

Newspaper Clips

November 27, 2010

Times of India ND

27/11/2010 P12

52 students admitted to IIT by mistake: Sibal

Clarifying the withdrawal of offer of admission to 52 candidates from IITs, the human resource development ministry on Friday said that the offers were made "erroneously" to the candidates.

Times of India
ND 27/11/2010
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'Failed' in exam, 7 JNU students allege bias

Manash Pratim Gohain | TNN

New Delhi: Seven students of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) have accused their teacher of failing them in the 5th semester exam on account of their religion. They are on hunger strike since Thursday.

The students of Centre of Persian and Central Asian Studies have accused a Muslim associate professor of victimizing Hindu students. The faculty member, however, dismissed the allegations as baseless. He said the students were resorting to such pressure tactics to get their degrees without appearing for another exam. Though there were no official confirmation of the incident, JNU sources said the administration had set up a committee to look into the matter.

Rahul Kumar, one of the seven students pursuing a five-year integrated course in Persian since 2007, said: "There were 17 students in our class. Of them nine failed Dr Syed Akhtar Hussain's sessionals and fifth semester exams. All the nine are Hindus. It is not a coincidence, but a case of victimization on the basis of religion."

A PhD student, who follows Islam, said: "His attitude towards SCs and Hindus is demeaning. He uses abusive language against Hindu students."

But Hussain said such a communal act was 'unthinkable' and many Hindu scholars had scored high grades under him in JNU.

Hussain said: "In 2009 5th semester, these students passed three sessionals under me, but in lowest grade (C-). Having passed the sessionals, they are eligible for the semester exams, which they failed. They opted for re-evaluation done by another set of examiners and one of them managed to pass with C-grade with grace marks. The students registered again this year and five of them reappeared in the first sessional and failed."

Times of India ND 27/11/2010 P-21 Oxygen atmosphere found on Saturn moon

Washington: Astronomers have announced that an oxygen atmosphere has been found on Saturn's second largest moon, Rhea.

At about 527,000 kilometres from Saturn, Rhea orbits inside the planet's magnetic field. Rhea's oxygen atmosphere is maintained by the ongoing chemical breakdown of water ice on the moon's surface, driven by radiation from Saturn's magnetosphere.

Nasa's Cassini spacecraft, which has been orbiting the Saturnian system since 2004, detected the oxygen atmosphere around Rhea during a close flyby of the icy moon in March. Cassini's data show that molecular oxygen forms inside the moon's surface ice when water molecules are split by energetic ions, a process known as radiolysis. The oxygen then gets ejected from the surface ice and captured by Rhea's gravity to form the atmosphere.

"The major implication of this finding at Rhea is that oxygen atmospheres at icy moons, until now only detected at Europa and Ganymede, may in fact be commonplace around those irradiated icy moons throughout the universe with sufficient mass to hold an atmosphere," National Geographic News quoted study leader Ben Teolis of the Southwest Research Institute, as saying. ANI

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Dinosaur die-off made way for gigantic mammals

Washington: They just needed some leg room: New research shows the great dinosaur die-off made way for mammals to explode in size — some more massive than several elephants put together.

The largest land mammal ever: A rhinoceros-like creature, minus the horn, that stood 18 feet tall, weighed roughly 17 tons and grazed in forests in what is now Eurasia. It makes the better known woolly mammoth seem a bit puny.

Tracking such prehistoric giants is more than a curios-

Within 25m years of dinosaurs' extinction, land mammals had reached a maximum size and then leveled off, say experts

ity: It sheds new light on the evolution of mammals as they diversified to fill habitats left vacant by the dinosaurs.

Within 25 million years of the dinosaurs' extinction — fast, in geologic terms — over all land mammals had reached

a maximum size and then leveled off, an international team of scientists reports. And while different species on different continents reached their peaks at different points in time, that pattern of evolution was remarkably similar worldwide.

Previous theories suggested that species diversity drove increases in size, but the new study didn't find that connection. The findings give clues as to what sets the limits on mammal size on land; and the amount of space available to each animal. AP

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Kids obese by 9 risk getting heart disease by age 15

London: Children who are overweight by the age of nine and don't slim down by the time they reach 15 years are at a higher risk of developing heart disease, a new study has claimed.

The study by researchers at the University of Bristol in UK is the first such research to investigate the link between body mass index (BMI), waist size and fat mass of pre-teen children and subsequent heart risk factors in late adolescence.

The findings showed that children who have a high BMI at the age of nine and stay fat are more likely to have high blood pressure, cholesterol and blood insulin levels — all risk factors for heart disease — by the time they reach 15. However, it said that children who achieve a healthy weight are able to lower their risk, the Daily Mail reported.

The study of 5,235 children, led by Debbie Lawlor from the University of Bristol, is part of a bigger research project which has tracked the health of more than 14,000 children since birth. The researchers assessed the BMI, waist circumference, and fat mass of children between the ages of nine and 12.

BMI is a score based on an individual's weight and



EARLY WARNING

height, although for children, the age and sex has to be taken into account because boys have less natural fat than girls. It was found that a high BMI between the ages of nine and 12 was associated with signs of heart disease at 15-16 years. The risk remained high even when the analysis was adjusted for a wide range of other factors.

Commenting on the findings, Cathy Ross of the British Heart Foundation, said, "Overweight children who successfully tackle their weight problem by the time they reach adolescence appear to be able to reduce their risk of heart disease, which is positive news." P11

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New iPhone app aims to fight skin cancer

People enjoying the summer sunshine can now know when it's time to cover up and avoid potentially cancer-causing ultraviolet rays thanks to SunSmart, a new iPhone application. Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world, with more than 1,850 people dying of it each year. To deal with this, as well as to reach young people who tend to be less stringent with sun protection, the council developed the free app that provides a daily weather forecast, including the maximum UV levels. It has an alert function and uses global positioning systems (GPS) to automatically adjust to the user's location, showing the times for which sun protection is needed as well as an automated UV warning and an up-to-the-minute guide to UV levels.

Jarring note: Cassette players steal ATM data

Outdated audio technology is being used by criminals to create a devious, high-tech ATM skimmer, a device that attaches to the cash machines and steals PIN data right from under your fingertips.

The European ATM Security Team, or EAST, reports learning of a new type of skimming device that uses parts from portable cassette players to capture users' PIN codes. The skimmers, which also use parts from cheap mini-spy cameras, have been found on automated teller machines in five European countries, two of which the security team called "major ATM deployers," meaning they have more than 40,000 ATMs, report MSNBC website.

The blog Krebs on Security first



SPOOLING IT IN: The ATM skimming device uses parts from cassette players to capture users' PIN

reported on the new skimming technology and linked to a website, Chrsi's Stuff that explains the sci-

ence behind the scam. As detailed on Chrsi's Stuff, the magnetic head of a mono cassette player serves to amplify the signal encoded on the magnetic stripe on the back of every bank card. Fed into the microphone input of a computer, the signal can be read by detecting the width of the pulse, or how the user data is written on the bank card.

EAST noted that the audio device is mounted on a piece of plastic that fits over the card reader on a standard ATM, camouflaged to look like part of the machine. The audio device is used to record data stored on the magnetic stripe as the card slides past. The micro-camera, embedded in the skimmer, steals the PINs of the people using the ATM, obviously unbeknownst to them. AGENCIES

Mail Today ND 27/11/2010

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Fake IIT-KGP institute faces vigilance heat

TAKING note of several complaint letters written by the affected students of the alleged fake institute, Institution of Electrical Engineers (IEE) within the IIT Kharagpur campus, the Union human and resource development (HRD) ministry's vigilance wing will be investigating the matter. IEE had shut down abruptly and was later found out not to be a part of the IIT.

The ministry-led probe has been prompted by the CVC. The now suspended IIT Kharagpur's former head of the department of aerospace engineering, A.K. Ghosh was also alleged to be running the institute. However, the students are not satisfied with the ministry-led probe and are demanding an independent inquiry to punish the guilty.

HRD ministry sources confirmed that they are still in the process of forming the inquiry committee. They said that such committees comprise directors of IITs and IIMs. The committee is required to submit its report within four weeks.

According to the documents accessed by MAIL TODAY, more faculty members of the IIT are alleged to have been involved in the running of the fake institute.

Kavita Chowdhury/New Delhi

Hindustan Times ND 27/11/2010 P11 HRD MINISTRY TO PROBE FAKE IIT INSTITUTE

Charu Sudan Kasturi

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NEW DELHI: The human resource development ministry will investigate the scam involving senior professors of Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur who duped poor students into joining an unrecognised institute offering invalid courses using the IIT campus and brand.

The ministry will set up a panel of academicians to conduct the investigation into the scam which HT was the first to expose on October 19. The panel will submit its report within a month, government sources said.

The decision came on a day when students duped by the fake institute — the Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) — petitioned the ministry accusing IIT Kharagpur of trying to “protect” those guilty. The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has also asked the HRD ministry to probe the scam.

“The HRD ministry will appoint a panel of academicians who will look into the administrative and academic violations in this scam,” a source said, adding that the probe report would be sent to the CVC as well.

As reported earlier, IIT Kharagpur aerospace engineering professor Amit Kumar Ghosh and at least three other faculty members — past or current — of the institute are under police investigation. Ghosh is also accused of forgery.

Ghosh, who was suspended by IIT Kharagpur after the HT expose, has accused two former IIT directors — Kasturi Lal Chopra and Shishir Dube — of being party to the operations of the fraudulent institute.

Hindustan Times ND 27/11/2010 P12

We've gone by the book too long

Our education system must be overhauled. We need indigenous institutions with imaginative curriculums

Pop quiz of the day: The purpose of education is to (a) get a good job (b) earn a degree (c) win the respect of peers and family (d) create wealth or (e) learn skills to lead a productive life.

The good news is there is no wrong answer. An education is indeed about gaining skills that will fetch a job/ income/ respect. Education is also about creating wealth, not just material wealth but wealth in terms of ideas, theories and creative solutions. And, of course, an education is nothing if it does not teach life skills and humane values.

As Indians we believe that education is the key to everything from jobs to happiness. Education is our chief aspirational goal where upgrade is a constant mantra, a series of stepping stones that must be gingerly navigated, from government to private schools, from Hindi to English medium, from polytechnics to degree colleges.

But Indian education is a multi-layered thing where we're constantly struggling to reconcile opposites - pushing up literacy rates while checking capitation fees in higher education; talking about the lack of toilets in girls' school (a big reason why girls drop out by secondary school) while glowing with pride at our world-class IITs, IIMs and National Law Schools.

Or to toss another set of opposites: only 12.4 per cent (or 13 million) of our 220 million high school children actually end up in college, a miserly comparison with 40 per cent in the developed world. Yet, Indian skills and talent are prized all over the

world; at last count there were 1,05,000 Indian students, the second largest international group after the Chinese, in various American universities.

For this privileged bunch, a foreign degree is more than a fashion statement. First, there is the practical constraint. It is often easier to get admitted to a good college in the US than it is to a top-notch one in India where cut-offs for in-demand subjects like Economics are as high as 96 per cent in the first list. If you are fortunate enough to afford it and unfortunate enough to not be among those 90 per cent plus scorers, you could settle for a second-rate college here or try your luck in the West.

There are other reasons. The Americans have understood that the basic essence of education is freedom. In which other university system can you major in international relations and dance? Which other system will let you design your own major if nothing available appeals to you? Which other system has everything on tap, from internships to study abroad; from core requirements in maths, science, arts to community outreach? Education is all encompassing, as it should be.

In India we remain crazily exam-centric. Learning equals memorisation. A vanilla BA requires little more than swotting from a *kunji* one month before the exams. I should know. That's how I graduated -- and I stood

first in my college, third in Delhi University.

Other exams seem to be based on the principle of making it impossible to pass. A friend, recently back from pilot training in the US, sat for an exam on navigation, trying to figure out why he was being asked questions on yellow fever.

If education is to go beyond a piece of paper, India must produce indigenous institutions with imaginative curriculums.

Our testing systems have to move beyond exams to continuous evaluation, as has been done for the 10th grade. Our admission criteria must be wider than cut-offs. Collaboration with foreign universities will meet some of the demand. But without homegrown institutions, whether public or private, we will continue

to remain dependable feeders to foreign universities.

Worse, we will continue to create an artificial hierarchy where an elite force including CEOs and MPs (as many as 12 senior Cabinet ministers, including Prime Minister Manmohan Singh have been educated abroad) will be those armed with degrees obtained outside of India.

Class distinctions in India are already deeply tattooed. Education should not be the new divider.

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The views expressed by the author are personal

Another Day



NAMITA BHANDARE

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50 years of IIM-A

It's an exclusive club that can change lives. But 50 years is a small landmark in the life of an institution. Can our best business school keep up its standards in the future—and get even better?



By HARSHA BOGLE

Some years ago I was at an event when a young man, looking a bit starry eyed, came up to me. He might have been about 20 and since I had been doing a bit of cricket on television for a few years, I thought he wanted to ask me something about cricket. Instead, he inspected me a bit and asked, "You from IIM-A?" I smiled at him, the kind of smile that says yes, and with the same intense gaze he said "Wow!" and walked away. My professional work meant nothing to him, I wasn't a cricket

host, just someone who had passed through "wow"!

Now, like many of my batchmates, my institute turns 50 too. Like many of them, and maybe even more so than them, it is robust and successful and hugely aspirational. Sometimes great brands can show signs of age, can become irrelevant to generations that care little for reputations, but IIM Ahmedabad is still the place to be for the best young men and women of this country. It is a solid brand, one of India's strongest and most resilient; a "wow" brand.

It is a brand that many like me wear with pride and emotion. IIM-A

Hall of fame:

The Louis Kahn-designed IIM-A campus is iconic.

changed my life, it put me into a peer group I didn't think I could have belonged to, a group I could claim for life. It gave me my Test cap, something I have often felt the need to turn to at various times in my career. To aspire for something and to be accepted is a very special feeling. And I know I am not the only one who thinks this way. That is crucial to understanding the aura of an institution.

Indeed IIM-A shares a wonderful symbiotic relationship with its students. It is not the bricks, but the minds in it that make a place and every year, the institute admits some

Assam Tribune Guwahati 24.11.2010 p-6

Jinx behind hydro electricity

Anubhav Dutta

The political debate on big dam issue has become complicated day by day because of lack of political will to resolve it. Apparently both the ruling and opposition parties have little will to find out a plausible solution of the problem. On the other hand majority of the politicians both -from the ruling and the opposition parties have taken it as a political issue to derive political mileage out of it on the eve of the ensuing elections in the State. Undoubtedly, the contradiction before a policy of sustainable development for the benefit of mankind and the instinctive behaviour of man to go for wanton destruction of nature for more and more profit with scant regard to its evil fallout on society is the driving force behind this.

The engineers working in the field of harnessing nature in an ideal situation should adhere to the tenet of sustainable development which has been endorsed by the present global economic order at least on paper. Yet globalization of finance capital has given birth to new necessities for any project related to harnessing of nature which even the committed professionals could hardly ignore in its design and execution. In the wake of commercialization of electricity, the social angle associated with it has been dropped. Cheap hydel power in abundance in order to capture the growing national market with higher return on the invested capital is the thrust imposed on the engineers responsible for planning and execution of a project. Naturally such commercial compulsion makes a profes-

sional engineer with social commitment to act in favour of his employer. Therefore the difference of opinion of scientists and professors and the opinion of practising Engineers are likely to differ in the controversial issue of big dam notwithstanding the fact that a balance could be struck to arrive at a pragmatic solution provided the warring parties come forward with an open mind without any political score to settle.

The design of a hydel power plant is invariably done as a peak load station with provision of perennial volume of water flow through the spillway provided in the dam. Now the moot question which arises is that there is an element of doubt among the people whether such procedure is strictly followed by the hydel stations operating in the region. Normally during monsoon there is enough water flow in the river and spillway flow would be allowed. But in reality due to power shortage thrust is put on the hydel power stations to run it continuously all throughout the day. When normal flow in the river is there, the generating authority closes the gates across the dam to conserve enough water in the reservoir not only to run the power station with a base load all throughout the day but also to enhance production during peak load hour. Of course, the volume of water from the powerhouse after completion of its power generation works is released into the downstream of the river notwithstanding the fact that a stretch of the river from the location of the dam to the delivery point from the powerhouse discharge is de-

barred from having the fruit of perennial flow. In winter the situation aggravates to such an extent that the gates are forced to be closed to avail enough water during daytime to enable the power station to run in full capacity till the next morning.

As to the river Ranganadi the situation is a bit more compli-

the dam at the cost of flood in the downstream. People downstream had to bear the brunt.

It would be worth mentioning that the south flowing tributaries of the Brahmaputra has a tendency to deposit silt in the river bed. Naturally the silt deposit on the upstream river will reduce the effective height

The fact remains that even if all these flood causing hydro electric projects are abandoned by dismantling the dams, the flood problem of the region is unlikely to improve and would rather worsen. On the otherhand if we can force the government to find out ways and means to convert such projects into multi purpose projects it would be of immense help.

cated as the water discharge from the powerhouse falls into the river Dikrong but not on the downstream of the river Ranganadi. The normal monsoon flow of the river is 550cumec, out of which 160 cumec is utilised for power generation. The remaining 390cumec should be flowing through the spillway, into the downstream provided that the project authority allows to happen at the cost loss of generation. It is interesting to note that the flow of Ranganadi in a particular year reached about 2200cumec and the project authority had no scientific measures to monitor the same in advance. Naturally there was no option than to open the gates all on a sudden to save

of the dam in the course of time. The spillway gates are normally located at the bottom portion of the dam and the silt deposit may make it permanently locked. To overcome this problem there is logic to take desilting measures in the upstream of the dam. This operation may be synchronised during the annual maintenance of the plant normally taken up by the project authority in a routine way. Moreover a method of ensuring automatic spillway flow from the reservoir by incorporating 'piano key' on top of the dam to facilitate flow from the reservoir after exceeding the water head could be an option as suggested in the new dam design and modification of the existing dam. An Act en-

compassing all these factors related to dam safety and its operation and maintenance to mitigate the evil effect of a hydel project on the people living in the river basin was long overdue. West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh have already enacted such a legislation. It is learnt that pressure generated by the movement against dam in Assam has already created an atmosphere for the Central government to cogitate on such a bill.

As to the design of a structure for seismologically sensitive area there are specific codes of practice for which the Roorkee IIT has adequate competence. If at all for unjustified cost saving such code has been violated by the project authority at the cost of safety of the dam, it is a serious allegation by all account. But such purposeful compromise is unlikely to be made by any authority not for the safety of the people living downstream but because of the commercial angle associated with it. Once the dam collapses there would not be enough water volume in the dam to generate electricity thus making the entire investment go down the drain! Therefore adequate safety factors are taken into consideration to design the dam. Even then, if the acceleration of the horizontal component of the seismic force is taken less than 5m per sec square, as alleged to save cost, it could definitely be cross checked by scrutinising the already approved design with the help of experienced experts. From this standpoint there is nothing wrong in the constitution of such a body of experts imme-

diately and to assign the above task to be completed in the specific time frame. It would be a purely engineering proposition whose solution is unlikely to be found in a mass protest meeting convened by a group of political forces having penchant for diatribes nor by a convention of practising engineers convened by a political party. At the same time it would have been logical for the government to suspend the construction of the dam as demanded by the opposition. But politics overrode any rational thinking to let continue the impasse. It would be worth mentioning that limited risk is always involved in any proposition of harnessing nature. However we can ill afford not to take up any project in a seismically sensitive zone and deprive people from development. Even for flood control, multipurpose hydel project has stood as a necessity. In the mean time a good number of hydel projects have been set up in the region without any holistic plan for flood control and irrigation. Now, this trend needs to be reverted!

The fact remains that even if all these flood causing hydro electric projects are abandoned by dismantling the dams, the flood problem of the region is unlikely to improve and would rather worsen. On the otherhand if we can force the government to find out ways and means to convert such projects into multi purpose projects it would be of immense help to moderate flood effect which would be more pragmatic and beneficial for the people.

Pionner Lucknow
22.11.10 p-5

IIT-K mulling to discontinue internet after midnight

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The recent suicide of an IIT student in its Kanpur institute seems to have rattled the authorities who are now mulling to discontinue internet access after midnight, pointing out that the hostel students were not taking adequate sleep which was leading to stress. As many as eight students have committed suicide during the past five years at the prestigious institute.

The incident was related to a 22-year-old BTech final year student from Andhra Pradesh, Madhuri Sale, who was found hanging in her room last week. While a three-member committee has been set up by the IIT administration to probe into her death it was not immediately known why she took the extreme step.

The student had a very good academic record and there was nothing to suggest that she was suffering from depression. However, sources have not over ruled stress as the immediate cause.

"Hostellers keep surfing the internet throughout the night. When they go for the classes, they are tired due to lack of sleep and are unable to concentrate which leads to stress," felt the sources in the management.

There are 5,000 students in IIT and it is not physically possible to check whether one is asleep or surfing the net after midnight. Hence, the authorities are considering to stop the internet server after midnight till 8 am such that the students can have the full quota of rest," they added.

The restriction will come into force after the ongoing exams with the help of the counselling cell once the proposal is approved by the students senate and the faculty, they pointed out.

Meanwhile, the institute has two psychiatrists, a yoga centre and a counselling centre for students to deal with the problem of stress. There are playing grounds and other means of entertainment for the students to de-stress, the students.