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Indian-origin professor Lord Kumar Bhattacharyya awarded Regius Professorship by Queen

<http://indianexpress.com/article/world/world-news/lord-kumar-bhattacharyya-awarded-by-queen-2839507/>



Eminent Indian-origin professor Lord Kumar Bhattacharyya has been awarded the prestigious Regius Professorship in Manufacturing by Queen Elizabeth II for his outstanding contribution in manufacturing.

“WMG, at the University of Warwick, which was founded by eminent Indian Professor Lord Bhattacharyya, has been bestowed the prestigious Regius Professorship in Manufacturing by Her Majesty the Queen,” a release said on Tuesday.

Through his career, he has advised the UK government on manufacturing, innovation, and technology, including former Prime Ministers Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair.

Bhattacharyya, Chairman and founder of WMG, said: “Having founded WMG in 1980 to invigorate UK manufacturing, it is a wonderful honour to be bestowed upon the Group. This is recognition to every member of staff, over the last 35 years, who has contributed to our success.”

He continued, “The University of Warwick was the first to have a Professor of Manufacturing, and I started with a desk, chair and a secretary. We are now internationally-acclaimed and the largest centre for manufacturing in the world. I am immensely delighted to have been granted this prestigious Regius Professorship in Manufacturing for WMG.”

The creation of Regius Professorships falls under the Royal Prerogative, with each appointment being approved by the Queen upon Ministerial advice. Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG) has been granted the Regius Professorship for its academic research which has contributed to driving growth and improving productivity. Working with global companies on collaborative research and development, WMG has enabled those companies who want to innovate to develop ground breaking products which have had a real impact on society and the economy.

Bhattacharyya, who is an IIT-Kharagpur alumnus, said it was always his aim to bridge the gap between academia and industry, and to encourage companies to think long-term by investing in skills, and research and development.

Over the last 35 years he has achieved this, but he isn’t sitting back, he’s looking to the future.

Bhattacharyya said: "We work with many international companies and SMEs all over the world on collaborative research to improve productivity, and in India with Tata Motors, TVS etc, as well as with many academic institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology, to improve the manufacturing skills base.

"We have also been very successful in attracting many inward investments in manufacturing in UK. We have ambitious plans for our future, especially with the National Automotive Innovation Centre, which will provide the next generation of skills and research for the automotive sector, and will formally open late 2017."

Applications for summer internship rise by 66% at IIT Gandhinagar

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/Applications-for-summer-internship-rise-by-66-at-IIT-Gandhinagar/articleshow/52657004.cms>

AHMEDABAD: An increasing number of students are seeking research experience at Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar (IITGN). The number of students applying for the institute's Summer Research Internship Programme (SRIP) has increased by over 66 percent from that of last year.

SRIP at IITGN offers an opportunity for students to work along with the institute's faculty members in the ongoing research projects. The number of applications for SRIP has increased from 6,000 last year to 10,000 this year. The programme which began on May 2 will go on till July 8.

A large number of students from leading engineering institutes in the country including IIT Delhi, IIT BHU, IIT Roorkee, NIT Trichy, NIT Karnataka, NIT Calicut, Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS) Pilani, Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISER) at Bhopal, National Institute of Science Education and Research (NISER) Bhubaneswar and such institutes are also seeking research experience at IITGN.

One of the coordinators of SRIP, Professor Shanmuganathan Raman said, "We received a very good number of students from some of the most reputed institutes in the country this year. Our aim is to place our internship program at par with the research internships provided at the top research labs and universities across the world. To achieve this, we are providing very high quality research environment and a good platform for student-mentor relationship."

A total number of 70 research projects were offered to the students in SRIP this year. Some of the projects include - gravitational wave detection, smartphone-based air quality monitoring, early diagnosis for parkinson's disease, analysis of road safety and driving behavior, early detection of Alzheimer's disease, bamboo as a structural element in building applications, automatic image matting and compositing, data analytics and modeling in social science, motor learning in health and disease and so on.

Sharing his experience of participating at the SRIP, a student of IIT BHU, Vikram Kumar said, "I came to know about SRIP through some of my seniors who had a great experience during their research intern here at IITGN. I had other offers for summer internship but I chose IITGN as the environment for research is fantastic here. This also opened a great opportunity before me to work with vibrant, young professor who are research enthusiasts and are always willing to guide." Kumar said, "Until now, I am finding the programme very resourceful and my passion for research has increased."

Mayank Agarwal, a student of Hansraj College of University of Delhi said, "The best thing that I observed here is the friendly atmosphere and the interdisciplinary culture. I am interacting with so many people from different disciplines and am learnt from it. I am very happy with my decision of coming to the SRIP."

IIT-B alumni develop 'mobile' microscope to screen infections



- While most desk microscopes are priced above Rs1 lakh, this device costs approximately Rs35,000, which includes the cost of the mobile phone provided with the microscope. HT PHOTO

Aayushi Pratap

■ aayushi.pratap@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: An alumna of IIT-Bombay has developed a portable microscope, which can benefit those living in remote areas where the diagnostic facilities are poor, said scientists.

“The microscope is smaller than the conventional ones used in labs. It is connected to a mobile phone, which converts the magnified image taken by its camera into a digital one,” said Samrat Singh, co-founder of the start-up that designed the device at IIT-Bombay last year.

The device can be used to screen infections such as malaria and tuberculosis and even take pictures, which could then be sent to laboratories in urban areas for quicker diagnosis, said scientists.

“To ensure that the quality of the images is good, we give a mobile phone that has a high-resolution camera,” said Greeshma Unnikrishnan, one of the co-founders.

Many city-based scientists and pathologists have already started using the device.

Dr Jude Vaz, chief pathologist at Bandra’s Holy Family Hospital, said, “Unlike doctors who carry stethoscopes around their necks, we pathologists cannot carry our microscopes everywhere. This device is useful as it can be carried around.”

While most desk microscopes are priced above Rs1 lakh, this device costs approximately Rs35,000, which includes the cost of the mobile phone provided with the microscope.

According to Dr Deepa Bhartia, a senior faculty at the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR)-associated National Institute of Reproductive Research in Health in Parel, the image quality of the microscope is as good as those taken by any imported device.

“Not only is the image quality excellent, it is way inexpensive as compared to other microscopes,” said Dr Bhartia.

A 'sweet' option to fix broken bones

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/a-sweet-option-to-fix-broken-bones/article8701815.ece>

Maltitol, a sweetening agent, is used to fill in the bone gap caused by fracture, instead of the traditional rod

Suture marks on injuries fade away with time. There was an era, however, when these stitches would have to be cut after the injury healed. But for injuries to the bone, there are only two options: a cast for minor fractures, and implants like metal rods for more serious injuries.

Now, a team of scientists from Bengaluru's Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has developed an alternative: a bone reconstruction method similar to sutures. What they are using is an unlikely ingredient: maltitol, derived from maltose, a sweetening agent found in most sugar-free foods such as ice-creams.

Maltitol is combined with other components to make long chain-like structures that become plastic. This is then used to fill in the bone gap caused by fracture, instead of the traditional rod. "But maltitol also reacts to water. And as the body is primarily made of water, the bonds start breaking slowly, over a course of time. The molecules are soluble in water, and they eventually come out," says Kaushik Chatterjee, Assistant Professor, Department of Materials Engineering, IISc. In other words, once the bone grows back, the structure simply disintegrates.

Prof. Chatterjee worked on the idea along with Giridhar Madras, Professor, Chemical Engineering Department, IISc and Janeni Natarajan, Ph.D student in the Centre for Nano Science and Engineering, IISc. "This material would be a huge advantage over existing ones, such as metal rods, which do not allow growth of the bone, especially in infants and adolescents," he added.

Advantages

Alternatives to maltitol were too soft to be used for bone reconstruction. The advantage of using maltitol to make the scaffold or structure to be implanted in the bone is that drugs can then be injected into it to hasten healing. The other alternative is to wrap a protein layer around the structure before it is implanted into the bone," said Prof. Chatterjee who is still conducting research on this.

Low side effects

The other benefit of using maltitol is fewer side-effects, Prof. Chatterjee said. Though the side-effects of direct consumption are still debatable, he said the implant in the body would not be "terribly harmful." This process is still being tested in the lab.

Should hires play the waiting game?

UNDER FIRE Any company can make an error of judgement when hiring. Criticising it and asking it to 'guarantee' jobs is wrong, say HR experts

Ayesha Banerjee

ayesha.banerjee@hindustantimes.com

How big a crime has Flipkart committed in deferring the hiring of its recruits from IIM-Ahmedabad?

India's premier institutes seem too ready to censure the company which has honestly admitted to its hires that it needs some time to take them in. IIM-A has sent stern missives that the hires be guaranteed jobs, turning up its nose at the compensation of ₹1.5 lakh, calling it "completely unacceptable." Other top institutes are also mulling options to not give Flipkart day one slots during placements, which enables companies to choose the best and brightest.

Deferred hiring is nothing new. Startups, unicorns and established organisations have often been defaulters. Kamal Karanth, MD, Kelly Services & KellyOCG India, a recruitment and staffing company, knows senior executives who have had standoffs with their leaders and left to join other employers – only to find the offers withdrawn.

Anyone with a mature understanding of the market would understand the pressures companies are under. Often, during a round of VC funding, companies can overstep their budgets and hire expensively to quickly fill positions. Plans can and do go awry. The funds do not come in on time, leading to all sorts of complications. Salaries have to be kept high because for an IIT or IIM student who has taken a hefty education loan a finan-

cially attractive company is a big draw. "So if a company needs to deliver on projects quickly to convince VCs that everything is on track, it would, in a rush to acquire talent, promise new hires a little more than the regular salary package," says Karanth. Playing the money card is wrong, but often organisations forget that money evaporates the moment an investor forgets the cheque.

Flipkart, Karanth feels, has been transparent in this case and honest, explaining why it has been unable to take in the hires immediately. Also, if the company has been going in for internal restructuring, "ordering" it to take in people immediately would be wrong. Today, with the market forces being what they are, there is no foolproof mechanism to guarantee anyone permanent employment. "Institutes cannot bully a company to take in hires immediately or guarantee them placements. What would they do if the hires were made to join and were fired in three months?" Karanth asks.

Institutes like IIMs or their students have to show a level of confidence in their calibre. "Any such hire who feels shortchanged should start afresh elsewhere. Instead of fighting and issuing ultimatums, the institutes should try and resolve the issue." If it's made into a media battle many companies, Karanth fears, would in the future be actually scared to come on campus.

That said, however, startups



ILLUSTRATION: ABHIMANYU SINHA

should also get their act straight. Rajesh Tripathi, VP and head-HR, GHCL limited suggests that e-commerce companies ensure their hiring strategies are real time ones and completely aligned with their business strategies. Instead of vying for top colleges for hiring and paying a premium for it, startups should penetrate deep into a candidate's ability to implement knowledge and bring about the manifestation of the same. The time is over for building a talent pool to attract investors. Companies are doomed if they fail to build a sustainable business with a productive workforce. They have to chalk out a long-term vision to bring profitability into the business.

He's all for measured steps are needed to utilise funds.

An established company can bear the cost of a wrong hire, but for a startup it can be disastrous, says Nishith Upadhyaya, head-advisory and knowledge, SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management) India. It would completely fail to reach its next orbit of envisioned growth. Defining and putting in place a clear Employer Value Proposition would enable startups to identify potential recruits who would be a good fit. Some startups have got it wrong by focusing their hiring strategies on getting hold of 'bright talent' rather than the 'right talent.' In their rush to be seen as hiring the brightest from technology

and management campuses, they have ignored focusing on getting the work for the future recruits clearly defined and chalked out.

For Flipkart, it could be "an error of judgement," Karanth says. Companies should do their calculations carefully, find out how many people are actually needed – and not hire 10 people if five can do the work effectively. "If I have a company that has reneged on its hiring promises then I am sure I would be carrying out my investigations, asking my HR team questions and holding people accountable. I am sure Flipkart has done that. What else can it do? Hasn't it apologised and offered to compensate the hires?" he asks.

IIM-A's start-up incubator to expand to Pune, Jaipur

CIIE's and SAP Labs' accelerator programme to focus on regional start-ups

CHITRA NARAYANAN

Ahmedabad, June 8

After jointly setting up the region-focused Gujarat Accelerator last year in Ahmedabad, IIM-A's Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship (CIIE) and SAP Labs are now planning to replicate it in Jaipur and Pune.

"The idea is to catalyse the regional ecosystem," said SAP Labs India Managing Director Dilipkumar Khandelwal as he, along with CIIE CEO Kunal Upadhyay, reviewed how the first batch of the Gujarat Accelerator programme had fared.

The two also announced the second edition of Gujarat Accelerator, inviting applications for the next batch.

Gujarat Accelerator is the first State-focused accelerator from CIIE. The goal of the programme is to mentor and build capacities of at least 30 early-stage start-ups in the State focussed on social innovations, by 2017, according to Khandelwal.

"In the past, CIIE accelerators had been sector-specific," says Ashwini Joshi, Vice-President - Ecosystem Development, CIIE. SAP Labs was roped in to bring in the industry connect and technical inputs for the programme. As Upadhyay said, "The partnership

with SAP Labs allows us to tap into their domain expertise in areas such as IoT (Internet of Things), healthcare, skill development and education."

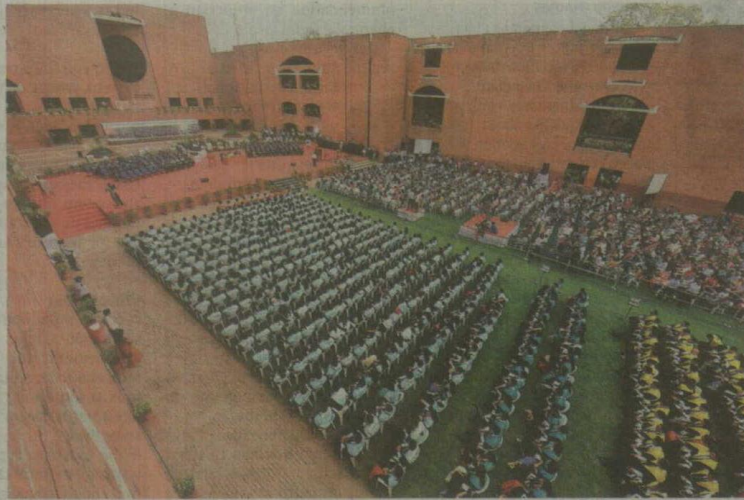
CIIE already has a presence in Jaipur through Startup Oasis, which it jointly set up with Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation, and in Pune, where it launched its ICT vertical recently; so expanding to these two places will be easy, says Joshi.

Fostering entrepreneurs

SAP Labs – the R&D wing of German enterprise-software firm SAP – for its part, is exploring similar partnerships to incubate or accelerate start-ups with other premier academic institutions, including some of the IITs. SAP is completing 20 years in India and wants to dedicate the year to fostering entrepreneurship.

A Growth Camp for the start-ups that participated in Gujarat Accelerator will be held at SAP Labs facility in Bengaluru sometime soon.

The first batch had eight start-ups from Gujarat, with one – KiviHealth, a platform for doctors – managing to get funded at the end. KiviHealth raised a total of



The Gujarat Accelerator aims to mentor and build capacities of at least 30 early-stage start-ups in the State focussed on social innovations, by 2017. VIJAY SONEJI

₹55 lakh, in which CIIE too invested some amount. Another start-up, IndiaBizForSale.com, is in advanced talks for funding.

Funding dilemma

However, both SAP Labs and CIIE said finding funding for the start-ups is not one of the goals of the accelerator, with the main focus on capacity building. Upadhyay said several of the start-

ups that went through the programme pivoted their business models or changed strategies.

The start-ups, of course, had a different take. While they appreciated the programme for the mentorship on how to scale up or monetise better and the modules on design thinking, they said they joined the accelerator with expectations that it would help them raise funds.

As KiviHealth founders Bhanu Mahajan and Rajandeep Singh, both ISB alumni, pointed out, it was the IIM-A branding that attracted them to this particular accelerator. "We felt that with ISB and IIM-A in our CVs, it would be easier to get funded."

For IndiaBizForSale's Bhavin Bhagat, one valuable input from the programme was the need to introduce value additions to his

business. IndiaBizForSale is a platform that connects SMEs wanting to sell/exit their business with buyers. It was initially only a listing platform. Now, it offers services such as providing valuations, another way to monetise the platform.

CIIE's Ashwini Joshi said feedback from the start-ups would be factored in and the second batch would see some changes in the structure of the programme. "Regional markets require different things than national ones. The first programme, which was an experiment, has allowed us to study and understand the needs," he said.

Fillip

Significantly, on June 5, Gujarat Chief Minister Anandiben Patel announced her government's IT and Electronics Start-up Policy. Under the new policy, 50 incubators will be set up in the State. Existing incubators, including those run by IIM-A, would get special financial assistance. Start-ups registered in Gujarat would also be considered favourably for e-governance projects in the State.

Finally, the Start-up India movement does seem to be percolating to non-metro cities.

The writer was recently in Ahmedabad at the invitation of SAP Labs.