

# Newspaper Clips

May 7, 2011

Hindustan Times  
07/05/2011 P-11

## IIT-M IGNORED GOVT DECISION ON GOLD COINS

Charu Sudan Kasturi

■ charu.kasturi@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Indian Institute of Technology, Madras chose to ignore the decision of the human resource development minister-led IIT Council in awarding gold coins to staff members, suggest fresh documents.

The IIT's argument that awarding gold coins is justified since non-government funds were used deviates from a decision taken by the Council, the documents accessed by HT reveal. The Council — the highest decision making body of the IITs — had at its 39th meeting on January 28, 2009 specifically clarified to directors that all funds with the IITs were strictly "public funds."

Institute director MS Ananth also faces questions over a flurry of appointments that the IIT is making in violation of an HRD ministry convention since 2004. Ananth has already resigned and quits end-June.

The IIT decision to award gold coins to about 1500 staff as a part of Golden Jubilee celebrations, first reported by HT on April 21, drew flak from some faculty members who turned down the offer.

Responding to criticism, Ananth and Dean (administration) P Sriram had argued that non-HRD ministry funds were used for the project.

Telegraph Kolkata 05.05.2011 P-5

# Scanner on IIT Madras for flouting rules

BASANT KUMAR MOHANTY

## Director defends registrar appointments and pension scheme switch

New Delhi, May 4: IIT Madras has come under scrutiny for illegal appointment of officials and financial irregularities, after similar breach of rules were detected at IIT Kharagpur and IIT Bhubaneswar.

Documents in the possession of **The Telegraph** show the institute has flouted norms in the appointment of two registrars and has illegally allowed its employees to switch from a contributory provident fund-cum-gratuity scheme to the more beneficial General Provident Fund-cum-Pension scheme, causing

losses to the institute.

The principal accountant-general, Tamil Nadu, has raised questions over the appointment of Usha Titus and K. Panchalan as registrars as they did not fulfil eligibility criteria. Titus held the post from 2002 to 2007 and Panchalan from 2007 to 2009.

The auditors have found that Titus was appointed in violation of rules that require the candidate to have at least 15 years of experience in educational administration. Titus had only eight. Panchalan was appointed despite not hav-

ing 55 per cent marks in post-graduation, which is the minimum educational requirement.

IIT Madras director M.S. Ananth, during whose tenure both appointments were made, has been asked by the audit authorities to give an explanation.

Documents accessed under Right to Information Act (RTI) show the audit authorities have taken up the matter with the HRD ministry which, in turn, has written to the institute to explain the lapses and specify what action has been taken to rectify them.

The audit authorities have also detected violation of government instructions in allowing IIT Madras employees to switch from the contributory provident fund scheme to the General Provident Fund. The Centre's department of personnel and pensioners' welfare had issued an order barring such a shift from September 30, 1987. Irregular payments to the tune of Rs 5.5 crore have been made to the pensioners till March 2010 as of the result of the violation, according to the accountant general.

HRD additional secretary

Ashok Thakur has written to Ananth, the IIT director, asking the institute to take action on the registrars and the pension scheme. "This ministry has written to your institute regarding these issues on several occasions. We are yet to receive a reply on any of the issues raised. You would agree that this is a matter of serious concern. We cannot afford to be negligent about audit matters. We are immensely concerned that an institute of national importance like IIT Madras has not taken any action," Thakur has said in the letter.

Asked about the registrars, Ananth said the selection panel had given a relaxation to Titus and Panchalan. "Titus is an IAS officer with excellent training and background. The selection panel relaxed the experience criteria in her case. Panchalan did not have 55 per cent marks in PG but had done PhD. The 55 per cent requirement does not count once you have a higher degree," he said.

On the pension scheme, Ananth claimed he had taken the decision with the approval of the IIT's board of governors, the institute's top decision-making body. "In the ear-

lier scheme, the employees stand to get less financial benefits. As recognition of their services to the IIT, we wanted to give better benefits to the employees and allowed them to switch to the (general provident fund) pension scheme. We are still corresponding with the audit (auditors) on the issue," he said.

**The Telegraph** has been highlighting irregularities in the IITs' appointments and finances. IIT Kharagpur has allegedly flouted norms in the appointment of at least five assistant registrars and three assistant professors in the past 15 years, as has the newly established IIT Bhubaneswar in recruiting faculty members.

Times of India Chennai 06.05.2011 P-11

## Nitin Reddy's Father Lodges Police Complaint Against IIT-M Administration; Student Had A History Of Depression, Says Dean

# Day after suicide at IIT-M BLAME GAME ON



would be extended.

Based on the complaint, the police have registered a case under Section 174 (unnatural death) of Criminal Procedure Code. "We will pursue and alter the case after detailed interrogation," a police officer said.

Meanwhile, the family members and the relatives of the victim Nitin Kumar Reddy staged a protest at Government Hospital in Royapettah demanding action against the IIT-M officials. But they were pacified by police personnel.

Nitin's body was handed over to his parents after an autopsy, who took it to Kuthalappattu near Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh.

When asked as to what the Institute

in general and Guidance and Counselling Unit (GCU) in particular was doing to address the situation and to improve the response against such incidents, dean of students Govardhan M said, "Why are you always reporting negative news about IIT Madras? We also have the maximum number of patents but you didn't report that. But you would want to report the death of 3

out of 5000 students which is statistically not important. Why don't you go to other engineering institutes and find out how many died there. Why only IIT?"

He went on to say, "Do you know the student who died yesterday had a medical history of

psychological problems from childhood? But obviously you don't want to investigate." But he quickly corrected the "childhood" part to say, "We have come to know from his friends that when he could not clear JEE in an earlier attempt, he went into depression."

## Most IIT-ians don't talk about problems

Ishan Srivastava | TNN

Chennai: Two suicides in three months and IIT Madras is in focus for its support systems for troubled students and the efforts taken to address such issues. To handle such cases, there is a Guidance and Counselling Unit (GCU) on the campus composed of student representatives, faculty advisors and senior faculty members. However, more needs to be done.

Apart from the task of identifying students who might be driven to extreme actions through falling grades and attendance, the feedback from friends, parents, faculty advisors and professors is a crucial input. "Someone needs to make a move; somebody needs to say there is an issue so that the situation can be identified," said a senior official connected with the GCU programme. "Many of the cases we handled well were because parents came forward with their child's problems."

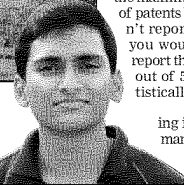
But in his view, most parents and even friends of students with problems are reluctant to talk about it to others. "We have structured visits to all hostels twice a year for which notices are put up in advance, where we meet GCU representatives as well as other students," said the official. The GCU received around 100 cases a year in total and of these, about 25 came through feedback from parents, he said adding that a professional psych-

chologist and counsellor were available on the campus. A recommendation from former GCU Chief Coordinators for student counsellors in each hostel wing is yet to be implemented. "We are certainly looking in that direction. We might get more volunteers," said the official.

GCU addresses the guidance of freshers well but doesn't seem to have a plan for final year students, especially near the thesis submission period when most suicide cases are generally seen. "We can get a list of students who have got extensions but then what? How do we address them?" he said. "It is extremely hard to pinpoint such cases and go about in a formal way."

On introducing professional training or workshops for GCU members, he said "it can certainly help." Incidentally IIT Bombay conducts small workshops for a similar programme on its campus.

UNFORTUNATE: The administration block at IIT-M (right) Nitin Kumar Reddy hung himself on Wednesday



A Selvaraj &amp; Ishan Srivastava | TNN

Nitin Kumar Reddy's friends were still in shock a day after his suicide. His father Lakshmanamurthy in his police complaint against the IIT-M administration and his son's project guide, has said that his son called him on his mobile on Wednesday afternoon before he died. He sounded depressed. Lakshmanamurthy pacified his son over the phone and assured that he would visit him in

Chennai and talk to his guide and professors about the problem.

Lakshmanamurthy said in his complaint that he informed his relative Sudhakar Reddy who was also the local guardian of his son. He asked Sudhakar to go see his son. But it was already too late. Nitin's hostel warden, professor Sathyananarayanan, called Lakshmanamurthy and asked him to rush to Chennai at once. Fearing the worst, Lakshmanamurthy rushed to Delhi airport when Sudhakar Reddy called him and said Nitin was dead.

Lakshmanamurthy has said that the IIT-M administration and Nitin's guide PV Manivannan should have informed him and his son earlier about the delay in filing the project. He said that Nitin had been told suddenly at the very end that his project

# PaperPhone: As thin & flexible as a credit card

## The Device Is Far More Portable & Energy-Efficient

**London:** Canadian scientists have developed what they say is the world's first interactive PaperPhone as thin and flexible as a credit card which is set to herald a new generation of computers. Extremely lightweight and made out of a thin-film, the prototype device can do everything a smartphone currently does — from making calls to playing music to sharing books.

And most impressively, the PaperPhone uses no power when nobody is interacting with it, the Daily Mail reported. "This is the future. Everything is going to look and feel like this within five years," said its inventor Roel Vertegaal, director of Queen's University Human Media Lab in Kingston, Ontario.

"This computer looks, feels and operates like a small sheet of interactive paper, meaning that when users are reading they don't feel like they are holding a sheet of glass or metal. You interact with it by bending it into a cell phone, flipping the corner to turn pages, or writing on it with a pen."

The phone's display consists of a 9.5cm diagonal, thin-film flexible E Ink display which, according to the researcher, makes it much more portable than any current mobile computer. Being able to store and interact with documents on larger versions of these light, flexible computers means offices will no longer

© Tony Anderson/Corbis



**SMARTPHONE JUST GOT SMARTER:** The PaperPhone uses no power when nobody is interacting with it

require paper or printers, said Vertegaal. He said: "The paperless office is here. Everything can be stored digitally and you can place these computers on top of each other just like a stack of paper, or throw them around the desk."

The new device will be unveiled at the Association of Computing Machinery's Computer Human Interaction conference next week in Vancouver. ■

## A mobile that knows you by fingerprint

**London:** It's a phone, a laptop, a PC and recognises its owner by his fingerprint. Motorola's ATRIX is being marketed as the world's most powerful smartphone packed full of tech wizardry "any aspiring spy can be proud of".

The ATRIX smartphone can be plugged into a range of docks that convert it into a laptop, personal computer, media centre, or a sat-nav, the Daily Mail reports.

It is the first smartphone to operate with fingerprint recognition to ensure it can only be activated by the genuine owner. The owner swipes his finger on the touchscreen a number of times when the smartphone is fresh out of the box for it to identify him as the authorised user.

From that point on, every time he touches the power button it will recognise the fingerprint and approve operation. Motorola spokeswoman Nicola Shenton said: "This really is the ultimate phone for gadget fans packed full of tech wizardry and features that any aspiring spy would be proud of." IANS

Publication: The Times Of India Delhi; Date: May 7, 2011; Section: Times Business; Page: 25;

# Harvard brings e-learns for Indian managers

Namrata Singh | TNN

**Mumbai:** For all those busy, on-the-go corporate managers, tips on how to face the daily management challenges will soon be available on the push of a button as applications on mobile devices.

Harvard Business Publishings (HBP) is launching an e-learning tool for managers in India this year, while other institutes like the Wharton's Executive Education Division have shown an interest in meeting such needs of the Indian manager.

The mobile offering by HBP, for instance, will be available on major mobile platforms including BlackBerry, iPhone and Android devices. HBP is also developing the product to support a mobile browser. "We're planning to launch this mobile learning solution within June-August. As a population with high adoption rates of mobile devices, we anticipate this mobile learning solution to provide great value and update in India to both individu-



**LEARN ON THE GO**

als and organizations," said Vivek Chachra, director corporate learning, HBP India.

India's premier institute, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM-A), offered a few certificate programmes in e-learning in the past for working executives. But it did not meet with much success. International busi-

**BOTTOMLINE**

ness schools are, however, keen on exploring e-learning tools for Indian managers.

Wharton's Executive Education Division (Aresty Institute of Executive Education) has identified e-learning, especially in the mobile space, as a key part of its delivery strategy. It has formed two separate centres of excellence

that will focus on what it terms as connected learning (eLearning) and mobile enabled learning. Additionally, its efforts are closely coordinated with initiatives taking place at the school level around effective use of technology to enhance the learning experience. The institute would look at making such tools available in India as well. "I believe that embracing the dissemination of knowledge and its value proposition via mobile is key to our strategy moving forward globally. This certainly includes a focus on professionals and organizations within India," said Louis Metzger, senior director, IT, Aresty Institute of Executive Education, The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania.

Wharton Executive Education has conducted a mobile device pilot leveraging Apple's iPad. "We feel that providing this type of device (including smart phones and other handheld devices) can enhance and extend the engagement taking place in the classroom," said Metzger.