

## Newspaper Clips

July 4-7 2017

July 7

### **IIT Admissions 2017: Supreme Court Halts JEE Advanced Counselling**

<http://www.ndtv.com/education/iit-admissions-2017-supreme-court-halts-counselling-under-jee-advanced-1721832>

**The Supreme Court on Friday ordered a halt to further counselling and admissions to Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) in respect of entrance tests under JEE (Advanced).**

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday ordered a halt to further counselling and admissions to Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) in respect of JEE (Advanced) exam. The apex court restrained IITs across the country till further orders from conducting counselling or admitting students subsequent to the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) this year, reported Press Trust of India.

A bench of Justices Dipak Misra and A M Khanwilkar also restrained the High Courts from entertaining any writ petition relating to counselling and admissions to the IITs from today onwards.

According to Press Trust of India, the Supreme Court also sought details of the petitions pending before the High Courts across the country and the number of petitions challenging the IIT-Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) 2017 rank list, and awarding of additional marks to all candidates who had appeared in the test which was held for admissions to IITs and NITs.

On June 30, in a petition filed by IIT aspirant Aishwarya Agarwal, the Supreme Court sought Centre Government's response on a plea seeking quashing of the IIT Joint Entrance Examination 2017 rank list and awarding of additional marks to all candidates who had appeared in the test.

The petition, had sought the court's direction to declare that the action of awarding "bonus marks" to the candidates who had appeared in the JEE (Advanced) 2017 examination was wrong and violated her right, as well as that of other students.

IANS reported that the extra marks in question were granted in the wake of a printing error in a Hindi language paper.

The petition sought a direction from the court for preparation of a fresh all-India rank list after rectifying the scores of JEE (Advanced) and also award marks for the incorrect questions to the candidates who had attempted the right answers. As an alternative, the petitioner said the institution should conduct fresh examination and prepare a fresh merit list or grant all students another opportunity to appear in the examination to be conducted next year.

IIT Madras was the official organiser of JEE Advanced 2017

In an affidavit submitted before the court yesterday, the joint admission board of IITs said the process of seat allocation is going on and 29425 candidates have already accepted the allotted seats and reported for physical verification of documents.

"In case the ongoing counselling and admission process is disturbed," the affidavit also said that, "the admission procedure of more than 36,000 students in 97 institutes under the joint seat allocation programme for IITs, NIITs, IIITs and GFTIs (Government-Funded Technical Institutions) would be scrapped."

The bench now listed the matter for further hearing on Monday.

The Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Advanced, considered as one of the toughest examination for the admissions in graduate level courses in Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) and other centrally funded institutes, was conducted on May 21 and the results were declared on June 11.

'JEE Advanced Counselling Process Suspended'

"As directed by the Honourable Supreme Court of India on 7th July 2017, admission and counselling process for JEE (Advanced) 2017 has been suspended till further orders," said a notification posted on the official website of JEE Advanced 2017.

Earlier, JEE Advanced organisers have declared an admission schedule applicable to those candidates who have accepted seats in various programs (other than preparatory courses) through JEE (Advanced) 2017. IIT Delhi was scheduled to start the process from July 19.

### **IIT Bombay will soon work with BSF**

<http://www.inuth.com/india/iit-bombay-will-soon-work-with-bsf-know-how/>

**The BSF will sign a deal with the IIT this week, the step is being taken to identify the illegal tunnel and to foil infiltration bid**

To beef up the western border in order to tackle infiltration of terrorists from Pakistan, the Border Security Force (BSF) has roped in the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay for research and development purposes. The step is being taken to identify the illegal tunnels and to foil infiltration bids. The force is expected to sign a deal with the IIT this week.

As per a report in The Indian Express, a senior BSF officer said: "We are looking at modern hi-tech gadgets to plug gaps in our border defence and also to strengthen the existing infrastructure. It is part of the BSF's integrated border management programme where multiple layers of security, both human and technical, will complement each other".

The Ministry of Home Affairs has given its nod to the idea and the deal will be signed on July 8 through a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the border force and the National Conference on Emerging Information Technology and Its Solutions (NCEITS) under IIT Bombay.

"Many of these technologies will have to be customised according to our needs and potential threats. For that, we need a high-quality research and development set-up. IIT will provide that," the senior officer added.

In last 5 years, the force has successfully unearthed four illegal tunnels in Jammu. As recent as this year, an illegal trans-border tunnel was identified in the Ramgarh area of Samba district. The tunnel started from Pakistan and ended at the border fence in the territory of India.

In order to strengthen the border, the government is exploring various forms of technology such as laser walls, earth sensors to underwater detectors. Also, the new laser walls are to be installed to prevent intrusion activities across the border and to immediately alert the nearest post for action.

## July 6

### **IIT/NIT admission: 6799 vacant seats after round 1**

<http://english.mathrubhumi.com/education/news/news-updates/iit-nit-admission-6799-vacant-seats-after-round-1vacant-seats-1.2061651>

As per the list published by the Joint Seat Allocation Authority, there are 19 vacant seats in IIT Madras, 8 in IIT Palakkad and 223 in NIT Calicut.

New Delhi: After Round 1 allotment and seat acceptance period in connection with IIT,NIT and other centrally-funded technical institutes, 6799 seats are lying vacant. As per the list published by the Joint Seat Allocation Authority, there are 19 vacant seats in IIT Madras, 8 in IIT Palakkad and 223 in NIT Calicut.

The result of Round 1 allotment was published on 28th June 2017. The candidates are directed to report at the reporting centre to confirm seat acceptance. The reporting time ended on 3 July 2017. The allotment was conducted for admission to 36,208 seats in 23 IITs, 31 NITs, 23 IIITs and 20 Other- Government Funded Technical Institutes (Other-GFTIs) and candidates accepted 29,415 allotted seats.

There is no vacant seat in Computer Science and Engineering at IIT Bombay which was the most sought after course and IIT. However, there are 3 vacant seats in Aerospace Engineering and 5 vacant seats in Engineering Physics at IIT Bombay.

The second round of allotment will be announced on 4th July 2017 at 5 pm. The list vacant seats in IIT Madras, IIT Palakkad and NIT Calicut are as follows:

#### **IIT Madras:**

Aerospace Engineering- 2

Engineering Physics- 1

Mechanical Engineering- 2

Naval Architecture and Ocean Engineering-1

Biological Engineering- 2

Civil Engineering- 1

Mechanical Engineering- 1

Biological Sciences- 5

Physics- 4

#### **IIT Palakkad**

Computer Science and Engineering- 3

Electrical Engineering- 4

Mechanical Engineering- 1

## **National Institute of Technology, Calicut**

Bio Technology- 21  
 Chemical Engineering- 24  
 Civil Engineering- 43  
 Computer Science and Engineering- 32  
 Electronics and Communication Engineering- 21  
 Engineering Physics- 7  
 Mechanical Engineering- 29  
 Electrical and Electronics Engineering- 29  
 Production Engineering- 7  
 Architecture- 10

## **IIT-B a favorite with JEE Advanced toppers, but fewer students in top 100 choose institute in 2017**

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/education/iit-b-a-favourite-with-jee-advanced-toppers-but-fewer-students-in-top-100-choose-institute-in-2017/story-UU1Y6NuSYBzVtUXXrzweCK.html>

### **The number of top rankers joining IIT-B seems to have shrunk a little, with 67 out of the top 100 opting for the institute in 2016 and 65 in 2015**

Mumbai: About 53 of the top 100 Joint Entrance Examination (JEE ) Advanced rank holders have chosen the Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay (IIT-B) over other IITs this year, data released by the institute after its first round of admissions has revealed. However, the number of toppers has shrunk as 67 of the top 100 had opted for IIT-B in 2016 and 65 in 2015.

Most of these students have chosen computer science and engineering course, which remains the most popular course year after year.

About “36 of top 50 ranks and 53 of top 100 ranks have chosen IIT-B by the end of round one of admission. Among the top 36, we also have three girls who have joined the computer science and engineering department,” said the press statement released by the institute today. A total of 75 girls have already confirmed admission with IIT as of now and the numbers might hopefully touch 90 soon.

“Computer science (CS) has been popular for years now, and students flock to IIT-B especially because we have a brilliant set of faculty in this department. Students choose faculty over the brand,” said Devang Khakkar, director, IIT-B. He added that what also matters is the increase in job opportunities available for students after a degree from IIT in this course. “Over the last two years, we have also slightly increased the intake capacity for this course, so have most of the other IITs,” he added.

Based on figures shared by the Joint Seat Allocation Authority (JoSAA) in the last few years, the number of top rankers joining IIT-B seems to have shrunk a little - 67 out of the top 100 rankers had opted for IIT-B in 2016 and 65 in 2015. “These numbers say a lot about how students are now looking for IITs closer home than just run after the brand,” said a JoSAA official. This year, rank 1 and 2 joined CS in IIT-B but rank 3 has gone to IIT-Delhi for the same course.

## **IIT-Bombay admissions: After first round, only 8.18 per cent girls enrolled**

<http://indianexpress.com/article/education/iit-bombay-admissions-after-first-round-only-8-18-per-cent-girls-enrolled-4737778/>

**A total of 917 students sought admissions to engineering courses across 16 streams at the institute in the first round. The total available seats are 929, apart from three supernumerary seats.**

**Only 75 girls have taken admission to the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, (IIT-B) at the end of the first**

ONLY 75 girls have taken admission to the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, (IIT-B) at the end of the first round of admissions — 8.18 per cent of the enrollment so far. A total of 917 students sought admissions to engineering courses across 16 streams at the institute in the first round. The total available seats are 929, apart from three supernumerary seats. Even if the remaining 15 are all taken by girls, they will constitute only 9.6 percent of the new batch.

Director Devang Khakhar said: “A large number of girls who get good scores do not apply for the IITs. We need to understand the reasons behind this.” He said that a survey should be conducted by speaking to the girls who did not seek admissions despite clearing the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE). “Our women faculty are in touch with some of the candidates. Apart from counseling the candidates, they are also trying to understand their reservations,” said Khakhar.

Last year, girls formed only 8 per cent of the batch across all IITs in the country. In 2015, the figure was slightly higher at 9 per cent. In 2014, it was 8.8 per cent. The low visibility of girls caught the attention of the Joint Admission Board (JAB) of the IITs, considered one of the premier technical institutes in the country. A panel was set up to look into the poor representation and suggest ways to improve it.

One of the recommendations of the panel was to include supernumerary seats for women at each of the IITs. Earlier this year, the recommendation was approved by the JAB, which decided to add seats starting 2018 with an aim to reach 20 per cent representation by 2026. In a first this year, a special web-portal was launched last month to help aspiring girls get through the admission process. The portal was launched after the JEE Council observed that of the total number of girls who cleared the JEE (Adv) last year, only 38 per cent actually accepted a seat, pointing to a gap in the counselling process. The portal was spearheaded by IIT Mandi Director Timothy Gonsalves, who is also the chairperson of the panel looking into the gender gap. Khakhar was hopeful that once these measures are in place from next year, the numbers would increase.

### **IIT-B favourite among toppers**

The institute continued to remain the favourite among top scorers this year with 53 of the top 100 opting for a seat in IIT-B. Almost 72 per cent of the top 50 scorers chose IIT-B for an engineering course at the end of the first round of admissions this year, according to data from the Joint Seat Allocation Authority (JoSAA).

While the institute grabbed the biggest chunk of the “creamy layer” among its sister institutes, the number of toppers choosing IIT-B has reduced from last year’s 67. “We have some very good faculty members here. It is one of the things that attracts students to our institute,” said Khakhar.

## **IIT-Kharagpur holds workshop, plans to tackle mental stress in students**

<http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/kolkata/iit-kharagpur-holds-workshop-plans-to-tackle-mental-stress-in-students-4735873/>

**The workshop was initiated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Director of IIT-Kgp, Partha Pratim Chakrabarti, said the institute has taken many initiatives to identify core strengths of its students and eliminate weaknesses.**

In a bid to tackle mental stress in its students, IIT-Kharagpur held a workshop in campus Tuesday for recommendations to promote mental, physical and psychological wellness. The workshop was initiated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Director of IIT-Kgp, Partha Pratim Chakrabarti, said the institute has taken many initiatives to identify core strengths of its students and eliminate weaknesses.

“There are three kinds of stress a student faces during his time at an IIT — parental stress, peer stress and technology addiction stress. We want to relieve them of these stresses through various programmes. We have decided to conduct four programmes for our students. An induction programme in the first year, assimilation programme in second year, a re-orientation programme during third year and a de-induction programme in fourth year. These programmes will be conducted starting this year,” Prof Chakrabarti said.

The institute also has a counselling centre which tackles various problems faced by students. IIT-Kharagpur has also formed four student representative councils for undergraduate, post graduate, research scholar and women students to address their problems.

“Identifying problems faced by students will not serve the desired purpose. We have to find the core strength of each student and nurture it. When a student works hard, he is bound to face failures. We want to build resilience and teach students how to handle failures,” Prof Chakrabarti said.

The institute is also encouraging its students to take part in extra-curricular activities to find a balance between studies and their personal life.

“There are about sixty student societies in IIT-Kharagpur, and students can also enroll in health and fitness programmes. They should engage in creative work and learn time management. We do not want to make anything mandatory for students. They are free to engage in any activity of their choice. It is more of a participatory initiative aimed for the welfare of students,” he added.

## **IITs devise wellness path for students**

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/iits-devise-wellness-path-for-students/1/995113.html>

Kharagpur (WB), July 5 (PTI) To promote wellness among its students and help them to become not only as successful engineers but also strong emotional beings, several IITs have come together to brainstorm and introduce innovative programmes for human excellence.

To begin with, a workshop was organised yesterday at IIT Kharagpur on promotion of wellness in IIT campuses wherein perspectives of the IITs were presented by IIT Kharagpur, IIT Bombay, IIT Madras and IIT Gandhinagar, the last one representing the newer IITs.

Experts from IIT Kharagpur, NIMHANS, TISS Mumbai and several industry experts delved deep into the campus life at the IITs and tried to find a solution.

"Our aim is not to pick their weaknesses but to encourage their innate strengths and then sharpen them further. We should understand that most of the brilliant students in the country get admitted into the IIT system and their problems are very unique," said Prof. Partha Pratim Chakrabarti, Director of IIT Kharagpur.

"We need to relieve them from unnecessary and imaginary stress elements that they suffer from. And that is the reason why we are trying to get a unique solution," Prof. Chakrabarti had said.

IITs have considered programmes such as students helpline, induction programme, academic curricula update etc. IIT Kharagpur is introducing four programs for its under-graduate students.

While the first year students will have an induction programme helping them to settle with campus life, the second year students will have an assimilation session where they will understand the IIT system better.

Once in third year the students will have reorientation session and finally in third year they will go through a de-induction program to make them ready for life outside campus.

IIT BHU has introduced an induction program as well while IIT Bombay has collaborated with TISS for counseling helpline.

At IIT Kharagpur, the students' councils would now have representation of four categories of students? Woman, PhD, Postgraduate and Undergraduate from every department who will be further represented by a council member from each category.

Further, students counseling would also include services like career development and students' activities to make counseling stigma free and encourage students to opt for assistance for conscious health and wellness activities.

IIT Bombay has developed a detailed questionnaire to analyze students' mental health. IIT Madras has developed reactive and proactive programmes called Mitra and Saathi respectively.

The programme has been initiated by Ministry of Human Resources Development to develop a set of recommendations which could promote wellness among students across old and new IITs.

The outcome and recommendations of the workshop would be communicated to MHRD for considering execution at IITs and similar institutions.

## **IIT-B AGREES TO REVIEW FEE HIKE, STUDENTS CALL OFF HUNGER STRIKE**

[HTTP://MUMBAIMIRROR.INDIATIMES.COM/MUMBAI/OTHER/IIT-B-AGREES-TO-REVIEW-FEE-HIKE-STUDENTS-CALL-OFF-HUNGER-STRIKE/ARTICLESHOW/59449045.CMS](http://mumbai.Indiatimes.com/mumbai/other/iit-b-agrees-to-review-fee-hike-students-call-off-hunger-strike/articleshow/59449045.cms)



*Director says that a proposed committee will meet on July 10 to discuss the components.*

Students of IIT-Bombay called off their indefinite hunger strike for the time being on Tuesday after the authorities agreed to revise the announced fee structure, which has witnessed a staggering jump of 167 per cent to 300 per cent in non-tuition charges.

However, a complete rollback of the hike is unlikely. Under the new fee structure, declared in May, hostel charge went up from Rs 500 to Rs 2,000 while gymkhana fees were raised from Rs 750 to Rs 2,000, medical premium from Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,000 and mess advance from Rs 15,000 to Rs 20,000. In a mail sent to the students, IIT-B director Devang Khakhar said, "The promised White Paper (on the fee hike) will be ready on Friday, July 7 and will be sent to you by email."

The email, which has been accessed by Mirror, further said that a committee would be formed to discuss the White Paper and the fee components that can be reduced. The committee will meet on July 10. "The proposal of the committee with the revised fee structure will be taken to the Board of Governors at its next meet in August for decision. The current fee structure will remain in place until then," the email added. The committee will comprise the institute's director, deputy director (finance and external affairs), dean (student affairs), registrar, three representatives from the forum, Students Against Fee Hike-IIT-B, general secretary (postgraduate students) and a representative from the Research Scholars Forum. After receiving the email, the students, who started the relay hunger strike on Monday, convened a meeting and decided to suspend the agitation temporarily. The students have replied to the director, saying that they were keen on a solution to the stalemate.

"We look forward to a favourable resolution by the committee set up by the director failing which we will be forced to resume our protest," the statement said. The students further urged the director to ensure that the revised fee structure to be decided by the committee is implemented retrospectively and the excess amount is reimbursed to students who have already paid the hiked charges.

"We take it as a triumph of the anti-fee hike movement that the administration has been forced to take note of students' concerns and their demands for involvement in decision-making processes on matters that affect their stay and study on campus," read the statement.



Non-tuition charges went up by over 160% under new fee structure

## Two years after quitting, Anil Kakodkar set to head board of IIT-Roorkee

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/two-years-after-quitting-anil-kakodkar-set-to-head-board-of-iit-roorkee-4737943/>

Anil Kakodkar, after the President formally approves his appointment, will succeed Professor Ashok Mishra. Although the institute had suggested another term for Mishra, the ministry forwarded Kakodkar's name for the job.

TWO YEARS after he resigned as chairman of the Board of Governors (BoG) of IIT-Bombay following differences with former HRD Minister Smriti Irani, nuclear scientist Anil Kakodkar, 73, is set to re-enter the IIT fraternity as head of the BoG



at IIT-Roorkee. The HRD Ministry, which is now headed by Prakash Javadekar, is learnt to have forwarded Kakodkar's name for the post to President Pranab Mukherjee last month. He will be officially appointed once the recommendation has the President's stamp of approval.

The IIT BoG chairman's term is of three years. When contacted by The Indian Express, Kakodkar confirmed on Wednesday that the HRD Ministry had sought his concurrence before recommending his name for the job. "Yes, they (HRD Ministry) approached me and I have agreed," said Kakodkar, former chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission of India and former director of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre.

As first reported by The Indian Express on March 18, 2015, Kakodkar put in his papers after a disagreement with Irani over the choice of an IIT director. At that time, Kakodkar, by virtue of being the IIT-Bombay BoG chairman, was also a member of the selection committee constituted to screen candidates for the post of director at the IITs in Ropar, Bhubaneswar and Patna. Irani, as the HRD Minister, headed the selection committee.

Differences between the two surfaced in February 2015, when Irani scrapped the panel of 13 candidates shortlisted for the three posts following disagreement over the choice of director for IIT-Ropar. The minister called for a fresh round of interviews on March 22, and all 37 applicants were invited again. Miffed, Kakodkar quit his post on March 12, 2015, but later agreed to stay for another two months and complete his term on Irani's request. He, however, distanced himself from the final selection of directors for the three IITs. At that time, both Irani and Kakodkar denied reports of any rift and attributed the resignation to personal reasons.

The scientist first spoke out against the selection process in an interview in May 2015, saying that he resigned because he could not be party to any "wrongdoing". Criticising the decision to conduct fresh interviews he said, "The point is you can't be deciding that choice of IIT director or three IIT directors among 36 in a six- or seven-hour process. If you set aside everything, and then you decide like that, then you are running a lottery."

On the other hand, Irani, in an interview to NDTV in November 2015, alleged that Kakodkar broke the law by interviewing a candidate who had not applied for the post and felt "slighted" when it was pointed out to him. Irani was transferred to the Ministry of Textiles in a cabinet reshuffle in July 2016. When asked on Wednesday if his decision to accept the offer to head IIT-Roorkee's BoG had anything to do with the change of guard at the HRD Ministry and if he had put the controversy behind him, Kakodkar said, "I work according to my principles and I have agreed to it (the offer) now. That is all I can say."

Kakodkar, after the President formally approves his appointment, will succeed Professor Ashok Mishra. Although the institute had suggested another term for Mishra, the ministry forwarded Kakodkar's name for the job. A week ago, the President appointed Sanjeev Goenka, chairman of RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group, as head of IIT-Kharagpur's BoG. The ministry is yet to suggest any names for the corresponding posts at the IITs in Indore, Jodhpur, Gandhinagar and six new IITs set up by the Modi government in Jammu, Tirupati, Palakkad, Dharwar, Bhillai and Goa.

### **No UGC NET in July 2017 throws student plans in turmoil**

<http://indianexpress.com/article/education/no-net-in-july-throws-student-plans-in-turmoil-4737833/>

Clearing the NET is an essential qualification if someone wants to become an Assistant Professor or get into research. While NET is generally held twice a year, this year, the July round has been skipped, and instead, a single exam is being held in November.

Amish Verma, a student of MA History at Delhi University, was set for his first attempt at clearing the National Eligibility Test (NET) this July. However, on June 6, a notification on the CBSE NET website announcing that the next examination would be held in November hampered his plan.

“The NET is not an easy exam to clear; it takes multiple efforts. If I took it in July, I would have got some practice, if nothing else. I need the fellowship to be able to continue studying; my family won’t support me for long,” said the student from Lucknow.

Clearing the NET is an essential qualification if someone wants to become an Assistant Professor or get into research. While NET is generally held twice a year, this year, the July round has been skipped, and instead, a single exam is being held in November. While there are some reports suggesting that the NET exam would no longer be held twice a year and that the number of NET qualifications will be capped at six per cent, there has been no official statement on the matter by the University Grants Commission or the CBSE.

A UGC source, meanwhile, said, “No decision has been taken yet to make NET an annual exam. It’s still being discussed. The July round had to be scrapped because the results of the previous NET exam were delayed due to a court case.”

However, such reports have fanned concerns among students. Hemantika Singh, a research scholar from the Gender Studies department at Ambedkar University Delhi, was hoping to clear her exam this year. “Our futures are linked to this exam. If I am not being given the chance to take the exam in July, I’d at least like to know why. I’d like to know if we’ll get more than one opportunity the next year and the coming years, but there’s no clarity,” she said.

Several students, led by the All India Students’ Association (AISA), protested outside the UGC office on Wednesday against “scrapping” of the July round of NET. They met Additional Secretary Pankaj Mittal, who is learnt to have told them the matter was being discussed by the HRD Ministry and CBSE.

### **This 15-year-old cracks IIT JEE Advanced 2017, wants to run a start-up dealing in robotics**

<http://indianexpress.com/article/education/this-15-year-old-cracked-iit-jee-advanced-2017-wants-to-run-a-start-up-dealing-in-robotics/>

**Abhay had scored 87.2 per cent in class 12 exams from CBSE board and 85.63 per cent in class 10 from UP Board. In future, Abhay wish to own a startup that will deal in products related to robotics.**



While at the age of 15, most students appear for their class 10 examination, 15-year-old Abhay Agrawal from Uttar Pradesh’s Firozabad has cracked the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE) Advanced 2017 and scored 2467 All India Rank. He secured a seat in mechanical engineering at IIT-BHU. “I took admission in a coaching class in my city. Some people discouraged me but that motivated me to study hard,” Abhay said.

As per a TOI report, vice-chairman of IIT-JEE Kanpur zone Prof Shalabh, along with other staffers, were surprised when they checked Agarwal’s documents. “He could be the youngest candidate this year to join an IIT. His class 10 marksheet confirms that he is 15 and a half years old. He was born on November 9, 2001,” said a JEE staffer.

While Abhay has already got admission in IIT-BHU, however, he has opted for ‘float’ as he is aiming IIT Roorkee. “Since I jumped initial classes, I could complete my 12 before other students. I have been lucky to crack JEE Advanced as well. I want to be in IIT-Roorkee and hope I will get it,” Abhay said.

Abhay had scored 87.2 per cent in class 12 exams from CBSE board and 85.63 per cent in class 10 from UP Board. In future, Abhay wishes to own a startup that will deal in products related to robotics.

Abhay comes from a humble family as his father Mukesh Agarwal works as a pump attendant at Firozabad Nagar Nigam. He expressed his happiness over his son's feat, "Abhay was always a bright mind and has brought us laurels at an early age. Even the chief medical officer in Firozabad was surprised when he had to prepare his medical certificate. He would finish BTech also in the stipulated time."

Like many entrance exam toppers, Abhay too stayed away from social media to focus on his studies. Though he has a Facebook account three years ago, he stopped using it when he entered class 11.

## July 5

### **IIT vacancies lowest after first round of counselling**

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/iit-vacancies-lowest-after-first-round-of-counselling/articleshow/59448772.cms>

KOLKATA: The number of vacancies across the 23 branches of the Indian Institute of Technology (IITs) has dropped from the last two years, much to the relief of the authorities at the premier institute.

After the first round of counselling and seat acceptance which ended at 5pm on Monday, the number of vacancies in the IITs was 397, the lowest in recent times. This year, 11,000 seats are up for grabs at the country's most preferred engineering institute. In 2016, the number of vacant seats was 566 out of 10,572, while in 2015, 645 seats remained vacant after the first round of counselling.

"Even though the number of seats has increased considerably over the past few years and is at an all-time high, it is extremely encouraging to find that the number of vacancies has gone down. This shows that there is a renewed interest to opt for engineering courses in the IITs," said Pallab Banerji, IIT-JEE chairperson at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur.

"Vacancies in premier institutes are always linked with the demand. The placements may have had an effect on bringing down the vacancies after the first round of counselling," he added.

Several reasons are being put forward by the faculty members. Foremost among them is the rise in the number of seat acceptance at the three new IITs which started operations from the last academic year. "Last year, there were more vacancies in the IITs at Jammu, Goa and Dharwad. This year there are only 22 vacancies at the three institutes," said an IIT-JEE official. "It seems that more students have found confidence to take up seats in these newer IITs along with the established ones. As a result, they can fulfil the regional aspirations. The local students may have opted for those seats," the official added.

Experts are pointing out that some IITs may have discontinued a few non-popular courses which were not finding too many takers, leading to a reduction in vacancy this year.

"The JEE-Advanced committee set up a helpline for selected girl candidates. It helped girls aim for IIT seats more confidently," said Banerji. "We hope to end up filling all the seats by the end of the seventh round of counselling. This year, the Joint Seat Allocation Authority has decided to do an extra round," he added.

Last year, too, the IITs could fill up all the seats after six rounds of counselling. "Yet, 73 seats had remained vacant. These students may have taken up courses in other institutes even after keeping their IIT seats occupied. This year, with an additional round of counselling, hopefully, we may end up filling up all the seats. The government spends almost Rs 3.4 lakh annually for every student at the IITs," said Banerji.

In most of the IITs, students will join the institute by the end of July and after taking admissions to the induction program classes will begin by the end of the month.

Some of the most renowned and established IITs like IIT-Bombay has 14 vacancies, IIT-Delhi has 27 vacant seats, IIT-Kharagpur has 50 vacancies, IIT-Kanpur has 27 vacancies and IIT-Madras has 20 vacancies. IIT-Kharagpur has the highest student intake 1341 among all institutes.

### **After first round of allotments, no takers for 397 IIT seats**

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/after-first-round-of-allotments-no-takers-for-397-iit-seats/story-xp9la3UNbyEQhFVWZW1raP.html>

### **Mumbai city news: Fewer vacant seats than after last year's first round; only 14 vacancies in IIT-B as seats in computer science, mechanical and electrical filled**

Almost 400 students who were allotted seats in the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) did not confirm their admissions in the first round of allotment. In all, 397 of the 10,988 undergraduate seats in 22 IITs and the Indian Institute of Mines (ISM), Dhanbad, remain up for grabs in round two.

There were 14 vacant seats in IIT-Bombay.

There are fewer vacancies than last year, when 566 of the 10,572 seats not filled after the first round of seat allotment.

"Students who are clear about the course and institute they want will not easily give up, and that's why many students end up not confirming admissions. They instead wait for the second and third rounds in order to try their luck," said a senior professor from IIT-B.

The professor said that most seats which did not get filled in the first round at IIT-B were for dual-degree programmes, whereas all seats in popular courses like computer science, mechanical engineering and electrical engineering were filled.

For the first time, the Joint Seat Allocation Authority (JoSAA) will be conducting seven rounds of seat allotment to IITs, National Institutes of Technology (NITs), Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs) and other Government Funded Technical Institutes (GFTIs).

Last year, six rounds were conducted and still, 76 seats went vacant in IITs alone. Officials had highlighted that most of the vacant seats were in the newer IITs. After the first round, maximum seats have gone vacant in IIT Kharagpur with 50 seats out of 1,341 up for admissions in the next round, as well as IIT-Delhi (27), IIT (BHU) Varanasi (55), IIT Madras (20), etc. "These vacant seats will be allotted once again in the next round, all the way till the seventh round, if needed. Hopefully we won't have to conduct seven rounds this time," said an official from JoSAA.

## **GATE 2018 to be conducted by IIT Guwahati, exam in February**

<http://indianexpress.com/article/education/gate-iitg-ac-in-gate-2018-to-be-conducted-by-iit-guwahati-exam-in-february/>

**The Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering (GATE) is the sole medium through aspirants are admitted to post graduate courses in engineering at all IITs, NITs and Indian Institute of Science (IISc). From 2012, the examination has also been used by the PSUs in their recruitment process**

The Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering (GATE) 2018 will be conducted by the IIT Guwahati. The exam will be held on February 3-4 and February 10-11, 2018. The GATE Online Application Processing System (GOAPS) website will open the enrollment, application filling and application submission on September 1. The official notification is expected to release by next month. IIT Guwahati had conducted the GATE last time in 2010. In 2017, the entrance examination conducting body was IIT Roorkee.

Once released, the aspirants can check detailed notification at [gate.iitg.ac.in](http://gate.iitg.ac.in) or they can check this page for all latest updates.

The Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering (GATE) is the sole medium through aspirants are admitted to post graduate courses in engineering at all IITs, NITs and Indian Institute of Science (IISc). From 2012, the examination has also been used by the PSUs in their recruitment process. The number of PSUs using the GATE score has steadily increased. GATE 2016 score was also used for recruitment of positions in the Cabinet Secretariat in the Government of India.

The application fee is Rs 750 for women aspirants, Rs 750 for SC/ST/PwD category candidates and Rs 1500 for all other candidates. For International candidates application fee is \$50. Every year, nearly 10 lakh candidates appear for the exam, making it one of the most sought-after and competitive exam in the country.

Moreover, the IIT Bombay will conduct the Joint Admission Test for M Sc (JAM) 2018, the dates of which are not released yet.

## **To keep Ahmedabad in pink, paint it green**

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/to-keep-city-in-pink-paint-it-green/articleshow/59448027.cms>



**AHMEDABAD:** The fast diminishing green cover has now left Ahmedabad gasping for breath. A recent study undertaken by Indian Institute of Sciences (IISc), IIT-Kharagpur and Isro revealed that though the city's built-up area grew by 132% between 1990 and 2010, at the same time the city's tree cover fell from 46% to 24%, which is dismally low and a dangerous trend too.

If this trend continues, by 2030 gen-next will be left with just 3% of the existing tree population. The study was conducted by IISc's T V Ramachandra, Vinay Shivamurthy, and Niranjana Joshi and Dr Bharath Aithal of IIT-Kharagpur.

According to the study, cities across India, including Ahmedabad, will grow over two times the current rate by 2030, which will only lead to more trees being sacrificed in the name of development. "In most of the cities, urbanisation was primarily due to infilling, followed by development along highways and arterial roads. Major drivers of land use change were observed to be industries followed by roads, educational institutes and transportation sector," claims the study.

"We never recognize trees as green infrastructure. Our town planning maps and even road line maps do not have trees marked on them. So, whenever road expansion or infrastructure development takes place, trees become first casualties," said environmental educator and CEE founder director, Kartikeya Sarabhai.

He adds, "At least old trees should be marked as 'heritage' on urban planning maps." Another naturalist Haseeb Sheikh told TOI that the problem was that the concept of greening generally involves ornamental plants. "What people don't realize is that there are hundreds of endemic tree varieties that should be planted and which will survive. This will attract 18 varieties of city birds, insects and various other life forms that are suited to Indian climate."

Ahmedabad currently has just 2% green cover and the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) ambitiously plans to increase it to 15%.

As part of its plans, AMC has started developing existing water bodies and open pockets as green spaces; like the Vastrapur Lake, but that too has become a losing ground. Another stark fact is that most water bodies in the city are located on the eastern part while in the western part AMC planned green belts like tree plantations along Nehrunagar-Shivranjani Road, which is yet to bear results.

## July 4

### **IITs must re-focus and add value to under graduate education**

<http://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/elephants-can-dance/iits-must-re-focus-and-add-value-to-under-graduate-education/>

**Rajiv Shekhar** : Most new ideas, fundamental or applied, emanating from universities are a result of graduate research, primarily from the PhD program. Take the case of Larry Page and Sergey Bin. They developed the Google search engine during their PhD program. Page came up with the concept of weighted ranking for the search engine and Bin figured out the complex math involved in implementing the search engine. Both Page and Bin were brilliant students. I have cited the case of Bin and Page to highlight the point that in this era of diminishing returns, you need brilliant minds to make breakthrough inventions such as the brainwave based biometric sensor or creating the world's smallest transistor, which emerged from Berkeley's graduate school. IITs are blindly aping the US research model without realizing that M.Tech. and PhD programs are more about human resource development than breakthrough, or world-class, research. To make India a true innovation hub, IITs must re-focus and add value to UG (undergraduate) education.

Prominent research universities such as Stanford, Berkeley, and MIT are successful because they have access to the best students from around the globe. In India, the higher ranked B.Tech. students from the better engineering colleges prefer jobs and MBA to graduate school in IITs. IITs have made serious attempts to attract top-ranked students through schemes such as the SURGE internship program and relaxing the entrance requirements for students from NITs; to no avail! The

proportion of students from private engineering colleges is also on the increase. Consequently, most students who finally join the graduate program are weak in fundamentals and have difficulty in coping with the rigours of IIT course work. In many cases, the thesis supervisor not only decides the thesis topic, she also suggests the research methodology, plays a major role in data analysis, and contributes significantly to thesis writing. Instilling analytical thinking and inculcating a logical, quantitative approach to problem solving, and consequently preparing the graduate students for industry, teaching, and research positions is the primary objective of IIT faculty.

The nature of students coming to IITs graduate program is also a reflection of the quality of teaching at non-IIT engineering colleges, even the NITs. A student of mine from a famous NIT of eastern India once remarked “padhai kya hoti hai, IIT mein aa ke pata chala.” In Metallurgical/Materials engineering departments of some NITs there are only a handful of regular faculty. Private engineering colleges are known to employ their own B.Tech’s as faculty.

I believe that UG students, who are the cream of the country, have to be nurtured for research and product development. It will not be easy, as our experience with the dual degree program shows. During the software boom starting from the early 1990’s, the intake in IITs graduate program reduced considerably. The IITs therefore started the dual degree program where a student after spending one extra year gets both B.Tech. and M.Tech. degrees. The logic behind this program was powerful: students with a strong academic background will do good research. Unfortunately, IITs expectations did not bear fruit. Most students are not motivated for research and simply go through the motions, as has been the case with the UG projects. Thus, a carefully thought strategy has to be put in place to entice UG students to research and product development. After all, “you can lead a horse to water but you can’t make it drink.”

### **Mumbai: IIT students on relay hunger strike to protest fee hike**

<http://www.mid-day.com/articles/iit-b-powai-students-on-relay-hunger-strike-to-protest-fee-hike-mumbai-news/18393153>

Fed up of the authorities turning a blind eye to their protest against the fee hike, students of the Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay (IIT-B), Powai, have begun a relay hunger strike from Monday.

After a signature drive against the fee hike, students of the premier technology institute also held a day-long protest at the institute on June 21.

But with no action from the concerned authorities, they decided to start the relay hunger strike. They have been protesting against the hike for over a month now, while the institute maintains its justification that the fees were due for a revamp as there has not been any increase in the past 7-8 years.

Tuition fees of IITs were hiked last year. This year, IIT-B has increased the charges for different facilities excluding tuition fees, such as hostel fee, gymkhana fee, and mess fee. There is a 300 per cent fee hike in hostel charges, 167 per cent hike in gymkhana fees etc. This increase in the fee structure according to students is quite exorbitant, and a shock at the beginning of the academic year.

“We have been protesting for so long, but our voices remain unheard. Hence we began the relay hunger strike. Nine students began the strike on Monday. Officials at the administration building will keep seeing the protesting students there,” said a member of Students against Fee Hike at IIT-B — a student group that is leading the protest.

An institute spokesperson, however, said, “The director of the institute had met the students after their one-day protest. He has assured them that the committee which took the decision of the fee-hike will consider their request of a rollback. But now, due to the vacation, all committee members are not on campus. Once the academic year begins mid-July, all

faculty members will be on campus, and the committee will meet for a discussion. Students have been asked to be patient.”

## **IIT Madras talks innovation: Connects faculty with alumni and startups in sunny California**

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/education/iit-madras-talks-innovation-connects-faculty-with-alumni-and-startups-in-sunny-california/story-DI6TjNvDKepT4qma8VR1DK.html>

IIT Foundation organised the Summer 2017 Summit at Santa Clara in California to enable faculty and alumni to get together and chalk out future plans, discuss innovations and more.

It was all about making plans for the future, discussing innovations, reaching out to alumni, addressing problems and looking for opportunities that could make an impact globally. For the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras, this could only happen in sunny California.

The Foundation Series - Summer 2017 Summit at Santa Clara, California, organised by the IIT Foundation, recently brought together the IIT Madras community, faculty, start-ups and alumni to collaborate with each other and with innovators in industry, academia, and think tanks.

Discussions ranged around technologies that enable Industry 4.0; capturing data and data sources (research on sensors and other devices that help capture data), communicating this data between machines and other devices/sensors/data sources; data analytics, modelling and simulation to use this data effectively. Also analysed was the actual manufacturing/automation/making process that is the end result (3D printing, creation of new applications, tools, devices, products, robots, systems such as Internet of Things or IOTs ).



Professor Bhaskar Ramamurthi, director, IIT Madras, addressing the Foundation Series - Summer 2017 Summit held at Santa Clara, California

In the first such event organised by the IIT Madras Foundation, 15 academics and seven start-up founders from IIT Madras took part along with 22 industry leaders from the Bay Area.

In his address to the gathering, Prof Bhaskar Ramamurthi, director, IIT-Madras, shared news of the institute being ranked the best engineering institute in India by the National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF), two years in a row. It also earned the highest revenues through consultancy projects for any engineering institute; and ranked among the top research groups in the world.



“While the event was a grand success and we may have exceeded the expectations of many, we also learned a lot. We need to use this as a launchpad, build on this momentum, and take this to the next level in the coming years,” he later said after the event concluded.

Calling the meet a huge success, Prof R Nagarajan, dean, international and alumni relations, IIT Madras, said it would be replicated in the future in other cities where IIT Madras alumni were present in significant numbers.



“While the director (Prof Bhaskar) and myself have been travelling abroad and meeting local alumni, this is the first time an event of such magnitude has been organised, enabling direct interaction with IIT-Madras faculty members who are active researchers in Industry 4.0,” he said

Other highlights were an IIT-Madras faculty panel elaborating on their research in healthcare technology, industrial consultancy and sponsored research and the interdisciplinary laboratory for data sciences.

This was followed by six interactive panel discussions on medicine, artificial intelligence and analytics, buildings and infrastructure, agriculture, manufacturing and energy. These panels had a blend of industry experts and venture capitalists offering their view of the innovative ideas and solutions attracting venture capital funding, while the IIT-Madras faculty members articulated the key research areas and problems they were trying to address.

Other faculty members from IIT-Madras included Prof Nandan Sudarsanam, Prof Rahul Marathe, Prof N Ramesh Babu, Prof Shankar Narasimhan, Prof Raghunathan Rengaswamy, Prof Ashwin Mahalingam, Prof Mahesh Panchagnula, Prof Sankara J Subramanian, Prof R Krishnakumar, Prof B Ravindran, Prof Mohanasankar Sivaprakasam and Prof Sathyan Subbiah.

### **IIT Team Developing Affordable Trainer Robot for Medical Colleges**

<https://thewire.in/154011/iit-madras-surgical-robot-trainer/>

**The researchers estimate their robot will cost Rs 60-70 lakh, whereas commercial models cost Rs 12 crore. The difference could mean more hospitals will be able to afford the machine.**



The IIT-M team with their trainer surgical robot. Credit: India Science Wire

**New Delhi:** Just like the industrial robots becoming increasingly common on factory floors, surgical robots are making their presence felt in hospitals. However, prohibitive costs and a lack of training facilities are hampering a faster rollout. A trainer surgical robot developed by the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) could help address this gap to some extent.

Surgeon-assisted robotic operations for several medical conditions are being performed at few tertiary care hospitals in the country. The use of robots offers greater precision and helps surgeons minimise the loss of blood by restricting incisions to smaller areas. Robotic surgery also allows for faster recovery and reduces the chances of complications. But not many hospitals can afford these robots due to their high costs and a lack of exposure to the associated technology.

Now, researchers at IIT-M have developed a surgical robot specifically for training purposes. Those varieties currently available in the market work on the master-slave principle.

The surgeon, sitting away from the patient, controls the master robot and monitors surgery through a vision system, while a slave robot, holding the necessary surgical tool, performs and repeats the doctor's actions. The IIT-M training robot has a similar configuration. The master and slave arms have seven degrees of freedom each (i.e. seven ways in which they can act). The prototype has been shown to a few robotic surgeons, according to its developers, the feedback has been encouraging.

"For it to be converted into a full-fledged surgical robot, it needs to undergo a large number of safety tests and regulatory approvals and clinical trials," explained T. Asokan, a professor in the department of engineering design. "This process can take a long time. But the robot developed by us can very well be used as a trainer robot in medical colleges." Asokan led the research effort under a project funded by the Department of Science and Technology. The current design is aimed at abdominal surgeries – but the developers have clarified that it could be extended to include other procedures in the future. To develop the prototype, the IIT-M team collaborated with urologists from PSG Medical college, Coimbatore, and an industrial partner.

It is estimated that the trainer robot will cost Rs 60-70 lakh. "The cost of a commercial robot is around Rs 12 crore. To get such a costly robot for training purposes would be impossible for medical colleges. An affordable trainer robot will help students to get trained on this futuristic technology," Asokan added.

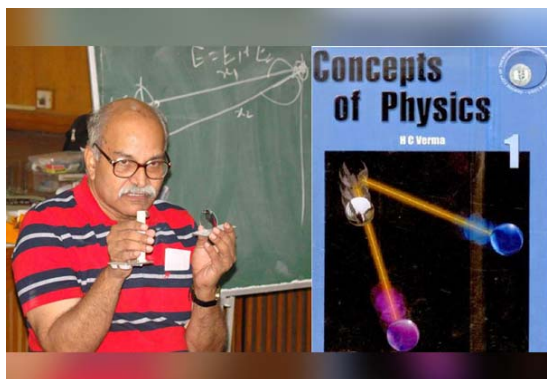
Robotic surgeons, however, feel that much work needs to be done for any developmental robot to become usable on a large scale. "Just as airliners need skilled pilots, surgical robots are best operated by expert surgeons specifically trained

in their nuances,” said Dr Gagan Gautam, head of urologic oncology and robotic surgery at Max Institute of Cancer Care, New Delhi. “Surgical simulation, undoubtedly, is going to play a key part in getting the next generation of surgeons up to speed in performing next-generation surgeries.”

## **Professor HC Verma, author of Concepts of Physics retired after 38 years of teaching, tributes pour in from former Physics students on social media**

<http://www.india.com/buzz/professor-hc-verma-author-of-concepts-of-physics-retired-after-38-years-of-teaching-tributes-pour-in-from-former-physics-students-on-social-media-2291548/>

HC Verma wrote a two-volume book ‘Concepts of Physics’ which turned out to be a bible for every science student appearing for their Class XII boards, IIT or Medical.



Anybody who had taken science in their Class XII would know the name HC Verma. HC Verma is the god of Physics, if you had any difficulty in understanding concepts or numerical then you delved into its pages.

HC Verma wrote a two-volume book ‘Concepts of Physics’ which turned out to be a bible for every science student appearing for their Class XII boards, IIT and Medical. The concepts in the book were so immaculately explained that it was the favourite and most revered book by all students. Anybody who was appearing for IIT-JEE or Medical treated the book as the Holy Bible and equivalent and solving sums from it at one go was an achievement in itself. No one could explain it better than HC Verma. Harish Chandra Verma, physics professor at IIT Kanpur and an experimental research physicist in nuclear physics, took to his Facebook and Twitter account to inform everyone that he had retired after a 38-year long career. His Facebook and Twitter updates have gone viral and fetched a humongous amount of comments, shares and reactions.

HC Verma took to his Facebook and Twitter and issued an update with the words, “Finally locked my IITK lab and submitted the keys to office. End of 38 years of formal teaching and research.” Seeing his tweet and update the internet was flooded with emotional, sentimental and nostalgic tweets, comments and farewell messages of countless of students who never met him but who excelled in exams and achieved their dreams through his books. Engineers, doctors and many other achievers took to Facebook and Twitter to pay farewell to one of the most popular and beloved teachers of all time (even though he did not teach them personally).

Other than ‘Concepts of Physics’, Dr. HC Verma has also authored a book named ‘Quantum Physics’ while he was researching in Nuclear Physics. In order to help the economically weaker section he co-founded socio-economic initiatives like ‘Shiksha Sopan’, ‘School Physics Project’ and ‘Utsahi Physics Teacher’.