

Newspaper Clips

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Indian Express ND 18/03/2015 P-1

IIT vs HRD again: Kakodkar quits IIT-B board over directors' selection

SHYAMLAL YADAV
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

THE Human Resource Development Ministry is embroiled in a new controversy with nuclear scientist Anil Kakodkar, chairman of the Board of Governors of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay, putting in his papers ahead of a crucial meeting of a search-cum-selection committee, chaired by minister Smriti Irani, which was to interview candidates for directors of three IITs.

A member of the selection committee and chairman of the Standing Committee of the IIT Council (SCIC), Kakodkar resigned on March 12 after "disagreement" over the choice of an IIT director, sources said.

Sources said 37 candidates for the director's job at IIT Patna, Bhubaneswar and Ropar were shortlisted and a dozen were called for an interview by this committee on February 16.

Sources said a consensus seemed to be emerging on



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ANIL KAKODKAR



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SMRITI IRANI

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Kakodkar quits IIT-B board

the choice of directors for IIT Patna and Bhubaneswar. But there was no agreement on IIT Ropar, sources said, adding that the process involving 12 candidates was later cancelled. All 37 in the original shortlist have been called for a new round of interviews starting March 22.

Chaired by Irani, the selection committee includes, besides Kakodkar, the chairpersons of IIT Patna, Bhubaneswar and Ropar; former IIT Bombay director Ashok Mishra; and former director of IIT Madras MS Ananth.

Kakodkar's term as IIT Bombay chairman was to end

in May. When contacted, he confirmed he had put in his papers but asked why, he said: "I have spent almost nine years in this capacity. There are a lot of other things to do in life. So, I decided to resign."

Asked if he had quit over differences with the minister over a director's appointment, Kakodkar said: "The selection process is still on. I cannot discuss internal matters of the meeting in public."

The Indian Express contacted HRD minister Smriti Irani who denied differences with Kakodkar. "I have personally spoken to Dr Kakodkar. His is a respected name

in the field of IITs. His tenure was already ending this May and the last board meeting had already been held. On my request, he will continue in the post. There are some people who are spreading disinformation about my ministry."

Meanwhile, IIT Delhi director Raghunath K Shevgaonkar has also written to the ministry, stating that his resignation letter dated December 22, 2014 may be accepted on completion of the mandatory three-month notice period—he had initially asked to be relieved of charge from January this year but will now continue until March 21.

HT.COM ND 18.03.15 P-3

New IITs suffering from 22% faculty shortage

HT Correspondents

NEW DELHI: All of the eight new IITs at Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh set up during the XI Plan (2007-12) are functioning from temporary campuses, said Smriti Irani on Monday.

However, another problem that she missed

out is that all the new Indian Institute of Technology (IITs) has a total of 22% faculty shortage.

These eight new IITs have 601 faculty present as against the government prescribed 766 that is required. IIT Jodhpur, Mandi and Ropar are the most affected with a 40% shortage while having 1,831 students.

IIT DELHI WANTS NEW DIRECTOR

With the HRD ministry sitting over the resignation of IIT Delhi director RK Shevgaonkar for close to three months now, the board of governors of the premier technical institute has written to the ministry asking it to move forward on it and begin the process of appointing a new director at the earliest.

Deccan Herald ND 18/03/2015 P-7

No engg, tech courses in distance mode: UGC

No retrospective approval for courses, says commission

NEW DELHI: The University Grants Commission (UGC) has banned universities and institutes from offering diploma and post graduate courses in engineering and technology through distance learning mode until further orders.

In its notification, the regulator has warned that it would take action against institutions violating the ban.

The Commission, in the process of finalising regulations for open and distant learning mode, has also said it will not give retrospective approval to distant learning programmes by institutes "at this stage".

The institutions have been barred from offering BE and B Tech through distant education mode following a ban in 2009-10 by the former distance education council on the orders of the Human Resource Development Ministry.

Referring to the government's previous decision, the Commission, in its notice issued late on Monday, directed universities and higher educational institutions not to offer degrees in engineering and technology programmes.

"No university/institution deemed to be university/institution should offer diploma, bachelors and masters level programme in engineering and technology other than MBA and MCA till the finalisation of the UGC (open and distance learning) regulations, 2014 or notification of relevant regulations by an independent regulatory authority established by the central government, whichever is earlier," the commission said in its public notice.

"UGC has also decided not to consider any request for ex-post facto approval for the ODL programmes offered by

For quality



■ The UGC, while banning such distance learning courses, does not mention names of the institutions that offer them

any university or other higher educational institutions at this stage," it added.

The notification did not mention names of the institutions that offer such courses.

Commission Chairman Ved Prakash did not respond to phone calls and text messages from *Deccan Herald*.

"The UGC has been issuing guidelines and notifications from time to time to regulate courses being offered, but it does not have legal backing to enforce its guidelines, particularly over two thirds of the universities and colleges which are not under the grant list of the higher education regulator," UGC member M M Ansari said while contacted.

He also wondered why the Commission has to issue a notification when it did not have a comprehensive list of institutions violating the ban.

"Issuing such notifications without identifying the institutions has no meaning," he said adding that there were many private universities, deemed to be universities and state universities offering such programmes in distance learning mode but the UGC did not have the authority to stop them.

DH News Service

**Statesman ND
18/03/2015 P-5**

IEST AWAITS HRD QUOTA NOD

Kolkata 17 March: Uncertainty looms over reserving 50 per cent seats at Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology (IEST), Shibpur, as the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) is yet to give a green signal regarding the proposal.

After Bengal Engineering and Science University (BESU), has been converted into IEST, there has been demand for reservation of 50 per cent seats at IEST for state run students, and the proposal was sent to MHRD for clearance. But till now the proposal has not been cleared by MHRD.

Senior officials of the University said that this year too, they won't be able to set up quota for the state students and so students who are eligible in the Joint



Entrance Examination (Main) can only get the chances. A senior official of the University said that till now it has not been confirmed who would become the representative of the state government of the governing body of IEST. IEST Shibpur had written to the MHRD several times, seeking permission to admit 50% students from Bengal, like that of NITs.

Meanwhile IEST Shibpur has formulated a model curriculum for the five-year integrated BTech and MTech programme where students will get excellent exposure to basic science, engineering and also management, in appropriate ratio.

Officials of the University said that the new curriculum will ensure that students who take up jobs in the industry are adequately skilled to contribute to engineering industries. At the same time, those who pursue higher studies will find it extremely convenient to join a PhD programme immediately anywhere in the world.

Students interested in joining sectors such as space, atomic energy, defence, renewable energy, remote sensing, aerospace establishments and so on will be skilled enough to contribute to the country's economy.

SNS

The duo who made the power-saving 'superfan'



R YEGYA NARAYANAN

Going from a turnover of ₹15 crore to ₹200 crore in three to five years may seem a daunting task for many. But Sundar Muruganandhan and K Durgasharan, who founded Versa Drives Private Ltd in Coimbatore, are confident they will reach that milestone.

Their confidence stems from the most important feature of the ceiling fans they make - energy efficiency.

The entrepreneurs have taken the outsourcing route, depending on small manufacturers in areas close to Coimbatore to produce key components. But their success is due to their focus on niche technology to produce an energy efficient fan.

Managing Director Muruganandhan, an electrical engineer with an MS from the US, and Director Durgasharan, an MTEch in Control Systems from IIT-Madras, said they started Versa Drives Pvt Ltd to achieve excellence in motor control.

Expansion plan

They began manufacturing motors that were highly efficient and not the induction motors mass produced in Coimbatore, a city known for its engineering excellence.

SUNDAR MURUGANANDHAN (right), Managing Director, and **K DURGASHARAN**, Director, Versa Drives Pvt Ltd, Coimbatore

Makes energy efficient ceiling fans

When the motor was developed, the first product they wanted it to be fitted in was the ceiling fan.

The fan, powered by their motor, would consume 'less than 50 per cent' of the power consumed by conventional ceiling fans. Muruganandhan and Durgasharan saw an opportunity in that.

Budget constraints

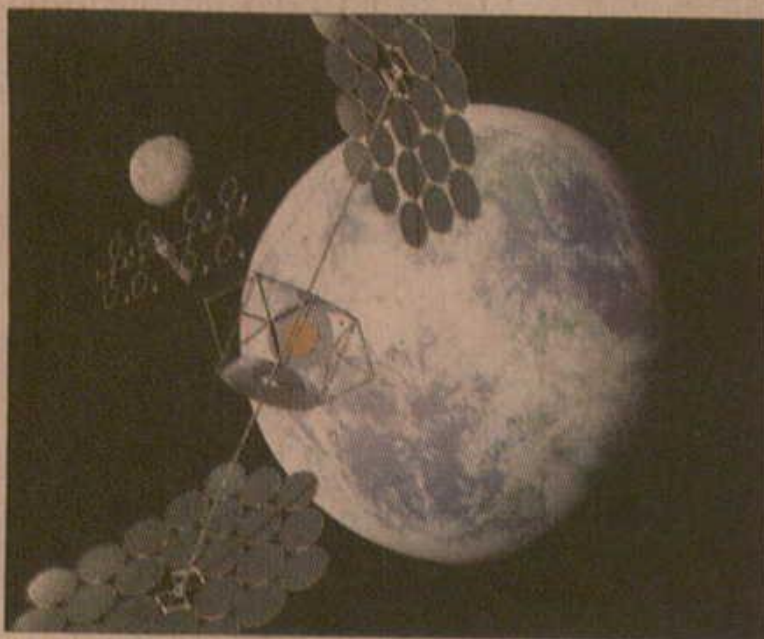
Muruganandhan said he could not afford a huge marketing spend for the product due to budget constraints. He was looking for investors to increase production and also to help advertise the product and create greater visibility.

The 300,000 unit annual capacity the company had was not huge considering that India annually produced 30 million fans.

Muruganandhan said he was looking for an investment of about ₹25 crore and hoped to reach a production volume of one million ceiling fans in three years.

Financial Express ND 18/03/2015 P-13

Electric power transmitted wirelessly in Japan



IN A breakthrough, Japanese researchers have transmitted electric power wirelessly to a pinpoint target using microwaves, an advance that brings space-based solar power closer to reality. According to Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, or Jaxa, the researchers transformed 1.8 kw of electric power into microwaves and transmitted it with accuracy into a receiver located 55 metres away. In space-based solar power generation, sunlight is gathered in geostationary orbit and transmitted to a receiver on Earth. Unlike solar panels set on Earth, satellite-based solar panels can capture the energy around the clock. If implemented, microwave-transmitting solar satellites would be set up 35,000 km from Earth. Researchers "are aiming for practical use in the 2030s."

Times Of India ND
18/03/2015 P-25

Two-seater flying cars may hit the skies in 2017

London: A two-seater flying car which can take flight from any clear road could go on sale as early as 2017, potentially changing personal transport on a global scale, its manufacturers say.

The Czech-built vehicle can hit over 160 kph on the ground and it flies at 200kph on twin propellers. The car can land on just 150 ft of grass and fly for up to 690km. It can be used in road traffic anywhere in Europe, and needs just 750 ft of clear road to take off. "We believe that by 2017 we'll be able to launch this to market," said Juraj Vaculik, CEO of Slovakian company Aeromobil.

"We don't even need airports. If something like a flying Uber and flying Lyft will be on the market, I think many users will find this a very efficient way to move," he said.

The company is in near-final prototype stage — and unlike other rivals, meets the criteria both for planes and for road vehicles in Europe.

The car is equipped with an autopilot — and a parachute for emergencies — and its makers hope it will herald a new age of 'door-to-door' transportation. PTI