

Newspaper Clips February 19, 2015

The moment PM turns his back, IIScians are set to play truant

<http://www.bangaloremirror.com/bangalore/cover-story/The-moment-PM-turns-his-back-IIScians-are-set-to-play-truant/articleshow/46279522.cms>

Making common cause with them will be scholars across more than 50 institutes in the country, including IITs, who are going on indefinite protest starting February 18

A day before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit on Wednesday, dark clouds of dissent were hovering over the prestigious Indian Institute of Science (IISc) with students and researchers seen sporting black bands on campus. Students, who are protesting against the delay in distribution of stipend, wanted to bring the issue to the notice of the PM. But, with their demand struck down, they have now decided to go on an indefinite fast on campus after Modi leaves the venue.

However, IISc students are not alone. Making common cause with them will be scholars across more than 50 institutes in the country, including the IITs, who are going on an indefinite protest starting February 18.

IISc's student council (academic affairs) secretary, Pankaj Jain, said he had earlier written to Modi asking for "paying attention to the ease of doing research and development in India." They wanted scientists and researchers "to explore the mysteries of science, not government procedures." Jain said fellowships of research scholars have not been hiked for almost five years now. The last hike was in April 2010. Though the Department of Science (coordinating agency) issued a notification in October, funding agencies which give fellowships like MHRD, CSIR, UGC, etc are yet to issue a notification. Students say they have met several ministers and secretaries to draw attention. However, they have only got assurances, but nothing concrete has happened. The fallout was seen on Tuesday when around 1,200 black bands were distributed. The IISc students said they had designed innovative posters to highlight their plight. One of these states the Mangalyan mission was cheaper than a Hollywood film, thanks to Indian researchers who made it possible. Meanwhile, the student body Research Scholars of India said several pending issues had not remained unresolved despite a number of meetings with relevant authorities. The association called upon faculty and scientists to come out of labs in support of the strike.

SAGA OF MISSED DATES

On October 24, 2014, the Department of Science and Technology had announced a hike in junior research fellowship, senior research fellowship and for research assistants and mentioned it would be effective from October 1, 2014. On December 1, 2014, UGC released a notice of revision in fellowships. It also mentioned the hiked amount for Masters students who cleared GATE with an implementation date of December 1, 2014. On December 5, students came across a notice from the Ministry of Human Resource Development dated November 28, 2014, to the directors of IITs, IISc, NITs, IISERs, etc., asking for an estimate of additional funds they want for revision in fellowship with implementation from January 1, 2015. However, nothing has been done so far. Till now, there is no clarity on the revised fellowship for IISc/IIT/IISER/NIT students who get MHRD funding. Moreover, some major funding agencies like CSIR have not released any notification till now, said Pankaj Jain, secretary, academic affairs, students' council, IISc Bangalore.

Gripes of researchers

- (1) Irregular dispersal of monthly fellowship (some get once a year)
- (2) Revision of fellowship not based on inflation
- (3) Lack of coordination and parity among funding agencies over hike
- (4) Lack of slab implementation from JRF to SRF and SRF to RF
- (5) Lack of proper hike for non- NET, non-GATE, project students

- (6) Inadequate fellowship allocation for professional courses
- (7) No facilities for research in universities
- (8) Slashing the number of fellowships by cutting funds
- (9) Difficulty in getting jobs after PhD and post-doctoral studies
- (10) Absence of transparency and national platform in appointment of scientists and faculty

PM Narendra Modi opens Centre for Nano Science Engineering at IISc

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/pm-narendra-modi-opens-centre-for-nano-science-engineering-at-iisc/articleshow/46286688.cms>

BENGALURU: Prime Minister Narendra Modi today inaugurated the Centre for Nano Science Engineering at the Indian Institute of Science here.

The Centre is considered to be the most sophisticated and comprehensive cluster of micro and nano-tech laboratories in India.

It is designed to provide research and technology leadership in the areas of nano-electronics and nanotechnology, which is key to the Modi government's 'Make in India' initiative, in the field of electronics.

Modi also unveiled the foundation stone of the Centre for Brain Research at IISc, which is being established as an autonomous centre at the country's premier science institute.

He also witnessed the signing of an MoU between ONGCBSE 0.30 % and M/s Super Wave Technology Pvt Ltd, envisaging development of new technology for drilling of oil and gas, an official release said.

The Prime Minister was given an overview of the research activities being carried out at IISc.

He took keen interest in initiatives in areas such as solar energy, water management, agriculture and enquired about collaborations between IISc and other institutes, it said.

Union Ministers Sadananda Gowda, Ananth Kumar and Dharmendra Pradhan were present.

Universities get UGC blow for being careless about transgenders

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/education/story/ugc-slams-universities/1/419640.html>

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has expressed unease regarding universities not making efforts to create transgender-friendly infrastructure on their campuses. In an official circular issued to the universities, the UGC said, "You (the universities) have spared no efforts to create transgender-friendly infrastructure like washrooms, restrooms etc. Understandably, this will go a long way in acclimatising transgender students without facing any fear, stigma or shame." The UGC has also mentioned that it has plans to award major research projects to academicians who can, in collaboration with community members and other experts in the field, undertake ethnographic research on the life and culture of transgender community.

"Such research, you would agree, will lead not only to a better understanding of the transgender subculture, but also help dispel several myths pertaining to the community embedded in popular discourse," said the circular. In

October 2014, the UGC had directed all the universities to come up with transgender-friendly infrastructure at universities across the nation following a Supreme Court judgment.

The UGC has also requested the universities to persuade faculty members to come forward and take up such challenging and socially relevant research in the interest of academia.

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BTECH COURSES

DU asks colleges to get AICTE approval

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 18

Facing flak for not seeking approval from the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) for BTech courses offered by its 24 colleges, Delhi University (DU) has directed the principals concerned to do the needful in this regard with barely a few days remaining for the deadline.

“The university is earnestly seized of the matter of seeking AICTE recognition for BTech programmes that are being offered in your college at present. The process to be followed for seeking this approval shall be initiated by your office....” said DU Pro-Vice Chancellor in an

official communication to principals.

BTech programmes in computer science, electronics, food technology, instrumentation electronics and polymer science were launched as part of the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP) scrapped last year following the UGC intervention.

The UGC had, however, directed the DU to continue with the five BTech programmes but only for students admitted in academic year 2013-2014. The colleges were asked to seek approval from the AICTE.

Last week, DU teachers also sought the VC’s intervention in the issue while students staged a demonstration in front of the

arts faculty.

The colleges had been asked to apply for the AICTE approval latest by February 19 (tomorrow).

The DU’s statutory bodies — Academic Council and Executive Council — had also written to the VC calling for his urgent intervention for safeguarding the interest of nearly 6,000 students enrolled in the five courses being offered by DU.

Earlier, a group of students had also approached HRD Minister Smriti Irani over the issue, who had assured them that directions have been issued to the Vice-Chancellor in this regard. She said the ministry had been pushing DU over the matter since June last year.