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Visitor of central univs, Prez refuses to blindly follow HRD

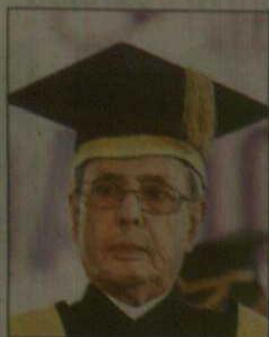
Pranab Taking Independent View On Appointing, Sacking VCs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: As visitor of central universities, President Pranab Mukherjee seems to be taking an independent view rather than fully abiding by the recommendations of the HRD ministry with regard to appointments and even dismissals of vice-chancellors.

He has often made informal inquiries to get the bigger picture, be it the case of JNU, Delhi University or Visva Bharati, Santiniketan. Mukherjee has also institutionalised the system of meeting central university VCs, directors of IITs and NITs every year, something that was done only occasionally by his predecessors.

Mukherjee's disagreement with HRD minister Smriti Irani over her choice of Virander S Chauhan for the post of vice-chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University emanated from the host of representations Rashtrapati Bhavan had received alleging conflict of interest in shortlisting Chauhan's name. Chairperson of the search-cum-selection committee D P



The President is refusing to budge from his stand on removal of Sushanta Duttgupta, VC of Visva-Bharati. Duttgupta was found guilty of financial and administrative impropriety by a committee appointed by the HRD ministry

Singh is director of National Assessment & Accreditation Council (NAAC) whereas Chauhan is chairperson, executive council. Chauhan had also crossed the 65-year age criterion in March 2015 and the advertisement for the post of VC clearly specified that the "person should not be more than 65 years of age on the closing date of receipt of the application". The President preferred Prof M Jagadesh Kumar of IIT, Delhi as VC of JNU. The ministry though later stated it was equally keen on Jagadesh Kumar.

Mukherjee is not the first President to have taken an independent view in case of appointments. During Murlidhar Joshi's tenure, one of the

biggest surprises was appointment of Prof Deepak Nayyar as VC of DU. He was among the shortlisted but not the one recommended by then minister MM Joshi. In fact, Joshi himself wanted to meet the then President KR Narayanan to convince him about his choice but Narayanan is believed to have told him to send the joint secretary with the file. Narayanan chose Nayyar, much to the chagrin of Joshi and Sangh Parivar that wanted its chosen man to head the prestigious university.

Mukherjee is pro-active even in matters not related to appointment. Last year, the HRD ministry recommended that then DU VC Dinesh Singh be sent on leave for allegedly

trying to vitiate the process of appointment of his successor. But Mukherjee was not convinced that sending Singh on leave barely 20 days before his term ended would be a good idea. He returned the file and the HRD ministry could do nothing.

The President is also refusing to budge on his stand on removal of Sushanta Duttgupta, VC of Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan. Duttgupta was found guilty of financial and administrative impropriety by a committee appointed by the HRD ministry. On the basis of the report, the ministry recommended his removal under General Clauses Act since Visva Bharati Act has no clause on removal of a VC. Duttgupta resigned on email which the ministry refused to entertain and went ahead with the recommendation seeking his removal. Mukherjee returned the file the first time and has not taken any action after it was re-sent. Last October, Mukherjee had overlooked the HRD's choice for VC of Maulana Azad National Urdu University and instead approved Md. Aslam Parvaiz.

Tribun ND 30.01.2016 P-7

JNUVC:IIT prof picked over Irani's choice

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 29

IIT professor Jagdeesh Kumar was appointed as Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) Vice-Chancellor by President Pranab Mukherjee after he was selected from a panel of four names that also included scientist VS Chauhan, who was reported to be HRD Minister Smriti Irani's preferred choice to lead the prestigious institute.

According to sources, the HRD Ministry had sent four names to the President and Irani had conveyed her preference for Chauhan, a scientist working in the fields of genetic engineering and biotechnology and known for his contributions to the development of a vaccine for malaria.

The President, however, appointed IIT-Delhi professor Kumar to the post of VC of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), ignoring Irani's recommendation. — PTI

IIT-Roorkee scientists patent low-cost biofuel tech

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/dehradun/IIT-Roorkee-scientists-patent-low-cost-biofuel-tech/articleshow/50776850.cms>

OORKEE: Scientists at the Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee (IIT-R) have achieved remarkable success in generating low-cost biofuel using a perennial weed, Kans grass. This grass, native to the subcontinent, grows up to three feet in height and is used in thatching katcha houses in rural areas. The weed, being widely available and perennial, comes at low cost.

"Through our technology, which we have now got patented, bioethanol will be produced as a substitute for petrol. This is a low-cost fuel, in comparison to other varieties of bioethanol now available across the world," said Sanjoy Ghosh, principal inventor of the technology and teacher of biochemical engineering at the biotechnology department of IIT-R. Recommended By Colombia

Kans grass, known by the scientific name *Saccharum spontaneum*, Ghosh said, was chosen as the feedstock for production of bioethanol because of its high yields, low cost, ability to grow in marginal lands with almost no water supply and wide availability right through the year.

"Kans is a weed that we have exploited for production of bioethanol through a unique process called fractional hydrolysis. This is a technology we recently patented. It comes with minimum toxic product generation and maximum sugar recovery," Ghosh said.

"There are various grasses from which bioethanol is being produced. Among the most common is Eastern Gama grass (*Trypsacum dactyloides*). However, scientists could recover around 37% cellulose and 22.1% hemicellulose from it. From Kans grass, we were able to recover over 43.78% cellulose and 24.22% hemicellulose," Ghosh told TOI.

For superior quality ethanol, unique fermentation techniques are used. "Generally available technologies give mixed sugars along with toxic compounds in the hydrolysis process. As a result, fermentation becomes difficult," said Ghosh, who co-authored a research paper on this topic in Elsevier's *Biochemical Engineering Journal* along with other authors, Lalit K Singh and Chandrajit Balomajumder.

"We were able to recover around 93.4 % of total biomass sugar without much toxic product generation, which is a breakthrough in bioethanol production. As raw material (Kans grass) is easily available in our country and recovery of sugar is much higher than other biomass, the cost of biofuel, made on ethanol from our technology, for petrol-fuel-based engines would be remarkably low for users," Ghosh said.

UGC to back govt's 'sensitisation' initiative

LENDING HAND The body has stepped in to assist govt in familiarising varsity admins with the concerns of socially-disadvantaged students

HT Correspondent

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NEW DELHI: The University Grants Commission (UGC) stepped in on Friday to bump up the Union human resource development ministry's decision to "sensitise" administrators in central universities on low-caste and poor students.

The UGC secretary wrote to vice-chancellors of central universities to ensure the equal opportunity centre in their institutions were functioning properly.

The cells were opened to make university and college authorities aware of problems that students from marginalised or disadvantaged sections of society were facing and find ways to improve their academic performance.

The EOCs are also meant to monitor the various schemes/policies of the Government of India and state governments relating to marginalized/disadvantaged sections," the letter states.

Within days of Dalit student-activist Rohith Vemula's suicide at the University of Hyderabad, which triggered countrywide outrage, the HRD



• Dalit student Rohith Vemula's suicide in Hyderabad triggered country-wide outrage.

AP FILE

ministry decided to conduct workshops in central universities to "sensitise" administrators about issues concerning socially, educationally and economically disadvantaged students.

The ministry will organise workshops, starting with Assam University on February 1 followed by similar workshops at the University of Hyderabad on February 8.

The UGC has asked all universities to send data regard-

ing activities undertaken by the cells and grievances addressed by them within 15 days.

"Indian society is characterised by social divisions and these inequalities are barriers to access educational resources to disadvantaged sections of society. The disadvantaged sections of society include scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward classes, women, minorities and differently-abled persons," reads the letter sent to the universities.

RAHUL TO TAKE PART IN PROTESTS

HTC & Agencies

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NEW DELHI: Stepping up the offensive on Dalit scholar Rohith Vemula's suicide issue, Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi left for Hyderabad on Friday evening to participate in a candle march by students of the Hyderabad Central University.

Congress general Secretary Digvijay Singh said Rahul would participate in the candle march and also in the sit-in organized by the students protesting on the university campus.

"Yes, he is participating in the candle march with the students and would participate in dharna till 6 pm tomorrow (Saturday) evening," Singh said.

The Congress has been demanding the sacking of HRD minister Smriti Irani and Union Minister Bandaru Dattatreya and also removal of vice-chancellor Appa Rao in the wake of the suicide by the Dalit scholar.

This is Rahul's second

visit to Hyderabad since Vemula was found hanging in the varsity's hostel room.

The last time he visited the city, the Congress vice-president had also met Vemula's mother Radhika and the other four suspended students.

Meanwhile, classes have resumed at the University of Hyderabad, which has been on the boil ever since the suicide of Dalit researcher Rohit Vemula on January 17, even as the Joint Action Committee (JAC) continues its protests.

After a rally by students on Thursday demanding the academics, research activities resume and a clash between students of school of life sciences and agitators over opening of the labs, the JAC on Friday restricted its indefinite shutdown call to the administration block.

"Academic blocks were opened today (Friday) and classes were taken in several schools. Yesterday, the admin block functioned to a degree but today it is closed again," said an official.

Business Buzz at IIT Madras Research Park

<http://www.nyoooz.com/chennai/336561/business-buzz-at-iit-madras-research-park>

SUMMARY: CHENNAI: Almost six years after the first phase of the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras's Research Park took off, its much larger second phase is set to throw open its doors for business. But Saint Gobain and its large installation are not the only ones the second phase will boast of. The second phase is also likely to add nearly 100 firms to the 50 odd now at the park. "It is likely we will be adding to the list of specialised incubators that will work from the research park during this expansion. The expansion is expected to add around 100,000 sqft to the 30,000 sqft available at the research park to the IIT-Madras Incubator Cell.

CHENNAI: Almost six years after the first phase of the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras's Research Park took off, its much larger second phase is set to throw open its doors for business. Among the project's salient features are a number of independent research facilities, a large expansion in space for its incubator cell and a brand new incubator for MedTech start-ups. According to Bhaskar Ramamurthi, director, IIT-Madras, the second phase involved a total capital expenditure of Rs 420 crore so far, with Rs 100 crore obtained as grant from the Ministry of Human Resource Development, and the rest funded through debt and contributions. Phase I of the IIT Madras research park | Martin Louis While the official launch date for the second phase is not yet

decided, Saint Gobain, which has reportedly taken up nearly 140,000 sq ft in the project, is set to inaugurate its India R&D facility on January 29. But Saint Gobain and its large installation are not the only ones the second phase will boast of. According to Ramamurthi, phase 2 was also likely have a brand new incubator for Medical Technology start-ups, overseen by IIT-Madras's highly successful Health Technology Innovation Centre(HTIC). "It is likely we will be adding to the list of specialised incubators that will work from the research park during this expansion. The MedTech incubator will be overseen by HTIC, since they have shown that they have expertise in this sector and will join our Rural Technology and Business Incubator and the BioTech incubator that are currently working from there," said Ramamurthi. The HTIC has actually clubbed its budget for the incubator and a planned MedTech core facility to come up for Rs 20 crore. The expansion is expected to add around 100,000 sqft to the 30,000 sqft available at the research park to the IIT-Madras Incubator Cell. "This should fit in quite well with our expectations.

Even planning for an addition of 25 start-ups a year, factoring in that they would stay for three to four years each, we would need a lot more than what the first phase will provide us," said Ramamurthi. The second phase is also likely to add nearly 100 firms to the 50 odd now at the park.

Focus on industry linkages, says AICTE chairman

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/focus-on-industry-linkages-says-aicte-chairman/article8170132.ece>

7th convocation of Sri Krishnadevaraya University held

Universities across the country need to focus on Industry linkages to develop the employability of the students passing out of the universities, AICTE chairman Anil Dattatreya Sahasrabudhe has said.

Delivering the 17th convocation address at the Sri Krishnadevaraya University here, Mr. Sahasrabudhe said: “There have been reports of unemployability of graduates coming out of colleges. Some of the lacunae pointed out by the industry are soft skills such as effective communication, team work, discipline, professional and ethical practice amongst others.”

He suggested a five point formula – Industry linkages, impetus of research and innovation, establishment of national and international networks by universities and colleges for faculty and student exchange, enhanced involvement of alumni, making university facilities such as labs available to students round the clock – to overcome many of the problems plaguing the education sector in India, opining that ‘amazing’ results would flow from these initiatives.

He advised a sector specific ‘hub and spoke’ model which would include internship, sabbaticals, adjunct faculty besides setting up of labs with the support of the industry and involvement of the industry in curriculum development and soft skills training.

“Colleges can explore various avenues available, including experiential learning for students, participation in Unnat Bharat Abhiyan by conducting research academies and innovation workshops”, said Mr. Sahasrabudhe and added that today’s world posed a different set of challenges to students in which the technology they are exposed to during their study is becoming outdated by the time they graduate and hence the requirement for continuous learning and inter- disciplinary learning, become ever more relevant.

A total of 48,388 students, of which 177 PhD and M.Phil students, received degrees at the convocation, said Vice-Chancellor K Rajagopal.

While 26,106 students comprising of graduates and post graduates took their degrees in absentia, around 21,661 students took their degrees in advance.

Complaint against Mysuru University professor for abusing Modi, Smriti Irani

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/crime/300116/complaint-against-mysuru-university-professor-for-abusing-modi-smriti-irani.html>

Bengaluru: A complaint has been lodged against Maheshchandra Guru, Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Mysuru University, for allegedly using abusive language against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, HRD minister Smriti Irani and former Prime Minister late Jawaharlal Nehru.

The complaint was lodged with Bengaluru city police commissioner, N.S. Megharikh by Dr Chi.Na. Ramu, National President of All India Dr Ambedkar Prachara Samithi. Mr. Ramu urged the police commissioner to take action against Mr Guru and ensure his service was terminated. The state BJP has backed Mr Ramu's decision to file the complaint against Mr. Guru. According to the complainant, Mr Guru is the most controversial professor in Mysuru University who had described Ms Smriti Irani as a 'third rated actress'. His abusive language against the PM is uncalled for, the complaint said.

During a programme organized by the SC student union of Mysuru University to pay homage to Rohith Vemula, a student of Hyderabad Central University who committed suicide recently, Mr Guru had used abusive language against the PM and the HRD minister. He was suspended by Mysuru University for violating the conduct rules. He had also allegedly used abusive language against Mysuru University Professor Rangappa.

A Dalit student committed suicide at IIT-B in 2014: Read his mother's moving letter to Rohith's family

"In IIT, Aniket must have suffered the emptiness and hidden insult a lot."

<http://www.thenewsminute.com/article/dalit-student-committed-suicide-iit-b-2014-read-his-mother%E2%80%99s-moving-letter-rohith%E2%80%99s-family>



File image: Aniket Ambhore and Rohith Vemula

On September 4m, 2014, Aniket Ambhore, a fourth year dual degree electrical engineering student at Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, committed suicide. He was a Dalit student. After his death Aniket's parents Sunita and Sanjay Ambhore submitted a 10-page testimony to the IITB director which raised the various forms of caste-discriminations faced by Aniket in the campus. After this, an enquiry committee was set up to look into the circumstances of the death. In spite of continuous demands from Aniket's family and friends the report has not been made public or even shared with IITB community.

Aniket's Mother Sunita Ambhore writes to the family and friends of Rohith Vemula

To the family and friends of Rohith,

After going through the last letter written by Rohith Vemula, I am feeling very restless, very suffocated. A researcher who in the name of punishment did not receive his fellowship for seven months and was thrown out of the hostel, all in an attempt to break him to his core. Though Rohith has not blamed anybody in his letter, it is very heart wrenching. I can see the similarities between the thoughts of the two, Aniket and Rohith, and I am trying to understand what pain they must have gone through. Aniket did not leave behind any letter, but from the sentences scattered here and there in his diary, in poetries I found that both of them had the same state of mind towards the end of their lives.

Aniket also talked about equality, and even supported and whole heartedly empathized with the struggles of transgender or his "Saathi" friends. He also had a lot of concern for his parents. He was struggling to find answers about caste, reservation, god etc. He was fighting against the discriminatory mindset which he had to face ever since he started preparing for IIT entrance exam.

When a person gets tired of fighting with powerful forces, only then is he overcome with an "emptiness", which can be seen in my son's and Rohith's life. This is frightening for one who is sensitive, thinks a lot and wants to realize his dreams. Such people due to their nature do not blame others but come to a point when they are unable to go on any more, they feel empty. Why would Aniket think so much? We always saw him laughing, performing mimicry, singing. What was there in IIT that my son forgot to smile. After his death the doctor told us that Aniket was confused. But Science and Mathematics were his favorite subjects from the beginning, then how could he have become confused?

In IIT, Aniket must have suffered the emptiness and hidden insult a lot. This was not in a direct but an indirect way, for he faced it in everyday discussions and in the name of advice, sometimes by peers and sometimes by faculty members. Not only IIT but other prestigious higher educational institutions also possess this egoistic way of thinking. Those who befriend students who come to these institutes through reservations keep saying, "Look, you and I have a similar economic background, yet you have received special facilities because of your caste...reservation is wrong" and other such things.

That is why Aniket had started searching for the roots of caste. Vedic religion, books and such knowledge are shown to be true and given a scientific form in these prestigious institutions and their ideas are drilled into the heads of the students even now. But when the students face a problem due to caste bias, there is no support system that the institute provides. There is no counseling for these problems, they are not even recognised as a problem, but put across as a fact that a category student has to face. Availing reservation is treated as a crime. If you have availed of reservation then you are expected to face the arguments and judgments of people, this is the mentality of the savarnas. Aniket and other children are not treated empathetically, their problems are instead framed as issues of low academic ability, parental pressure, high self-expectation so that savarnas do not have to deal with the actual issue on hand.

Aniket had lost his identity. "Who am I" - why would such a question trouble him? Why did Aniket become concerned about graha, stars, soul- supreme soul or the other world after coming to IIT? We don't know where his positive thinking, creative mind and his smile disappeared. Our only crime was that we sent him to IITB with a category certificate. If he had studied in ordinary institutions then at least he would not have to listen to so many discussions and advice which weakened his mind. That he is incapable, who gave such a feeling to my able, sensible, jolly Aniket? We have not yet received any replies to the letters we sent to various important official authorities like MHRD and Scheduled Castes Commission. After our request, IIT Bombay did set up an inquiry committee but no changes were brought about in its institutional functioning, nobody has even informed us about the inquiry report. Perhaps they do not think it necessary to give answers....

We feel very small in our own eyes. But Rohith's incident has once again highlighted the matter. Both Aniket and Rohith faced different conditions, but the reason they had to struggle was the same. I don't know till when will our children fight this hidden casteism. We too are fighting it...

Students' agitation is the only remaining hope. Perhaps only the students will be able to wake up the dormant system. We are waiting to see some solace for the pain suffered by Rohith's family and the dalit society....

Aniket's mother,

Sunita Ambhore