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TOI

IIT-H sacks gay activist Ashley Tellis

Nikhila Henry / TNN

Hyderabad: In an AMU redux south of the Vindhyas, Indian Institute 3025 Technology (Hyderabad) management sacked gay rights activist and faculty member Ashley Tellis, apparently discomfited by his sexual orientation. The academic, with around 20 years of experience, was shown the door last fortnight less than a year after joining IIT-H.

Being on probation, Tellis's services were terminated summarily. However, reliable sources said he was asked to leave for his "unlawful behaviour" and "deviant mischief".

Tellis faced resistance at IIT-H from the beginning

Hyderabad: Gay rights activist Ashley Tellis has been given marching orders by Indian Institute of Technology (Hyderabad), where he is a faculty member. It's learnt that Tellis's exit from IIT was being planned by the management ever since AMU's S R Siras was sacked for being gay in February this year. Tellis has filed a RTI application seeking reasons behind his sudden termination and intends to have a face-off with IIT-H.

Tellis was assistant professor with the liberal arts department and is a well-known voice in the gay rights movement. A published author, Tellis has a PhD from Cambridge University and a long teaching career. He faced strong resistance at IIT-H from the day he joined. "Ashley's entry was controversial with several groups among IIT faculty not wanting him in. There was internal bickering and resistance right from the beginning," said a source. Prior to his appointment, several faculty members had objected. "There were group mails sent against his appointment, asking the IIT director not to take him," a source said. Some faculty members blamed Tellis for being too candid in discussing gay issues on campus. His article on 'manboy' love in a national daily further ruffled feathers. "The institute has a humanities wing but it is meant for technical education. It was found that students were extremely annoyed with Tellis's behaviour," said a faculty member.

However, a number of students disagreed with the faculty members. "He was one of the best teachers. Not many students had problems with him until the administration and other faculty members began asking questions about his behaviour in classroom," said a student.

HRD nod for action against ex-AICTE chief

Akshaya Mukul / TNN

New Delhi: HRD ministry has accepted in full the CBI recommendation for major penalty against R A Yadav, former chairman of All India Council for Technical Education.

HRD minister Kapil Sibal has given sanction to begin penalty proceedings against Yadav. Earlier, Yadav had challenged his removal from AICTE in the Central Administrative Tribunal on the ground that he was not a government servant and could not be removed under central government rules. CAT dismissed his plea. Unrelated to AICTE, Sibal has also given sanction for prosecution of R K Mishra, assistant director, Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT), a body under the HRD ministry.

In case of AICTE, CBI has also sought sanction for prosecution of two officials — H C Rai and Shreem Dalal — from Delhi government where they are employed after being moved out of AICTE. Contract of another official Rominder Randhawa, CBI report said, was terminated by AICTE and therefore major penalty proceeding against

her should be examined as per departmental rules. The CBI report showed there was sufficient evidence to prosecute Rai, Dalal, Randhawa and Yadav under Section 120B read with Section 7 of Prevention of Corruption Act.

Sources said this was just one of more than 40 cases against Yadav and AICTE officials. The present case pertains to setting up of Echelon Institute of Technology in Faridabad. It is alleged that Yadav and other officials harrassed the promoters both when the institute was being set up as well as when the demand for increasing the intake of seats was made by the institute. CBI investigation confirmed all the allegations against Yadav and others.

In Mishra's case, CBI sought Sibal's sanction earlier this month. The allegation against him mostly relates to financial bungling. Investigation was referred to CBI a few months back. CBI report established there was sufficient evidence to initiate prosecution against Mishra.

IIT WORKSHOP

IIT Delhi's Department of Management Studies, had organised their fourth workshop on management imperatives for educational institutions from June 9-12, 2010 to sensitise the participants on the science and art of management and also to empower them to become more effective managers and leaders. The workshop saw a mix of lectures, case discussions, experience sharing, simulations and role-playing. All participants developed an actionplan for implementation at the end of the workshop.

The topics that were discussed in the workshop were principles of management, self-management and self-development, time management, legal issues in school management, understanding financial statements, brand management etc.

The participants of the workshop were the principals and owner managers of the schools desirous of sharpening their managerial skills and competencies.

New course in business analytics

Surbhi Bhatia/TNN

THERE IS an increase in the number of companies launching new products and processes on the basis of market research. The data collected during this research is analysed to form strategies for increasing quantity and quality of businesses. Till now, commerce graduates or MBAs have been involved in analytics. The lack of formal training in the field of business analytics makes it difficult for these professionals to remain updated about the latest software and techniques that help data analysis.

In order to train working executives, researchers and consultants in this field, Shailesh J Mehta School of Management at the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, has launched a one-year certificate programme in advanced business analytics in association with HughesNet Global Education.

"Trained, competent professionals in analytics, research and management are very much in demand. Analytics has become a major driving force and is closely aligned with the core competency for most of the industries today. Its impact on management has created a demand for an entirely new array of leaders. These emerging knowledge leaders must be able to effectively and efficiently guide their organisations into the future by continuing technical advancements and the increasing reliance on analytics and research to remain competitive in business," said Chitra Bhatia, director, HughesNet Global Education while explaining the need for the programme.

The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Kozhikode already runs a certificate programme on business analytics which provides training for beginners. "However, as the name suggests, this programme will offer advanced training in analytics where faculty from IIT will train candidates on advanced techniques — analysis, boosting, bagging, bootstrapping, etc," she said.

Spread over 40 weeks, the programme in business analytics focuses on enterprise analysis and requirements analysis, documentation and implementation. Participants will learn data modelling, the power of entity relationship diagramming and best practice in system design, solution implementation and impact communication.

Eligibility to apply for the programme is minimum 50% marks in graduation with one-year work experience.

Classes will be held through video conferencing. The evaluation will be done on a continuous basis. The total programme fee is Rs 1,17,500.

Obama-Singh initiative stuck over turf war

11 Jun 2010, Times of India New Delhi Edition

New Delhi: The Obama-Singh Knowledge Initiative will be used to develop faculty for new IITs. However, OSKI is stuck between the two nations on who will run the show. While US wants US Educational Foundation for India to do it, University Grants Commission thinks it has the right credentials.

For the first time, both India and US have also started talking about recognising each other's degrees. HRD minister Kapil Sibal expects the announcement of formation of India-US Education Council when President Barack Obama visits India in November, 2010.

However, sources said there were problems at the US end as there was a turf issue between the office of education secretary and the state department."

ET

Railways brings highest, tallest, bridge to Kashmir

Masood Hussain SRINAGAR

UPCOMING railway line connecting Srinagar with the plains will have the world's tallest as well as India's highest railway bridge. An expert team of the Railway Board has approved the alignment of the latter recently.

Safety norms forced the Railways to stop implementation of the major stretches of the Katra-Qazigund part of the prestigious project. Later, it was reviewed and alignments in certain stretches were amended. Though the alignment was cleared, but permission to the two major bridges on river Chenab and Anji nullah remained withheld for safety reasons. Last week both the bridges were cleared after experts from IIT Delhi inspected the sites.

An IIT team recently visited Reasi district and found the ongoing construction on the 359 meters high bridge fulfilling all the safety norms. This bridge is taller than the Eiffel Tower. Located at Kauri hamlet, around 40 kms from Reasi, it is being implemented by Afcons Infrastructure Limited. Once ready it will beat surpass the record of Millau Viaduct in France that is the highest cable stayed road bridge in the world.

Prof K S Rao led the team of experts, railway sources said. Its construction was stopped on July 12, 2008, forcing Railways to appoint a sevenmember team to examine the safety concerns.

The team later visited Anji bridge that, once implemented, will be country's tallest railway bridge and also the longest span railway bridge in India. It has cleared its construction as well. Its height from the bottom of the Anji gorge will be 180 meters with a span of 2200 meters.

Railways sources said after the clearance, they will be initiating talks with Gamon India for its implementation. It had earlier been allotted the work before its implementation was stopped on safety grounds.

Raising fingers on safety norms of the track, especially the two bridges, led to a series of measures. These included engaging foreign consultants and also involving DRDO for evolving a security blueprint for safety of the wonder – the Chenab bridge.

A national project, linking Kashmir with Jammu has been a long pending dream of the policy makers in Delhi. While Jammu is already linked with Udhampur, caving in of certain tunnels delayed the start of the Udhampur-Katra stretch that is otherwise ready. The rest of the track has two sections, one connecting south Kashmir Qazigund with north Kashmir Baramulla which is functional for over a year now. Completion of the Qazigund-Katra section will complete the project but will take many more years and lot of money.

Sources in the railways said the major tunnel that is connecting Qazigund with Banihal is nearing completion. It is being implemented by the HCC.

What seeps out from me; and Why?

*On a day when we are short of everything, can we even think of a new blood for a new world, asks
Rajiv Singh*

Blood in the water Dark and red and raw

These are lines from the hit American comedy Legally Blonde which make us think of the blood that we don't shed otherwise.

Aditi looks like any other eight-year-old kid: spunky, talkative and full of energy. Like any other child, she too has a dream. She wants to become a sprinter and fastest woman on the Earth. But Aditi is not like any other eight-year-old kid. She is thalassaemic and needs blood transfusion twice a month. Undergoing blood transfusion in one of the private hospitals in Delhi, Aditi has become immune to the pain of the needle but one can easily see discomfort in her father's eyes. "I don't know whether I would be able to get blood the next time," said her father with a choked voice.

India needs 9-10 million units of blood every year but only 7 million units of blood are collected. "We have had Green and White revolution. Now, it's time for Red revolution," said Dr R N Makroo, director, department of transfusion medicine, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals.

And Red indeed is the colour that's close to the heart of India Inc. So whether it's Tech Mahindra, Tata Steel, Microsoft India GTSC, EXL Service, or Applied Materials India, companies are pitching in with their efforts by organising blood donation camps among employees to help India tide over the crisis.

The BPO firm EXL Service regularly organises blood donation camps at its Noida and Pune units. "Blood donation is an integral part of our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme," said Shruti Jain, vicepresident & global head, corporate communications and brand, EXL Service. "We promote blood donation by encouraging our employees to participate in such camps and sending internal communication when employees, their relatives and friends are in urgent need for blood."

Bangalore-based Microsoft India GTSC, which is part of Microsoft's customer service and support organisation, is organising blood donation camp on June 14-15 as a part of its annual community services week. Binu Philip, director-HR, Microsoft India Global Technical Support Centre (GTSC), said: "We have always encouraged employees to work towards giving back to the society. We have been organising an annual blood donation camp, and this year we already see more enthusiasm and employee involvement."

Applied Materials India, a subsidiary of US-based nano-manufacturing technology services provider, was recently awarded TT Vasu Memorial Trophy for coordinating and running blood drives in Chennai and Bangalore, said Shakambhari Thakur, manager, corporate and community affairs, Applied Materials India.

Similarly, Tech Mahindra, the information technology (IT) services provider to telecom sector, conducts blood donation camps every two months at its various locations. "We do not wait for Donor's day to join in this noble cause. It is a regular activity at Tech Mahindra," said a Tech Mahindra spokesperson.

And it's not only India Inc that believes in the policy of blood and iron. IIM (Ahmedabad), one of the top business schools of the country known for grooming future entrepreneurs, has been enthusiastically participating in ushering Red revolution. Between 2004 and 2009, IIM-A collected 3053 units of blood during 38 camps organised at its campus. "When these IIM grads walk out of the campus and join business houses or start their own venture, they take with them this culture of blood donation to their respective organisations," said Ishita Solanki, head, global partnership and corporate affairs, IIM-A.

In fact, IIT Delhi chapter of National Service Scheme (NSS) has gone beyond blood donation camps and started a website, bloodconnect.org, containing database of all interested blood donors. "Blood donation camps are not enough. You need to have a pool of interested blood donors who could be contacted any time," said Nitin Garg, general secretary, NSS IIT Delhi. "Every youngster must donate

blood regularly. This is how we can build a strong India," said Nitin, who is the brainchild behind bloodconnect.org.

But in the end, blood donation is a community-based movement. "There's no point in donating blood once in a life," said Dr Makroo, who has donated blood 109 times. "What India badly needs is not blood donors but repeated blood donors. All of us owe something to the society, to our fellow human beings. And it's time to pay back not in cash, but in blood."

NEW V - C

Hunt begins for Pental's successor

HT Correspondent

■ htreporters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Delhi University Vice-Chancellor Deepak Pental, in an emergency meeting of the Executive Council (EC) on Thursday, proposed two names for the Search Committee that will select his successor.

The two names he suggested are Raj Gopalan Chidambaram, a nuclear physicist and scientific advisor to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, and Yogendra K. Alagh, an agricultural economist and former V-C of Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Chidambaram is also the former director of India's primary nuclear research facility, Bhaba Atomic Research Centre. He also played a key role in the 1974 Peaceful Nuclear Explosion Experiment at Pokaran and led the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) team in the Pokhran-II tests in May 1998.

Alagh is currently the chairman of Institute of Rural

Management, Anand (IRMA). He was the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Planning and Programme Implementation, Science and Technology and Power from 1996 to 1998.

The EC proposed two other names, Justice J.S. Verma, former Chief Justice of India, and Justice A.M. Ahmadi, also the former Chief Justice of India, to be members of the search committee.

The V-C informed the executive council about suggesting the two other names to the Ministry of Human Resource and Development so that the third member of the search committee can be chosen from them.

The Visitor of the varsity, the President of India, reserves the right to nominate the third member of the search committee.

Some of the council members expressed resentment about the manner in which the meeting was convened.

IE

Now, IITs roped in for clean-Ganga plan

KAUTILYA SINGH
KANPUR, JUNE 9

AFTER two Ganga Action Plans failed to deliver the goods, seven major IITs of the country have joined hands to find ways to clean up the national river.

After perusing a report submitted by the seven IITs, namely IIT Kanpur, Mumbai, Guwahati, Delhi, Kharagpur, Chennai and Roorkee, the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests has asked them to prepare a work plan for National Ganga River Basin Authority

(NGRBA) in the next 18 months.

IIT-K Director Sanjay Govind Dhande has been appointed co-ordinator between the ministry and IITs, while Vinod Tare, professor in the Civil Engineering Department of IIT-K has been named convenor for the project.

Dhande told *The Indian Express*: "GAP was launched in 1985, but the project failed to bring down the pollution level of the national river, therefore the Union Environment and Forests ministry decided to give an opportunity to IITs to prepare a work plan for NGRBA."

Union Environment and Forests Minister Jairam Ramesh had met with representatives of the seven IITs at IIT-Mumbai on March 13, 2010. During the meeting, he asked the IITs to prepare a detailed work plan for NGRBA, following which the IITs prepared an initial project report. The Ministry approved the report on June 7 and asked the seven IITs to submit a detailed project report on the work plan for NGRBA in the next 18 months.

Explaining the difference between GAP and NGRBA, Dhande said: "While the former concentrated on

treatment of water at sites of extreme pollution, the latter aims to take care of river pollution as well as the development of the river surroundings."

The IIT-K Director said the report would include short-term and long-term plans for perpetual development of the Ganga River Basin. "Our work plan would include development of a green cover on both sides of the river, ensuring a proper flow rate and depth of the river and methods to keep the river free from pollution," he said. The work plan would aim at bringing down the pollution level consider-

ably in the next 10 years.

After declaring the Ganga a national river, formation of NGRBA was the first major initiative of the Union Government for cleaning the river basin. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh heads NGRBA which includes the Chief Ministers of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. Dhande clarified that the IITs were not the implementing agency for the project. "We will prepare the work policy for NGRBA, and it will be executed by different government and private organisations," he said.

IITs put heads together to find ways to clean Ganga

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For delay in RTI reply, IIT-Kgp staff made to pay

SHIV SAHAY SINGH

KOLKATA, JUNE 13

THE Central Information Commission (CIC) has penalised two officials of IIT-Kharagpur for allegedly delaying information sought under the RTI Act. While ordering that Rs 15,000 each be deducted from the salaries of Dr T K Ghosal and T K Mukherjee, the CIC has also asked IIT-Kharagpur public information officer (PIO) A Patra to ensure that a cheque of Rs 5,000 is given as compensation to Professor Rajeev Kumar, the complainant, before June 30.

Kumar, a professor of the computer science and engineering department of IIT-Kharagpur, had sought information on adjunct, visiting and guest faculty of Rajiv Gandhi School of Intellectual Property Law (RGS IPL) at IIT-Kharagpur, and the honorarium they received. The RTI application was filed on Octo-

ber 4 last year, but when no reply came within stipulated time, a complaint was lodged with the CIC on December 25.

“The commission finds this a fit case for levying penalty on Dr T K Ghosal, then PIO/Registrar, and T K Mukherjee, OSD/Deemed PIO. Since the delay in providing the complete information has been for 60 days, the commission is passing an order penalising the two at the rate of Rs 250 per day of delay,” Central Information Commissioner Sailesh Gandhi ruled on May 28 in New Delhi.

Satisfied with the orders, Kumar wrote back to the CIC that there were a number of cases where information has not been furnished by the IIT. The Dean of the law school, institute Registrar and PIO were summoned by the CIC on May 24 and were told that it reflects either carelessness of officials or poor functioning of the institution.

Students cram for pressure-cooker place in job race

Young Indians face stiff competition to get into university, let alone find a job, writes Matt Wade.

14 Jun 2010, The Age

GEETANJALI Soni has spent the past five months in a stuffy cram school. She already holds a master's degree in biotechnology, but to get a job in an Indian college or government laboratory she must crack the National Eligibility Test later this month. This is one of a myriad of special exams set for young people wanting a good job or a place at university.



PICTURE: GRAHAM

CROUCH Geetanjali Soni (front left), who has a master's degree in biotechnology, studies eight hours a day at the Gyan Bindu Academy, Delhi, to compete for a good job.

"I come to classes for seven or eight hours a day and after going to my room I study for another four to five hours," said Ms Soni. Another student at the cram school, Nipun Mohan Agarwal, will sit the test so he can pursue his dream to be a medical researcher. " This is one of the biggest and toughest exams in India," he said.

Ms Soni and Mr Agarwal will compete against 100,000 others with master's degrees and PhDs. Fewer than 1000 will be successful.

Last month, a Bangalore preschool made national headlines when it started accepting eight-month-old babies for an educational program called "Brain Bear".

More children start school each year than the whole population of Australia and the dropout rate is high. India's latest census showed just 13 per cent of boys and 9.6 per cent of girls in rural areas finished year 10. Completion rates were only about 20 per cent in urban areas. Even so, the battle to get into a good university is intense. This year, 472,000 people sat the entrance exam for about 10,000 places at India's prestigious Institutes of Technology. Those with an IIT degree are in hot demand from the world's biggest companies, especially if it is coupled with an MBA from one of India's elite management schools.

Exam preparation courses are a booming business. Parents can pay up to 300,000 rupees (\$ A7450) for coaching classes to try to get children into an IIT, a study published this year by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham) found.

It said coaching classes had become a “craze”, especially in India’s big cities.

The town of Kota in Rajasthan has become famous for its coaching schools and the industry has become the lifeblood of the community.

So fierce is the demand that Kota’s most successful coaching academies now have their own entrance exam. Enterprising small businesses in the town even run “coaching for coaching classes”. Up to 800,000 Indian students are enrolled in private coaching colleges each year and Assocham estimates the value of the industry has swelled to \$ A3-3.8 billion yearly.

Social researcher and consumer analyst Rama Bijapurkar said: “ These kids are in a pressure cooker, they want to grab opportunities, they want to make their parents happy and they want the good life.”

This aspiration, combined with the stiff competition students face getting admission into India’s vocational and higher-education institutions, forces many young Indians to consider alternatives in countries such as Australia, Britain, Canada and theUnited States.

Students in India say it is easier to get into a prestigious university, such as the London School of Economics, than an Indian IIT.

But getting a good job can be even tougher. A recent survey of 14-to-34-year-olds by a New Delhi think tank, the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, found 64 per cent had a preference to work for the government.

However, the entry of global companies following economic liberalisation in the 1990s has allowed well-educated young people to get high-status, wellpaid jobs outside the public sector, especially in IT and financial services.



New technologies, such as mobile phones, have created many new types of jobs in the service industry. But most new jobs are located in the so-called “unorganised sector” where job security, protection and wages are often low.