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  ■ letters@hindustantimes.com

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 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 KAWWAR
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 Management Studies.

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

The IIT B-schools which are planning to merge and have common application portals are Salish 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 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.
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 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.”

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 GN | 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 Narayanswamy, 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 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 Narayanswamy’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 asked.

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 Narayanswamy’s statement unfair. “Professionals know their jobs. Such reprimands are laughable,” he said.
What still remains a simmering conflict is now open war in India’s space program. JOHNSON TA puts together the inside story of ISRO’s internecine feud

As ISRO chairman, Madhavan Nair was responsible for 25 successful space missions, including the inside misfires mission of ISRO’s leadership.

In July 2011, shortly after the decision of the Cabinet Committee on Security to award the contract, a former ISRO director, Arun Jaitley, told to the press that ISRO would proceed with a multi-mission launch vehicle, the vehicle that would be used for the Mars mission. This was a clear signal that ISRO was now ready to move forward with its plans for the mission.

The ISRO chairman, Madhavan Nair, was tasked with the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of the contract and ensuring that the mission was successful. However, tensions began to surface within the organization as different factions vied for control. Nair, who had been a vocal advocate of the mission, was suddenly eclipsed by the new chairman, who had been appointed by the government.

The atmosphere was tense as the launch date approached, with each faction vying for control. The tension grew as the mission neared completion, and it seemed as though the success of the mission was at stake.

Finally, on July 14, 2014, the probe entered Mars orbit, and the mission was declared a success. However, the tension between the factions remained, and it seemed as though ISRO would never be able to resolve its internal conflicts.
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?
I 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 communiqué 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.
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 recommended 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 Purunand Chatterjee. He had sub-contracted the work on back-to-back basis, in complete violation of the contact.

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

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 Chakraborty — 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.
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
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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, 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 preferably 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.

Curtailment 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.
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 beginning,” 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 cannot 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
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.

Do we deserve our freedoms?

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 exalt the virtues of ahimsa but we have just surrendered to threats of violent rioting in Jaipur: A Republic Day 62 years old is 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 chor hasjis will survive as editors and the honest ones who spoke the truth to power would be hushed 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 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 26 years.

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 you don’t score 99 percent, 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 or a Hindu successfully; it is the religious gatekeepers who police if they can enjoy their fundamental rights.

All his life Gandhi 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 enraged 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 Badrinnath 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.

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 Badrinnath took over as CEO of Orange Business Services, the commercial business-to-business (B2B) brand of Orange Telecom, in April 2010. The 40-year-old’s father had moved to France in the 1950s. Badrinnath made his bones from the famed Ecole Polytechnique and not from the IT/SM circuit unlike many of his ilk with an Indian name. But that’s set to change.

Badrinnath, 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.

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

Vivek Badrinnath, CEO, Orange Business Services

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 asymmetric market, firms like 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 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 Rohan Shetty, partner and head of telecom at PwC, 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.

Badrinnath may yet become a familiar Indian-origin global CEO in India.
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 inside the country, artist and activist Ai Weiwei tweeted in response to the news, “If Twitter censors, I’ll stop tweeting.” One often-replayed 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
India creates Vivekananda chair at Chicago varsity

HT Correspondent
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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 ambassador 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.
Hindustan Times
Title: BREAKTHROUGH 16 years on, cloning scientists now create human brain cells
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BREAKTHROUGH

16 years on, cloning scientists now create human brain cells

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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 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 ffrench-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.