

Newspaper Clips

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At IITs, Placements Trump Slowdown

Facebook, Google, Sony & Rio Tinto rush to campuses with 10-20% higher salary packages



BRIGHT FUTURE: IIT-Madras grads at the placement office

SHREYA BISWAS & SREERADHA D BASU
NEW DELHI/KOLKATA

If this year's campus placement offers at India's premier technological institutes are anything to go by, it looks like corporate biggies have shrugged off the sense of gloom that slowing economic growth and tumbling stock markets have created.

The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) recorded a 10-20% jump in salaries at the final placement offers for students at Madras, Kharapur, Bombay, Delhi, Guwahati and Roorkee.

The top offer thus far is an annual package of ₹75 lakh (\$150,000) from social networking platform Facebook. A close second is US-based mobile gaming start-up Pocket Gems' ₹69.5 lakh (\$135,000), followed by global miner Rio Tinto's ₹36 lakh and Japanese consumer electronic major Sony Corp's ₹30 lakh. Facebook has also made two offers of ₹67.2 lakh (\$130,000) and six offers of ₹64.7 lakh (\$125,000) across the IITs.

"The year definitely looks great. There is a lot of demand for students, especially from companies that want to train them to be global leaders in research and develop-

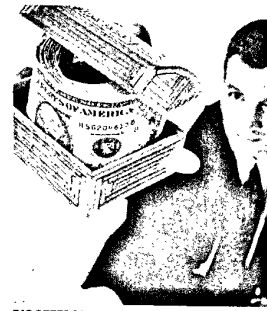
ment. Salaries, too, have gone up 10-20%. The way the process has started, we don't see any market sentiment impacting it," said N Ramesh Babu, professor and placement advisor at IIT-Madras.

The placement process, which started on Thursday, will continue into April.

So far, 19 companies have completed the placement process, making 66 offers. Amazon, Schlumberger, IBM and ITC have been among the regulars on campus while new names on the block include Flipkart and EXL Service.

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Rush at all IIT Campuses



BIG OFFERS FOR IIT STUDENTS

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The line-up of companies wanting to tap Indian talent also includes investment banking and securities firm Goldman Sachs, management consulting firms McKinsey and The Boston Consulting Group, Internet company Google, Shell Technologies, Swiss offshore drilling company Transocean, Deutsche Bank and Indian heavyweights HUL and ITC.

At IIT-Madras, 15 companies made 45 offers on Day 1. The highest was from Pocket Gems, which picked up three students at the same salary, followed by Facebook's offer for two US positions. Last year, the highest offer at the campus was ₹28 lakh from Transocean.

Goldman Sachs picked up 11 students at a pay package of ₹26 lakh while Sony Corp (Japan) snapped up five with salary packages of ₹30 lakh each. Transocean offered a pay package of ₹28 lakh to one student while Deutsche Bank picked up eight students at salary packages of ₹21.5 lakh. Google is offering ₹20-21 lakh.

The institute's Guwahati campus has landed the highest offer until now amongst all campuses, from Facebook. "Three students have been offered packages of \$150,000 (₹75 lakh) each for positions based in the US," said Saurabh Basu, faculty-in-charge training and placements at IIT-Guwahati.

"Microsoft has made 10 offers, of which two are in the US, at a salary of around \$119,000 (₹61.55 lakh). Google has made two offers, of which one is in the US," he added.

The overall response has been better than last year. "More than 200 companies have already confirmed for December. Last year, a total of 280 companies had come till June," said Ravi Sinha, professor-in-charge, placements, IIT-Bombay.

The campus at Bombay is playing host to 5-10 new companies this year, including Works Application from Japan and American retailing company Target Corp.

Sinha, too, said that packages have gone up 10-20% compared to last year. The Boston Consulting Group, McKinsey, Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, Deutsche Bank, Google, Facebook, Microsoft, P&G, Sony and Shell on day 1. Students bagged 130 offers.

At IIT-Kharapur, Facebook made the highest offer at \$125,000 to four students who will be based in the US. "The campus saw a total of 84 offers from 17 companies at the end of day 1, which had Opera Solutions, Rio Tinto, Schlumberger, Microsoft and HUL, among the recruiters," said placement head SK Srivastava. "Day 2 had Intel, Nomura, American Express and Amazon, among others."

A similar placement start unfolded at IIT-Roorkee. Till now, 140 companies have signed up as compared with 120 last year. The highest offer on day 1 was ₹36 lakh from Rio Tinto, which was surpassed on day 2 by Facebook, which made two US offers for around \$130,000 (₹65 lakh). Companies on day 1 included Rio Tinto, Schlumberger, Texas Instruments, Shell and ITC, while day 2 saw Cairn Energy and Paypal among others. Microsoft offered 12 jobs, of which eight were based in the US.

"So far, packages on an average have been 15-20% higher than last year," said IIT-Roorkee professor-in-charge placements, PK Jain. Last year, the average salary was ₹7.5 lakh across all programmes. This year, the institute aims to place 1,200 across all disciplines.

At IIT-Delhi, over 20 companies picked up 130 students, giving a boost to last year's salary average on the first day by 10%, offering similar packages as they did in other top campuses.

But the professor-in-charge of placements, Kushal Sen, sounded a note of caution. "We will do well this year, but given the market sentiments, we are keeping our fingers crossed. The start has definitely been good," he said. The institute has more than 220 companies registered with it for the process.

IIT-Kanpur, which started the process on Friday, has 200 companies lined up from across sectors. Of these, 25 are coming on campus for the first time. IIT-Kanpur has 950 candidates registered for placements this year.

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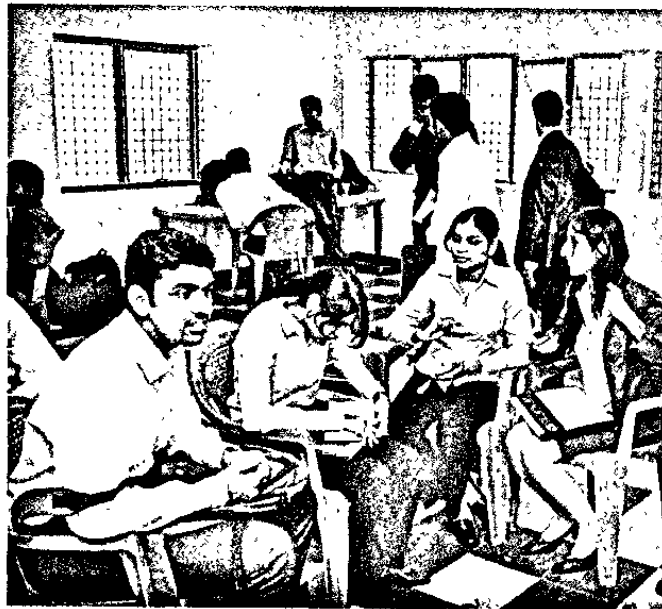
On day one of IIT-M placements, five students offered Rs. 30 lakh per annum

Special Correspondent

CHENNAI: On day one of campus recruitment at Indian Institute of Technology - Madras (IIT-M), 11 companies have come up with offers for 46 students, with some students getting multiple offers. The first day's best offer came from Sony Corporation. "Sony has confirmed selection of five students, one for each of the five profiles it came with, for a salary of Rs.30 lakh per annum for each student," said B. Nagarajan, Deputy Registrar, (Training, Placement and Public Relations), IIT-M.

At the Mahanadhi Hostel, it was a busy and tense day for students as they shuttled from one room to the other for multiple interviews. Apart from their core area of study, students could attend interviews of companies with finance, consulting and analytical job profiles.

"We know the IITs have the top two per cent of students. The brains are there. We are looking at students' ability to think and their curiosity of what's happening in



Students preparing to attend personal interview on day one of the campus recruitment at IIT-M in Chennai on Thursday.— PHOTO: M. KARUNAKARAN

the world of finance," says Anand Vilayannur, Director, Global Markets Structuring, Deutsche Bank Group. "Across five IITs, we will recruit 42- 45 students," he said.

There is a bit of home coming too. From the McKinsey

team of recruiters, three top executives are IIT-M alumni. Boston Consulting Group and Deutsche Bank also had an IIT-M alumnus each in their team of recruiters. These are the students who actually sat across the table last year to clear the interview. "When

the alumni return to any good campus to recruit, there is a richness of interaction. Companies prefer it as it is a win-win situation," says L.S. Ganesha, Dean (Students).

I.V.S. Sandeep, co-curricular affairs secretary, IIT-M, was one of the earliest to get an offer for over Rs.20 lakh. "The company was looking for leadership qualities and they chose me," he said. Apart from his chemical engineering background, his role as Shastra 2011 convenor tipped the balance in his favour.

While most of them came in formals, team Google came in T-shirts and jeans. "The Google test was basically in coding and algorithms," said a student who failed the interview. As a polite parting gift, Google gave him a gadget to take home.

The recruitment went till late into the night with students interviewed through Skype from the campus placement office by recruiters from US companies Pocket Gems and Facebook, which have come up with the best offers this year.

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Why IIT-B can't crack food poisoning case?

Three months after the incident, institute has no clue how food got contaminated

DNA Correspondent

Three months after the food poisoning incident, the Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay (IIT-B) has still not figured out why more than 600 students had fallen ill after dinner at the hostel mess.

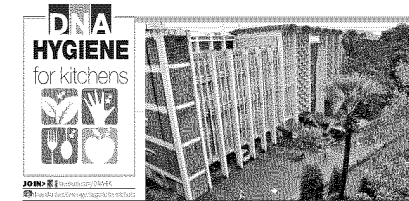
Despite the fact-finding committee probing into the matter for two months, the institute, which takes pride in scientific research has been unable to figure out how klebsiella, the bacteria that was found in the stool samples of the affected students, was present in the food.

"Around 80% of gastrointestinal diseases are caused by bad handling of food and unhygienic methods. Not all food contamination is caused by the raw material. In fact, on most occasions, food gets contaminated when it is not handled hygienically," said Ashwin Bhadri, head business relations, Equinox Lab, a professional expert agency in hygiene auditing.

"If the food handler is suffering from an illness, he or she can pass the contamination to the food. Hence, maintaining a clean kitchen and hygiene of the workers is important."

Questions are now being raised if the institute went about finding answers in a scientific manner or is it simply brushing the issue under the carpet.

In a bid to quell reports in the media, IIT-B went to the ex-



THE INCIDENT

On September 25, around 600 students of IIT-B took ill after having Chinese food for dinner at the hostel mess

Most of the affected students were from hostel numbers 12, 13, and 14. They complained of headache and stomach ache

tent of issuing a gag order on students and even conducted an opinion poll last month to see if a blanket ban on media should be implemented.

The key questions that the institute doesn't have answers to are how the fact-finding committee would probe into the incident when it was formed as late as the last week of October — almost a month

later. Obviously, it did not have food samples to check.

The institute was quick to rule out water contamination believing a report submitted by the purifier manufacturer, and the food handlers were not subjected to medical examinations immediately to check if they were had any infections.

The committee reportedly also overlooked other sources

of infection such as seepage in the walls of the hostel mess that could lead to mold.

Bhadri said the panel should have checked the possibility of contamination by air as the walls of the hostel mess were extremely moist.

While professor Urjit Yagnik, dean of student affairs at IIT-B, admitted no medical checks were conducted on the food

handlers, he gave an assurance it has been made mandatory in the new contract.

"Routine medical check-ups and regular training for the canteen workers to maintain basic hygiene will be part of the canteen contract. All canteen staff has been asked to use sanitizer for washing with immediate effect."

Yagnik admitted that the suspect food samples were not made available to the panel.

"We have not been able to take samples of the food and water consumed by students on September 25, because they started showing symptoms and reporting to the campus hospital at different points. Some even complained of stomach ache a day later. The samples could be taken only of the items that were available

after students started complaining of illness," he said.

He, however, denied claims that the water at the campus was being tested by a purifier manufacturer. "Students do not have complete information. The water was properly tested by experts at the IIT-B labs. But, it would not be correct to completely rule out water as a cause of contamination as the director-appointed committee's report is yet inconclusive."

In one of the issues of *Insight*, an official IIT-B students' magazine, Praseon Thapliyal, general secretary of hostel number 13 (one of the messes affected by food poisoning), mentioned how the purifier manufacturer staff had conducted tests. He also lamented the poor construction of the kitchen and uncontrolled seepage in the walls.

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Changes likely in UPSC main exam from 2013

Vishwa Mohan | TNN

New Delhi: After successfully introducing changes in the civil services (preliminary) examination this year, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) is looking at bringing some changes in its 'main' examination with effect from 2013.

UPSC has constituted a panel which is expected to come out with its report early next year. The civil services examination (CSE) that is meant for selecting candidates for elite central services like IAS, IFS, IPS, IRS and others has three stages comprising 'preliminary', 'main' and personality test (interview).

UPSC chairman D P Agrawal said: "Consistent with the need for selecting right kind of person from huge pool consisting of multiple languages, culture and communities, the commission has now constituted a high power panel to suggest possible changes in the pattern of CS (main) examination".

Though the chairman did not elaborate, he made it clear that the endeavour of the commission is to ensure that all the candidates are judged "on the basis of in-depth knowledge and understanding rather than information gathered at the last moment".

UPSC, which changed the 'preliminary' exam pattern this year by infusing elements of 'aptitude' test, had brought a minor change in the 'main' test pattern last in 1993 when it introduced an additional paper of 'essay' of 300 marks.

However, it is felt that the new paper introduced 18 years ago has not served the desired purpose of bringing candidates opting for high scoring science subjects at par with those opting for humanities and languages as their optional papers.