discrimination against Hindi and other languages.

Speaker Sumitra Mahajan turned down the demand for suspension of question hour and for a statement by the Home Minister since one had already been made last week on the issue.

Seeking the cooperation of all parties to appeal to the candidates to call off their agitation, Mr. Singh said the problem was not of the NDA government's making and it was trying to find a solution.

He said the former UPA government had introduced aptitude test papers in English in the preliminary examination in 2010. To make it language-neutral, they were "precis, objective type, 10th Standard papers" more to evaluate a candidate's comprehension and working knowledge of English rather than essay-writing. "Why nobody objected then, I don't know," he said.

The matter came to public

attention after a PIL was filed in 2012 and on the High Court's order, the UPA government set up a three-member committee to look into the issue. The panel could not complete its report in one month and was given a three-month extension. In the meantime, the government changed and the NDA came to power.

Mr. Singh said the committee was still not ready with its report and sought further extension from the new regime. "Today, we have asked the panel to give its report in one week. On that basis we will decide further course of action."

Earlier, most members demanded that the admit card issued online on Thursday be cancelled immediately. JD(U) president Sharad Yadav read out statistics to show how participation in civil services examination of students with Hindi, Tamil, Kannada and Telugu as their mother tongue had declined while that of English students had "doubled" since 2008.

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Only 8.2% of human DNA is 'functional'

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London: Oxford University researchers have found that only 8.2% of human DNA is doing something important — is “functional”. The rest of our genome is leftover evolutionary material, parts of the genome that have undergone losses or gains in the DNA code—often called junk DNA. The finding trashes what scientists have long believed, that 80% of our genome has some biochemical function.

The scientists' idea was to look at where insertions and deletions of chunks of DNA appeared in the mammals' genomes. These could be expected to fall approximately randomly in the sequence—except where natural se-

lection was acting to preserve functional DNA, where insertions and deletions would then lie further apart.

The researchers said: “We found that 8.2% of our human genome is functional. We cannot tell where every bit of the 8.2% of functional DNA is in our genomes”. Also, not all of the 8.2% is equally important, the researchers explain. A little over 1% of human DNA accounts for the proteins that carry out almost all of the critical biological processes in the body. The other 7% is thought to be involved in the switching on and off of genes that encode proteins at different times, in response to various factors, and in different parts of the body.

These are the control and regulation elements.

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Electricity-obsessed ants march across UK

POWER INSECTS

An army of 'super ants' who have a very strong attraction to electricity has **invaded south of England**



➤ Also called **fire ants** or **Asian super ants**, they were **first spotted in the UK in 2009 at Hidcote Manor in Gloucestershire**



➤ They are now on

the move and have **invaded a house at Hendon in northwest London** (100 miles from Hidcote) while more have been **discovered in Buckinghamshire**

HOW THEY AFFECT US

These ants can **gnaw through electricity cables and nest in electrical equipment and plug sockets**. This means they can pose a fire risk and **can cause blackouts** when they swarm

Kounteya.Sinha@timesgroup.com

London: An army of super ants, known for their attraction to electricity, has been found to be marching across the UK, posing a threat to electronic items and even power grids.

Known as fire ants or Asian super ants, the insects were first spotted in the UK in 2009 at Hidcote Manor, a National Trust property in Gloucestershire, where more than 35,000 were discovered. The National Trust now says the super ants could make a full-fledged invasion across Britain. A large nest was discovered recently in London. What is bothering experts is that the nest was empty and the ants had escaped. Unlike common garden ants, these super ants form large colonies and interconnect over many miles.

The super ant's attraction towards electricity is stronger than its need to eat or drink, meaning it can gnaw through electricity cables and nest in electrical equipment and plug sockets. These ants usually nest in electrical items and this means they can pose a fire risk and when they swarm can cause blackouts. Their attraction to electricity usually results in their death.

"The ants themselves pose little direct threat to us as they don't bite people or pets, but their habit of creating super-colonies means they pose a threat to native species by out-competing them for food and space, and their attraction to electrical circuitry means they could pose a fire risk," said David Bullcock, head of nature conservation for the National Trust.

Leopard remains elusive on IIT-B's Powai campus but faeces confirm its presence

Richa Pinto & Yogita Rao | Jul 25, 2014, 11.56 PM IST

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/City/Mumbai/Leopard-remains-elusive-on-IIT-Bs-Powai-campus-but-faeces-confirm-its-presence/articleshow/39001907.cms>

MUMBAI: The spotted cat seemed to be nowhere in sight in the IIT-Bombay workshop on Friday as well. But a confirmation of a leopard being present in the workshop came in when the forest officials found its faeces while attempting to enter the workshop for an inspection on Thursday.

The forest officials are also not ruling out the possibility that the big cat might have escaped as they heard "a heavy cupboard" fall on the ground at Thursday midnight and found broken windows.

"We tried to send four of our officials inside the workshop in a cage, but they could only smell the animal. Also, we found its stools, which are like a confirmation that it was inside. On Thursday night, there was a loud sound which could have probably after a cupboard fell. It seems the big cat was trying to escape," said Sudhir Padwale, assistant conservator of forest, Thane (territorial).

Pawan Sharma, founder of NGO Resqink Association for Wildlife Welfare who was along with the forest officials, said, "A robot fixed with a siren was also sent inside the workshop for around 30 minutes and we kept a watch from the small openings, but the leopard showed no movement. We checked all openings and corners of the workshop, but the leopard could not be seen."

The forest officials, who have been monitoring the situation for the last three days at the Powai campus, complained that the ruckus created by curious onlookers and the continuous traffic movement near the workshop area could have stressed the animal, who, therefore, is showing no movement. "The animal can remain without food for several days and there was already a bucket of water inside the workshop. Hence, he did not fall for our live chicken and water bait," said Padwale.

An IIT-B official said that they might need to sort out the matter soon. "We did not expect it to be such a prolonged affair. The leopard is trapped in an enclosed room (the workshop) and its size could be a hindrance in the rescue operation. We hope to find a solution by Saturday morning," said the institute's official.

Once the animal is trapped, it will undergo a medical check-up and only on confirmation that it has no infections would it be released in the Sanjay Gandhi National Park.