

Newspaper Clips

August 20, 2013

Hindustan Times ND 20/08/2013 P-10

Eligibility norms for IITs may be relaxed

Vanita Srivastava

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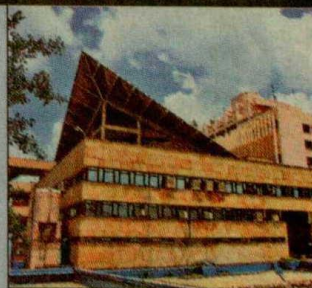
NEW DELHI: While the overall pattern of the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE) for admission to IITs may remain the same next year, the government could consider relaxing the eligibility criteria.

But any relaxation can happen only if it is approved by the Joint Admission Board (JAB), a body for deciding admission to IITs, which meets on August 25. The directors of different IITs will review the percentile system for admission this year, which will finally be ratified at the IIT council meeting scheduled for September 3.

The government had made

PROBLEM AREA

- Varying cut offs across boards created problems in the top 20 percentile cut off system used this year
- Suggestion has been made that boards with a 20 percentile cut off higher than 80 percent should have a common cut off of 80%
- JAB meeting on August 25 will review the system.



■ IIT eligibility may be revised. HT

the IIT entrance exam a two-phased one this year – JEE (main) and JEE (advanced). The eligibility criterion was changed from 60% in the board exams to

being in the top 20 percentile of his/her board. Only the top 1.5 lakh students of JEE (main) were allowed to appear for JEE (advanced) exam — which was

the gateway for selection to IITs.

The top 20 percentile cut offs has varied largely across different boards with some like Andhra board and Tamil Nadu boards having high cut offs of 91.85% and 90.9%, respectively.

Considering the problems that had surfaced with the percentile system this year, a suggestion has been made that all boards whose 20 percentile cut offs are higher than 80 percent should have a common cut off of 80%. The proposal may be disapproved as it doesn't take into account different categories like SC/ST and OBC. The JAB may also consider increasing the number of students for JEE(advanced) from 1.5 lakh to 2 lakh.

Government likely to dilute IIT entrance norms

RAMESH PATHANIA/MINT



Controversial system: The current eligibility norm for admission to IITs is that a student be in the top 20th percentile of students in terms of performance in the school-leaving examination.

► FROM PAGE 1

the students' point of view," he said.

The officials said that while low scoring school boards such as those of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh can continue to adhere to the top 20th percentile, others can adopt either 75% or 80% marks. For example, this year, students scoring 91% from Andhra Pradesh were not eligible for IIT-JEE (Advanced) as they did not fall within the top 20th percentile.

Last year, the government announced a two-tier common engineering admission test for entry into all central government-funded engineering schools. The first part, called JEE-Main, is for selecting students to all the central government-funded engineering schools except IITs. The JEE-Main ranking gives 40% weightage to the school-leaving examination and 60% to

the entrance examination.

The top 150,000 rank holders of JEE-Main are eligible to write JEE-Advanced, the second part of the two-tier common exam. JEE Advanced is the gateway to 15 IITs and Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad, but for getting a final IIT ranking these 150,000 students need to be in the top 20th percentile of their respective school boards.

After the results for the JEE-Main and Advanced were announced in May and June this year, many students found that though they qualified the JEE-Advanced, they were not within the top 20th percentile and hence not eligible to compete for a seat.

Consequently, students in Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Kerala challenged the results in several high courts as well as the Supreme Court. Though the apex court did not stop the admission

process, it said that the final admission would be subject to its verdict. The cases are pending before the court.

CBSE chairman Vineet Joshi said he would not comment on the controversy as the matter is sub judice, but added that any process could be improved. "After you have conducted an entrance, you at times feel that there is scope for improvement," he said.

The second government official said that all stakeholders involved agree that school-leaving examinations need to get their due. "The underlining argument is that school boards must get enough weight in the IIT selection procedure. You have to be good at all levels than just tailor-made for an entrance," this official said.

In the 14 August review meeting, all stakeholders also decided to stick to the current multiple choice format of IIT-JEE, introduced in 2005-06.

Mint ND 20/08/2013

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CORRECTING FLAWS

Govt likely to dilute IIT entrance norms

BY PRASHANT K. NANDA
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NEW DELHI

The government has decided to rework the admission norms for the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), acknowledging flaws in the process, although the change is likely to effectively dilute the criterion for appearing in the IIT-Joint Entrance Examination (Advanced).

The current eligibility norm is that a student be in the top 20th percentile of students in terms of performance in the school-leaving (or so-called board) examination and this will likely be tweaked, two government officials with direct knowledge of the development said, asking not to be identified.

The 20th percentile criterion has attracted several legal challenges.

The officials said that the government is proposing an alternative criterion of minimum 75% marks in the school-leaving examination.

The change will benefit students from Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and those affiliated to the Central Board of Second-

ary Education (CBSE) because these boards are believed to be generous with their marking.

According to one of the two officials, the human resource development ministry reviewed the system on 14 August in the presence of officials from the IITs and CBSE. It has now asked the IITs to take up the matter in the Joint Admission Board, the apex admissions body of the IITs.

The 75% suggestion isn't iron-clad, said the second official, adding that the Joint Admission Board can decide the cut-off will be 80%.

Interestingly, before the government came up with its changes in 2012, the cut-off was 60%.

"Percentile is a black box. Students need to know what's the minimum mark they need to score, while preparing for the board exam. A 75% or 80% score will do away with the existing confusion," said Pramod Maheswari, managing director of test prep company **Career Point Ltd.**

"If they return to the minimum percentage score, it would be a correct move from

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Hindustan ND 20/08/2013

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अमेरिका पहुंचा आकाश टैबलेट

नई दिल्ली। भारत में बना सबसे सस्ता टैबलेट अब अमेरिका पहुंच गया है। अमेरिका के उत्तरी कैरोलिना प्रांत में आकाश टैबलेट की पायलट परियोजना में 100 टैबलेट 10 वर्ष से कम उम्र के बच्चों को ग्रीष्मकालीन शिविर में दिए गए। इसका उद्देश्य आकाश की मदद से बच्चों को अगली कक्षा के लिए तैयार करना है।

कैरोलिना पायलट परियोजना के पीछे सॉफ्टवेयर उद्यमी क्रिस इवांस का हाथ है। एक अन्य उद्यमी विवेक वाधवा से आकाश के बारे में सुनकर इवांस ने अमेरिका के उत्तरी कैरोलिना के सामुदायिक स्कूलों के लिए 100 टैबलेट की कीमत देने का फैसला किया।

Stanford offers flagship biz course in Bangalore

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Stanford University's Graduate School of Business is offering its Ignite certificate programme in Bangalore. The course, to be offered annually in India, equips innovators and entrepreneurs with tools of business and the practical aspects of identifying, evaluating, and moving the dream ideas forward.

The programme has been running on its Silicon Valley campus since 2006 and has for the first time moved out. It will also be offered in Paris in September and in China in 2014.

"This is our flagship programme and we are teaching all that it takes to build a business: to analyse, to evaluate the idea, to iterate, team dynamics, how to lead, what to do to get assistance," said Stanford Ignite faculty director Yossi Feinberg.

The Ignite programme has about 800 alumni. There are 41 students in the

The programme has been running on its Silicon Valley campus since 2006 and has for the first time moved out. There are 41 students in the first year in Bangalore

first year in Bangalore.

What is surprising is that the majority of candidates, who have signed up for the Ignite, have not eventually given shape to their original idea, but during the course they either came up with a new plan or then went on to become a part of another venture, said Feinberg.

"Entrepreneurship has a lot of highs and lows. You want to be around with people who have the same pains," added Feinberg, who said the alumni are in constant touch. The course has students from varied backgrounds and from across age groups.

Sizeable numbers of Indians are opting for online courses

Revolutionary in every way

Growing numbers of Indians – recent estimates count over 10 lakh – registering for online courses is welcome news. At the outset, this shows Indians entering the pathway to the future, which is online. Today, the web and its spin-offs, from tablets to telephones, contain everything once considered bound to set locations. The virtual world houses film shows to rock concerts, prayer rituals to billions of paintings and books. With com-

such courses offer the world's best teachers to students, linking lecturers from London to listeners in Ludhiana within seconds.

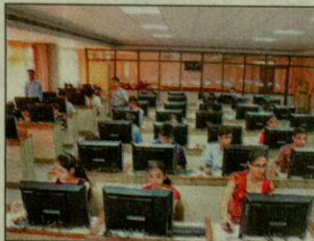
Further, online education offers new opportunities to those who

■ TIMES VIEW ■

merce, news, art and entertainment making way online, it's only logical classrooms will transport themselves too. It's wise, therefore, for Indians to follow suit.

For India particularly, such courses revolutionise conventional ideas about education. This has traditionally been single stream-oriented, with students forced to choose early on between the pleasures of literature versus those of physics, or give up music to focus on math. But online courses have a hugely eclectic range. They can go from string theory to cinema studies, pushing even IIT Bombay towards joining the party. IITs might also be considering how

aren't traditional students anymore. Virtual lectures and assignments are accessible to professionals and homemakers, experts and enthusiasts, allowing the motivated to add to their learning and skills. And for those moaning that the educational experience includes joys like bunking or back-chat, relax. An online classroom is only a site, its substance is still people being brilliant or banal. Online courses fit perfectly into education that aims to liberate people from diverse constraints. Only the most traditional, who believe that ideas – those most light and powerful of travellers – can't move out of one library, lab or land, can complain.



Always the second choice

Online learning will always remain an imperfect substitute to the conventional method. Education is not a reductive process that can be packaged into standard

classroom or even the washroom.

Even in a classroom, teachers who are able to make learning an interactive process get the best results. A mere change in tone adds nuance to the process of communication. In contrast, a change in the pattern of typing, even if it is large case and bold font, won't add much. The quality of communication, be it between a

■ COUNTERVIEW ■

Sanjiv Shankaran

teacher and student or between peers, plays a key role in learning. No matter how much technology improves, it will not match a face-to-face engagement. Physical proximity also forces students and teachers to become more open-minded. An unappealing face in the classroom cannot be made to disappear by shutting a window. Forced proximity is what makes most of us become aware of our prejudices and, in some cases, overcome them. Online courses may get popular because they provide an opportunity to people who otherwise would not have one. Where an option does exist, conventional forms of learning will remain the first choice.

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Stanford Ignite Course Launched in India

RICABHATTACHARYYA
MUMBAI

Stanford Graduate School of Business has rolled out its Stanford Ignite programme for entrepreneurs and innovators in India. This is the first time that the business school is expanding the nine-week part-time certificate program globally. India is the first destination it has chosen due to its huge talent pool of existing and prospective entrepreneurs.

IT major Infosys will provide classroom facilities for the students on its campus in Bangalore and Stanford will bring in its senior faculty to teach the programme through live video and audio streaming. Participants will also connect with practitioners from the Silicon Valley including venture capital firms, angel investors and professionals.

The programme, which aims to teach the



India has incredible entrepreneurship spirit and given the intellectual content we have, it was about having the greatest impact

GARTH SALONER

Philip H Knight Professor and Dean, Stanford Graduate School

participants the skills required to develop ideas into market-ready business plans, will consist of projects for which the institute will leverage its huge alumni network base in India and, also have leaders and investors from Indian industry as mentors. It will also help participants connect with venture firms in India to understand from the investor community how to get funding and pitfalls associated with it, among other issues.

The institute has chosen 41 students for its inaugural class, which started about a week ago. The candidates come from diverse background and consist of working professionals, entrepreneurs, and researchers or advanced degree students, who want the required knowledge in entrepreneurship.

"India has incredible entrepreneurship spirit and given the intellectual content we have, it (the choice of India as the destination of programme expansion) was about having the greatest impact," said Garth Saloner, Philip H Knight Professor and Dean, Stanford Graduate School of Business.

"In India there is amazing talent pool that could be the potential target of the programme," said Prof. Yossi Feinberg, The John G. McCoy — Banc One Professor of Economics and the Faculty Director for Stanford Ignite Bangalore, adding that the programme will give prospective start-up entrepreneurs the much-needed knowledge on the business side to drive entrepreneurship.

The Stanford Ignite programme has been running in Stanford since 2006. On Stanford campus, the programme is held two times in a year and the institute is planning the same in India.

The programme gives participants exposure to core business skills such as marketing, operations, strategy, accounting, finance, and economics, applied skills such as negotiation, teamwork, public speaking, leadership and pitching ideas, approaches to product design and prototyping, and developing a plan for commercialising a new product.

Tribune ND 20/08/2013 P-14

UK universities flash the cash in seat-filling war

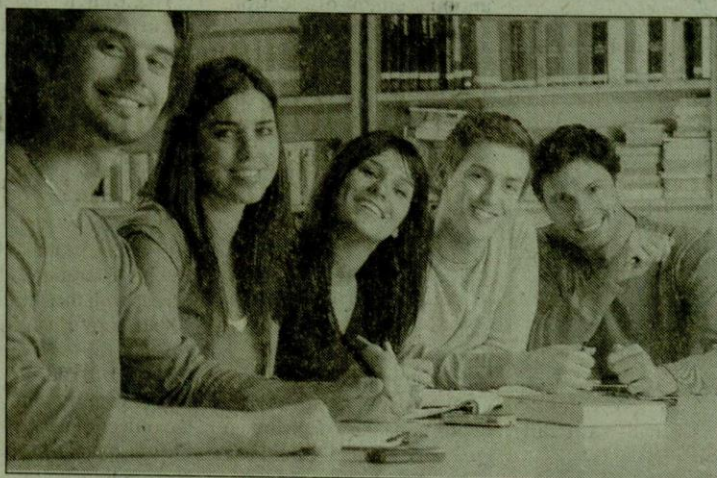
First it was iPads and laptops. Now students are offered fee rebates as recruitment battle heats up

RICHARD GARNER AND HELEN LOCK

CASH incentives to students are being stepped up as UK universities go to war with each other to fill places this autumn, an investigation by *The Independent on Sunday (IoS)* has found. Some are even offering rewards to students who fail to meet the government's criteria of at least one A grade and two Bs for allowing universities to increase the number of places they offer.

Last week it emerged some top universities were offering mini iPads and laptops to lure students onto courses. At Coventry, students applying to the Computing and Engineering Department with three B-grade passes are being offered an incentive of £1,000 towards fees or £1,500 towards the cost of university accommodation. Newman University in Birmingham is also extending a £10,000 grant available to students over their three-year study period to those with a minimum of three B-grade passes on its non-teacher training courses. It said it has also received an unusually high number of applications from students with A or B grade passes.

The growth in incentives comes as the recruitment war between universities intensifies, with many of the country's leading universities taking advantage of the government's new policy to increase their intake. Exeter University is recruiting 600 extra students this year, while Northampton said it was taking up the government's offer in order to expand the number of places it



At least six of the 24 Russell Group of elite universities — Oxford, Cambridge, UCL, Bristol, Imperial College and the London School of Economics — are not involved in clearing because all of their places are filled. — Thinkstockphotos

was offering through clearing.

Around 80 universities responded to an *IoS* investigation into student admissions this year, the first of the new policy. It was being predicted that the expansion of elite universities' numbers could mean others struggle to fill their places. Universities Minister David Willetts said: "There will be some that fill up quickly and others who don't do so well. That's how an open, more flexible system works."

Other incentives offered include a fee waiver by Goldsmiths, University of London, for the 10 most exceptional students from its local borough of Lewisham. Cash incentives of up to £2,000 a year were also being offered

by Salford, Bangor, Bradford and Glasgow. This year's A-level results saw a slight drop in the number of A* and A grades awarded, down by 0.3 percentage points to 26.3 per cent. However, the percentage of students achieving A* to B-grade passes rose from 52.6 per cent to 52.9 per cent.

City University in London, as a result, was encouraging those who exceeded grades for a firm offer at other universities to contact them and "adjust" to their own equivalent course.

The subjects still on offer differed from university to university: Coventry and Pearson College, the latter run by the FTSE company and granted degree-awarding powers, reported places left

on their business and economics degrees, as did the for-profit private university BPP. Suffolk, the University of West England and Bangor had spaces in creative arts, the humanities, social science and business subjects.

Healthcare courses were popular with Bradford, and South Bank University in London closed many of its nursing courses. Manchester University, which whittled down its remaining vacancies from 300 to 100, said most unfilled places were on modern language courses. The New College of the Humanities, the university in London whose master is the philosopher Professor A.C. Grayling, and which charges fees of £18,000 a year, reported vacancies through clearing on all its courses but pointed out that, as a private university, it was not restricted by government rules on student numbers.

Some of those universities left in clearing said they had high minimum qualifications for their remaining places and that only students with at least one B-grade and two A-grade passes should apply. At least six of the 24 Russell Group of elite universities — Oxford, Cambridge, UCL, Bristol, Imperial College and the London School of Economics — are not involved in clearing because all of their places are filled.

There are still spaces available to students with lesser qualifications: Bedfordshire and Bath Spa were among those universities willing to accept three D-grade passes, but which said that they would judge prospective students on a case-by-case basis. — *The Independent*

THE ECONOMICS OF EDUCATION

The rapid growth of Indian higher education may create compromises in scope and quality. Which is why a clear approach is needed for raising and deploying finances

ARUN NIGAVEKAR

THE Indian education system is under great study the world over these days. The reasons are at two levels — firstly, a lot of foreign universities are looking at India as a big profit zone for higher education; and second, overseas organisations are seeking to establish links between their countries and India. Also, a majority of knowledge-based industries these days are deeply dependent on Indian youth, who have undergone fundamental and higher studies under the Indian education system.

The RAND Corporation, an organisation that helps society and governments to improve policy and decision-making through research and analysis, recently came out with an interesting report for India — *Building the links between funding and quality in higher education: India's Challenge*. The report is under enormous discussion in the country and we come across economists, industry persons and financial experts continuously in conversation over this critical topic.

The report makes a comment: "The higher education system in India enrolls the second largest number of students in the world after China — nearly 22 million. In the past two decades, enrolment grew by 7.7 per cent per annum and more-than quadrupled. The number of institutions has grown even more rapidly, from fewer than 6,000 in 1990-1991 to more than 46,000 today, the most in any country in the world."

It also refers to the 12th five year plan reforms, making a statement: "The state and institutional-level regulations and controls are supplemented by controls imposed from a still higher level, the national government and its regulatory arms. This has led to a collection of unclear and often contradictory policies and laws that have prevented the government from implementing cohesive reform."

The report's recommendations touch upon aspects like developing and implementing a robust accreditation system; creation of a quantitative data system to measure quality; linking of funding to quality measures; developing and implementing a student financial aid system; expanding the funding for competitive research grants; increasing funds to spur innovation and achieve specific national and state goals, and finally, stress on building of capacity for self-governance in the new "Steer and Evaluate" model. The suggestions in the report cause one to think in a comprehensive manner about the true challenges in the Indian higher education system.

For any nation, stabilisation and growth of economy is vital in the present knowledge era. India has shown the potential to take advantage of knowledge-linked economy but needs to keep that momentum for growth. Which could be

maintained provided we accept the challenges of stepping up agricultural growth, infrastructure development, fiscal consolidation, building social infrastructure, managing globalisation and, of course, good governance. Education is a vital and critical soft infrastructure in a knowledge-linked economy, and higher education in particular. A nation that has the sound foundation to deliver quality higher education will be in an advantageous position in the 21st century.

Today, our higher education system is showing the signs of breaking mainly under the pressure of enhanced access and reduced finances. The system that is predominantly 'public' finds itself orphaned by the state which is not willing to evolve a long-term policy for co-existence of education as a 'merit good' and 'non-merit' good. We are locked in an unending discussion that touches age old issues of access, relevance and quality only at a peripheral level. The simple truth is that we need more educational institutions that give relevant and quality education to take full advantage of opportunities that are emerging at the global level. We can accept these challenges provided we strengthen our educational and research infrastructure in both quality and quantity.

However, both these factors require larger investments. Who is going to put in the money? The government has budgetary limitations and is caught in difficult situation with the pressure of societal aspirations and dearth of employable graduates. The experiment of 'self-financing' professional teaching programmes in affiliating university systems while expanding access has promoted unhealthy academic and financial practices. Individuals, the education barons and those who could afford the high cost of education, have been benefited, but the under privileged and financially weak are at a loss. They are in a 'no man's land' as neither the government assures them access to education nor is the 'self financing' education within their reach. Even those who get admission are uncomfortable about the utility of the education that they get. Both the aided and non-aided institutions, for different reasons, compromise in quality. It really boils down to investments in education. What India needs is entirely a new economic architecture for education.

A few core decisions need to be taken. Currently, education is treated as a non-profit activity. This approach, which was essential immediately after Independence, is not sustainable now, as the government has limited resources to meet ever-increasing demands. The creation of self-financing affiliating institutions has done more harm than good. We now need to accept that education can exist as a dual entity: 'merit good' activity to be done predominantly by the government and 'non-merit good' activity to be done by the corporate sector.

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CHALLENGES FOR EDUCATION

From Page A

For the last six decades, the government has been supporting higher education and our access ratio is around 16. Let us now bring education also under Companies Act allowing an individual to establish a company that is run professionally with a principle of 'fair profit.' Companies Act does have few defects and it is also true that all is not well with the way companies are run and hence adopting it in totality may not be advisable. What needs to be done is to formulate 'Educational Companies Act' that incorporates good principles of the Companies Act and facilitates the establishment of educational companies that work only in the domain of education. Such an approach is needed because 'education' is a different type of business; one that produces value-added intelligent and

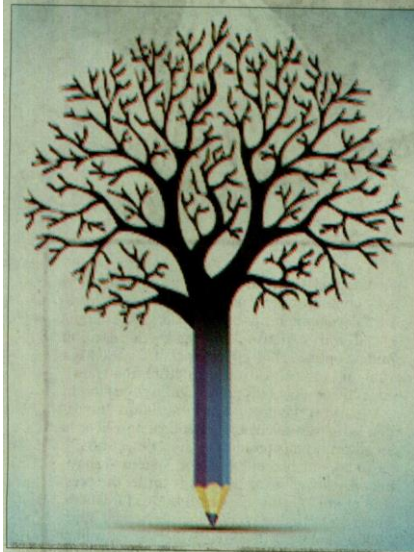
second appeal option to the Supreme Court directly.

We also need to take a bold decision that higher education need not be fully subsidised. Students must be made aware of its full cost. There are standard ways for estimating the full cost per student by considering capital, running and future expansion expenses. We need to work out the full cost for every degree programme for a full time student. Partial cost — Knowledge Commission recommends not less than 20 per cent and the MHRD says not more than 20 per cent — could be recovered from students in the form of fees. Aided institutions could charge 20 per cent of full cost as fees and the government could subsidise the rest.

Indeed, the government should abandon the present method of funding to aided institutions and switch over to grant-in-aid worked out on the basis of 'unit cost for full time student' for total full time active students in an institution.

The institutions created by educational companies could charge fees worked on the principle of recovering the full cost of education. These high fee structures, as is happening presently for professional disciplines, may become a hindrance for meritorious but economically weak students. Fee waiver concept, in percentile form that is linked with merit of student and economic status of parents, could become an integral part of such educational institutions.

In addition, we should create an appropriate mechanism for awarding scholarships and soft loans to deserving students through a special instrument funded both by the government and the private sector. This could maintain the balance between accessibility for students, social equity, competi-



ted quality education and the government's responsibility of retaining education as a public good identity.

The right approach would be to create an Higher Education Finance Corporation (HEFC), an independent financial institution to support higher education on a long-term basis. This concept has been discussed for several decades but no government has ever stepped forward to establish it. HEFC could be a professionally managed financial entity where the government only needs to make a bulk investment initially, introduce investor-friendly opportunities for private sector and create a continuous flow of revenue by introducing employment tax for employers. Each employer (private and public) should be levied a tax equivalent to the first month's salary for addition of every new employee. HEFC should make provisions for giving soft loans to students and institutions for development of academic and other infrastructure.

The participation of the private sector, with fair returns for investors in for-profit institutions, will only enhance growth and competitiveness in higher education sector. The Indian education system would only gain by a dual identity as both 'public' and 'private' good. Consequently, there is a need to address issues related to the new economics of education, which demand a clear approach for raising and deploying finances.

The ECBI could have three functions rolled into one body: quasi-legislative, quasi-judicial and quasi-executive. It could draft rules in its legislative capacity, conduct enquiries and enforcement action in its executive function and pass rulings and orders in its judicial capacity. There could be an appellate tribunal which could be a three-member body headed by a former high court judge and with the option of a

(The writer is former chairman of the University Grants Commission)

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

E-Summit at IIT-K concludes

TNN | Aug 19, 2013, 02:16 PM IST

KANPUR: In its efforts to instill **entrepreneurship** among the students, the Entrepreneurship Cell of IIT Kanpur organised the three-day E-Summit 2013 that concluded on Sunday.

Parth Arora, head of media and publicity at the cell informed that the E-Summit concluded with a series of talks by young and dynamic leaders from multiple walks of life like author **Preeti Shenoy**, startup co-founder Harishankaran Karunanidhi, online **entertainment** expert Prashant Raj, and Ambarish Gupta, CEO, Knowlarity.

Parth said these personalities discussed their **journey** with the students who turned out in large numbers at the venue. The E-Summit included a wide range of competitions such as 'Mind Your Business', a business simulation game, SoCha, formulating business idea for tackling social problems, E-Sell, marketing strategy designing and Pitch-ur-Project, pitching a technical project for commercial scale-ability.

Cash prizes worth Rs 1.75 lakh were given away at the programme. He also informed that a panel discussion on 'Funding Scenario in India and Future Opportunities' was held with Prashant Raj as the moderator of the discussion. The panel consisted of Anil Joshi, head of operations at Mumbai Angels Ashu Agarwal, head, north India operations, Indian Angel Network and Navin Honagudi, part of the investment team at Kae Capital.

He concluded by saying that workshops from leading corporate organisations like National Entrepreneurship Network (NEN) and Focus Adventures explaining the process of coming up with an idea and converting it into viable businesses were organised.

The event was held under the guidance of SIDBI Innovation and Incubation Centre, IIT Kanpur.

IIT-B launches National Entrepreneurship Challenge

Yogita Rao, TNN Aug 19, 2013, 07:32 AM IST



Tags: [silicon valley](#) | [IIT-Bombay](#) | [Entrepreneurship](#) | [E-Cells](#)

MUMBAI: The **entrepreneurship** cell of IIT-Bombay (Friday night) launched the National Entrepreneurship Challenge (NEC). Created with the vision of promoting entrepreneurship amidst all the campuses in India, and making people realise that coming up with an innovative idea is no rocket science, the challenge is the first of its kind pan-India competition undertaken by E-Cell.

The challenge will ultimately direct participating colleges to establish their own E-Cells. It will include all the colleges spread across India.