IIT professors who retired before 2006 seek revised pension

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A GROUP of IIT professors who retired before 2006 has been running from pillar to post pleading its case with top ministers, asking for payment of revised pension as per the 6th Pay Commission’s recommendations.

The amount of pension given to retired IIT professors was revised after the 6th Pay Commission’s recommendations came into effect for all Central government employees with effect from January 1, 2006. But professors who retired before that, too, seek the enhanced pay, calling it injustice that those retiring in January 2006 are getting more pension than their colleagues who retired just a month earlier.

They have made a number of representations and written letters to Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee, PM Manmohan Singh and UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi.

“After several attempts, HRD Minister Kapil Sibal granted us an appointment and suggested we seek redressal from court. While we have served the IITs and generations of students and the country by imparting quality education, no one bothers to hear us out. All we ask for is revision of our pension as per the 6th Pay Commission as this is our right,” said Prof A L Agarwal, convenor of All India IITs Retired Faculty Federation.

The HRD Ministry, however, says while they had moved a note on this subject to the Finance Ministry, it was conveyed that such a revision of pension was not possible as it involved re-fixing of the last salary drawn.

Incidentally, in July 2010, the UP government had revised the pension of retired government servants on the basis of the same criterion. The Army Tribunal had also, in 2010, decreed to fix the revised pension for Army officials who retired before 2006.

Professors (in Pay Band IV) who retired before 2006 are currently paid Rs 23,950 (50 per cent of the minimum basic pay of Rs 37,400 and the grade pay of Rs 10,500). The revised amount works out to Rs 29,250 on the basis of 50 per cent of Rs 58,580 (i.e. 50 per cent of Rs 48,000, the revised minimum starting pay of a professor, and Rs 10,500 grade pay for a professor in Pay Band IV) under the 6th Pay Commission.

“We are losing out on Rs 8,000 per month... that makes a huge difference to retired people,” said Agarwal.
MISLEADING INFO ON GATE PUTS IIT Kharagpur IN THE DOCK

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NEW DELHI: The Central Information Commission (CIC) has asked the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, whether it admits students for its Masters in Technology (MTech) course on the basis of the Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering (GATE).

The GATE brochure says that IITs admit students for MTech on the basis of the test score, but IIT Kharagpur denied it in a reply to an RTI applicant. This contradictory position was brought before the information commission this week.

The GATE test is conducted by IITs for post-graduate admissions. On Sunday, thousands of students from across India took the examination.

Rajiv Kumar, the RTI applicant, had sought information from IIT Kharagpur regarding students called for interview on the basis of their GATE score in August 2010. A month later, the IIT told him that no students in IITs were admitted on the basis of the test score. The same was reiterated in a reply to the first appeal filed by Kumar.

He then filed a complaint with the CIC, claiming that the information provided was misleading and incorrect. He also attached a brochure of the GATE examination, stating that admissions in all IITs and Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, for the masters programmes are based on the test result.

Information commissioner Deepak Sandhu asked IIT Kharagpur's public information officer A Patro to clarify. Patro claimed that the information was correct. He also told the commission that the information was provided to him by PKG Mohapatra, dean, post-graduate studies, of the IIT.

Kumar, a professor at IIT Kharagpur, termed the information "patently incorrect". Sandhu asked Patro to reconfirm the information with the dean and, if it was correct, to state the same through an affidavit.
A toast to IIT Kharagpur

In many parts, The Game Changers comes across as a fanboy account of the accomplishments of IIT Kharagpur alumni turned entrepreneurs. That's not surprising, considering that two of the authors Yuvnesh Modi and Rahul Kumar are fourth year students of the institute while the third, Alok Kothari, is a recent alumnus.

**SIX DECADES**
The book, which marks six decades of IIT Kharagpur, provides, through short write-ups, a glowing though sometimes academic narrative of the entrepreneurial journeys of 20 alumni. Nevertheless, it demonstrates that IIT Kharagpur has much to feel proud about, having been the breeding ground of many a worthy entrepreneur. That too in diverse fields such as IT, shipbuilding, sales and marketing solutions, consulting, architecture, alternative energy, biotechnology and farming.

The institute's alumni have also made their mark in unconventional areas such as supply of products for magicians, classical arts awareness and anti-corruption movements.

Along with their experiences in IIT Kharagpur, the challenges faced by these entrepreneurs in their various endeavours, and their personal and professional attributes have been laid out in quite some detail, often in a hagiographic tone. Some irreverence and a mention of warts and idiosyncrasies of the entrepreneurs would not have hurt, though. Role models become all the more believable, when they exhibit flaws and failings.

But while The Game Changers may seem one-sided in its praise-laden approach, it scores on many fronts. One, it breaks away from the notion of an entrepreneur as merely an efficient businessman to one who stood for what he or she believed in and was able to transform the lives of others through his or her action.

This broad selection criterion enables the book to chronicle the significant achievements of someone such as Kiran Seth, the founder of SPIC-MACAY, a non-profit movement promoting awareness of classical arts among youth. It also narrates the story of Arvind Kejriwal, who was in the forefront of many anti-corruption drives and the recent Jan Lokpal movement.

The inspiring account of Harish Hande, who has been providing sustainable solar energy-based solutions in rural India, is another instance of the book adopting a holistic approach in entrepreneur selection. Choosing from over a wide time-period (the early 1960s to the late 2000s) was a deft touch, enabling the inclusion of veterans such as Suhas Patil (founder of Cirrus Logic) and also new-age entrepreneurs such as Krishna Mehra (Co-founder of Capillary Technologies). This approach provides perspective about how management and financing challenges for new ventures has changed over the years.

What is surprising, though, was the inclusion of only one lady entrepreneur, Anuradha Acharya, Founder and CEO, Oicrnum Biosolutions, in the book. Guess, that's a result of the low representation of women in IIT campuses, with Anuradha's IIT Kharagpur batch in 1995 having only 10 girls in a batch of 500.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**
The key takeaways from the book, however, lie in the various useful tips provided by the entrepreneurs for aspiring ones. The crystallised mantras for success of the 20 entrepreneurs draw on their experiences and provide a good reference point for those planning to take the leap of faith and go independent. Expectedly, the common theme that runs across most of the narratives is passion – the ability and the willingness to do what you love. Self-confidence and the ability not to be weighed down by odds are also quintessential qualities of successful entrepreneurs.

As Sam Dalal, Founder and Head, Funtime Innovations puts it “According to the laws of aerodynamics, a bumblebee cannot fly, as its weight is too large and wingspan too narrow. However, the bumblebee doesn't know the laws of aerodynamics! It just picks up and flies away. That's the way an entrepreneur should think. There are no rules, you just do it!”

Overall, a good inspirational read even for non-IIT folks. The good could have been better, if the tone was not so deferential.
Bangalore: Former Isro chairman G Madhavan Nair is pinning hopes on Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to revoke the order banning him and three others from government jobs despite Union minister V Narayanasamy ruling out its review, as he reiterated there is "no issue" vis-a-vis the Antrix-Devas deal.

Nair said he hasn't heard anything from the PM. "I hope he will consider and take an appropriate decision," he said.

Nair wrote to the PM more than two weeks ago, appealing for quashing the order which he claimed was issued without enquiry and one aimed at tarnishing the image of the scientists. Nair and three other ex-Isro scientists were blacklisted based on two official reports on the controversial deal. He has applied under RTI seeking copies of the order banning them as well as the reports. But he said that "they are taking the usual time to reply. So I will have to allow that one month to get through to get all the details". On whether he would appreciate if the PM intervenes in the issue, Nair said: "Yes, naturally".
GUINNESS ENTRY FOR JANA GANA MANA

PATRIOTIC FEAT: (Top) Over 15,000 gathered in Aurangabad on the eve of Republic Day to sing the national anthem to create a world record. India broke the previous record held by Pakistan of 5,800 individuals singing their national anthem. The event was organized by the Lokmat Group to commemorate the 100th year of the anthem. (Above) Lokmat Media Ltd chairman Vijay Darda, Maharashtra school education minister Rajendra Darda, joint MD of Lokmat Media Rishi Darda, executive director Karan Darda and other dignitaries after receiving the Guinness World Records certificate from Andrea Banfi, head of adjudicators, Guinness World Records Ltd
Child panel draws up a stiff classroom code for teachers

NEW DELHI: Calling a child names on the basis of skin colour, body structure, gender, religion and caste by teachers could very soon invite disciplinary action, and in extreme cases, sacking.

This will happen if new guidelines to define discriminatory treatment, mental and physical harassment of schoolchildren being drawn up by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) are accepted by the human resource development ministry. Once approved, these will be sent to states for implementation.

At present, there is no statutory definition of corporal punishment.

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Child panel draws up a stiff code of conduct for teachers

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The Right to Education Act, 2009 merely says, "No child shall be subjected to physical punishment or mental harassment".

The tough new guidelines began to be formulated after 13-year-old Kolkata student Rouvanjit Rawla committed suicide after being caned in school in February 2010.

"The guidelines look at the psychological aspects of corporal punishment on children. For the first time, we are elaborating on what actually comprises a discriminatory act. We will submit the guidelines to the HRD ministry shortly," said Shanta Sinha, chairperson, NCPCR.

The move has evoked mixed reactions. "Such strict regulations are uncalled for and will bring fissures in the teacher-student relationship," said VK William, principal of Mount Carmel School, Anand Niketan.

But RK Sharma, principal of Ahlon Public School, Mayur Vihar-I welcomed the step. "Initially, teachers will find the recommendations very harsh. But they have to realise that children today are much more sensitive. To deal with them, teachers will have to change their attitude and treat a child with dignity."
Strict PGET rules scupper students’ hopes

Candidates debarred for not bringing valid photo ID proofs; affected decide to move HC

BANGALORE: Brinjing secrete measures for the medical and dental post graduation entrance test (PGET), conducted by the Comed-K, led to an adverse problem for a few aspirants of the post graduate courses.

About 60 candidates, who failed to produce the identity proofs mentioned in the Comed-K notice, were not allowed to write the examination. This resulted in a heated argument between the students and examiners. Parents who accompanied their children tried to convince the examiners to allow them to appear for the exam, but to no avail.

A candidate, who was not allowed to write the examination at the M S Ramaiya Institute, said she had all the ID proofs with her, but they were photostat copies. She resorted to a hotel nearby where she was staying and brought her original ID, but she was not allowed to write the examination because she was late by an hour.

At least 15 students could not appear for the examination at the Ramaiya Institute. Parents said the students had been allowed on University grounds.

Aparna, a parent, said her child was debarred by the way the officials handled the students. "I appreciate the stringent measures. However, they executed it mechanically without applying their mind. When the students had the original photo ID, they showed the examiner the same. The examiner, instead of taking a second look, asked the students what they were doing here," she said.

DH News Service

NARAYAN RAMACHANDRAN

FOR SOME SCIENTIFIC ENERGY

The normally low-profile Indian scientific establishment has been joined by the actions to debar recently entered senior scientists from working with the government. The backlash against these measures is a wake-up call for India’s science and technology research model and the country’s scientists.

Different countries have followed different models for their science and technology research. These have evolved based on the scientific tradition, politics and the philosophy of pioneering scientists. The US Department of Energy, for example, is funded by endowments of some remarkable grants from corporations and science grant institutions such as the National Institutes of Health.

A critical component of the US program has been its ability to attract global talent. This talent has translated into a US-funding system that is effective in producing solutions.

China follows a hybrid model that has been in transition for the last decade. A landmark decision to allocate 10% of research funds to institutions in corporate and private projects, staffing, funding and hiring is perceived as the "market for brain gain". The US federal government has been a major player in this program.

In my view, independent India’s science and technology institutions are proceeding along a three phase path. In phase one, Indian scientists worked with commitment to set up institutions and were given a long leash of autonomy.

The iconic energy program, initiated and led by Vali Bhalla, the space program of Vikram Sarabhai and Sathish Dhawan, CSIR and allied laboratories set up by Shri Swaminathan Ramakrishnan, the Director of the Center for Advanced Study in Biotechnology and Crystallography by G.N. Ramaswamy, all formed the foundation of this evolution in the space, atomic energy and general science areas. In phase two, without the founding zeal of the great scientists, these institutions became administration, bureaucratic and career-oriented. I believe the episode of debarment of the space scientists is a clear manifestation of this.

India’s science research agenda needs institutions that nurture talent and autonomy. Many existing institutions are degrading. Universities and private research laboratories do not show much interest or progress. The private sector has been largely focused on here and now. India’s best hope is to consolidate research institutions, focus on a bunch of them, inject new leadership that is empowered and energized to do the job and provide latitude to succeed (or fail).

This is a science that alone can solve the problems of hunger and poverty, of innovation and education of our youth. From vast resources running to waste, to a rich country that is starving poor.

Narayan Ramachandran is an investor and entrepreneur based in Bangalore. He writes the series on innovation and entrepreneurship for the government and markets. Comments are welcome at narayanr@tcs.com

To read Narayan Ramachandran’s previous column, go to www.livemint.com/avi/bhand
DU semester exam: Only 2% students apply for revaluation

ROHINEE SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Only 2 per cent students apply for revaluation after the semester exam of Delhi University. Interestingly, these students are not among those who have failed in the semester exam, but those who have scored comparatively less than the counterparts. Complying with the order of the Supreme Court, the University this year is also prepared to give away the answer scripts of the candidates. The Examination Department of Delhi University says that it has stacked and piled all answer scripts and if the students demand they will give it to the students.

Complying by the Supreme Court’s judgment, the examination department of Delhi University will give away answer scripts to students on demand. The University has gathered, compiled and stored all the answer scripts of students. This move of the university is also being looked upon as an attempt to condemn all allegations of the teachers who are alleging that the university is given unexceptionally high marks to the students. “We had sent people from our department to collect the answer scripts from all the colleges. These answer scripts have then been arranged by the roll numbers and have been packed in boxes,” an official of the examination department said. The department has created a database of all the answer scripts and says that it will be able to make them available to the students in no time if they demand for it.

The students who want to see their marksheets can apply for the same within 61 to 75 days of the announcement of results on the university website. To see an answer script, the students will have to pay ₹750. “If the students point out any totalling error in the marksheets, they can approach the examination department with the same; the department will rectify the marks,” added the official. This will be the first time that the university will make answer scripts available to the students.

While some teachers of the university have been crying foul about the way the university has given marks to the students this year, the examination department feels that the students are happy with the result and the number of students applying for revaluation of the result has gone down tremendously.

“Unlike the other occasions when the revaluation rate was as high as 25 percent, this year only 2 per cent students have applied for revaluation,” the officer said. A total of 6,500 students appeared for BCom examination for four papers, of which the examination department has received a total of 153 applications for revaluation. 115 applications have been submitted for revaluation in BCom programme and 250 for BSc Honours courses.
Pakistani pop duo plays unity tune
Band casts a spell on IITians during festival

The Raeth maestros say music knows no boundaries of regions, nations and religions. “The youth of both countries feel that since Pakistan and India have a common culture, they can prosper in peace and mutual coexistence,” says Farouqui, a pop singer who has blockbuster albums like “Bhula Do” and “Yadaon Ke Sang” to his credit.

Farouqui is a fan of Mohit Chauhan, a Bollywood singer, and likes his folk numbers from Chamba like “Arama Puch Di Sun Dhiya Mera Hai” and believes in fusion of sufii and classical music.

The Raeth duo says there are fundamentalists everywhere in the world, including Pakistan, who always try to divide people on the basis of religion and nationalities.

Young musicians can break these narrow shackles of divide if there is frequent exchange of cultural programmes in both countries,” they add.

During their performance, Farouqui and Sunny Ghanshyam of Pakistani pop band Raeth perform during a fest of the IIT, Mandi. Photo: Jal Kumar

The youth of both countries feel that since Pakistan and India have a common culture, they can prosper in peace and mutual coexistence.

— Farouqui

Saksha Grover and co-coordinator Sanchit Khattri said more than 10 musical bands performed at the cultural night.

Mandi IIT OSD Samual Simon said the programme was organised entirely by students and more than 300 students from different IITs, NITs and other institutions participated in the event. The other highlight of Exodia was the showcasing of products made from junk, he added.