

Newspaper Clips February 10, 2016

Screening of film on Kashmir triggers row in IIT-Delhi

Some students disrupt the show, calling it 'anti-national'

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/screening-of-film-on-kashmir-triggers-row-in-iitdelhi/article8215045.ece>

For the last six months, research scholars associated with the Centre of Social Sciences and Humanities at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi (IIT-D), watched films, a routine event on weekends at 5 p.m., which was followed inevitably by discussions, sometimes in the presence of the director.

A process, the faculty and students looked forward to. On January 29, when the Film Society, brainchild of the centre, screened Iffat Fatima's *Khoon Diy Baarav* (On a Trail of Vanished Blood), a film on Kashmir, not only were the proceedings disrupted, the viewers were asked to explain whether the screening was tantamount to being "anti-national."

When the film was screened on January 29, a couple of students from the Applied Mechanics department sought to disrupt the screening, calling it anti-national. These students wrote to the officiating director, Professor K. Thyagarajan, who has forwarded the mail to the centre, seeking a detailed discussion from the department for screening the film.

Even as attempts were made to downplay the exchange of mails between the authorities in the IIT, what has upset the centre is the reaction the film has evoked in some students who were not present for the screening and their attempt to disrupt it.

"There was a heated exchange between those who watched and those who protested the screening," said those who watched the film. The Film Society was meant to encourage students' engagement with meaningful cinema. The head of the centre, Ravinder Kaur, said: "We should have the freedom to discuss a whole range of opinions, and centres such as IITs, should retain the right to discuss sensitive issues that cinema often raises in its audience."

Ms. Kaur said she was hopeful the centre would continue to show cinema to its students. It is also learnt that the centre will be discussing the matter with Mr. Thyagarajan on Wednesday.

While sources in the department said those students who disrupted the screening had complained to the director, and not those whose viewing was marred by the act, the behaviour of the disruptive students was unacceptable.

The society which is six-months-old, showcases contemporary, meaningful cinema often resulting in lengthy discussions. Mr. Thyagarajan was unavailable for comments though an email was sent to him.

IIT Delhi has been in the news for high-profile visits of Baba Ramdev, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and the Brahmakumaris in the recent past.

STARTUP INITIATIVES

Entrepreneurs love IIT-IIM brands

THUMBS UP Graduates from premier institutes say they've benefited from peer learning, exposure to resources and people

Rozelle Laha

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Of late, one has seen a rise in the number of startups by IIT and IIM graduates. Some entrepreneurs think that studying at the elite institutes have given them an edge over others, as peer group interactions and pedagogy at these institutes accelerate their growth as entrepreneurs.

"I do indeed feel that studying at IITs gives one an edge, especially when it comes to launching new ventures. The exposure to resources and people is formidable and irreplaceable in terms of value. Additionally, engineering at IIT isn't limited to just the core technology subjects. We also learned critical problem-solving skills," says Ritesh Arora, an IIT Bombay graduate and co-founder at BrowserStack.com, a cross browser testing tool.

Most of the entrepreneurs from IIT-IIM are unanimous in their praise of peer learning at their institutes. IIT Delhi alumnus Himanshu Aggarwal feels he was made ready for the real world at the institute. "At IIT, I had the opportunity to interact with some of the best minds I have known and gained rich tech knowledge. It was all about competing and surviving - virtues every entrepreneur needs. While getting things done was minimum expectation, risk-taking was essential to be able to stand out in the face of stiff competition," says Aggarwal, the co-founder and CEO of Aspiring Minds, a job skills credentialing company.

On similar lines, Srinivas Krishnaswamy, CEO and co-founder, Krya, a startup creating products for sustainable urban living, says, "The environment

WANT TO LAUNCH A STARTUP? 10 SKILLS THAT WILL COME IN HANDY

Entrepreneurs need to wear many hats to be able to run a business. Here are some skills that startup founders recommend aspiring entrepreneurs to pick up at graduate schools



Strategy, financial planning

Considered as key to launching and running any business, startup founders think the lessons on strategic thinking, competitive differentiators, and business and financial planning are useful in building long-term viable models for business



Marketing skills

Basic and core skills of segmentation, targeting, positioning a product, brand management, and consumer behaviour are core to your business idea formulation. Having a marketing background from an elite institute also helps founders set credibility and get funded



Presentation skills

Remember the fundamentals of business communications and those surprise call-ups for presentations at class? Take them seriously as they will definitely come in use for pitching your story to investors later if you star your own business later



Building a strong network

Your peers can be the souls of your business. In fact, the peer network at your institute can be your first set of customers, well wishers, referrers too. In fact, your peers can also help you meet the right mentor, potential venture capitalists and funding agencies. Peers help out the most



Problem-solving skills

Entrepreneurs think that at premier institutes, engineering just isn't limited to the core technology subjects. Things like problem-solving skills, application of logic, and the judicious use of the resources at their disposal form a part of the IIT learning ecosystem



Hiring skills

Hiring the right team is crucial to the success of a startup. Most startup leaders find a direct application of their human resources management course taught at IIMs relevant while interviewing and hiring candidates throughout their startup career



Accounting skills

Most startup founders think that a basic understanding of how to read a balance sheet or project cash flow statement comes in handy when it comes to understanding the financial aspects of business and related finer nuances



Tech and engineering skills

Being a graduate from a premier engineering institute can be immeasurably useful if you are launching a tech startup. That's not all. Even if you are launching a non-tech startup, knowledge of technology is a plus, with the growing digital focus in companies



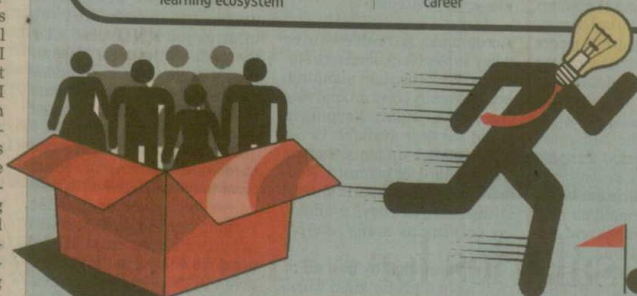
Creating from scratch

Extracurricular activities like the management fest, cultural fest, placements and business plan competition at institutes, can give you an opportunity to test your perseverance, and deliver impactful results, against all odds



Group work

Getting work done towards a common goal from multiple team members, with different motivations and skill-sets is the essence of success for any startup leader. You can learn the tricks of this game at your group work assignments in your graduate school



and IIT peer group is a plus. Your classmates are of high calibre and that raises the competition bar." Some of them also mentioned the brand value associ-

ated with these institutes. "Even Harvard and Stanford drop-outs have a name, for example, even if they drop out of those colleges. People would know that

they are good enough to get into those colleges. That is the psychological advantage," says Krishnaswamy, a graduate from IIT Madras and IIM Bangalore.

However, as IIM Bangalore pass-out Rajiv Srivatsa, COO and co-founder, Urban Ladder, a furniture e-tailer, says, "It's useful, but not necessary. You can do the

courses, build a strong network, and get out of your comfort zone to do something impactful in any context or good college or young company as well."

ILLUSTRATION: ABHIMANYU SINHA

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Nokia, IIT-M sign technology research pact

S SHYAMALA

Chennai

TELECOM equipment maker Nokia (the erstwhile Nokia Siemens networks) and IIT-Madras have partnered to create technology solutions that will enhance broadband connectivity in rural India.

Under the three-year partnership, Nokia will fund and provide technological expertise for research at IIT-M's Center of Excellence for Wireless Technology (CEWiT).

The project will evaluate the option of using unlicensed spectrum to deliver cost-efficient, last-mile broadband connectivity to remote rural communities in India, complementing the government's National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) initiative.

The research project aims to bridge the connectivity divide in India by broadening the reach of broadband in rural areas. As part of the initiative, CEWiT at IIT-M will verify the feasibility of using unlicensed spectrum radio access technologies for cost-efficient, last-mile broadband connectivity, complement the government's plans of providing fiber optic connectivity to 2.3-lakh *gram panchayats* by providing last-mile connectivity and create effective low-cost rural access solutions based on Wi-Fi technology.

Sandeep Girotra, vice president and head of India region at Nokia, said: "India is on the cusp of a digital revolution. We are really excited

about this research collaboration with IIT-Madras, which will leverage its talent and innovation to drive the Indian government's vision of empowering rural communities through broadband connectivity — an initiative that will revolutionise access to government services and the internet. The successful implementation of this project is a key social development objective for Nokia in India."

A recent study by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) shows that a 10 per cent increase in growth of internet subscribers leads to an increase of as much as 1.08 per cent in the rate of growth of GDP.

The National Telecom Policy of 2012 envisaged broadband on demand by 2015, and 175 million broadband subscribers by 2017 with a minimum speed of 2 Mbps and up to 100 Mbps on demand. However, as of September 2015, the total number of broadband (defined as download speeds higher than or equal to 512 Kbps) subscribers stood at 120.88 million (largely concentrated in Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu), with only 27.20 million rural subscribers.

This "internet divide" between rural and urban India has become more relevant as the scope of activities carried out on the internet has expanded beyond what was previously imagined.

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Ropar IIT gets ₹5 cr for biz incubator

ROPAR, FEBRUARY 9

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Ropar, has received a grant of Rs 5 crore to set up technology business incubator (TBI). The grant will be utilised to contribute towards the Centre's "Start-up India" programme over five years.

Ropar IIT Director SK Das in a press release stated that the TBI would be a specialised state-of-the-art facility with an objective to promote startups based on new technology, knowledge and innovation.

It would provide cost-effective and value-added services to start-ups such as mentoring, legal, financial, technical and property related services to young entrepreneurs, he added. — TNS

CAMPUS ROW

IIT-Madras circular bars all 'political activities'

Director calls it a 'mistake', says no intention to impose such rules; Students slam move, link it to Rohith Vemula protests

ARUN JANARDHANAN & DIPTI NAGPAUL D'SOUZA
CHENNAI, MUMBAI, FEB 9

LESS THAN a year after IIT-Madras banned a Dalit students' movement, and then revoked the decision following nationwide protests, the authorities, it has emerged, have issued another circular, this time with an aim to bar all kinds of "political activity" because that is "against the apolitical nature of the institute".

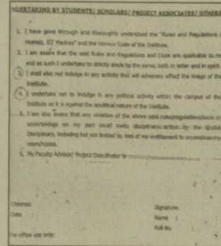
Another clause in the circular — an undertaking to be signed by students, scholars, project associates and others — says, "I shall not indulge in any activity that will adversely affect the image of the university".

Taking objection, students and students' group representatives said these were vague clauses that will be open to in-

terpretation, and can be used against any student at any point to drive him/her out of the hostel, which is the last point in the undertaking. In fact, as one student pointed out, something not very dissimilar had been done with Rohith Vemula, a PhD scholar from Hyderabad Central University, who was suspended, leading to his suicide that sparked nationwide protests.

Official response of IIT-Madras varied from initial denial to lack of knowledge to admission of mistake "if such a circular went out". *The Indian Express* has accessed the document being circulated in hostels.

Earlier, students were required to submit three affidavits — two anti-ragging undertakings from students and parents, and an "honour code", or a set of rules or ethical principles for the academic community.



Circular given out on campus.

Specifying that he was not aware of any such new rule being implemented, Sivakumar Srinivasan, Dean of Students, said, "May be (it was) a mistake if such clauses are added in the list...or it may be something done by the hostel authorities." Srinivasan was blamed for

the decision to ban Ambedkar-Periyar Study Circle (APSC) in May 2015 based on an anonymous complaint forwarded by the Union HRD ministry. It alleged that APSC members were inducing "hatred" against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Hindu community.

K Sethupathi, Chairman, Council of Wardens, initially said no such rules were circulated. When told specifically about the clauses and cited with instances of students being served the document for the last two weeks, Sethupathi said he had never "intended" doing so. "(It) may be a mistake," he said. "If students have a problem, I will send them a clarification mail to not follow any such rule. (A) similar form uploaded on the website has no such clauses."

IIT-M Director Bhaskar Ramamurthi also initially

claimed ignorance but later told *The Indian Express* that it could have been a "mistake" by his colleagues. Asked how such clauses could be added by mistake, he said a similar rule was implemented in July last year, and revoked following students' objection. "Officials must have used those papers again. Anyway, I have no intention to impose such rules," Ramamurthi said.

A senior APSC leader said: "What do they mean by 'indulging in political activity within the campus...? It is a very vague rule that can be used against students in different contexts. When the authorities turn indifferent to APSC and other independent student groups, right-wing student groups propagating political ideology of the RSS and inviting their leaders are being treated like official bodies. Groups such as Vivekananda

Study Circle or Vande Mataram are allowed to take students on campus buses for temple visits, and they have a permanent room when others have no such privileges."

Condemning the document, Chinta Bar, an independent students' movement in IIT-M, said in a statement that it may not be a coincidence that this document comes into circulation soon after student uprisings on campuses across the country following Rohith Vemula's suicide. "Even in the absence of such undertaking, student activities are under constant surveillance. This undertaking would help administration take action against any student for anything under the tag of 'tarnishing the image of IITM'... This is to silence dissenting voices and crucify independent student bodies," the statement said.

2bn meals for schoolkids, this IITian shows the way

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Bengaluru: Its 12 noon at the government school in DJ Halli, northeast Bengaluru. Hundreds of little faces are fixed on the van that has carried their lunch. For 15 years, every afternoon, the Bengaluru headquartered Akshaya Patra Foundation (APF) has been bringing smiles on faces of 1.4 million children.

And in a few weeks, it will serve its two billionth meal.

APF, founded by IITian Madhu Pandit Dasa who was conferred the Padma Shri last month, is the world's largest school lunch programme.

"I still remember the day when I took the first meal to a government school. The children loved it. I did not believe that we would go with the food the next day. But for 15 years now, we have been able to sustain," Dasa said.

From ensuring that no child in India shall be deprived of education because of hunger, the scheme has won many accolades for its transparency, hygiene and tech savvy delivery of cooked meals.

Says APF CEO Shridhar Venkat: "Growth has not been a

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

INSPIRATION

One day while looking out of a window at Mayapur, a village near Kolkata, the founder of ISKCON AC Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada saw a group of children fighting with street dogs over scraps of food. This moved him to a resolve that no child should go hungry...

FOOD IN NUMBERS

YEAR 2000

1,500 children in five government schools

YEAR 2015

1.4 million children every day in about 11,700 schools across 24 locations and 10 states

Served 17,000 meals/day during the Chennai floods.



challenge but sustainably growing is a challenge. Every time we start a kitchen, children come with a hope that they will get a good meal every day. Ensuring food safety especially at the school level which is the last mile and on a daily basis is a challenge. The road ahead is to implement innovative ideas in operations, fundraising and sourcing. We also would like to freely share our learnings with any organisation or an individual who wants to work on alleviating hunger amongst children."

APF trustee T V Mohandas

Pai told TOI: "I think the reason for our success has been how different competencies which are mutually inclusive and collectively exclusive have come together to fight hunger among children."

PM Narendra Modi has congratulated the foundation for the milestone. "I am happy to learn that the foundation will complete 15 years of serving midday meal to schoolchildren and will serve its second billionth meal soon. These milestones and efforts inspire many to serve children," he said.

IIM Lucknow wraps up final placements in three days

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The Indian Institute of Management Lucknow (IIM-L) which boasts of one of the largest IIM batches in the country, placed its 30th batch of 446 students in a record three days.

Over 160 domestic and international recruiters participated in the final placement this year. About 25% of roles on offer were in sales and marketing, 22% offers were made in finance, 21% in consulting, 15% in e-commerce, 10% in systems/IT and 7% in general management. Students were also offered roles in market research, analytics, business development, social media marketing and HR.

Top recruiters included Alvarez & Marsal, BlackRock, MasterCard, Advisors, o3 Capital, Accenture, Aditya Birla Group, Amazon, Avendus, Flipkart, Hindustan Unilever, P&G, TAS, The Boston Consulting Group and others.

Authorities of the institute

OVER 160 DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL RECRUITERS PARTICIPATED IN THE FINAL PLACEMENTS THIS YEAR

who wrapped up the summer placement drive in four days during October 2015, were positive about the final placements. Professor D S Sengar, chairman, placements, IIM-L, says, "Given that the economy is doing well and a lot of companies have received funding, we are hoping that it will reflect well on recruitments."

The institute also had few first-time recruiters on campus this year. These included Avalon Consulting, BMW Group, Kotak Investments and Tata Sky, among others. International profiles were offered by Equirus Capital and Olam International.

About 110 offers were made in the FMCG/consumer goods/telecom/digital media sector. Top recruiters included Airtel, Colgate Palmolive, Dr Reddy's, GSK, Hindustan Unilever, ITC, Nivea, P&G, Pepsi, Puma, Samsung and Star TV.

Several international firms from BFSI sector participated this year. Arga, Avendus Capital, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Blackrock, Citibank, DBS, Edelweiss, Equirus Capital, Goldman Sachs, ICICI Bank and o3 Capital offered roles in front end investment banking, global markets, investment research, corporate/wholesale/retail banking, market research, trading and operations.

UGC lets deemed pvt univs have 6 off-campus centres

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Barely three months after the University Grants Commission (UGC) issued notice to 10 deemed universities, including prestigious ones like the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, for having off-campus centres without clearance, it has amended its regulation allowing private deemed universities to have six such centres.

In case of government-established and managed universities, the UGC's ceiling of six off-campus centres will not apply.

However, HRD ministry sources said the decision allowing six off-campus centres does not change the nature of the UGC notice to the 10 deemed universities. "Having off-campus does not mean UGC and HRD ministry clearance is not needed. Fact remains that these 10 violated the existing UGC re-

U-TURN

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▶ Allowing six off-campus centres does not change the nature of the UGC notice to the 10 deemed universities, say HRD ministry sources

gulations," said an official. BITS, Pilani that received notice for having off-campus centres in Goa and Hyderabad has moved Delhi high court against the UGC.

UGC's case against these universities got further diluted after it approved the existence of Bhubaneswar-based National Institute of Science Education & Research,

off-campus centre of Homi Bhabha National Institute, Mumbai.

"This has weakened UGC's case against 10 deemed universities. Eventually all will get clearance," said a senior UGC official, who admitted that the HRD ministry was taken by surprise when the notices were sent.

In November, notices were sent to Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies University; Birla Institute of Technology & Science (BITS) Pilani; Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra; Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad; Banasthali University, Rajasthan; Ponnaiyah Ramajayam Institute of Science and Technology, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu; Indian Veterinary Research Institute Uttar Pradesh; Lakshmi Bai National University of Physical Education, Gwalior; Tata Institute of Fundamental Research and Homi Bhabha National Institute.

Nothing Destroys Childhood Like IIT and IIM'

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/Nothing-Destroys-Childhood-Like-IIT-and-IIM/2016/02/09/article3268890.ece>

Professor Shiv Visvanathan may have been dismissed from four colleges and recently transferred from his latest department of work, but he lives to fight another day. And his message resonated with hundreds of high pressured students at the ThinkEdu Conclave 2016. "Nothing destroys childhood like an IIT or IIM," he said, to a roar of applause on Tuesday.

The social scientist from the Jindal School of Government and Public Policy in Haryana added to more cheers, "Childhood is about invention. As a friend said, our scientists are very good as summarisers, they are not originals. This is the problem with IIT. It teaches convergence, not divergence."

Speaking for diversity over uniformity, Visvanathan went on to elaborate that inventive thinking can hardly be encouraged when the focus is to get one and only one 'correct' answer in a pre-board exam, rather than explore the possibilities. "Science is about invention, new theories, new possibilities - and what we have are government programmes and official professors destroying this dream," he added.

Instead he said, the need of the hour is for teachers to introduce a sense of playfulness in their methods. This as opposed to standardised 'rankings' that are often confused for 'excellence' to meet lofty ideals that in effect extinguish a child's right to dream, debate and make a difference. Visvanathan also pointed out that waiting a decade for government approvals to change a syllabus was not the way and perhaps it was time for a child to offer some perspective. "We need a child to tell the BJP emperor that he has no clothes," Visvanathan made a bold metaphor of breaking through the illusion that is well with the education system.

Criticising the government for taking the joy out of learning, the professor signed off, "Childhood is a time of invention or joy. And I don't see any joy in IIT or Mr Modi."

Cognitive Science at IIT Gandhinagar

<http://www.pagalguy.com/articles/cognitive-science-at-iit-gandhinagar-39849803>



Cognitive science, a term that brings a blank and perplexed look on a lot of people, in simple terms, is the study of mental processes. It is, therefore, a branch of science that is trying to unravel the mysteries of the black box, commonly known as the 'brain'. Cognitive Science is one of the emerging fields of study that incorporates, but is not restricted to, areas like neuroscience, psychology, artificial intelligence, anthropology and philosophy.

There is a general consensus among researches worldwide that brain and its processes can be understood only with an inter-disciplinary approach. Based on this viewpoint, a technology and engineering institute, IIT Gandhinagar started a PhD programme in Cognitive Science back in 2010. The institute also started a Masters programme in 2013.

Well, it is quite paradoxical to see a technological institute engaging in a discourse like Cognitive Science. But the institute takes pride in its endeavor to indulge in an area that has tremendous applications ranging from machine learning to developing novel tools for various behavioral & neurological disorders. And, as of now, IIT Gandhinagar is the only IIT that offers a Masters programme in Cognitive Science.

The programme in Cognitive Science started at IIT Gandhinagar with some highly thought-provoking and dedicated efforts of a few people. Prof. Jaison Manjaly, who is known for laying the foundation stones of Cognitive Science at this institute, had put forth the proposal for commencing this programme. The institute happily gave a nod to this and recruited some highly experienced researchers. Currently, there are five faculty-in-residence who are part of this discipline- Prof. Jaison Manjaly, Prof. Krishna Prasad Miyapuram, Prof. Meera Sunny, Prof. Uttama Lahiri and Prof. Pratik Mutha. Each of these faculty is specialised in different areas of cognitive science, thereby giving an inter-disciplinary flavour to this programme in a true sense. Some of the broad research interests of these faculty are: consciousness, sense of agency & privacy; brain imaging, learning & consumer behaviour; visual attention & embodied cognition; artificial intelligence & affective computing; and sensorimotor control, learning & movement disorders. Apart from these faculties, there are some visiting faculties as well that are associated with this program- Prof. Frederick Coolidge, Prof. Manuel Ramos, Prof. Angus McBlane and Prof. Bipin Indurkha.

Early in 2015 the discipline of Cognitive Science at IIT Gandhinagar became a centre and is now known as Centre for Cognitive Science. This one-year old centre is expanding itself both in terms of the number of researchers and highly advance & sophisticated research facilities in order to carry out cutting-edge research in so called "one of the four pillars of knowledge of the 21st century"- Cognitive Science.

P.S- Visit the official page of the Centre for Cognitive Science, IIT Gandhinagar here to know more about your mental processes!!!

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Note: This article about IIT Gandhinagar has **not** been written by the PaGaLGuY Editorial Team. Readers should research and verify the claims and judgements in the article before reaching a conclusion.