

**Newspaper Clips**  
**December 30, 2015**

**Tribune ND 30/12/2015 P-07**

# IIT-K terminates failed students, says it's routine

**KANPUR, DECEMBER 29**

The Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur (IIT-K) has terminated dozens of students who failed in their respective course examinations, the authorities said.

Without disclosing the number of students who have been terminated, the institute Director Indranil Manna said: "Every year, some students fail in their examination at IITs. It's a routine exercise like any other institute. They (students who fail) get terminated from their programmes. Then they go for mercy appeal. An IIT committee studies their cases, which are then forwarded to the Senate that takes the final decision."

He said: "The terminated students get several opportunities for appeal. There is nothing new in this. This hap-

pens every year. Why is media inquiring about it?"

**Indranil Manna, DIRECTOR, IIT-KANPUR**

pens every year. Why is media inquiring about it," he asked.

The authorities said the terminated students were from undergraduate, post-graduate and research programmes. "When terminated students appear before the Senate, they will get the chance to continue their studies," Deputy Registrar AK Mishra said.

Mishra said because students were informed about their result by their subject teachers through e-mail, he could not confirm the number of students who had been terminated. — PTI

## IIT, IISc scientists dislike Facebook's Free Basics

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/iit-iisc-scientists-protest-against-facebook-s-free-basics-115122900682\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/iit-iisc-scientists-protest-against-facebook-s-free-basics-115122900682_1.html)

Computer science teachers and scientists of leading Indian institutes have come out against Free Basics, asking the telecom regulator to reject Facebook's plan in the interest of protecting the citizens' rights to use their own public utility, the internet. "Allowing a private entity to define for Indian internet users what is 'basic', to control what content costs how much, and to have access to the personal content created and used by millions of Indians, is a lethal combination which will lead to total lack of freedom on how Indians can use their own public utility, the internet," said a joint statement from the academic community.

Including professors from the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) in Mumbai, Kharagpur and Delhi and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc).

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India is to decide on the merits of Free Basics in January. Till then it has asked for public responses on differential pricing for internet services. Net neutrality activists have alleged that Free Basics would discriminate access to a large number of Indians.

Stating that the term 'free' in Free Basics was a marketing gimmick and the cost of access would be borne by the users, the scientists from IITs and IISc cautioned that Facebook's proposal had several deep flaws beneath a veil of altruism. "What are the 'basic' digital services Indians will access using their own air waves will be decided by a private corporation, and that too one based on foreign soil. The sheer absurdity of this is too obvious to point out," they said.

The scientists have also questioned Facebook's model stating that the social network can decrypt the content in the basic apps that could potentially be a security threat to the users. "Either we get to consider our banking apps to be not 'basic', or risk exposing the financial information of all Indians to Facebook. And so on. This is mind-boggling even under normal circumstances, and even more so considering the recent internal and international snooping activities by the NSA in the US," they said.

Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, who is betting on Free Basics to get the next billion users in India, has been lobbying with start-up executives and software industry body Nasscom.

Nasscom on Tuesday said it was still working on its response to the telecom regulator on differential pricing and net neutrality and would submit it before the December 30 deadline.

"As part of our policy submissions, we have detailed consultative sessions with different stakeholders and these discussions will help us to better understand different points of view and take into consideration any inputs that Facebook and Save the Internet and any other interested parties provide before we firm up our response to Trai," Nasscom President R Chandrashekhar said in an email response.

Software rights activists have also questioned Facebook's move in India.

"Facebook's Free Basics is a disingenuous way of trying to solve a problem of access. The regulator should see through this attempt by Facebook and not allow any of these distortions of the market," said Mishi Choudhary, Legal Director at Software Freedom Law Centre, and a campaigner of Save the Internet.

Earlier, Vijay Shekhar Sharma, founder of wallet-turned-e-commerce firm Paytm, had called Facebook's actions as similar to those of the "East India Company".

## **IIT faculty to move TRAI against Free Basics**

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/iit-faculty-to-move-trai-against-free-basics/article8042490.ece>

At least 40 faculty members from the IITs at Mumbai, Delhi, Khargapur and the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore have, as of Wednesday, signed the petition lambasting **Free Basics** — a Facebook initiative to offer free access to a few sites—as 'misleading' and 'flawed.' They will be submitting the petition to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on Wednesday.

"Facebook's 'free basics' (sic) proposal is such a lethal combination, having several deep flaws, beneath the veil of altruism wrapped around it in TV and other media advertisements," says the petition.

Krithi Ramamritham, Professor, Computer Science and Engineering, IIT Bombay, said that he and three other colleagues had drafted the petition and got others, across institutes, using their personal networks. "This doesn't, in anyway, represent the position of our institutions. I've been part of the earlier Net Neutrality debate and, as a group, we felt that our voice needs to be heard by TRAI," he added. Facebook is a key recruiter from the IITs.

In October, **Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg** while addressing a convention of faculty and students at IIT Delhi, where, among other things, he said that his company supported Net neutrality and Free Basics in no way contradicted those principles.