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OLACABS DRIVE

Now, an app to call a cab

Priya Sheth
Mumbai, Oct. 5
Now it’s possible to start a taxi service without owning a fleet of vehicles.
Meet Bhavish Aggarwal and Ankit Bhatt, alumni of IIT Bombay who have used their background in IT to create a network of ‘Olacabs’ to take on competition from other radio taxi services in the country.
The duo has partnered with various smaller taxi operators to provide services across the city.
“We approached many mom-and-pop cab drivers and got them on board. The only thing that they need to do is buy an Android device and install the Olacabs software. It is a win-win for both sides,” says Aggarwal, CEO and Co-founder of Olacabs, founded in 2011.

ADVANTAGE SMALL OPERATORS
Using the Olacabs network, small cab operators can maximise their inventory utilisation by about 70 per cent, said the company.
Olacabs, in turn, gets a commission of 15 to 20 per cent on the fare. The tariff varies by city. The minimum fare ranges between Rs 10 and Rs 21.
The IIT duo introduced a smartphone application that can help customers locate Olacabs on the map and pick the nearest one. The application can also help customers track the cab moving towards them.
“The waiting time is drastically reduced and customers don’t need to keep worrying about when the cab will reach them. Customers can also book a cab through our call centre,” said Aggarwal.
At present, Olacabs has tie-ups with 600 operators in Mumbai and about 1,000 sedan taxis on its network. Thorough due diligence is done before signing up with the taxi operators, said the company. Olacabs also runs a driver engagement programme where drivers are rewarded based on customer feedback.

EXPANSION PLAN
“We are present in Mumbai, Bangalore and Delhi. We plan to expand to Hyderabad, Pune, Chennai and Kolkata soon,” said Aggarwal, who heads a team of 400 people. The company expects to add another 400 people for the new centres.
Earlier this year, Olacabs received funding from marquee private equity investor Tiger Global Management.
Though the company did not officially reveal the amount, reports indicated an investment of Rs 40 crore. Olacabs is not looking to raise any more money at present.

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Security issues bother IIT-B students: survey

Bhavya Dore

MORE THAN 85% RESPONDENTS SAID THERE SHOULD BE MORE STREET LIGHTING ON THE IIT-B CAMPUS

MUMBAI: An online poll has revealed the security concerns of students at the Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay (IIT-B).

In a survey of more than 550 students, conducted by a student newsletter, 62% respondents said they wanted security staff to have a warrant before searching their rooms. Over 85% said there should be more street lighting on campus; 73% said female students should have the right to request female security personnel in case of a situation involving the security office.

More than 84% said they expected officers to explain before asking them to disperse from a non-restricted area. However, overall only 2% said they didn’t feel safe at all on campus.

The survey was published in the student newsletter Insight, released on Thursday.

Students will present a report based on the survey results to a committee constituted to review security arrangements on campus.

“Several people seemed annoyed by late night searches conducted by the vigilance team,” said the newsletter.

UA Yajnik, dean of student affairs, said he hadn’t seen the latest newsletter but pointed out the issues involved. “Owing to the security situation in the city, the police issues various rules. Hence, the security officer needs to be sure of the identity of every person on campus,” said Yajnik. “People do get frustrated, but there are also legitimate concerns.”

He said security staff checked students’ rooms with the implicit sanction of authorities, however, there was no system or written permissions yet.

On the issue of women security, he said the institute was planning to hire women at the officer level.
आईआईटी की ‘स्वच्छन्द परियोजना सिमरन’ पर रोक

कानपुर, (भारत). इंडियन इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ टेक्नोलॉजी (आईआईटी), कानपुर के प्रोफेसरों और वैज्ञानिकों की सत्ताएं की सिर्फें और बेहतर पर रेलवे ने ग्राहक का सबूत भेजा है। और, संस्थान के महत्वपूर्ण परियोजना सिमरन (सर्वेक्षण, इमेजिंग, फार्म रेल नेबिगेशन) पर गत एक अक्टूबर 2012 से रेल लगात दी है। रेलवे इसके आईआईटी से यह प्रोजेक्ट हटाने से संस्थान के वैज्ञानिकों में काफी हजारा और सिराजा है। सिमरन (सर्वेक्षण, इमेजिंग, फार्म रेल नेबिगेशन) वह रेलवे ने लगाई रेलवे इससे घर बेठे मिल सकती है ट्रेन की सही जानकारी प्राप्त है जिसमें आम लोगों को पर से ही एसएमएस या इंटरनेट के माध्यम से ट्रेन को सही स्थिति पता चल सकता है। आईआईटी कानपुर को जून 2005 में रेल संसार प्रोफेसरों के पहले आरडीएमों (रेलवे डिजाइन एंड स्टैडियंस आर्नाइजेशन) लाखों के सहयोग से रेलवे को 12 परियोजनायें मिली थी जिनमें से एक ‘सिमरन’ भी थी। इस परियोजना पर कटोरा नामक ट्रेन का सेवा बढ़ाया गया था और आईआईटी ने संस्थान का 105 नेबिगेशन उपकरण 36 ट्रेनों में लगाया था। और वह काम भी कर रही थी। आईआईटी ने इस प्रोजेक्ट के रूप में आईआईटी के संस्थान का व्यवस्था किया कि रेलवे ने आईआईटी के प्रोजेक्ट सिमरन को सेवाबंदी कर दी है। आईआईटी प्रशासन ने वैज्ञानिकों को यह दूसरे सिमरन तकनीकों का आपूर्ति रखने का आयाम भी किया था लेकिन रेलवे बोर्ड ने कोई जवाब नहीं दिया। अभी भी हम रेलवे से जानते हैं वह दिखाई देता है। रेलवे के अनुसार वर्तमान में रेलवे आईआईटी से संस्थान प्रोजेक्ट को लेकर क्रिसिया: सेट्टलर रेलवे इमेजिंग सिस्टम: को प्रोजेक्ट राष्ट्रीय भाषा वह प्रोजेक्ट ने तभी इस प्रोजेक्ट को आईआईटी से लेता है और अब हाल ही संस्थान प्रोजेक्ट को देखा। इसके बाद तक उसने इस प्रोजेक्ट को आईआईटी से लेता है और अब हाल ही संस्थान प्रोजेक्ट को देखा। इसके बाद तक उसने इस प्रोजेक्ट को देखा।
Quotas in education meaningless

While reservations have certainly not promoted excellence in higher education, it is also not clear whether they have enhanced social equity. We need another model, as in US universities, that combines equity and excellence.

Does the existing reservation system help the really disadvantaged students? — Sushil Kumar Verma

The social welfare argument is, in India, thousands of years of social injustice have made a few disadvantaged communities weak. To rectify that injustice, it is necessary to give them preference. If that dilutes the quality of education, that is a price the society has to pay. The opposite side of the argument is capitalistic. According to it, the tens of thousands of educational institutions should be allowed to compete freely. That competition can be so regulated that it will ensure both high-quality education and the variety needed to accommodate all classes.

Being capitalistic, the HRD Ministry is sympathetic to the rich; it will not admit the children from rich families, however high the fees they are willing to pay. However, the Finance Ministry is different; it offers whatever foreign exchange is needed to educate children abroad. Naturally, the families need to be rich to avail of its generosity. Hence, rich parents can get their children admitted in Harvard or Oxford, but not in the ITIs, or in even the less prestigious institutions.

SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION

In effect, the HRD Ministry is strongly in favour of backward classes and the Finance Ministry favours the very rich. Thus, the people in the middle — however meritorious — have no supporters. Whenever any of them point out that kind of inequity, backward-class representatives strongly object: They say you upper castes have been unfair for thousands of years and the injustice you have perpetrated cannot be resolved in a few generations. They argue that social discrimination still persists against them and, therefore, they are entitled to preferential treatment.

One of the drawbacks of this debate is lack of data. For instance, it is true that reservation has helped the backward-class families, but no one knows how far it ensures similar privileges to really poor families of the same castes. It is true that reservation has reduced the disparity between upper castes and backward ones, but it is not certain if it is not increasing the disparity within backward castes — between those families which have enjoyed that privilege and the first generation families who have not yet done so.

That is, there are two basic issues: One, how far are the opportunities given to the very rich justified? Two, does the existing reservation system help the really backward families, or is it creating a new circle of privilege?

President of the United States Barack Obama is doing far more to redress the social issues of a nation, than India is doing over the years to eradicate the social issues.

Prosper. Both are far more prestigious than any institution we have. Then, consider the following proposition. Every college is free to admit, say, up to 20 per cent of its students, provided they pay very high fees — as much as half or even the whole cost of running the institution. Of the remaining 80 per cent, half will be admitted on the basis of merit — since again defined by the institution itself, and not by the State. The remaining 40 per cent are admitted in the manner the Government decides. Further, the performance of each institution is regularly checked by the State, according to the institution's own objectives, and not by what the State dictates.

In that case, the government confines itself to two activities: One, decide and check how 40 per cent of the students are admitted from backward castes. Two, check how far each institution fulfills the objectives it has set for itself. There are several advantages to this kind of regulation: One, each institution enjoys appreciable operational freedom. Two, the government saves billions of dollars in foreign exchange as also much of the cost of running institutions. Three, the Government does check the performance of every institution. Naturally, the institutions have to set higher standards for meritorious students. The best way is to leave it to the students themselves. For instance, southern universities used to do so. They ran "Honours" courses where a student got one, and only one chance, and had to pass without fail. Only those confident of passing without fail opted for this course. Why not that criterion for meritorious students? Let students themselves claim they are meritorious and the institutions select only from those who make that claim.

Will not such a system ensure (a) autonomy for the institutions, (b) better opportunities for meritorious students, and (c) for the State, greater economy as well as authority to ensure social welfare?

(Concluded)

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New Delhi: In a record, 172 management schools other than IIMs have subscribed to Common Admission Test (CAT) scores this year. In 2011, the number stood close to 130. A total of 2.14 lakh aspirants have registered for the 21-day long computer-based test that will begin from October 11. CAT 2012 is being coordinated by IIM-Kozhikode.

There has been a gradual increase in the number of non-IIM institutions using CAT scores despite the dwindling number of applicants since the last three years. In fact, the trend gained momentum in 2011 when six IITs, Faculty of Management Studies, Delhi University and Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar, among others subscribed to the scores.

This year has also witnessed a marginal increase of 4.95% in the number of CAT takers. Last year, 2.05 lakh candidates registered for the exam while 2008 recorded the highest number of registrations with 2.76 lakh students applying. However, in 2010, the figure slipped to 2 lakh. "The slight increase in the number of applicants this year is a positive indication that postgraduate management programmes, which accept CAT scores, still offer an attractive future to many aspirants. We are yet to analyse the factors that have contributed to the growth of institutions as well as candidates," said professor S S Kumar, convener of CAT 2012.

This year has also witnessed a marginal increase of 4.39% in the number of CAT takers. The NCR has recorded the highest number of registrations. Last year, 2.05 lakh candidates registered for the exam.

Like previous years, Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Pune are the cities where maximum number of candidates are scheduled to take the admission test. "National Capital Region has recorded the highest number of registrations," said Kumar.

Meanwhile, the admission test which is known for springing up surprises has nothing new to offer this year. "IIMs are pretty much moving towards standardizing CAT and hence no surprises are expected this year. Speed and strategy are not major issues any longer. What is important is to remain calm and not to make basic mistakes. In relative terms, it still remains a tough test. Also, the selection process has become more transparent now. Eight years ago, we didn’t know how much we scored. IIMs are now looking for people who fit their requirements rather than toppers," said director MBA guru and IIM-Kolkatta alumnus, Deekshant Sahra- wat.

CAT 2012 will have two sections — Quantitative Ability and Data Interpretation, and Verbal Ability and Logical Reasoning.
IIM-A moves up in *The Economist* MBA ranking

Our Bureau

*Ahmedabad, Oct. 5*

The Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM-A) on Friday said it has been ranked 56th globally in *The Economist* full-time MBA programmes ranking 2012, moving up from the 78th position last year.

The Institute has made it to the 5th position in the Asia and Australasia 2012 regional rankings, moving up from 9th position last year.

IIM-A is the only Indian B-school to get ranked in the *The Economist* full-time MBA programmes since the last three years, according to a release.

*The Economist* reported that the IIM-A was reckoned to be the leading business school in the subcontinent and also “the toughest in the world to get into.”

Last month, IIM-A had been ranked 10th in the *Financial Times* Masters in Management Ranking 2012.
UGC plan leaves many future gurus NET-tled!

PUNCHLINE Ever heard of change in the selection criterion after the results have been declared: UGC did it for the NET-qualified

HT Correspondent

LUCKNOW: The University Grants Commission’s decision to rework the National Eligibility Test (NET) qualifying percentage for 2012 after the declaration of results has left lecturership aspirants shocked, confused and made them feel cheated. They are planning to seek a legal remedy in this connection.

The modified rules state that the general category candidates have to score an aggregate of 65% in the three NET papers to be eligible for college and university lectureship. However, OBC and SC/ST candidates need to score 60% and 55% respectively to wear the eligibility crown.

In the past, general category candidates had to get 40% qualifying marks in paper I and paper II. In paper III, they had to score 50%.

The three paperwise qualifying percentage for OBC and SC/ST students had been 35%, 35%, 45% and 35%, 35% and 40% respectively.

Now the candidates, who took NET in June 2012, are shocked and are looking forward to a legal remedy to the problem. The candidates who appeared for the eligibility test are feeling letdown as they think that the UGC shouldn’t have set the qualifying criterion after announcing the results. There should have been separate cut-offs for all the three papers. The aspirants now argue that any change in the rules after the examination is not acceptable anywhere in the world.

LU teachers also feel that it is not a good move. They should have done it before announcing the results or even before that to avoid controversy, as the students would have prepared in a different manner.

SOFTWARE TO CHECK PLAGIARISM MAY BE MADE MANDATORY

LUCKNOW: The University Grants Commission (UGC) is planning to make it mandatory for colleges and universities to install anti-plagiarism software.

The proposed UGC minimum standards and procedure award of MPhil/PhD degree regulations 2012 mandates the academic council of the institution must develop a mechanism to detect plagiarism using developed software and guide that can detect academic fraud and facilities made available by UGC- INFLIBNET.

According to the proposed regulations, at the time of submitting a dissertation/thesis evaluation by the PhD scholars, the research supervisor must attest to the originality of the work, vouching that there is no plagiarism and that the work has not been submitted for the award of any other degree/diploma of the same institution or the work was carried out, or any other institution. Besides, the institution must submit a copy of the MPhil dissertation/PhD thesis to the UGC within 20 days for hosting the same in digital repository maintained by INFLIBNET.
Scientists aim to mimic black holes in UK laboratory

London: Scientists in the UK are attempting to mimic black holes in a laboratory to understand how matter and energy interact. A team at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh will produce laser pulses whose energy is measured in trillions of watts, The Independent said. The laser pulses will be used to simulate conditions found around a black hole as part of a £2.35 million project.

Black hole is a region of spacetime where gravity is so strong that light cannot escape and the normal laws of physics break down. "What we are creating is the same space-time structure which characterizes a black hole. But we are doing this with a light pulse, so we don’t actually have the mass which is associated with them. Gravitational black holes are generated by a collapsing star. We don’t actually have that so there’s no danger of being sucked into black holes," Daniele Faccio, the lead scientist, said. PTI

Oz telescope to probe outer space

Australia on Friday launched one of the world’s fastest telescopes that will look for intelligent life in the outer regions of the universe while probing the origins of stars, galaxies and black holes. The Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder comprising 36 dishes in remote Murchison, Western Australia was unveiled on Friday. PTI

ALIEN HUNT: The Australian SKA Pathfinder telescope