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Improve in 5 years or miss the bus: CNR Rao to IISc

Chethan Kumar,TNN | Jun 27, 2015, 02.00 AM IST

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/science/Improve-in-5-years-or-miss-the-bus-CNR-Rao-to-IISc/articleshow/47837191.cms>

BENGALURU: Showering praise while also being blunt, Bharat Ratna Prof C N R Rao cautioned the 106-year-old Indian Institute of Science (IISc) that it may miss the bus to becoming an institute of global standards if it fails to improve in the next 5-10 years. "Don't let anything come in the way of excellence, get rid of everything that causes hindrance," he told IISc director Prof Anurag Kumar, while speaking at the IISc Global Conference on Friday.

Stressing that the Bengaluru institute is the only one in India to match the MITs and Harvards, Rao said, "I am not sure how we are going to achieve this if we do not improve in the next five years, or at best, a decade."

"I say this because it isn't enough to be good in the present scenario, one has to be outstanding and an institute like the IISc must be the best. I have seen institutes that did not exist 10 years ago in China and South Korea that have made it to the top 100 today. Why has IISc not been able to do it?" Rao said.

IIT-Gandhinagar develops ultrathin nano-sheets

Ankur Tewari,TNN | Jun 27, 2015, 02.47 PM IST

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/IIT-Gandhinagar-develops-ultrathin-nano-sheets/articleshow/47842047.cms>

AHMEDABAD: A team of researchers at Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar has developed an extremely transparent nano-material.

The nano-sheets developed by the IIT-Gn team are rich in boron unlike graphene that is based on carbon. The boron makes these nano-sheets not only highly transparent, it also provides material scientists a wonderful platform to utilize its rich chemistry.

Chemical engineering Prof Kabeer Jasuja, who led the research, said these nanosheets are like ultrathin sandwiches with metal atoms trapped between boron planes that are 20,000 times thinner than human hair.

"Such thinness gives these nano-sheets unusual properties: they do not absorb visible light but strongly absorb ultraviolet light. This can prove extremely useful in making UV-blocking coatings that still allow visible light to pass," said Jasuja.

He further said that not much was known about these nano-sheets yet. But it would be worth exploring if, like their optical properties, their mechanical and thermal properties are also similarly at extremes, said Jasuja.

Jasuja's team of researchers including doctoral student Saroj Kumar Das, Master's student Amita Bedar, and undergraduate student intern Aadithya Kannan.

IIMs oppose bill that might take away autonomy

NEW DELHI: Three of the older Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) are on the warpath to prevent the Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry from braining a bill they feel seeks to give them degree-granting powers but take away autonomy.

A day after IIM-Ahmedabad came out in opposition of the bill, IIM-Bangalore chairperson Kiran Majumdar Shaw on Friday told *Deccan Herald* the premier B-schools would not allow the government to go ahead with the bill in its present form unless provisions that seek to give the Centre powers to "micro-manage and take full control" of the IIMs' affairs are dropped.

She said IIM-B and other

Contentious clauses

■ **Section 3 (k): "Regulations" mean regulations made by the Board with the approval of Central government**

■ **Section 16 (2):** The Academic Council shall exercise such other powers and perform such other functions as may be conferred upon it by this act or the regulations or by the board

■ **Section 17 (4):** The director shall exercise the powers and perform the duties as may be assigned to him un-

der this act or the regulations or as may be delegated to him by the board

■ **Section 35:** The Centre may, by notification, make rules for carrying out the provisions of this act.

■ **Section 36:** The board may, with the approval of the Central government, by notification make regulations not inconsistent with this act and the rules made thereunder to carry out the provisions of this act

premier B-schools have submitted to the Ministry their comments on the provisions of the draft Indian Institute of

Management Bill, 2015.

"We hope the HRD Ministry will respond in a positive way. They need to change

some of the provisions in the bill. The draft bill, in its present form, is not conducive to the spirit of what the government wants from the IIMs.

The IIMs are world-class organisations. The government cannot take away the institutes' autonomy," she said.

Joining its sister institutions IIM-Lucknow and Bangalore, IIM-A chairperson A M Naik and director Asish Nanda on Thursday slammed the HRD Ministry for introducing certain clauses in the bill they felt would take away the 16 premier B-schools' autonomy.

"(Under) the provisions of the bill, we need to take prior permission of the government in matters related to admission, courses, fee structure, establishment or maintenance

of new buildings and the regulating powers of the academic council," Naik told reporters at a press conference in Ahmedabad.

The institutes are opposing five clauses of the bill, which seek to give sweeping powers to the Centre. According to the draft bill, the Centre will have a final say in all the policy matters, and even fixing of fees. The HRD Ministry, however, remained tight-lipped on the issue.

All the IIMs had earlier supported the bill as it was formulated in consultation with them with the assurance that it aimed to give them degree-granting powers and set up a panel to discuss and decide on issues of common interest.

DH News Service

IIMs Get a Low Score on Gender Diversity Test

Women intake in top 4 institutes dips by up to 31%

Sreeradha D Basu

Mumbai: The drive by the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) to step up gender diversity in admissions has suffered an unexpected setback. And, given that the proportion of women applicants hasn't changed, no one really knows why far fewer of them have got through this year.

Despite concerted efforts over the past few years, the intake of women in four of the top IIMs – Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Lucknow and Kozhikode – has dropped by as much as 31% in the 2015-17 batch from last year.

At some institutes, the drop has been particularly steep. At IIM-Ahmedabad, women this time account for just 14% of the batch compared with last year's 29%.

IIM-Bangalore Only Exception >> 8

Surprise Drop

	2015-17 Batch		2014-16 Batch	
	No. of Women	Total Batch Size	No. of Women	Total Batch Size
IIM-A	55 (14%)	385	116 (29%)	394
IIM-C	92 (20%)	462	108 (24%)	461
IIM-L	136 (32%)	422	189 (46%)	411
IIM-K	88 (25%)	346	125 (35%)	357
Total	371 (23%)	1615	538 (33%)	1623

ACROSS THE IIMs at Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Lucknow & Kozhikode, the intake of women in the 2015-17 batch has dropped by 31% from last year

AMONG THE older IIMs that have already wrapped up admissions, only IIM Bangalore has seen an increase in the number of women students – to 115 from 95 last year

Note: All percentages have been rounded off

IIM-Bangalore Only Exception

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At IIM-Lucknow, it's about 32% compared with last year's 46%. And IIM-Kozhikode, which made history by admitting 53.6% women in 2013, the figure has plunged to 25.4% since then.

The only exception as of now is IIM-Bangalore, which admitted 115 women (27.7%) compared with last year's 95 (23.4%). However, even factoring in these numbers, the total intake of women at the five older IIMs has dropped by more than 23%.

"This year's percentage is a surprise to us," admitted Tathagata Bandyopadhyay, the new convenor for the Common Admission Test that determines selection. The decline seems to exceed the normal variation that might be observed. "Variation in percentage of female students depends on several factors," said Bandyopadhyay, also the admissions chairperson of IIM-Ahmedabad.

"Applying the same selection criteria on the past data, we observe that, year to year, it could vary 6-8% due to change in applicants' cohort, contents of the exam etc," he explained. The sharp decrease has taken place despite some IIMs offering additional diversity points to women at the WAT/PI (written ability test/ personal interview) stages. What's more, there was no decrease in the number of women CAT takers, which has remained consistent at 29-30% of overall candidates in the last two-three years.

Could the entrance exam have something to do with it?

"Performance in CAT is possibly one of the most important reasons," Bandyopadhyay said. "We are reexamining our eligibility and evaluation criteria to explore how to maintain the quality of students while encouraging gender diversity. Besides this, we are reviewing the content of CAT."

IIM-Ahmedabad will conduct CAT in 2015.

"I would hope this is a one-off," said Saugata Gupta, managing director and CEO of Marico and an IIM-Bangalore alumnus. "Diversity is very important to corporate India. In the long term, it creates both

value and impact," he said.

Ashutosh Sinha, admissions chairperson at IIM-Lucknow, was more sanguine. "The numbers cannot go on increasing indefinitely. There will be some ups and downs," he said.

Improving diversity, particularly on the gender front, is high on the agenda of the IIMs. "The classroom has to mimic the global workplace for our students and the discussions should provide a variety of perspectives," said Peeyush Mehta, chairperson, admissions, IIM-Calcutta, which gives additional points to women candidates at the preliminary short-listing stage. IIM-Indore is yet to firm up its final list of candidates. Starting this year, the institute has introduced a gender diversity factor of 3 to be awarded to women candidates during selection for the WAT/PI process. The newer IIMs are yet to finish with admissions. The rise in the number of women getting into IIM-Bangalore reflects their quality.

"We have not made changes to the admission system. It is just that we had a strong pool of good female applicants," said Rajendra K Bandi, professor and chairperson, admissions and financial aid at IIM-Bangalore. "Having said that, IIM-B strongly believes in encouraging diversity in the batch. Diversity, not just of gender, but diversity of work experience and academic background. A diverse batch enriches the programme experience for the entire batch, and students get the advantage of being exposed to multiple perspectives, which is essential in pluralistic societies and organisations," he added.

Times Of India ND
27/06/2015 P-13

IIT scholar molested in hostel

Sujay Khanra | TNN

Kharagpur: A research scholar of IIT Kharagpur was molested when she was sleeping in her hostel room late on Thursday night.

The suspect was identified as a contractual sweeper, K Vijay. He had scaled the boundary wall and broke into the room to kiss the researcher, said West Midnapore SP Bharati Ghosh. He was nabbed while trying to escape.

The hostel is meant for both women and married scholars. The researcher woke up the moment she was kissed and started screaming for help. Other boarders rushed to her room, forcing the molester to flee. They caught him while he was trying to scale the boundary wall.

Police were called to take him in custody. Cops are investigating if he had been stalking her for some time. Vijay was granted bail on Friday. IIT-Kgp officials said he has been suspended. IIT-Kgp director P P Chakraborty said, "I am rushing back from Kolkata and will launch a separate investigation."

For the full report, log on to www.timesofindia.com

Times Of India ND 27/06/2015 P-19

A robot that builds a house in 2 days

'Hadrian' Can Lay 1,000 Bricks Per Hour

Andrew Griffin

An Australian engineer has built a robot that can build a house in two hours, and work every day to build houses for people.

While, humans need four to six weeks to put a house together, besides availing weekends and holidays, the robot can work much faster without breaks.

Mark Pivac said the reason behind its creation is due to the lack of available workers — the average age of the industry is getting much higher, and the robot might be able to fill some of that gap.

"People have been laying bricks for about 6,000 years, and ever since the industrial revolution they have tried to automate the bricklaying process," Pivac said. But despite thousands of years gone by, most bricklaying is still done by hand.

Hadrian works by laying 1,000 bricks an hour, letting it put up 150 houses a year. It takes a design of the house and then works out where all of the bricks need to go, before cutting and laying each of them. It has a 28-foot arm, which is used to set and mortar the brick, thus it doesn't need to move during the laying.

Pivac will now work to commercialize the robot, one of its first kinds globally. THE INDEPENDENT



MiPosaur — a robot that can chase after a ball, go for a walk with its owner and even dance and make happy sounds — is displayed during a tech show in New York AP

'Robots will make us their pets in future'

Robots will make us into their pets because we just want to be taken care of, Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak has warned. Wozniak, who is sceptical of artificial intelligence taking over the world, believes that it will be good for us since robots will opt to keep us as part of nature. "It will be hundreds of years down the stream before they'd even have the ability. By that time, the robots will be aware of their place in the world and opt to keep us around, in the same way we keep family dogs. They will also be smarter," he said. THE INDEPENDENT

Deccan Herald ND 27/06/2015 P-4

HRD Ministry asks Stephen's to speed up probe U.

NEW DELHI: The Union HRD ministry on Friday asked St Stephen's college to expedite its probe into the sexual harassment complaint filed by a PhD student against a professor who was supervising her research.

"The college has been asked to ensure that the probe by its Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) is expedited and justice is ensured," officials in the ministry said.

Taking cognisance of the

controversy over the allegations leveled by the girl against Satish Kumar, an assistant professor in college's Chemistry department, HRD ministry had earlier this week sent a notice to DU seeking an action-taken report in the matter.

College principal Valson Thampu had said that he has replied to the notice with all "relevant documents".

Kumar who was also the Bursar of the college was earlier this week denied anticipato-

ry bail by a Delhi Court in connection with the case, following which he had resigned from the post. The student had approached police last week alleging that she was molested by the accused in October, 2013.

She has also alleged that the college principal tried to protect the teacher when the matter was reported to the college authorities.

While Thampu has been maintaining that he had "duly"

forwarded the students complaint to ICC, a statutory body to deal with such complaints, the victim had last week withdrawn her complaint from the committee saying she has lost faith in its proceedings.

Thampu submits report

Thampu on Friday submitted a report to DCW in which he claimed that the matter was referred to a college committee for investigation.

PTI



Unequal footing (Clockwise from top) An RTI filed by a former student showed that a majority of the students and faculty at IIT-Madras, in Chennai, belonged to forward castes. M. KARUNAKARAN; a placard-carrying SFI activist in Delhi protests against the ban on Ambedkar Periyar Study Circle at IIT-Madras. PTI; police stand watch outside the institute during an agitation by members of the Opposition DMK party. LISBUN KUMAR

Joint entrance?

The recent controversy at IIT-Madras exposed, once again, the bumpy caste dynamics in premier educational institutes

Since 2004, there have been 64 suicides at the 16 Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT). While certainly not all, at least a few of these deaths have been attributed to caste-based discrimination. Earlier this year, the IITs and Indian Institutes of Management were advised to have separate canteens for vegetarian and non-vegetarian students. IIT-Delhi went a step ahead and disallowed non-vegetarian food on the campus for a brief period.

It is known that in 2006, the IIT-Madras administration offered support to the Youth for Equality (YFE) members protesting the introduction of 27

per cent reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs). The late PV Indiresan, a former director of IIT-Madras, was one of the chief

petitioners in a PIL challenging the government's decision to implement the reservations that year.

According to a survey conducted at IIT-Bombay in 2013, 56 per cent of the first-year students belonging to a 'reserved' category felt that discrimination did exist in the institute.

On May 22 this year, IIT-Madras derecognised the Ambedkar Periyar Study Circle (APSC) on its campus after receiving a communiqué from the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD), which in turn had acted on an anonymous complaint.

The cited reason: organising meetings and issuing pamphlets that "spread hatred against the present dispensation and its policies". It is another matter that the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) had specifically instructed all institutions to never act on anonymous letters.

After several twists and turns, the group was re-recognised on June 7.



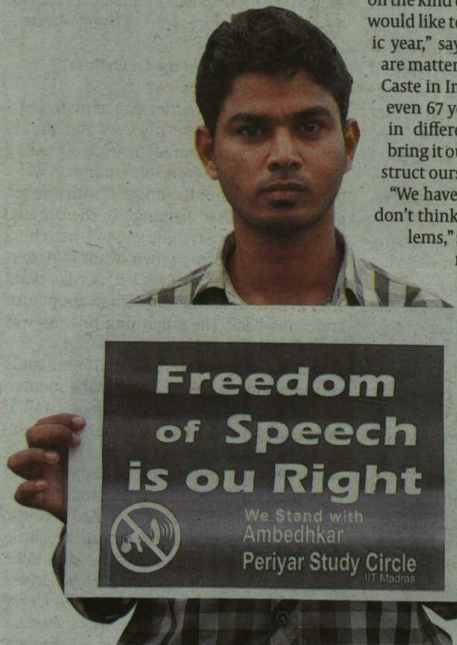
Not the status quo

"Even when we formed a year ago, they (IIT-M administration) didn't like the idea. They wanted us to remove the names of Ambedkar and Periyar," says Akhil Bharathan, 23, a founder-member of APSC, who is pursuing his Master's in development studies.

"While it was clear that they took action based on the letter from MHRD, the management later said it was because we had violated the guidelines for independent student bodies... (but) what about other groups such as the Vivekananda Study Circle or the Vande Mataram group? Why don't the rules apply to them also?" Incidentally, the Vivekananda Study Circle has its own page on the IIT-M website, a provision that has now been promised



Joining forces Protestors in Delhi and (bottom) Bengaluru express solidarity with members of the Ambedkar Periyar Study Circle in IIT-Madras after it was de-recognised recently. SANDEEP SAXENA/ K IRUBALI KUMAR



to APSC as well.

The Dean of Students, Sivakumar M Srinivasan had reportedly asked APSC members to remove the names of Dalit icon BR Ambedkar and Dravidian leader Periyar EV Ramasamy from the organisation's title. He also asked them to desist from any activities that "would go against the grain of the institution".

As the issue played out on television screens and was debated in newsrooms, the IIT management seemed to realise that it had bitten off more than it could chew. APSC study circles rapidly mushroomed in other IITs and institutions across the country.

Finally, in an attempt to douse the controversy before the new academic year began, the management re-recognised the group. Millind Brahme, associate professor at the humanities and social sciences department, who was guiding the group earlier, was officially recognised as its faculty advisor. "I'm thinking of calling the students back together and decide on the kind of programmes and activities they would like to take forward in the new academic year," says Brahme. "The issues they raise are matters that should be discussed openly. Caste in India is an issue you cannot ignore even 67 years after Independence. It works in different ways and it's important to bring it out in the open, be willing to deconstruct ourselves."

"We have resolved the issue satisfactorily. I don't think there should be any future problems," says Prof Bhaskar Ramamurthi, director, IIT-M.

Casting questions

Under a Right to Information (RTI) petition filed by former IIT-M student Arun Sudarsan, it was found that from 2008 to 2015, out of 2,483 PhD students, only 142 were from the scheduled castes and nine from scheduled tribes. Of the remainder, 1,592 belonged to the general category (forward castes) and 740 to the OBC. In the MS programmes,



Akhil Bharathan, a founder-member of Ambedkar Periyar Study Circle

only 32 students out of 1,655 belonged to SC and ST groups.

Sudarsan had also asked for the caste and community break-up among faculty members and here too, unsurprisingly, the forward castes dominate. Of the 536 faculty members, 86.57 per cent belongs to the general category. Only 13 members of the faculty belong to the SC or ST communities.

"I filed the RTI out of curiosity. My 1,500-odd friends on Facebook discuss many issues and reservation inevitably comes up," says Sudarsan, who has also worked as a project assistant at IIT after completing his five-year course in economics. "Most people tend to have a narrow view. They see reservation as a threat to meritocracy. So I wanted to get my hands on some concrete data, and hence filed the RTIs," he says.

Sudarsan believes the APSC controversy could have been handled better by the institute. "In IITs, when it comes to student affairs, I have noticed that things are done quite informally. That's why there was confusion about the guidelines. While I won't say there's systemic discrimination, there is a bias towards upper-caste values. The only way forward is to have open debates on these issues. Unfortunately, APSC doesn't have popular support on campus. Most students, I think, tend to see this controversy as a dent to the institution's image."

Meanwhile, for students at IIT-M, especially

When most of the faculty is also upper caste, the students need a protective body to feel safe

those affiliated with the APSC, the re-recognition is a battle won, although what will follow remains unclear. "We see the re-recognition as the result of protests by students and progressive forces across the country. We plan to continue our work, conduct more lectures and other events along the same lines as we used to," says Bharathan. He adds, "How exactly it will play out for us individual students associated with APSC, I'm not really sure... we'll have to wait and see."

Voices from the Right, too, contend that the issue was blown out of proportion. Aravindan Neelakandan, consulting editor of *Swarajya* magazine, a self-proclaimed votary of a liberal, centre-right point of view, argues that the APSC controversy was more hype than substance. "It is a fabricated incident; there was no action taken against free speech," he says. "Naming the group Ambedkar-Periyar is as bad as calling a group Gandhi-Godse. There should be a debate to tell people they don't have a right to use this name. How can they associate Ambedkar, a conservative, liberal democrat, who was also a fierce nationalist, with EV Ramasamy, an anti-Indian, Dravidian leader? There's discrimination in their name itself."

Viduthalai Rajendran, general secretary of the Dravidar Viduthalai Kazhagam, sees the incident as yet another attempt to instil an upper-caste monopoly. "Without reservations, students from SC/ST and OBC communities cannot even get a foot in the door. When most of the faculty is also upper caste, the students need a protective body to feel safe," he says. "How can an IIT graduate be only technically skilled, without any kind of social understanding? It's not wrong to raise these questions. We're not saying our viewpoint is the only right one, all we're saying is that there should be room for every school of thought."

SIBI ARASU is a Chennai-based journalist

Faculty members at IIT- Madras as on 1.12.2014				
Category	Assistant Professor	Associate Professor	Professor	Total
SC	2.26%	3.31%	1.26%	2.05%
ST	0.56%	0.83%	0.00%	0.37%
OBC	11.30%	14.05%	9.24%	11.01%
General	85.88%	81.82%	89.50%	86.57%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Students enrolled in PhD and MS, IIT-Madras				
Year	PhD			
	General	OBC	SC	ST
2008-09	158	45	13	2
2009-10	175	80	18	1
2010-11	187	82	11	2
2011-12	255	112	21	0
2012-13	201	138	21	2
2013-14	322	133	36	0
2014-15	294	150	22	2
Total:	1592	740	142	9

Year	MS			
	General	OBC	SC	ST
2008-09	103	47	4	2
2009-10	126	70	3	0
2010-11	136	49	4	0
2011-12	186	52	2	1
2012-13	216	68	3	0
2013-14	238	70	9	0
2014-15	189	73	4	0
Total	1194	429	29	3

Source: Response to RTI filed by Arun Sudarsan, dated 29-12-2014