

Newspaper Clips Oct. 7, 2015

IIT Council meeting: Five developments which may lead to major changes from upcoming academic year

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/education/story/iit-council-meeting-five-developments/1/492427.html>

Indian Institute of Technology council, the highest government-nominated body of the 16 IITs hosted 49th meeting with Human Resource Development Minister Smriti Irani on Tuesday in Kolkata regarding some of the major changes in IITs as the need of time to enhance the productivity of the institute.

1. The decision of fee hike put on hold.

Smriti Irani has put the decision to hike the fee on hold. According to Times Of India report, she had said that the issue of fee hike was sensitive and ministry cannot rush through it. However, no timeline has been fixed to take a decision on this issue.

The IIT Council had proposed to hike tuition fee of students by 150 per cent from Rs 90,000 to Rs 2.65 lakh to meet the recurring expenses of the institute. The proposal made by Anil Kakodar committee in 2011.

According to the proposal, IITs are highly subsidised by the government. The cost of a students graduating from IIT is around 3.5 lakh per year, the students are paying Rs. 90,000 per year as tuition fee. The hike was proposed in light of meeting the institutes' expenses on labs, equipment, staff salary, housekeeping, water and electricity.

Moreover, the students belonging to scheduled class and scheduled tribe which accounts for 22 per cent of total strength and students from economically weaker section (less than 4.5 lakh income per year) pays only 10 per cent of the fee currently.

2. Fee for physically handicapped students waived off, more scholarships proposed for economically weaker students.

Smriti Irani announced to provide freeships to physically handicapped students. Sharing the good news on Twitter she said, "Happy to report that IIT Council has decided to waive off fees for our physically challenged students." Moreover, it was proposed that more scholarships need to provided to the students belonging to the economically weaker background once the hike takes place.

3. Recommendations on 'single' entrance test by November

The council meeting headed by Smriti Irani has decided that a core committee will study and evaluate the proposal to hold single entrance test for IITs. The recommendation is likely to be put in place by the first week of November.

According to the proposal made by IIT council, the admission procedure for IIT were 'time- taking' and 'cumbersome' and did not leave much time for institutes to conduct enough number of counselling sessions.

The aspirants, currently, need to give two-tier entrance tests namely, JEE Mains followed by JEE Advanced to get admission in IITs. Pitching the National Institute of Technology (NIT) admission procedure, IIT asked for single entrance test for admissions. For NIT, clearing only JEE Mains is required for admissions.

4. Quota of students appearing in JEE Advanced increased.

The council has approved the proposal of increasing the quota of students appearing for JEE Advanced from 1.5 lakh to 2 lakh. The proposal was put forth by IIT Joint Admission Board (JAB) in September.

The change was proposed taking into consideration the two-fold reasons, first, around 200 seats are lying vacant this year in IIT, and second, three more IITs will be taking admissions in next academic year.

5. Peer-group Assisted Learning (PAL) to be set up.

The council has also decided to put in place, Peer-group Assisted Learning (PAL) to help students in their academics by involving bright senior students. These senior students will hand-hold the weak students to meet the challenges of rigorous and intensive education system. The plan also involves admitting foreign students especially from SAARC and African countries.

The decision was taken in light of higher drop-out rates by IIT students. Irani during Monsoon Session of Lok Sabha said that many as many as 228 students dropped from IITs in the academic year 2014-15 facing various problems but the highest being 'academic stress'.

IIT-K experts to study active faults which can trigger earthquakes

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/education/news/IIT-K-experts-to-study-active-faults-which-can-trigger-earthquakes/articleshow/49267212.cms> KANPUR: Experts of IIT Kanpur will conduct mapping of the active faults in the country that can trigger earthquakes. But first an expert team will be prepared for carrying out the lengthy task for which a class cum practical training workshop has kickstarted at IIT-K.

It will be two months from now that the experts will conduct the study at the foothill zones of Chandigarh, Dehradun and Punjab. The experts will study active faults here and thereafter, digitize the fault maps. This team will be headed by IIT-Kanpur professor of civil engineering department, Javed N Malik.

Two other teams headed by other experts will identify the active faults and map them in Gujarat and Jammu and Kashmir, Central to North Western Himalayas respectively. This is for the first time that the work of mapping of the active faults is being done on such a massive scale. The entire work is being done in the backdrop of the Nepal earthquake which had hit this year, causing massive destruction and loss of precious lives.

Talking to TOI, Prof Javed Malik said that a trained team of experts will do the task of identifying the active faults and thereafter mapping will be done. He said that this ambitious and mammoth project will start in two months time and is being funded by Ministry of Earth Sciences. Funds to a tune of Rs 20 crores will be provided by the ministry, he added.

"We will start the project from the foothills of Nanital first where there exists active faults and gradually lookout for such faults in Chandigarh, Dehradun, Punjab", said Prof Malik.

He added that the team members who will engage in the task include Dr Shanti Swarup Sahoo, Shreya Arora, Asmita Mohanti, and Shravnthi and the work will be coordinated by me.

When questioned what work would be done during the study of the active faults, Prof Malik said active faults will be characterised first and their analysis will be done as to how much damage it can cause. Also the study will involve in knowing upto what magnitude of earthquake these faults can trigger, he said.

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Nobel for DNA research in cancer war

REUTERS

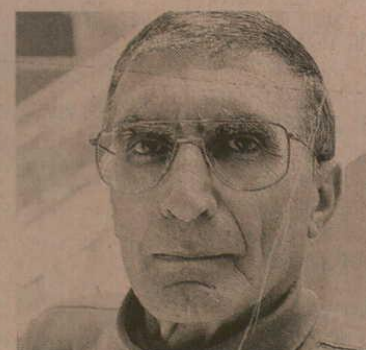
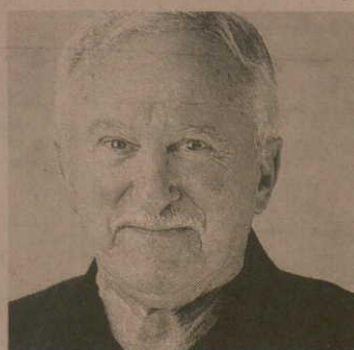
Stockholm 7 October

Three scientists from Sweden, the United States and Turkey won the 2015 Nobel Prize for Chemistry on Wednesday for working out how cells repair damaged DNA, providing new ammunition in the war on cancer.

Detailed understanding of DNA damage has helped drive a revolution in cancer treatment as researchers develop new drugs that target specific molecular pathways used by tumour cells to proliferate.

Tomas Lindahl, Paul Modrich and Aziz Sancar won the prize for "mechanistic studies of DNA repair". Their work mapped how cells repair deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) to prevent damaging errors from appearing in genetic information.

In many forms of cancer, one of



Chemistry Nobel Laureates Tomas Lindahl (left), Paul Modrich (centre) and Aziz Sancar

PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

more of these repair systems is damaged.

"Their work has provided fundamental knowledge of how a living cell functions and is, for instance, used for the development of new cancer treatments," the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said.

Thousands of alterations to a cell's genome occur every day due to spontaneous changes and damage by radiation, free radicals and carcinogenic substances - yet DNA remains astonishingly intact.

To keep genetic materials from disintegrating, a range of molecular

systems monitor and repair DNA, in processes that the three award-winning scientists helped map out.

"It's important for cancer prevention and cancer treatment. That is what I received it for," Sancar, who is a professor at the University of North Carolina, told Reuters.

P-03

DU Has to Wait for Its New VC

K Kasturirangan, wrongly included in search panel, has to be replaced

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New Delhi: The hunt for a vice-chancellor to succeed Dinesh Singh at the Delhi University is likely to take longer even though Singh completes his tenure on October 29th as eminent scientist K Kasturirangan who was in the panel to select the new V-C is set to be dropped from the search-cum-selection committee. Other members of the panel are former Comptroller & Auditor General Vinod Rai and the chairman of the UGC, Ved Prakash.

Kasturirangan, incidentally a nominee of the University's Executive Council, is currently serving as an honorary professor at the Delhi University and hence it is seen as a conflict of interest if he is in the panel that selects the new V-C, as per provisions of the University of Delhi Act. Kasturirangan pointed out the issue to the Smriti Irani-led HRD ministry. Queries emailed to Kastu-



K Kasturirangan FILE PHOTO

rirangan elicited no response at the time of going to press.

The process to find a replacement for Kasturirangan will be time consuming as it will require the DU executive council to meet again and recommend a candidate and the same will then have to be routed through the visitor to the varsity — President Pranab Mukherjee.

The ministry is learnt to be seeking legal opinion on how to proceed with the selection process. It is unclear just now whether the outgoing VC will be allowed to continue until his successor is appointed.



V-C Dinesh Singh

Put DU V-C on compulsory wait, HRD tells President

**RITIKA CHOPRA &
ABANTIKA GHOSH**
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 7

THE HUMAN Resource Development Ministry has urged President Pranab Mukherjee to put Delhi University Vice Chancellor Dinesh Singh on "compulsory wait" a few weeks before his tenure ends.

The President's office received the ministry's recommendation Wednesday night. If Mukherjee, who is the Visitor of all central universities, accepts the suggestion, Singh will lose the right to discharge duties as Vice Chancellor and, in effect, will remain a titular head till he completes his term on October 29. He will, however, continue to draw his salary till the end of his tenure.

According to DU sources, the government recommended this action against the V-C on the ground that Singh, as head of DU's Executive Council, nominated an honorary professor of the university to the search-cum-selection panel, which is tasked to find the next head of the institution.

DU's Executive Council had nominated K Kasturirangan, former ISRO chairman, and former CAG Vinod Rai as members of the selection committee in May. Kasturirangan, DU sources said, was appointed by Singh as

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Put DU V-C on compulsory wait: HRD

"Honorary Professor for Life" at the university in 2013. "As per rules, none of the members of the selection panel should have an association with the institution in order to ensure free and fair selection of candidates for the V-C's post. Kasturirangan's nomination violates that," the source added.

The President's press secretary Venu Rajamony did not wish to comment on the development. Singh did not respond to phone calls and SMSes by *The Indian Express* for comment. HRD Ministry spokesperson Ghanshyam Goel was not available for comment.

The government's recommendation, if accepted by the Visitor, will signal an end to the year-long standoff between Singh and

the HRD Ministry. The V-C's future has been uncertain ever since the University Grants Commission, an autonomous body under the ministry, ordered the rollback of the four-year programme in June last year.

This was followed by a probe instituted by the ministry against him on allegations of administrative irregularities and financial mismanagement. In March this year, Singh became the first DU V-C to get a show-cause notice from the government and was asked to explain why he should not be removed from the post.

The notice asked him to explain why he jeopardised careers of thousands of students by introducing the Four Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP) with-

out clearances. It also sought an explanation on why B-Tech courses were started by DU without the approval of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). That apart, he was also accused of diverting Rs 172 crore meant for OBC students to buy laptops for first year students.

The notice also asked him why the university, in an affidavit in Delhi High Court, called itself a 'state' under Article 12 of the Constitution. DU had asserted that since it is a 'state' it can have its own policy of reservation under Article 16(A) of the Constitution. It was withdrawn when it came to the UGC's notice. The V-C, in a 26-page reply to the ministry, had rejected all the charges.

Smriti Irani emphasises need for IITs

Union Minister of Human Resource Development (HRD) Smriti Irani while chairing a meeting of the Council of Indian Institutes of Technology in IIT Mumbai on Tuesday emphasized that IITs carry a major responsibility of facilitating the 'Make in India' campaign by participating in research and innovating processes to improve the competitive edge of Indian manufacturing on the global stage...

Union Minister of Human Resource Development (HRD) Smriti Irani while chairing a meeting of the Council of Indian Institutes of Technology in IIT Mumbai on Tuesday emphasized that IITs carry a major responsibility of facilitating the '[Make in India](#)' campaign by participating in research and innovating processes to improve the competitive edge of Indian manufacturing on the global stage.

Already many IITs are engaged in research, but they need to reach the frontiers of knowledge. It is also essential that socially relevant themes are given focus in research. She emphasized the need to build IITs into robust and autonomous institutions, and become global centres of knowledge.

The Council is the apex Policy making body for the (18) IITs. Secretary of Higher Education, Vinay Sheel Oberoi, along with senior officers participated in the meeting along with the chairmen and directors of all IITs.

Prior to the council meeting, the Minister has opened a new 1,000-seater hostel for girl students and visited the National Centre for Aerospace innovation and research (NCAIR) in IIT Bombay.

The current system of admission through a two-stage entrance was reviewed by the Council. It was decided that the system would be examined in depth by a group of eminent persons to determine whether it needed modification.

Their recommendations would be provided by the first week of November 2015.

The Council proposed a funding mechanism for IITs that would appreciably enhance government investments for building world class infrastructure.

A committee of directors would examine ways to enhance loans to students, and maintain and enhance scholarships to needy students, especially those from the SC/ST/economically weaker sections.

The council suggested that free ships should be provided for all physically handicapped students.

With a view to handhold students to meet the challenges of an intensive, rigorous and focused educational system, a Peer-group Assisted Learning (PAL) system will be put in place.

Under this, bright senior students would handhold the weak students; IITs would work out further details. The Central Government would support and fund this initiative.

A system for admitting foreign students would be put in place, with preference being given to students from SAARC and African countries.

All IITs would participate in the National Ranking Framework and would ensure that their performance is placed on the NIRF portal before 31st December.

They will also participate in the Rashtriya Avishkaar Abhiyaan by adopting the schools in their vicinity. The chairperson also took stock of the progress made by the IITs under flagship programme of IMPRINT, GIAN, Unnat Bharat, MOOCs, and Digital Library.

Every IIT will provide a guarantee of clean hostel, clean mess, clean water and hygienic and wholesome food. This will be incorporated in mission statement of each institution.