

Newspaper Clips March 31, 2015

Here's why many top research labs like IISc, CSIR and others have ad hoc leaders

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/jobs/heres-why-many-top-research-labs-like-iisc-csir-and-others-have-ad-hoc-leaders/articleshow/46752627.cms>

The country's scientific institutions are being rocked by changes in leadership selection processes.

The warning signs were visible in July, soon after the BJP government took over at the centre. The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru had to choose a new director, and the search committee headed by space scientist K Kasturirangan picked electrical engineering professor Anurag Kumar for the job. The political leadership rarely frets about appointment of scientific leaders, but it was different this time. There were objections from the government, but the differences were sorted out quickly and Kumar took over as director on August 1 last year.

The IISc had not advertised for the post. Elite science institutions usually do not do so, and their directors are found by a search committee of eminent scientists. Some institutions do not even hold interviews, and there have been instances when search committee members visited and talked to candidates without them being aware that they were interviewed. The new government apparently wanted to put an end to this system, and bring transparency to the appointment process. Its attempt has sent shock waves through the scientific establishment.

IISc would probably be the last government institution in the country to make a leadership appointment without an advertisement. The Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, another elite institution, was not so lucky. Two weeks ago, the Prime Minister's Office rejected the selection of Sandip Trivedi, a well-known theoretical physicist, as the director. Trivedi had taken over in January after a selection committee headed by CNR Rao chose him as the director. The rejection of his appointment was on technical grounds. In other words, the job was not advertised.

The attempt of the government to change the recruitment process in elite institutions has divided the scientific establishment, with one side supporting the effort and the other condemning it, and few in the government who spoke to ET was willing to be on record. These procedural changes have also come at a time when some posts were lying vacant for some time, and on top of another change by the government: to deny extensions to retiring scientists or technocrats. Together these have caused an unprecedented situation in the country: a large number of top scientific institutions are without heads.

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has been without a full-time head for more than a year. Former director-general Samir Brahmachari retired on December 31, 2013, and it has had three temporary heads since then: former secretary of the department of science and technology T Ramasami, PS Ahuja and now MO Garg, who has been given six months as CSIR head. The appointment of CSIR head had run into trouble for several reasons, none of them being procedural issues. "Temporary heads cannot take many decisions," says MM Sharma, former director of the Institute of Chemical Technology. "There is a difference in leadership and managership." One of them is hiring. About 30% of faculty positions in IITs are vacant, and acting directors may have little interest in searching for and filling these posts. They cannot formulate long-term strategies, or take disciplinary action.

While CSIR headquarters has a temporary chief, many of its constituent laboratories are faring no better. As many as 17 of the 37 CSIR laboratories are without permanent directors. Many of their former directors would have got extensions in the previous era, but not anymore. It is common for several directors to retire each year, and their appointments used to go smoothly always. The process for appointment of lab directors has now slowed down, and not because the headquarters has a temporary head. The new government is looking at every appointment of the previous government with suspicion.

Here are a few more institutions without heads: the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the Indian Institute of Agricultural Research (IARI), a few IITs, and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). The reasons for non-appointment are different for each institution. The DRDO head was sacked, and IARI director's appointment got mired in politics and legal tangles. JNCASR did not advertise. Three IIT directors - Bhubaneswar, Patna and Ropar - were denied a second term.

Business Standard ND 31/03/2015 P-1

Harvard, IIT graduates are tea sellers, too

Look for fresh funding as tea selling gains scale online as well as offline

REGHU BALAKRISHNAN
Mumbai, 30 March

Amuleek Singh Bijral had some of the best offers from the corporate world after graduating from Harvard Business School. But those offers weren't his cup of tea; so, Bijral did something that surprised even his closest friends — he set up Chai Point, an online tea selling business in Bengaluru and Noida five years ago.

Bijral obviously read the tea leaves well quite early in his career. Chai Point, which received ₹12 crore from Saama Capital, is now looking to raise its next round of funding worth ₹80-100 crore to finance plans to expand to Mumbai, Hyderabad, Pune and Chennai. Chai Point has 50 stores and claims to have sold 10 million cups of tea.

Bijral says there is no single organised player in India's ₹33,000-crore chai market and Chai Point targets

white-collar workers across the country who are fast on technology and love the new experience of sipping tea. The idea is catching on — Chai Point's latest app has seen about 12,000 downloads in the last three months. In the backdrop of rising real estate prices, Chai Point is keen to do a hub-spoke model in each city it plans to enter.

Bijral isn't alone. Nitin Saluja, founder of Chaayos, ventured into the business after he started missing home-made ginger tea during his days in the US. In 2012, the IIT Mumbai graduate opened Chaayos in the National Capital Region along with IIT Delhi's Raghav Verma. Both are in discussions to take the next leap in scalability and are in talks with venture capital investors to raise ₹30-40 crore.

Investors seem to be getting interested in putting in more money, with good reason. Ankur Bisen, senior vice-president, at retail consulting firm Technopak,

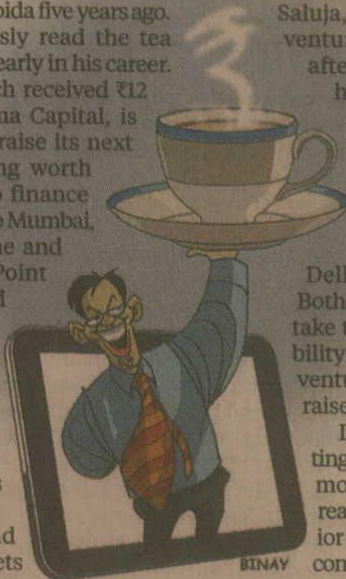
says, "Tea-based cafes have seen interest because Chaayos and Chai Point have demonstrated to investors that they can grow beyond local catchment areas to different cities," Bisen adds. Replicating the success of Starbucks and Café Coffee Day through the *chai* business is an idea that has inspired many graduates from India's premier institutes. A year ago, Pankaj Judge, an IIT Kharagpur graduate, opened his first outlet of Chai Thela in Noida with a plan to enter Delhi and Gurgaon. From *aam aadmi chai* to *adrak chai*, to *tulsi chai*, Chai Thela offers 30-plus varieties of tea through seven outlets in Noida. "We want to do with *chai* what Starbucks and Café Coffee Day did with coffee," Judge says, explaining why the potential is huge. On average, each of his outlets sells 400-500 cups of tea per day. Chai Thela, which focuses on IT parks, hospitals and college campuses, is in discussions with angel investors to raise ₹1 crore now and another ₹12 crore after six months.

Recently, another firm TeaBox, an online retailer of premium tea, raised ₹36 crore in fresh funds led by venture capital firm JAFCO Asia and existing investor Accel Partners.

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TeaBox, which eyes international markets, plans to expand its footprint to the US, China, Japan, etc. "The high disposable income as well as influence of western culture have changed the lifestyle of Indians who like to consume high-end tea in the same way as they enjoy a good wine," Kaushal Dugar, founder, TeaBox, says. Bisen says when a concept in the food services space reaches a decent size and show results, it starts attracting the fancy of investors. Agrees Prashanth Prakash of Accel India. "Most tea retailers continue to rely on a legacy value chain consisting of multiple middlemen," he says. "But the renewed interest in category is bringing in a new set of retailers like Chaayos, who essentially would continue to be a part of the same set-up," he adds.



BINAY

Pioneer ND 31/03/2015 P-4

US varsity gives Pune girl wings to fly higher

36% of our Indian students hired by NASA: Auburn University

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

If I can do it, even you can do it," says Viraja Kollam, 24, who is pursuing Master's in Aerodynamics from the US-based Auburn University, here on Monday.

Representing India at global level through her hard work, she says: "At Auburn, innovations are traditions. By this I mean Auburn loves to follow various traditions for game day or certain festivals but being innovative is always important and required. Things which might be old are never boring and are very engaging here," adding that coming from a middle-class family and learning aerospace engineering was not easy for her.

As girls in India, do not come forward to study

Aerodynamics, Viraja, who hails from a small town in Pune, appealed to the Indian girls to come forward and go for Aerospace Engineering and Auburn is a great place for that.

"It is the value of education that we provide to the Indian students," says Joseph Majdalani, alumni and chairperson of the Department of Aerospace Engineering at Auburn University.

"We do not compromise with the quality of education. We have a lot of faculty from India like Professor Pradeep Lal, who teaches mechanical

engineering and there is a great connection between teachers and Indian students."

With many alumni exploring NASA, Infosys, aviation industry and many other projects, Majdalani said: "Our 36 per cent of students are hired by NASA and all of them are from India".

In coming days, Auburn University will conduct more seminars and workshop in Indian schools and colleges to motivate and encourage more students who want to build their career in Aerospace engineering, he said.



Mint ND 31/03/2015 P-9

IMPROVED FORECASTS

India develops new climate change model

Model will allow India next year to contribute for the first time to annual report of global climate change panel

By NIKITA MEHTA
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NEW DELHI

India has a new and improved climate prediction model, which will help make more accurate long-range forecasts of the erratic monsoon and allow scientists to better study the impact of climate change on the monsoon.

The model, developed by researchers at the Pune-based

Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), will allow India next year to contribute for the first time to the annual report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)—an important document that is closely followed by countries around the world.

The ministry of earth sciences recently reviewed 26 projects under its monsoon mission, which aims to develop more accurate models for extended-range and short-range prediction systems. The projects were given funds and told to come up with improved climate prediction models. An official at the ministry said the outcomes from these projects will be put together to build the new mon-

soon prediction model that will be assimilated by the Aditya supercomputer at IITM. While IITM will start running its results from the 26 projects by 2017, the Earth System Model (ESM) will be used in the 2016 IPCC report.

"There is a new concept of looking at the ocean and atmospheric data together and putting them together in a coupled model. This has led to a big breakthrough and will lead to major improvements in the forecast model," said M. Rajeevan, a senior scientist at the ministry of earth sciences and director of IITM. "We are able to understand initial conditions better, leading to more consistent and accurate forecast," he added.

ESM takes into account vari-

ous factors while making forecasts—including data on land, ocean and the atmosphere—and gives a detailed mathematical description of the processes. ESM is a modified version of the Climate Forecast System (CFS) model developed by the US National Centers of Environment Prediction, but with improvements to make it suitable for climate change studies. "This is our first effort [towards] developing an indigenous climate model. We did not want to reinvent the wheel and wanted to build on the experience that other modelers gained over the past three decades," said B.N. Goswami, former director of IITM.

Included in the model are biochemical processes which will

help study the impact of climate change on fisheries and equations describing the biogeochemistry of phytoplankton in the oceans as they can heat up water and thus have an impact on climate. The model will also churn in information on the El Niño and Pacific Decadal Oscillation, two weather phenomena that have a significant impact on the Indian monsoon.

IITM is in the final stages of work on the project, which includes around 33 models for climate modelling. Coming up with more accurate predictions of the monsoon is an urgent priority for Indian scientists and economists because of the monsoon's impact on farming and food prices.

Mail Today ND 31/03/2015 P-20

DUTA steps up protest against V-C

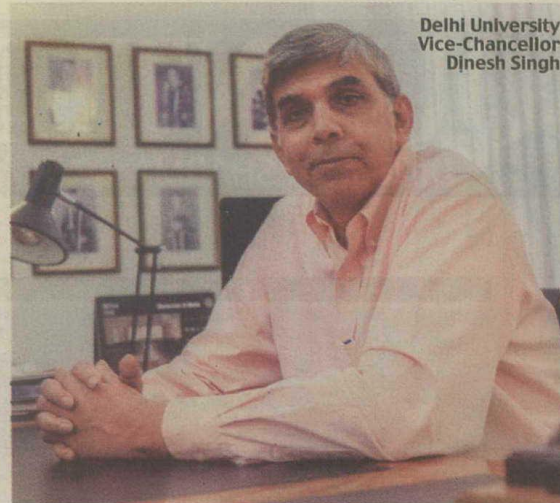
By Mail Today Bureau in New Delhi

INTENSIFYING their protest against Delhi University Vice-chancellor Dinesh Singh, the Delhi University Teachers Association (DUTA) on Monday began a three-day public hearing where students, teachers and parents came together to share their complaints against the V-C. DUTA is also seeking Singh's resignation.

Speaking against the manner in which DU started B.Tech under the now-scraped Four-Year Undergraduate Programme, Academic Council member V.S. Dixit alleged the university disregarded all the AICTE norms without getting neces-

sary infrastructure in place. "DU disregarded all AICTE norms related to technical support, course content, class size and student-teacher ratio. It merely renamed the existing B.Sc. courses into B.Tech, thus precipitating the crisis of AICTE approvals," Dixit said.

Many students



Delhi University Vice-Chancellor Dinesh Singh

DU disregarded all AICTE norms related to course content, technical support, class sizes and student-teacher ratio.

—V.S. Dixit, Academic Council member

in the examination system and turned internal assessment into a farcical ritual," said Salkat Ghosh, who teaches English.

On Tuesday, the Jansunval (public hearing) will see teachers and students discussing the financial irregularities and illegality related to academic decisions taken by Singh, DUTA said. On Wednesday, DUTA will hear complaints about repressive governance and assault on the democratic fabric of the university.

"Students, teachers and parents came in huge numbers to tell complain against the V-C. A parent complained against the arbitrary withdrawal of the re-valuation scheme and said it had adversely affected her son's career and thrown him into depression. She reported that the administration deliberately ignored his appeals and in fact told him to give up seeking redressal," Abha Dev Habib, member DUTA.

spoke about the university's decision to discontinue Special Chance which has affected the careers of hundreds of students.

Special Chance is a provision under which one can successfully clear the degree even after the stipulated duration of the programme.

"Despite the high court's order asking the

university to consider resuming the facility, DU has not convened a single meeting on the issue yet," said Neeraj, a student.

Teachers alleged the semester system is inflexible and said it has paralysed both teaching and learning. "Singh introduced the semester system by arm-twisting the departments into submission. The semester system has been found to be a big failure in DU. It has also given rise to distortions

DU teachers' association kick-starts a three-day public hearing to share complaints against V-C

Indian Institute of Science Bags 5 of 11 Fellowships

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/bengaluru/Indian-Institute-of-Science-Bags-5-of-11-Fellowships/2015/03/31/article2738476.ece>

MALLESWARAM: Five scientists from the Indian Institute of Science have been selected for the prestigious Swarnajayanti fellowships given by the Central government.

The fellowships for 2013-14 were announced earlier this week. Eleven scientists have thus been honoured by the Department of Science and Technology.

The fellowship is given to young scientists to carry out basic research in science and technology.

The IISc scientists who have been awarded the fellowship are:

Gautam Bharali of the Department of Mathematics, Satish A Patil of the Solid State and Structural Chemistry Unit, Navin Kashyap of the Department of Electrical Communication Engineering, Saptarshi Basu of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, and Aninda Sinha of the Centre for High Energy Physics.

Of the 11 scientists chosen for the 2013-14 fellowships, five are from IISc.

The awardees get `25,000 a month for up to five years, in addition to their salaries. The fellowship also covers grants for equipment, consumables, contingencies, and national and international travel.

Aninda Sinha is on the faculty of the Centre for High Energy Physics. He tries to decipher the working of nature through the 'string theory'.

The theory is a mathematical framework that aims to explain the interaction between subatomic particles. Sinha applies the theory to other fields like condensed matter physics.

Satish Patil, Assistant Professor the Solid State and Structural Chemistry Unit, is working on the synthesis of new material, from solar cells to biodegradable polymers, for drug delivery, and 'organic electronics', an area where individual components can be made from small organic molecules.

Saptarshi Basu is an associate professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering. He tries to gain insights on droplets under different heating rates, and diagnosing problems in fuel cells.

Gautam Bharali, on the faculty at the Department of Mathematics, works on a branch called 'several complex variables'. He has also guided many master's and PhD students.

Navin Kashyap is Associate Professor in the Department of Electrical Communication Engineering at IISc, and an Adjunct Professor at the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Queen's University, Australia.

His research interests include coding for data communication and storage, and information theory. He has guided students from both India and abroad, and regularly publishes in refereed, international journals

Harass charge on IIT officer

Roshan Kumar and Joy Sengupta

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1150331/jsp/frontpage/story_11797.jsp#.VRotoJOlhWU

Patna, March 30: A girl student of the Indian Institute of Technology, Patna, has accused an employee engaged in ensuring security on campus of having misbehaved with her.

Following a formal complaint filed by the girl, the IIT administration has lodged an FIR against its assistant security officer.

The officer, however, has not been arrested yet though the FIR was lodged on March 26. The officer, who hails from Jamshedpur in Jharkhand, has in the meantime proceeded on medical leave.

The Telegraph is withholding the name of the officer as investigations are still on.

The girl student is pursuing a PhD from the institution. She lives in one of the IIT hostels at Patliputra Colony.

IIT registrar Subhash Pandey said: "Based on the written complaint lodged by the girl and on the instructions of IIT Kharagpur director Partha Pratim Chakrabarti, who holds additional charge of IIT Patna, an FIR was lodged against the security officer."

Sources at IIT-Patna said the girl, in her complaint, had said that the security officer, on the pretext of some work, often visited Sridev Apartment - the girls' hostel - at Patliputra Colony to meet her. The girl also stated that last week, the officer made an attempt to board the same vehicle in which she was returning from the institute to her hostel.

The hostel is around one km away from the building where IIT classes are conducted at present.

The source also said that after receiving the complaint from the girl, the IIT-Patna administration informed director Chakrabarti and after receiving instructions, lodged the FIR at Patliputra police station.

According to rules, the security officer, who is a permanent employee of the institution, may face disciplinary action in addition to the legal battle he would have to go through in the wake of the police complaint lodged against him.

"The disciplinary action also amounts to removing him from duty among others," said a source at IIT Patna. The work of security officers entails coordinating with the institution and hostels.

Patna senior superintendent of police Jitender Rana said: "Police are on the job. ASP (law and order) Mamta Kalyani has been asked to oversee the investigations and file a detailed report. Based on her report, the police will take further steps and action. I will look into the case personally. An FIR has been lodged under Section 354 of the IPC," he told **The Telegraph**. Section 354 of the IPC pertains to assault and use of criminal force against a woman with the motive to outrage her modesty. If found guilty, an accused can face maximum punishment of two years in jail and a fine.

R.K. Dubey, the station house officer of Patliputra police station, said: "The case is being investigated. The investigating officer of the case is on the job and the victim has been questioned too."

IIT-Patna, one of the new IITs established by an Act of Parliament in August 2008, is running from a transit campus in Patliputra Colony. The institution's permanent campus is being constructed at Bihta, around 40km southwest of Patna. Apart from offering BTech courses in five streams - computer science, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, civil and environmental engineering, chemical and biochemical engineering - the engineering cradle also offers PhD programmes in 10 streams.

A student of IIT-Patna welcomed the firm action taken by the institution. "Strict action against the IIT employee would instil a sense of confidence among the girl students studying here."