Newspaper Clips
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CBSE letter behind JEE percentile calculation goof-up

CHITLEEN K SETHI
CHANDIGARH, JULY 18

THE goof-up in the calculation of percentile for the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) 2013 can be traced to a set of contradictory instructions issued by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) to the school boards.

A letter sent by CBSE chairman Vineet Joshi on June 17 to the Punjab School Education Board, a copy of which is with *The Indian Express*, clearly states that admission to IITs will be "based on category wise all-India rank in JEE (Advanced), subject to the condition that such candidates are in the top 20 percentile of successful candidates in Class XII examination conducted by their boards in applicable categories." The same letter, however, gives a formula for calculating the percentile based on the total number of students who appeared for the exam and not the total number of successful candidates.

It even gives an example of such a calculation, which also shows the percentile based on the total number of candidates who appeared for the exam.

Following this formula, the Punjab board calculated the top 20 percentile candidates from the almost 3.3 lakh candidates who appeared for the exam, instead of the 2.2 lakh students who had actually passed, and prepared a list of over 67,000 students (in general category). It is learnt that over 750 students from the Punjab board have made it to the JEE (Advanced).

While Joshi could not be contacted, CBSE advisor B M Gupta maintained that the calculation on the basis of the total number of candidates who appeared for the exam was correct.

However Prof H C Gupta, organising chairman, JEE 2013, had told *The Indian Express* on Tuesday that the top 20 percentile was to be calculated on the basis of students who passed the exam.

IIT aspirants from AP await justice

HYDERABAD, DHNS: Several Andhra Pradesh IIT-aspirants who missed the bus due to wrong calculation of their 12th standard cut-off marks by the authorities, are waiting for justice with fingers crossed.

Following intervention by Union Human Resource Development Minister Pallam Raju, the state authorities are now engaged in revising the list of students who figure in the top-20 percentile category.

As per the norm fixed by the CBSE, only those who are among the top-20 percentile category in the qualifying 12th standard examination of their respective state boards are eligible for admission to the IITs.

Indian Express ND 19/07/2013   P-9

Protest intensifies, govt moves to decide on IIT-Kharagpur director

ANUBHUTI VISHNOI
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

WITH students, faculty and alumni stepping up protests against delay in the appointment of Prof Partha Pratim Chakrabarti as director of IIT Kharagpur, pending the Central Vigilance Commission's (CVC) approval, and threatening to move court, the government is moving to resolve the issue.

Sources said that the CVC, nudged by the human resource development ministry, will decide on Chakrabarti's appointment in the next few days.

The ministry's selection committee recommended Chakrabarti for the post in July 2012 but his appointment ran into trouble with the Vigilance. The CVC sought action against him, prof R N Banerjee and IIT Patna director A K Bhowmick for their role in the coal-net scam, involving computerisation of Coal India and its subsidiaries between 2001 and 2004; it wanted a major penalty against the others but a minor one against Chakrabarti though the IIT's board of governors had given him a clean chit.

The ministry, on its part, admitted that Chakrabarti had told Coal India that the computerisation project was not outsourced — though it was — but maintained that it was just an oversight. He had not negotiated the agreement, handled the project or benefited from it in any way, the ministry told the CVC about two months ago, so he should not be penalised.

The CVC has been examining the issue since. To arrive at a final decision, it will have to consider its recommendation for a penalty as much as the IIT board's clean chit and the HRD ministry's defence of Chakrabarti.

Allegations of wrongdoing aside, Chakrabarti comes with an impressive resume: a President's Gold Medallist, one of the youngest winner's of the S S Bhatnagar Award, dean of Sponsored Research and Industrial Consultancy, IIT Kharagpur from 2004 to 2013.

And, it seems, he is also popular with the IIT's students, faculty and alumni, who have launched a "PPC for Director" campaign — the faculty have been wearing black badges in protest since July 15 and many sat on a hunger strike on July 17 — and have threatened to move court if he is not made director by July 29.

Hindu ND 19/07/2013 P-15

आईआईटी व एनआईटी की स्थापना में राज्य और केंद्र सरकार के रवैये पर उठे सवाल
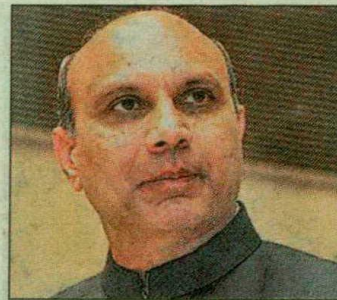
संस्थानों को जमीन देने में देरी

नई दिल्ली | विशेष संवाददाता

राज्य सरकारें केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालयों, आईआईटी और एनआईटी की स्थापना की मांग तो जब-तब करती रहती हैं। लेकिन जमीन देने और अन्य मामलों में उनकी लेटलतीफी के चलते नए संस्थानों की स्थापना में देरी हो रही है।

केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय, एनआईटी के मामले में ऐसा ही देखने में आ रहा है। इसलिए केंद्र ने राज्यों के उच्च शिक्षा सचिवों की बैठक बुलाई है।

सूत्रों के अनुसार, 22 जुलाई को योजना आयोग में यह बैठक होगी जिसमें मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री पल्लम राजू उपस्थित होंगे। एक उच्च अधिकारी के अनुसार जमीन देने में सबसे ज्यादा आनाकानी गुजरात द्वारा की जा रही है।

लेटलतीफी

- 22 जुलाई को बैठक में मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री पल्लम राजू उपस्थित होंगे
- केंद्रीय विवि के लिए तीन साल से जमीन नहीं दे रहा गुजरात, कह-कहकर हारे मंत्री

गुजरात में तीन साल पूर्व केंद्रीय विवि स्वीकृत हो चुका है जो अहमदाबाद एवं गांधीनगर के बीच स्थापित होना है। लेकिन राज्य सरकार जमीन नहीं दे रही है। जबकि केंद्र ने उसे छूट देते हुए पांच सौ एकड़ की जगह ढाई सौ एकड़ जमीन ही देने को कहा। पल्लम राजू इस मुद्दे को निजी तौर पर 13 मई को मुख्यमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी के समक्ष उठा चुके हैं। लेकिन फिर भी राज्य सरकार जमीन नहीं दे रही है।

हिमाचल प्रदेश में राज्य सरकार ने केंद्रीय विवि के लिए जमीन दी है लेकिन वन भूमि होने के कारण वन एवं पर्यावरण मंत्रालय की मंजूरी नहीं मिल पा रही है। वहीं दिल्ली में एनआईटी की स्थापना के लिए दिल्ली सरकार ने बांखोली (नरेला) में जमीन देने का फैसला किया है। लेकिन इसे एनआईटी को हस्तांतरित नहीं किया गया है। यही हाल एनआईटी गोवा, सिक्किम का भी है।

उत्तराखंड में हाल यह है कि राज्य सरकार ने एनआईटी के बोर्ड ऑफ गवर्नर्स के गठन के लिए राज्य सरकार का प्रतिनिधि तय नहीं किया है। जिसके चलते बोर्ड का गठन नहीं हो पाया है और आगे काम नहीं बढ़ पाया है।

मिजोरम, केरल, हरियाणा, असम, महाराष्ट्र तथा जम्मू-कश्मीर में खुलने वाले एनआईटी के मामले में भी इसी प्रकार की बाधाएं हैं। केंद्र का बजट तैयार है लेकिन राज्य सरकारों की लेट लतीफी के कारण एनआईटी की स्थापना या उनके नए कैंपस बनने में दिक्कत आ रही है।

Indian Express ND 19/07/2013   P-1

SC rejects common medical entry exam

In 2-1 verdict, top court says plan is unconstitutional

UTKARSH ANAND

NEW DELHI, JULY 18

REJECTING the one-nation-one-test proposal of previous human resource development minister Kapil Sibal, the Supreme Court Thursday held the all-India common entrance test for medical admissions as illegal and unconstitutional, saying it interfered with the rights of private, minority and linguistic institutions to admit students.

In a 2-1 split verdict on the validity of the National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET), a bench led by Chief Justice Altamas Kabir said that the Medical Council of India and the Dental Council of India lacked legal authority to control admissions to MBBS, BDS and post-graduate courses. This view was shared by Justice Vikramjit Sen.

"The right of the MCI and the DCI to prescribe such standards has been duly recognised by the courts. However, such right cannot be extended to controlling all admissions to the medical courses, being run by different medical institutions in the country. At best, a certain degree of control may be exercised in regard to aided institutions, where on account of the

SC rejects medical CET

funds being provided by the government, it may have a say in the affairs of such institutions," the bench said as it quashed the four notifications issued by the MCI in 2010 and 2012 on NEET.

It said that neither the MCI Act nor the regulations had vested MCI with any authority to conduct examinations for NEET, thereby effectively taking away the right of medical colleges and institutions, including those run by religious and linguistic minorities, to make admissions on the basis of their own rules and procedures.

"The power to frame regulations for the conduct of professional examinations is a far cry from actually holding the examinations and the two cannot be equated...we also have no hesitation in holding that the MCI is not empowered under the Act to actually conduct the NEET," it said.

The majority verdict said that the right to admit students in different educational and medical institutions was an integral part of the right to administer and it could not be interfered with except in cases of maladministration or lack of transparency.

Citing constitutional provisions and various precedents, the court said the right to administer an educational institution would essentially include the right to admit students and this right could not be taken away on the basis of notifications issued by the MCI and DCI, which had no authority to do so.

It held the policy to be "ultra vires".

The court also said that the desire to give due recognition to merit was "laudable" but the pragmatic realities have to also be kept in mind when policy decisions are taken in matters such as this.

"In a single-window competition, the disparity in educational standards in different parts of the country cannot ensure a level playing field...the decision of the Central government to support a single entrance examination would perpetuate such divide in the name of giving credit to merit," it said.

However, authoring a dissenting judgment, Justice A R Dave held NEET to be not only legally and constitutionally valid but added it would prove to be a "boon" to students aspiring to join the medical profession.

"If only one examination in the country is conducted and admissions are given on the basis of the result of the said examination, in my opinion, unscrupulous and money-minded businessmen operating in the field of education would be constrained to stop their corrupt practices and it would help a lot, not only to the deserving students but also to the nation in bringing down the level of corruption," he said.

परीक्षा की तैयारी कर रहे छात्र फैसले से निराश   3

मानव संसाधन मंत्रालय को अब सिंगल टेस्ट प्रपोजल की चिंता

नेशनल ब्यूरो | नई दिल्ली

मेडिकल में सिंगल एंट्रेस टेस्ट पर सुप्रीम कोर्ट की रोक के बाद मानव संसाधन मंत्रालय भी अपने एजेंडे पर सतर्क हो गया है। मानव संसाधन मंत्रालय एकल परीक्षाओं का पुरजोर समर्थन करता रहा है।

आईआईटी व अन्य इंजीनियरिंग संस्थानों की साझा परीक्षा के लिए खासी मशक्कत करके एआईईईई व जेईई को एक साथ कराने का फैसला हुआ था। आईआईटी की प्रवेश परीक्षा के लिए तय फार्मूला अधर में है। परसेंटाइल पर राज्य सरकारों व आईआईटी में भ्रम के चलते मामला कोर्ट पहुंच गया। नार्मेलाइजेशन का फार्मूला भी कोर्ट में है। सिंगल टेस्ट के लिए मैकेनिज्म बनाने की पहल भी मंत्रालय कर रहा है। मानविकी, कामर्स, साइंस की कई परीक्षाओं को साथ करने का प्रस्ताव भी मंत्रालय के पास विचाराधीन है। मंत्रालय के सूत्रों ने कहा कि अब इस मसले पर काफी सोच विचार कर आगे बढ़ने की जरूरत है।   **शेष पेज | 4**

मानव संसाधन मंत्रालय ...

जरूरत होने पर इसकी समीक्षा भी की जाएगी। हालांकि सीबीएसई चेयरमैन विनीत जोशी ने भास्कर से कहा कि मेडिकल में सिंगल टेस्ट पर सुप्रीम कोर्ट के फैसले का असर अखिल भारतीय इंजीनियरिंग प्रवेश परीक्षा पर नहीं होगा। यह परीक्षा पहले से हो रही है। उन्होंने सिंगल टेस्ट के लिए प्रस्तावित मैकेनिज्म पर भी कोई असर नहीं पड़ने की बात कही। जोशी ने कहा कि मैकेनिज्म इन्फ्रास्ट्रक्चर के लिए होगा। बाकी चीजें तय होनी है। मंत्रालय सूत्रों का कहना है कि कोर्ट के फैसले का अध्ययन करके इसके असर का आकलन किया जाएगा। जरूरी होने पर मंत्रालय अपने फैसलों की समीक्षा करेगा।

'Corridor talk' predicted doom for NEET

Advocates Knew Crux Of Majority Decision

Dhananjay Mahapatra | TNN

New Delhi: The Supreme Court corridor talk had much before the delivery of the judgment on Thursday accurately predicted the fate of NEET — the single-window entrance cum-eligibility test for 38,000 MBBS, BDS and MD seats offered by government and at a premium by private medical colleges.

The buzz turned out to be right even about the precise grounds that Chief Justice of India (CJI) Altamas Kabir and Justice Vikramjit Sen cited to scrap the NEET: that MCI and DCI did not have statutory jurisdiction and uniform entrance scheme violated the fundamental rights of both private and minority educational institutions.

Considering that few would have read the draft verdict as well as the premium that SC has traditionally put on secrecy, the clairvoyance of the corridor struck many.

Interestingly, an article captioned "Into the Darkness" by advocate Gopal Shankarnarayan and uploaded on website "Bar and Bench" at 8.36 am on Thursday — a good two hours prior to the pronouncement of the judgment — not only predicted that the petitions by private medical colleges would be allowed by Justices Kabir and Sen on the ground that MCI had no jurisdiction to notify NEET, but also that that Justice A R Dave would dissent.

Shankarnarayan wrote: "In a little while, on his last day in office, the Chief Justice's court will deliver the much awaited judgment concerning the validity of the national medical entrance test to be conducted by the Medical

For steps to download and view free Alive app, see Page 20

Council of India."

"For the better part of the last week, senior counsel and junior advocates alike have without compunction shared a story that the appeals by the private colleges will be allowed with a declaration that the MCI has no jurisdiction, and that Justice Dave will dissent from this view. The judgment, it is

> **Interestingly, an article by advocate Gopal Shankarnarayan at 8.36 am on Thursday predicted that the petitions by private medical colleges would be allowed by Justices Kabir and Sen**

confidently touted, runs into more than 190 pages and in excess of 300 paragraphs. It is my fervent hope that this tale is false — a figment of some perverse and destructive mind. In a few hours, we will know the truth," the advocate wrote.

Justice Kabir's short tenure as the CJI — from September 29, 2012 till July 18, 2013 — was peppered with controversies: be it for the way the Sahara-Sebi tussle was heard out of

turn by the CJI-headed bench when it was pending before another two-judge bench. Many were puzzled also when a CJI-headed bench took up the petition by Bharti chief Sunil Mittal and Essar promoter Sashi Ruia for quashing of summons in a 2G case when the main case was pending before a separate two-judge bench. Selections for higher judiciary also attracted attention because some of the interesting choices made by the collegium.

Shankarnarayan notes these aspects but does not forget to give credit to Justice Kabir where it was due. "To be fair to Kabir, his demeanour as a judge saw very little change when he came to occupy this high office. He continued to be a complex man — tardy with sittings, patient with the junior bar, arbitrary with listings, and for the large part, good-humoured," he wrote in the article.

"Last week, Chief Justice Bhattacharya of Gujarat leveled some hard-hitting criticism at (Justice) Kabir for having superseded him because he had objected to the latter's sister being appointed to the Calcutta high court merely a few months before she turned 60. Kabir's rancour at this was evident when he took the unprecedented step of writing to the Government stating that Bhattacharya and two others had been overlooked by the Collegium "because their elevation as such would prove to be counter-productive and not conducive to administration of justice"," he added.

FINDING THE RIGHT ANSWER

OLD SYSTEM | Until 2012, most states followed their own admission procedures, some used class XII scores and others conducted entrance exams. In Maharashtra, the state administered MHT-CET whose scores were used by government institutes; an association of private colleges meanwhile had its own entrance exam. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) conducted the All-India Pre-Medical Test and 15% of seats in all medical and dental colleges nationwide were reserved for candidates appearing for this test

NEET SYSTEM | Admissions to all government medical and dental colleges across the country were based on the scores of the Medical Counil of India's National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET). For undergraduate courses it was administered by the CBSE, and for post-graduate courses by the National Board of Examinations. The first NEET was conducted for the term beginning 2013. An all-India merit list was generated along with a separate merit list for each state. Private colleges too were asked to accept NEET scores

CHALLENGE — Apart from private colleges, state governments of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu moved court against the NEET system

SUPREME COURT VERDICT — The powers conferred on MCI and Dental Council of India under the provisions of the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956, and the Dentists Act, 1948...are restricted to laying down standards which are uniformly applicable to all medical colleges and institutions in India to ensure the excellence of medical education in India.... The MCI is not empowered under the 1956 Act to actually conduct the NEET

Students dismayed by changes

Yogita Rao & Hemali Chhapia | TNN

Mumbai: Lakhs of medical aspirants in the country are left facing mid-course changes in their preparations after the Supreme Court decided to quash the single-window National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET).

Rajlaxmi Iyer, a class XII student in Mumbai, said, "Last year, there were apprehensions about whether Maharashtra will adopt NEET. Months after its acceptance, the test has got cancelled. Most students start preparing for entrance examin-

ations in class XI. We will now have to make major adjustments to our preparation methods."

Students in Maharashtra are also upset because NEET was based on NCERT syllabus of class XI and XII, whereas the state's MHT-CET is based on state board curriculum of class XII. Although the state board too has adopted most of NCERT course outline, the syllabus for NEET was more extensive. So, many pupils complain that they have spent months studying topics that may no longer be crucial for them to get admission in a medical college.

"The government should stop experimenting on students and study all the legalities involved before implementing any new system," said a parent.

"Students have to go through unnecessary stress due to such changes," said Aakash Chaudhry, director of Aakash Educational Services.

Chirag Shah, a PG student, had to undergo a testing time this year with the implementation of NEET. "The court case delayed our entrance test results by three months, in turn delaying admissions," said Shah.

Times Of India ND 19/07/2013   P-13

Ex-MCI chief: SC ruling unfortunate

Durgesh Nandan Jha | TNN

New Delhi: The Supreme Court decision to scrap NEET — the single window admission route for MBBS, BDS and post-graduate courses — has come under a scathing criticism from several academicians including Dr S K Sarin, the former chairman of the board of governors of Medical Council of India. Sarin, one of the key persons behind the move, has termed the SC order an unfortunate and regressive step.

"While I have full faith in the judiciary and respect the NEET verdict, I think it is a bit unfortunate. The decision takes away all our efforts to streamline the admission process. We are back to square one," the former MCI chief said. Sarin was appointed as the head of the MCI board of governors in May 2010.

"Implementation of NEET was one of the key decisions taken during my tenure. The SC itself gave a go-ahead to the proposal in December 2010 following which a gazette notification was issued for its implementation," he said. The examinations were conducted for both UG and PG courses under NEET format recently; thus doing away with the need to appear for separate tests for the autonomous institutions, state and private medical colleges.

Sarin said that NEET was born after due diligence and consultation with all stakeholders including the various secondary boards — CBSE, ICSE,
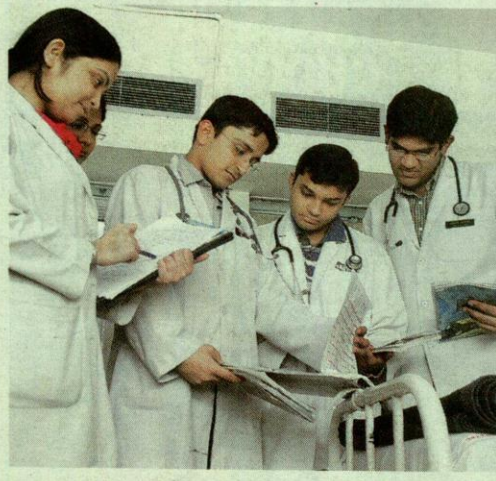

VENTING IRE: S K Sarin

Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh Board, and the representatives of more than 300 government and private medical colleges. "There was near unanimity among all over the need for a common exam. Subsequently, the health ministry entrusted the CBSE and the National Board of Examinations for undergraduate and PG courses respectively to conduct the exams," Sarin, a renowned gastroenterologist and current head of the Delhi-based Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences said.

Experts say appearing for multiple tests spend lot of money which includes the cost of form, which range from Rs 1,000 to Rs 3,000, amount spent on travelling, and there is also a variation in the examination pattern.

"When there can be a common entrance exam for engineering, why not for medical courses?" Sarin asked. The Sarin-led MCI had also put forward a proposal to start the licentiate examination to assess standards for an Indian Medical Graduate under its 'Vision 2015' initiative. It is yet to be implemented.

Medical muddle

STUDENTS HIT

■ Critics say the verdict favours private players in the field of medical education who charge lakhs of rupees in capitation fees and many are even alleged to be selling seats. So, students will have to shell out a lot of money to get admission. And those who can't afford to pay will be at a disadvantage

■ Since every state and private college conduct its own entrance exams, students will be required to travel across India to write multiple exams

SC verdict quashing single entrance test for medical courses has invited criticism

By **Mail Today Bureau** in New Delhi

THE hopes of lakhs of medical aspirants were shattered as the Supreme Court on Thursday quashed the notification for holding a single common entrance test for admission to medical and dental colleges across India.

In a verdict, which critics said was a boost for private players at the cost of inconvenience to students, a three-judge bench presided over by Chief Justice Altamas Kabir quashed by a 2:1 majority the notifications issued by the Medical Council of India (MCI) and the Dental Council of India (DCI) for conducting the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET).

Chief Justice Kabir and Justice Vikramjit Sen held that the common entrance test for admission in medical colleges violated the right of proprietors of private institutions and also the right of minority institutions to admit students of their choice. The court, however, clarified that the verdict will not affect the admissions already made.

The two judges stressed that the decision violated the right to trade under Article 19(1)(g) and various other fundamental rights. Besides, the right of MCI and DCI to prescribe standards of education could not be extended to controlling all admissions.

They ruled that a single test would give an edge to students in big cities as the standard of education was not the same throughout the country. The decision would thus perpetuate the divide between urban and rural areas.

However, Justice Anil R. Dave, batting for students in his minority judgment, said the introduction of NEET would ensure more transparency and less hardship to the students.

Justice Dave held in his dissenting judgment that a common entrance test was not only legal but also "a boon for students" as it would "put an end to corrupt practices of unscrupulous and money-minded businessmen operating in the field of education".

The health ministry is said to be unhappy with the verdict and is reportedly planning to seek legal opinion on filing a review petition.

NO QUOTA IN FACULTY

THE Supreme Court on Thursday ruled against reservation in appointment to faculty positions in super-specialty courses in medical colleges. A five-judge Constitution bench headed by CJI Altamas Kabir passed the order while allowing petitions challenging quota in faculty positions in AIIMS. Noting that the court had, in the Indra Sawhney case, advised against reservation in technical posts, the bench said it could not take a different view.

Meet IIM-A faculty without going to B-school

Chetna Mehra
Chennai, July 18

You don't have to ace the Common Admission Test and go through a gruelling interview process to engage in those intellectually stimulating business discussions with the country's leading professors. India's top management institute, the Indian Institute of Management – Ahmedabad (IIM-A), is giving an opportunity to everyone by launching FacConnect – a unique social interaction initiative by the student body which handles the institute's external relations.

The social media initiative aims at extending the institute's online outreach. The programme will give interested netizens a chance to interact with faculty members of IIM-A and engage in discussions with them on selected topics.

"The areas of discussion as well as the faculty members will be chosen keeping in mind some of the most pressing concerns of the day," said Sarthak Phadke, member of the media cell at IIM-A, in an

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, AHMEDABAD

launches

FacConnect

An opportunity to interact with top management faculty at IIM A!

IIM Ahmedabad

e-mail reply. "The initiative will provide an opportunity for complete outsiders to interact and discuss issues and relevant topics with (our) reputed faculty."

The outreach programme also gives an opportunity for aspiring students who want to join the reputed B-School a

glimpse of what one can expect in the premier institute.

The business school is using a mix of social media platforms such as Google Hangout, Facebook and Twitter to launch and execute the discussions.

The shortlisting for the programme will be done on

the basis of answers and essays submitted by those interested.

"Unlike conventional methods, social media has the ability to reach thousands of people at one go, it will also allow us to get feedback about the activity regularly and introduce required

changes," added Phadke. Netizens will have to go through an online submission and shortlisting process to interact with a new faculty member each month.

The discussions will take place on Google Hangout on topics such as public systems, business policy, marketing, and ethics in business. The initiative is primarily aimed at students and professionals who have a keen interest in such topics. Participants with a non-management background are also eligible to apply.

The institute has a social media presence on multiple platforms including Wordpress. "With the current migration of offline to online and large number of traditional media houses moving to online editions, online content is slowly building credibility with the audience as well," said Phadke. "Coupled with the ease of use and the speed, it is very crucial for the dissemination of information."

The last date for registering for FacConnect is July 24.

Economic Times ND 19/07/2013   P-1

GLOBALLY, SUCH MODELS HAVE CREATED A STORM

IIT-IT to Offer Free Online Courses

Seven leading IITs, software biggies and Nasscom team up to provide IT education to masses

The Lowdown on MOOCs

Massive open online courses

Make high quality education from top universities accessible to anyone, anywhere in the world, online & for free

PARTNERS

IITs
TCS
Infosys
Nasscom
Cognizant

ROLES

IITs

Will run three mini modules of a computer science course to run over 12 weeks

Each module will have 12 lectures

Nasscom & Industry

Helping to make students more industry and job-ready

Giving inputs on applicability & problem-solving aspects in the curriculum

Sharing information with IITs on 67 entry-level job roles

RICA BHATTACHARYYA
MUMBAI

Seven leading IITs, Infosys, TCS, Cognizant and industry lobby Nasscom are coming together to launch a bunch of free, online courses that could potentially help 100,000-150,000 people a year get high-quality education and make them job-ready. The courses will be offered using the model of massive open online courses (MOOCs), which is globally creating an upheaval in the world of higher education. The first three courses in computer science are expected to roll out this October.

"This programme is particularly relevant to India because of the high number of young students who need to be educated and trained," says Lakshmi Narayanan, vice-chairman of Cognizant.

MOOCs make high-quality education from top universities accessible to anyone, anywhere in the world, online and for free.

The model was rolled out in early 2012 back-to-back by two start-ups, Udacity and Coursera, both emerging out of Stanford University. This was followed by edX, MIT-Harvard's online courses platform.

About 15 faculty members from the seven older IITs will form the faculty and are currently designing the course.

BEYOND BOOKS & BORDERS ▶▶ PAGE 6

MOOCs Promise to Take Learning Beyond Books and Borders

US consortia in tie-ups with local universities for taking content online; experiments on teaching methods and certification still on

RICA BHATTACHARYYA
MUMBAI

For 29-year-old Anil Kumar, a business consultant at Cognizant Technology Solutions, an online course in 'gamification' fast-tracked his career, earning him a consulting project for his firm in the US. Kumar learnt the concept from Coursera, a social entrepreneurship firm partnering with 33 top universities in the world that offer courses online for anyone to take for free.

"Since gamification (application of game elements to non-game problems, such as business and social impact challenges) is a new topic, I was able to scale up fast and have become a subject matter expert," says Kumar, who has done his engineering from Manipal Institute of Technology and MBA from IIM Indore.

Bhuvanesh Baberwal, an engineer and MBA from IIIT Gwalior who is preparing for his civil services exams, has completed 60 courses from Coursera and has also enrolled into similar platforms, Udacity and edX. He says the courses opened up world class "good quality education" that would have cost him millions of dollars in a traditional classroom environment of one of the top global schools.
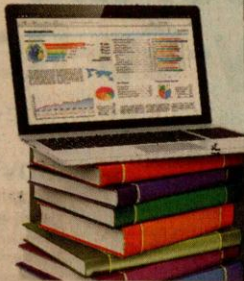
Kumar and Baberwal are among many participants in the global education revolution called MOOCs, or massive open online courses. Interactive learning content is delivered online to any individual, anywhere in the world for free. The lectures are delivered in video chunks and students can watch them at their convenience. Students can also participate in interactive quizzes, short video lectures, open forum discussions and assignments. Though it's early days yet for MOOCs and experiments on certification, assessment, pedagogy and other aspects are on, they have opened up high quality education opportunities like never before.

India is the largest driver of traffic for the courses outside of the US, according to data from the three MOOCs consortia from the US – Coursera, edX and Udacity – which offer courses from the world's elite universities. Udacity also has a strong tie to industry and bridges workforce-related skills in their courses. At edX, Indian enrolments are the second highest across all courses. And with nearly 100,000 visits last month alone, India is the largest driver of traffic outside the US for Udacity.

Coursera and edX are exploring associations with several top Indian institutes of higher education, including the IITs. Udacity too sees India as a huge opportunity and is keen on making inroads. A few weeks ago, IIT Bombay joined edX, and some of its regular courses will be available to lakhs of students in the world. And after the success of its experimental course on web intelligence and big data on Coursera last year, IIT Delhi is planning to repeat it this year. "We are open to partnering with other institutions so that their students can have access to IIT faculty and resources," says Prof Huzur Saran, head of computer science department at IIT Delhi.

Coursera is developing a mobile application so that students from economically weaker backgrounds in India can access courses on Akash tablets, which the government is keen to take to people at Rs 1,500 a piece.

"In India, students face the problem of intermittent internet connectivity. With the mobile App we are developing, students can download course content when they have no connectivity and access it later," says Andrew Ng, one of the co-founders of Coursera, which has about 400 courses and 4 million students. In the past six months, Coursera has seen a 139% increase in Indian student enrolment.

Coursera is also discussing with several Indian universities a model called "flip classroom". Students can listen to lecture material at home and then come to collaborative classroom teaching. It has introduced an option called Signature Track, which will give students in select courses the opportunity to earn a verified certificate for completing their course on payment of about $50.

AFTP, a MOOC platform that provides application-oriented business courses, is pursuing partnerships with IIT Kharagpur, IMT Ghaziabad and IISWBM Calcutta to offer courses for credit in a "flip classroom" framework. It is also pursuing partnership with employers like CMC to offer courses to new hires. "India is one of our most important target developing nations," says Raj Chakrabarti, one of its founders and professor of systems engineering at Carnegie Mellon University.

While MOOCs promise to change the higher education landscape, they are still in the evolving stages as far as pedagogy, assessment – online tests are open to plagiarism and proxy – and authenticated certification are concerned. The drop-out rate too is very high, with only about 10% of the registered students completing courses.

"Some students are hoping that a certificate of completion can enhance their employment prospects, but we don't have rigorous enough standards and methods for evaluation to put a lot of weight on these certificates," says Larry Diamond, director, Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law at Stanford University, who teaches a course on democratic development on Coursera.

Experimentations on pedagogy are on. One observation is that half the students start working on their homework before watching video lectures, which could lead to professors assigning homework before the lecture. "It appears that students get more excited about learning when they try to puzzle out a problem," says Agarwal of edX.

"We are learning about teaching methods with research that can translate to on-campus teaching," he adds. For example, at MIT, researcher David E Pritchard has been studying how people learn. The data from the first prototype course alone, one that Agarwal taught on Circuits & Electronics, is staggering and can fill 110,000 books. "We recorded every click – all 230 million of them," he says.

Critics say online courses cannot replace traditional classroom teaching methods and university degrees. However, there seems to be a significant scope for MOOCs as a complementary teaching method, particularly in the context of continuing professional education and 'lifelong learning'. "We do not believe MOOCs will replace on-campus teaching. But we do see MOOCs as enriching college courses, through blended or hybrid courses," says Agarwal. In such courses, the lecture portion of a course is delivered online, outside of classroom time, and instructors use class time for more interactions with students on campus.

What form MOOCs eventually take is hard to predict, but for now, they can be a priceless supplement.

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The Higher Education Web

BIG MOOC PLATFORMS

US: Coursera, edX, Udacity
UK: Future-Learn

A SHORT HISTORY

IN EARLY 2012, start-ups Udacity and Coursera rolled out short interactive courses online

FUTURELEARN, Britain's only MOOC with a partnership of 23 leading British and global universities, is readying to launch its initial set of courses in September

COURSERA partnered with several top universities such as Stanford, Columbia, University of Michigan

A FEW months later, MIT and Harvard started non-profit open online courses, named edX

INDIVIDUAL professors from the world over also offer lessons on these platforms

PARTICIPATING UNIVERSITIES
Stanford, Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Pennsylvania State University, Columbia University, National University of Singapore, Indian Institute of Technology, etc

THE INDIA PICTURE

IITs, Nasscom and industry coming together to offer MOOC

IIT DELHI to again offer big data course on Coursera this year

IIT BOMBAY joined edX to offer some of its regular courses online

COURSERA, AFTP discussing "flip classroom" model with Indian universities

COURSERA making mobile app so students can access courses on Akash tablets

India is the largest driver of traffic for the courses outside of the US, according to data from three American consortia

Industry-Academia Partnership

The participating IITs are Delhi, Madras, Kharagpur, Kanpur, Roorkee, Bombay, and Guwahati.

"We are currently working out the details of the programme in consultation with Nasscom," says Prof Bhaskar Ramamurthi, director, IIT-Madras.

"We are also hoping to rope in more than 500 mentors on a voluntary basis from industry and academia," adds AK Ray, professor of the Centre for Educational Technology at IIT-Kharagpur.

This is the biggest industry-academia partnership to help students and professionals access top-quality course content and meet specific industry demands. "For the first time, students from both rural areas and metros will have access to the same content, channel, tests, experts and certification," says Cognizant's Narayanan.

People who take the courses will be eligible to write proctored exams for a minimal fee and get certificates. For the computer science courses, IIT will give certification. For the foundation courses, industry will give certificates. It could also be a joint certification with IITs.

"Students from the second year onwards in science and engineering from any college can take the courses that will be offered multiple times a year," says Andrew Thangaraj, associate professor of electrical engineering at IIT-Madras. "It will make a difference in their career progress."

Google is providing its Course Builder platform for hosting MOOCs. HackerRank will provide their web portal, where students can practise their programming assignments and get them verified and graded.

Till now, IITs have been offering open courseware on the National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL). This is a repository of video lectures created by professors of the seven older IITs and IISC-Bangalore available to anyone, anywhere in the world on Youtube etc. However, NPTEL does not give any certification; neither does it have any interaction or synchronised classes. In the next phase of NPTEL, all these seven IITs and industry have joined hands to offer courses on the web-based MOOCs platform, which will also offer certification.

"Cognizant has been discussing this idea with academia and industry for the past three years... Cognizant will make available infrastructure at its training facilities during off-peak times, such as weekends, to enable students to take tests and get certified," says Narayanan.

Students from the second year onwards in science and engineering from any college can take the courses that will be offered multiple times a year

Initially, IITs will run three mini modules of a computer science course, including programming, algorithm, and data structures. Each module will have 12 lectures and there will be a total of 36 lectures over 12 weeks.

Going forward, the plan is to repeat this model in VLSI (very large scale integration) embedded systems and other branches of engineering and general sciences.

"Industry is getting involved with inputs on applicability and problem-solving aspects with the aim of making students more industry and job-ready," says Sandhya Chintala, executive director, sector skills council, Nasscom, who is leading the programme for the industry association.

Industry has also shared a brief on the skills needed for 67 entry-level job roles. IITs will make these available on MOOC platform. "This is the first time that industry has articulated the performance of an individual at an entry-level job role. This clarity will help formal or non-formal training institutions to get people job-ready," says Chintala.

DNA

Jab life ho out of control... IIT-B sings 'all izz well'

Thursday, Jul 18, 2013, 10:20 IST | Agency: DNA

Kanchan Srivastava

- Uday Mohite/DNA

Around 800 new students admitted in various B Tech courses this year in IIT Bombay will undergo a comprehensive counselling programme within a week of joining. The Institute has chalked out a half-day workshop on "Preventive Mental Health" to be conducted by end of July and which is mandatory for all students to attend.

The workshop aims to boost students' "mental and emotional well-being".
Students will learn how to tackle homesickness, deals with hostel conflicts and take on the academic pressure that comes with a robust curriculum. A panel of experts from Tata Institute of Social Sciences and other institutes has been invited to conduct the workshop. The new academic year starts on Thursday.

Most first year students are teenagers. As all the IIT courses in are essentially residential, all of them will be staying in hostels which might be a new experience to most of them.

Prof Urjit Yajnik, dean of students affair, told **dna**, "We have permanent counselling at the campus for students. This year we decided to start off with a comprehensive session also, so that students know better how to deal with situations before they become too complex or get out of hand."

The workshop will also be attended by senior students who play the role of the "mentor" to new students. IITs had started a mentor programme a couple of years ago to support first year students.

According to a professor, several first year students need counselling during the course for various reasons including homesickness, academic pressure and conflicts that come with shared hostel rooms. "Senior students have a different set of emotional problems altogether, which includes relationship and career issues," he added.

Shivani Manchanda, counsellor at IIT B who is finalising the finer details of the preventive mental health session, says, "Loneliness and homesickness is what a new student feels once he/she joins. On the other hand, for some students from a rural background it's a cultural shock to shift from a vernacular medium curriculum to an English curriculum. At the same time, they have to adjust with roommates and also handle academic pressure."

This workshop aims to address all those issues and the students will be told to approach counsellor if they can't handle any emotional situation. Several cases of suicide have been reported in IITs in the past, which alerted the authorities, forcing them to establish counselling centres in the campus.

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National Network Of Education
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International

8 Indian Universities receive Obama-Singh Grant for Higher Education Reforms

July 15, 2013

In a continuation of the educational partnership between India and the United States, **eight institutional partnership projects** have been selected for the second round of Obama-Singh 21st Century Knowledge Initiative awards.

This initiative strengthens collaboration and builds partnerships between American and Indian institutions of higher education in priority fields. **Each project will be awarded approximately $250,000 that can be used over a three year period**, with the objectives of cultivating educational reform, fostering economic growth, generating shared knowledge to address global challenges, and developing junior faculty at Indian and American institutions of higher learning.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Barack Obama announced the Obama-Singh Initiative in November 2009 as an affirmation of their commitment to building an enhanced India-U.S. partnership in education. Each government pledged $5 million for this endeavour, for a total of $10 million.

U.S. led Partnerships:

Harvard School of Public Health
Project Title: Harvard-India Nutrition Initiative
Partner Institution: *St. Johns Research Institute, Bangalore*

Ohio State University
Project Title: The STEM Faculty Project: Training the Next Generation of STEM Faculty at Higher Education Institutions in India
Partner Institution: Aligarh Muslim University

University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Project Title: Inclusive Universities: Linking Diversity, Equity and Excellence for the 21st Century
Partner Institution: University of Pune

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Project Title: Partnering for Success: Advancing Sustainability Research and Education in India
Partner Institution: Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore

Indian led Partnerships:

Annamalai University
Project Title: Tamil Nadu Energy Futures: Mapping Uncertainties and Risks
Partner Institutions: Tennessee Technological University

Assam Agricultural University
Project Title: Engineering ADP - Glucose Pyrophosphorylase (AGPase) enzymes for heat tolerance in rice
Partner Institution: Washington State University

Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women
Project Title: A Sustainable 'Response to Intervention' model for successful inclusion of children with disabilities -A India-US Partnership
Partner Institution: University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

National Institute of Technology - Trichy
Project Title: Cognitive based Curriculum Development Tool for emerging areas of Computer Engineering and Management Studies for improving Teaching-Learning Process
Partner Institution: University of Nevada, Las Vegas

The next request for proposals for the Obama-Singh Initiative grants will be announced this month.