

Newspaper Clips June 4, 2015

Mauritius seeks clarifications on MoU with IIT-Delhi

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/education/mauritius-seeks-clarifications-on-mou-with-iit-delhi/articleshow/47533596.cms>

NEW DELHI: Mauritius has sought clarifications from the Indian government on an MoU signed between it and IIT Delhi in view of HRD Minister Smriti Irani's recent statement questioning the legality of the agreement.

The MoU has been at the centre of a controversy ever since IIT Delhi director R Shevgaonkar tendered his resignation last December.

After there was suspense over his fate for the past five months, the Ministry is now understood to have finally decided to relieve him and send its recommendation to the Visitor soon.

The clarification sought by the Mauritius government about the MoU has been forwarded by the External Affairs Ministry to the HRD Ministry and it has been put up before the Higher Education Secretary, sources said.

Replying to a debate in Parliament on April 27, Irani had sought to blame the previous UPA government, arguing that the MoU as it was in violation of the IIT Act.

"Why such an agreement was signed where commitments were made to set up a campus at (an) international level in violation of the IIT Act by spending India's taxpayers' money? Why did the minister of that time (M M Pallam Raju) did not react," she had said.

Shevgaonkar's stepping down is also being linked to the MoU signed between IIT Delhi and Mauritius Research Council was for setting up an International Institute of Technology Research Academy (IITRA) in the Indian Ocean island nation.

The IIT's board of governors had in March had advised the Ministry to accept Shevgaonkar's resignation. His notice period is set to end by mid-June.

Much of the contention of the MoU was related to the grant of degrees by the new institute.

According to the agreement, IIT would be performing the role of mentoring and hand holding till the new campus is fully functional.

IIT would admit students for the IITRA and award degrees once they successfully complete their research programmes.

Students can pursue courses partly in IIT Delhi and partly in the IITRA.

This arrangement of the IIT awarding the degrees to IITRA students registered with it would continue till 2018. After 2018, the IITRA would award the degrees.

Times of India ND 04/06/2015 P-9

Ex-Harvard maths prof criticizes IIT-M ban

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: Distinguished American mathematician David Mumford has expressed “deep shock” over the IIT-Madras’s de-recognition of student group Ambedkar Periyar Study Circle.

In a letter to IIT-M director Bhaskar Ramamurthi, which was leaked to the media, Mumford said, “I believe campuses must allow open discussion of divisive issues even when it offends some people so that all its aspects are out in the open. Today’s youth are tomorrow’s leaders and one wants them to think deeply about the direction to which we are headed.” Mumford, president of the International Mathematical Union and a former Harvard University professor, is also a Fields Medal winner (top mathematics prize).

The study circle was reportedly derecognized following an anonymous complaint that it was spreading hatred against PM Narendra Modi, which triggered protests.

“I have strong ideas about the importance of free speech and

David Mumford said he saw many similarities between India’s Dalit problems and the African-American problems that have rocked the US

especially the importance of allowing students to discuss vital and difficult issues that confront society today,” he said, adding, “I have also become aware, during my nearly 50 years of visiting India, of the deep social struggles that quite possibly are coming to a head as India takes a central role in the world.” Acknowledging that it was difficult to understand complexities of local disputes as a foreigner, Mumford said he writes as a long term friend of many Indian academicians. Mumford added that said he saw many similarities between India’s Dalit problems and the African-American problems that have rocked the US since the beginning. “For this reason, I take Dr Ambedkar as one of my heroes,” he said.

आईआईटी छात्रों की मदद से ऑटो चालक के बेटे को 90% अंक



नई दिल्ली | सुशील राघव

आईआईटी छात्रों की मदद से ऑटो चालक के बेटे राजीव काले ने सीबीएसई बारहवीं की परीक्षा में 90 फीसदी अंक हासिल किए हैं। राजीव आईआईटी छात्रों द्वारा शुरू की गई 'आरोहण' कक्षा में पढ़ता था।

आईआईटी, दिल्ली में पढ़ाई कर रहे छात्रों की ओर से कमजोर वर्ग के

बच्चों की जिंदगी संवारने के लिए 'आरोहण' कक्षा शुरू की गई है। इसके जरिए 11 और 12वीं के आर्थिक रूप से कमजोर बच्चों को आईआईटी में पढ़ने वाले छात्र मुफ्त में गणित, भौतिकी एवं रसायन विज्ञान पढ़ाते हैं।

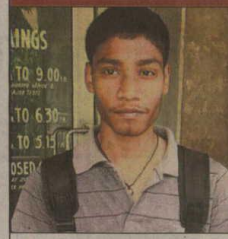
'आरोहण' में पढ़ने वाले राजीव ने जेईई (मैन) में 151 स्कोर अर्जित किया है। राजीव के अलावा 'आरोहण' में पढ़ने वाली उर्वशी राठौर, शुभांशु गोल्डी और सोनू अग्रवाल ने भी 85 फीसदी से अधिक हासिल किए हैं।

'आरोहण' की जिम्मेदारी संभाल रहे सिविल इंजीनियरिंग के पौरुष

मितल और अदिति जैन ने बताया कि हमने कमजोर वर्ग के होनहार बच्चों को विज्ञान, गणित और अंग्रेजी पढ़ाने के लिए इन कक्षाओं की शुरुआत की थी।

आईआईटी कैम्पस के टेक्सटाइल विभाग में आयोजित होने वाली इन कक्षाओं में आईआईटी के विभिन्न विभागों से बीटक कर रहे करीब 35 छात्र बच्चों को पढ़ाने के लिए आते हैं।

पौरुष ने बताया कि हम सरकारी स्कूलों के बच्चों को प्रवेश परीक्षा के माध्यम से चुनते हैं। बच्चे वंचित वर्ग के ही हों, इसके लिए हम उनके घर जाकर वास्तविक स्थिति का भी पता लगाते हैं।



● राजीव काले, आरोहण कक्षा के पूर्व छात्र।

अदिति ने बताया कि इस वर्ष से हमने आईआईटी दिल्ली के आसपास के क्षेत्र में मौजूद सरकारी स्कूलों के

इसरो में काम करने की है तमन्ना

संगम विहार में अपने परिवार के साथ रहने वाले राजीव काले फिलहाल दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय से कंप्यूटर साइंस में बीएससी करना चाहता है। इसके बाद आगे की पढ़ाई के बाद भारतीय अंतरिक्ष अनुसंधान संगठन (इसरो) में काम कर देश की सेवा करने की तमन्ना है। वंचित छात्रों के लिए राजीव का संदेश- मेहनत से कोई भी मुकाम हासिल कर सकते हैं।

राजीव का परिणाम

भौतिकी : 91 रसायन विज्ञान : 95
गणित : 95 अंग्रेजी : 95
शारीरिक शिक्षा : 78

'आरोहण' में दाखिला जुलाई में: आईआईटी के छात्र पौरुष मितल ने बताया कि आगामी सत्र के लिए जुलाई में हम दाखिला प्रक्रिया शुरू करेंगे।

बच्चों को एक महीने तक पढ़ाएंगे और उसके बाद परीक्षा लेंगे। जो बच्चे पास होंगे उन्हें 'आरोहण' की कक्षाओं में

प्रवेश दिया जाएगा। इस वर्ष हम ग्यारहवीं और बारहवीं के 15-15 बच्चों का चुनाव करेंगे।

Statesman ND 04/06/2015 P-5

'Govt focus on solar power will attract investors'

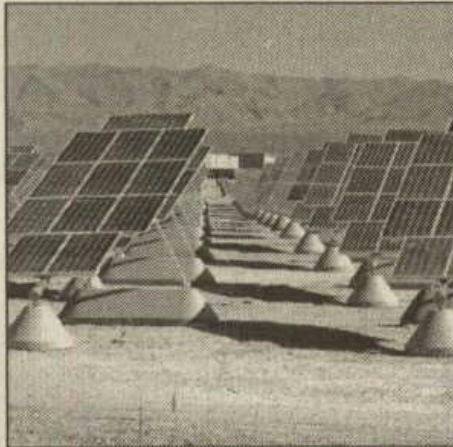
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, 3 June

The government's focus on solar energy has raised expectations among those involved in solar energy generation.

"This move by the government would indeed attract investors to this sector and in a country like India, solar power would immensely boost the power sector," said Adarsh Das, a solar energy engineer who along with Kushagra Nandan runs SunSource Energy, specialising in solar energy.

Das a graduate from IIT, Kharagpur, said investors



look for three important aspects before entering the solar energy sector. These are that technology is viable, bills are paid on time and that there is a regulatory authority.

The company has so far commissioned about 40 projects. Currently they have

projects in about 18 states and are monitoring all of them closely to ensure that they function without any hitch.

The company has also carried out the system of net metering for some of its customers. Net metering is a billing mechanism that credits solar energy system owners for the electricity they add to the grid. For example, if a residential customer has a PV system on the home's rooftop, it may generate more electricity than the home uses during daylight hours.

They said this would also help the customer to save on power.

Economic Times ND 04/06/2015 P-14

UGC Must Not Rush into a Rash Reform

The University Grants Commission's (UGC) rendition of a Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS) limits choice and, unless modified drastically, threatens to throttle academic innovation and excellence in the country. CBCS requires students to complete a certain number of hours of academic work, tallied in credits, to qualify for a degree. For a subject honours degree, the university identifies compulsory core courses, accounting for a portion of the credits, with the balance to be earned from an assortment of disciplines, related to the honours degree subject or otherwise. This much is welcome.

However, the UGC takes it a step further: in the name of inter-university mobility via transferring credits, it seeks to im-



pose uniformity across universities. The UGC has prepared a model syllabus for each discipline, with core courses and the choices for electives for each subject. This bureaucratic quest for homogeneity ignores the reality that universities, meant to be creators of knowledge, do their work best when its faculty have the freedom

and autonomy to pursue excellence in ways they think most suited. Programmes across universities are not meant to be replicas of one another. The freedom to design programmes, allowing for diversity and specialisation, is essential to ensure that universities fulfil their mandate as knowledge creators. Leave individual universities to work out the equivalence of credits sought to be transferred from one to the other.

Policymakers should understand that higher education is not about acquiring skills, but about advancing knowledge. Those who learn to learn by pursuing knowledge under guidance can learn and unlearn skills as required. Those who merely train in specific skills will be left in the lurch when those skills become obsolete.

Times of India ND 04/06/2015 P-19

Flying from London to NY in 1 hr?

Jet Travels At Over Mach 5.1; US Air Force Plans To Weaponize Tech

Andrew Griffin

The US Air Force is developing a super-fast weapon that can fly many times the speed of sound.

Travelling at over Mach 5.1, the jet could make it from London to New York in an hour. But it will be used instead as a super-fast weapon, working like a missile.

"We are the Air Force. What do we want to do with this technology? We want to weaponize it," Ryan Helbach, an official with the Air Force Research Laboratory, told Military.com. It's unclear how it would be used as a weapon, but US officials expect that China and other countries are building similar technology.



NEED FOR SPEED: A US Air Force B-52 (top) carries the X-51 WaveRider for a test flight. The special plane is being developed to strike targets super-fast

The X-51 WaveRider, developed by Boeing, works by dropping out of a traditional plane. During successful tests, it flew

through the air using almost no moving parts and a special air-breathing system that allows it to fly so fast. The plane must be

given a kickstart to get going, so is first propelled by an attached rocket booster. That takes it up to about Mach 4.5, and then drops off — the X-51 can do the rest of the work from there, accelerating up to Mach 5.1.

It was tested in 2013, when the plane flew at almost 4,000mph and reached 60,000-feet before it ran out of fuel and dropped into the sea. Boeing is now working with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency to shrink it into a weapon that could be attached to bomber planes.

When that happens, the special plane will be able to strike targets super-fast, without pilots and aircraft ever having to get close to them. THE INDEPENDENT

IIT Mandi is too cold for its students

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/education/news/IIT-Mandi-is-too-cold-for-its-students/articleshow/47535305.cms>

MANALI: The first IIT in the Himalayas at Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh, is offering world-class academic environment for its students, but the region appears to be too cold for its students, especially those coming from plains of the country.

According to faculty members, many students coming from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, MP, Maharashtra and other places complain about the cold environment of the region, which is unbearable for them. Summer season is pleasant but bone chilling cold of winter months is troubling students. Honoured as the first IIT in the Himalayas, IIT Mandi was founded in 2009 and the first batch was admitted in July 2009.

Registrar of IIT Mandi, Mohammad Shakeel, said students like the academic environment but the only problem that some students from plain areas are facing is bone chilling cold. "Location and environment are suitable for study. Some students are not used to bone chilling cold. That is the only problem so far," he said.

Surrounded by snow-capped peaks, the newly-built campus of IIT Mandi is situated on the bank of Uhl river at Kamand village. According to Shakeel, infrastructure of IIT is being strengthened and new structures are being constructed according to requirements.

"We have faculty members according to demand. We have over 600 students and nearly 80 faculty members. As per guidelines, an IIT should have 10:1 students to faculty ration and we have required faculty members. Recently we started civil engineering programme and recruited more faculty members," he said.

One major problem that IIT Mandi faces is its difficult approach by road, train and air. Though it is spread over an area of 530 acre, its connectivity is very weak. Mandi district has no airport. Nearest airports is Kullu, which is in the opposite direction and more than 2 hours drive from Kamand. A source with IIT said that faculty members coming from abroad under exchange programme are also having difficulty in reaching the campus. Road journey is the only option to reach Mandi. Chandigarh to Mandi takes more than six hours of drive from Chandigarh.

IIT-B TO CALL EXPERT ON JUNE 21

Hindustan Times (Mumbai)

MUMBAI: The Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (IIT-B), will celebrate International Yoga Day on June 21. According to officials, the institute is planning on hosting a formal function followed by a lecture-cum-workshop by a yoga expert.

A group of students will also perform 108 suryanamaskars. However, as it is vacation time, very few faculty members or students may be present for the event.

"While the institute has been told to host some celebration, we are not going to make it compulsory for students to attend or participate," said Soumyo Mukherjee, dean of student affairs.

"Practising yoga is a healthy habit, but enforcing it is not. Moreover, why make autonomous intuitions like IITs do this? It is vacation time and more than half the campus is empty," said Divesh Singh, a third-year student.

IIT-B to revamp student counselling programme

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai/iit-b-to-revamp-student-counselling-programme/article1-1354616.aspx>

After a 23-year-old student at Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (IIT-B) attempted suicide on Monday, the institute is planning an overhaul of its counselling programmes to help students speak out about their problems instead of taking drastic steps.

Though the student survived the attempt, two others have killed themselves on the campus since September last year.

As part of the revamp, the institute plans to hire more professional mental health experts.

“We are also planning an outreach programme, as part of which students will be trained to spot signs of depression. Lectures on the subject will also be conducted. Depression is a major taboo in our society and that makes it difficult for students to reach out for help. The outreach programme will address that issue as well,” said dean of student affairs at IIT-B Soumyo Mukherjee.

According to sources in the institute, letters will also be sent to parents of first-year students, asking them not to pressurise their wards too much.

“Apart from academic pressure, students are often burdened with unrealistic expectations from their families. We need to address each of these triggers,” said an official from the institute.

Why the choice-based credit system proposed by the UGC is obtuse and destructive

<http://blogs.economictimes.indiatimes.com/cursor/why-the-choice-based-credit-system-proposed-by-the-ugc-is-obtuse-and-destructive/>

Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS) is a lemon some used ideas salesmen have sold India’s policymakers in education. Instead of reforming and improving anything, the proposal, as outlined by the University Grants Commission (UGC), will swamp the little patches of excellence that still manage to survive in India’s higher education and replace them with monochrome mediocrity that all students who aspire to excel will flee, by scholarship, loan, émigré uncle, hook or crook.

Choice is Welcome...

Why has the UGC embarked on this change? Here is the rationale, in its own words, “The education plays enormously significant role in building of a nation. There are quite a large number of educational institutions, engaged in imparting education in our country. Majority of them have entered recently into semester system to match with international educational pattern.

“However, our present education system produces young minds lacking knowledge, confidence, values and skills. It could be because of complete lack of relationship between education, employment and skill development in conventional education system. The present alarming situation necessitates transformation and/or redesigning of education system....” And so on.

Just that first sentence automatically disqualifies its author for a subeditor's position at this newspaper. Not that he will ever apply for one — he is too busy redeeming the country's higher education.

Let us go past the crudity of the language, and focus on the thinking it articulates. That is cruder — “complete lack of relationship between education, employment and skill development” is the problem it seeks to attack, using CBCS as its weapon.

This confusion between education and employable skills is elementary but widespread. Skills are transient. They change, when knowledge advances and makes new skills possible and necessary while making old ones redundant.

Education is about acquiring, interrogating and creating knowledge. Those who focus only on skills will end up like the computer training institutes of the 1990s, which taught people how to use Windows and Word or browse the World Wide Web.

Whether India should focus on skills or on knowledge creation is a matter of ambition, at the level of policy. If you aim for greatness, the aim of higher education must unwaveringly be set on advancing knowledge in myriad areas, of myriad kinds. Educated people can learn and unlearn skills as required. Those deprived of an education but merely train in skills will be shortchanged for life, when their skills are made redundant by the advance of knowledge.

And knowledge is not limited to science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Steve Jobs attributed the success of Apple's Macintosh computers to the classes he audited in calligraphy. Innovation comes from changing familiar patterns of cognition and such disruption comes from a confluence of many things, including the aesthetics, the passion and the insights into the human condition offered by the arts, humanities and social sciences.

If the focus is on knowledge, what is wrong with CBCS? What it does is to allow students to complete a Bachelor's programme by acquiring a sufficient number of credits in different disciplines. There is nothing wrong with it. In fact, such a system is eminently desirable. It should be possible for a student to graduate with the requisite number of aggregate credits drawn from an assortment of disciplines, say, philosophy, game theory, music and history.

...But Not Uniformity

But CBCS does not stop there. In the name of transferability of credits across universities, it seeks to homogenise syllabi. This is both self-contradictory and destructive of academic and pedagogic innovation. For credits to be transferable, two conditions are necessary and sufficient: each credit should represent roughly the same number of hours of study across universities and the qualitative outcome of that much of academic effort should be similar across universities. Since choice, by definition, precludes uniformity, why should the credits sought to be transferred from University A to University B be based on the same course as is offered in University B?

Nor does uniformity of the syllabus guarantee qualitatively similar outcomes. It should be left to universities to work out the equivalence of one another's credits.

To mandate a uniform syllabus across universities is to render hollow the advocacy of choice. It is also to choke research and academic innovation. The bane of Indian universities is the colonial legacy of separating research from teaching. The major universities of the world advance the frontiers of knowledge and also teach. Their research rubs off on their teaching. Since research would vary across universities, so would the teaching. To preclude this in the name of transferability of credits is to suppress the natural cross-fertilisation of teaching and research and stunt India's academic potential. To no gainful end whatsoever.

IIT Hyderabad announces course in entrepreneurship

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/education/news/IIT-Hyderabad-announces-course-in-entrepreneurship/articleshow/47527506.cms>

Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IIT-H) has announced a minor in entrepreneurship in its B Tech curriculum to instill entrepreneurial spirit in students.

IIT Hyderabad has said the course is designed to equip students with entrepreneurship competency, business acumen and entrepreneurial vision required to be job creators.

According to IIT-H, the program is available to B Tech students in the third year. It will last for two years and consist of 12 credits.

"Of all the student clubs, the E-cell (entrepreneurship cell), was very famous with the students. Given the interest among students, we decided to formalize this entrepreneurship course as a minor. We also have plans to set up a full-fledged incubator to provide space, guidance, and environment to groom our students into entrepreneurs", Faiz, dean of academic program at IIT Hyderabad, said in a statement.

IIT Hyderabad believes that the inclusion of entrepreneurship in the syllabus will benefit students who aspire to own or run a company but do not have business background. The course would be conducted by faculty members, serial entrepreneurs, leaders from successful start-up organizations and senior industry stalwarts, IIT-H said.

"Students learn to identify when and how to seize opportunities, understand the challenges of financing, the pitfalls to avoid, and how to grow their business. They will also be given many opportunities to network and socialize with professionals and successful entrepreneurs," read IIT Hyderabad's official statement about the course.