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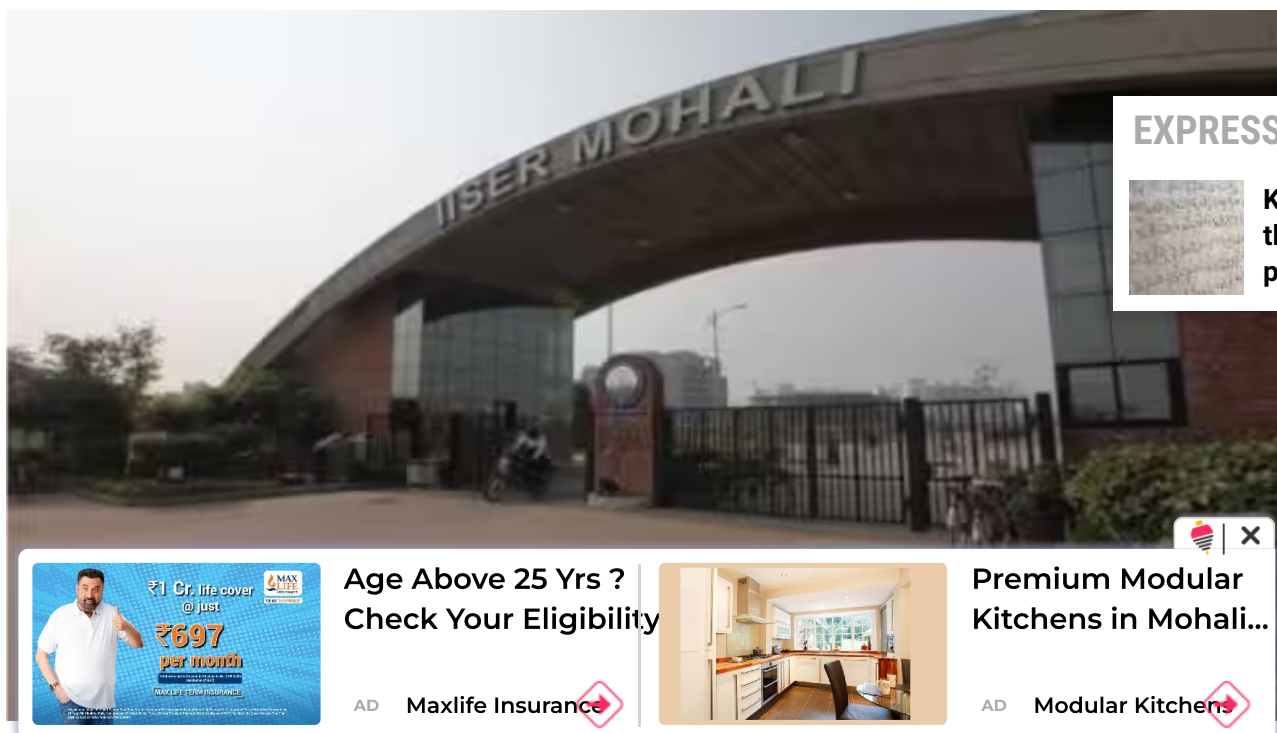
UAPA Event Cancellation: IISER Mohali issues notice to teachers critical of IISc Bangalore

The institute has directed two of its faculty members, who were the only two from IISER Mohali to register "dismay" over IISc's cancellation of a talk on UAPA, to explain their actions by July 13

By: **Express News Service**

New Delhi | Updated: July 13, 2023 11:35 IST

 **NewsGuard**



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Indian Institute of Science Education & Research (IISER), Mohali. (Representative image. Express archive photo by Jasbir Malhi)

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— Moin Shah

Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Mohali has issued showcause notices to two of its faculty members for signing a recent letter addressed to the director of the [Indian Institute of Science \(IISc\) in Bangalore](#) to [protest the last-minute cancellation of a discussion on the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act \(UAPA\)](#) that was supposed to be led by student activists [Natasha Narwal](#) and [Devangana Kalita](#).

The two faculty members, who were the only two teachers from the institute to sign the letter, have been directed to explain their participation without “obtaining the prior approval of the competent authority.” They have time till July 13 to respond, and the institute, meanwhile, has frozen “the notional allocation of funds” to the two teachers meant for research purposes. The administration has prima facie found them in violation of the Central Civil Services Conduct Rules, which are applicable to all employees of IISER Mohali.



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The two teachers who have been asked to explain their actions and the institute's director haven't responded to *The Indian Express*' email seeking comment. This story will be updated once we get their response.

"I don't think any rules within the CCS have been violated," said an IISER Mohali faculty member. "This is reflective of what is happening in the larger country. 'Protest is punishable' is the kind of mentality which has been adopted over the years," the faculty member added, pointing out that notices have been issued by the institute administration in the past as well, but it was "certainly not expected" in the case of the IISc letter.

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The missive sent to the IISc [Bangalore](#) director on July 3 was signed by more than 500 scientists, academics, and students in which they expressed "dismay at the actions taken by the IISc administration to stop a discussion on the 'Unlawful

Activities Prevention Act, Prisons and the Criminal Justice System' that was to be led by Natasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita on June 28." The letter, however, had stated clearly that the institutional affiliations provided against the name of the signatory was only for purposes of identification and that the signatures do not reflect the views of these institutes.

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Student activists Natasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita. (Express photos)

Narwal and Kalita were arrested in May 2020 for their alleged role in the Northeast [Delhi](#) riots conspiracy case and were later booked under the UAPA. The Delhi High Court had granted them bail a year later.

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On June 27, the IISc Registrar, Sridhar Warriar, intervened and cancelled the event that was scheduled to be held at the Center for Continuing Education (CCE) for

which student organizers had obtained permission from the CCE chair. This action was taken on the grounds that the organizers should have sought permission from the institute administration and not just the department.

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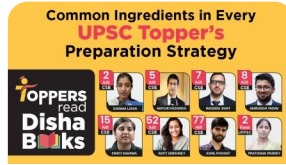
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“I think it is absurd that two academics at IISER cannot sign a perfectly reasonable letter to the director of another institution without being hauled up by their director. This violates basic tenets of academic freedom,” said Suvrat Raju, a faculty member at the International Centre for Theoretical Sciences (ICTS) of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) and one of the signatories to the letter.

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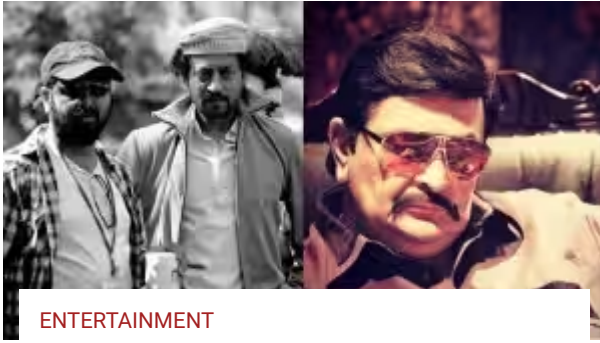
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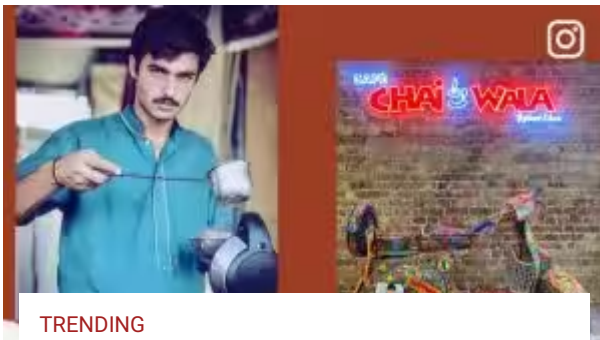
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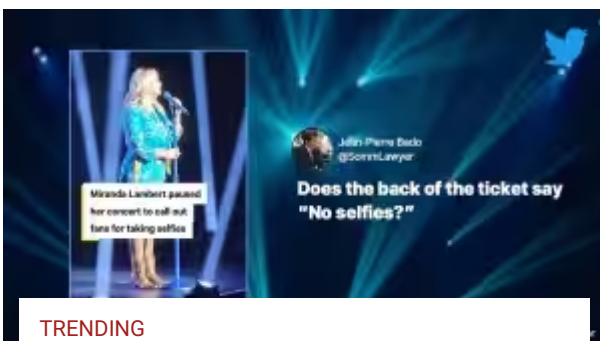
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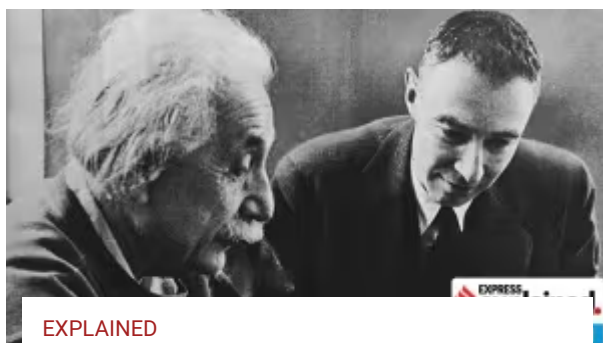
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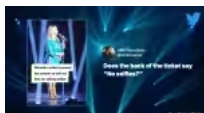
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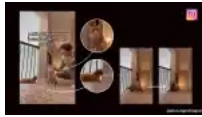
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