

DRDO to tie up with IIT for Army's happiness quotient

Kolkata: In these tense days for Indian soldiers, the Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) has approached IIT-Kharagpur to put smiles back on their faces. DRDO will tie up with the institute to work out methods to help increase the happiness quotient of Indian soldiers.

Happiness increases productivity and, therefore, a rise in happiness levels will result in more productive and loyal soldiers, both the director of IIT-Kharagpur and the director-general of life sciences at DRDO, told HT on Friday. "As part of the comprehensive soldier fitness programme, we would be tying up with IIT-Kharagpur to work on increasing the happiness quotient of the Indian army," Manas K Mandal, director-general of life sciences at DRDO, said.

Partha Pratim Chakrabarti, director of IIT-Kharagpur, said, "We are in the process of tying up with DRDO to help increase the happiness levels of our army. The details of the programme will be finalised shortly. We will work out the module that will require them to visit us and we visiting them."

The concept of gross national happiness (GNH) and happiness index have been doing the rounds for a few decades now. The term GNH was first used by the Bhutanese king in 1972. Bhutan, incidentally, is ranked first in the world happiness index.

"We are looking at devising ways to build resilience among our soldiers, and it can be done by increasing the happiness quotient among them. We will be working with the Rekhi Centre of Excellence for the Science of Happiness at IIT-Kharagpur," Mandal said.

Mandal said, "But unlike the US army serving in Afghanistan, where soldiers require programmes to de-stress, our men on the frontlines do not need such tools. Most of our soldiers come from struggling families and continue to face hardships on the job. So they are much less vulnerable compared to the US soldiers in Afghanistan, who are used to abundance."

"But then, we have to admit that working in extreme weather conditions (in Siachen, for instance) for a prolonged period does require a lot of resilience, which we can induce through this programme," said Mandal.