

Newspaper Clips

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REGISTRATION DEADLINE

IIT aspirants say CBSE didn't give fair chance

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NEW DELHI: Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) aspirants from the Capital who scored lower than expected in the Joint Engineering Examination (JEE) Main are feeling shortchanged because the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has not extended the registration deadline for the JEE advanced exam.

After a CBSE notification on Monday evening that effectively allowed students to review their scores by providing them answer keys, those seeking admission to National Institute of Technology (NIT) and other

centrally-funded institutes heaved a sigh of relief.

However, it was too little too late for those low scorers who were aiming for Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)s since the last day to register for the second round JEE advanced exam was Monday.

The uproar over the scores came to the fore on May 7 when the JEE main results were announced and many students in the city were "shocked" with their scores, which were about 25-30 marks below expectations. However, the most affected were those students who missed out on the eligibility for JEE advanced exam by just a few marks.

CBSE RELEASED THE ANSWER KEYS ON MONDAY BUT IT WAS TOO LATE FOR THOSE HOPING TO GET INTO IIT

"My son's official score is 104, which is very close to the cut-off mark of 113 for general category. He was shocked to see his marks and is very depressed because based on expert solutions, he should get at least 124 which would make him eligible," said Rajandrav Dayal from Noida, parent of an aspirant.

Some students have even missed out on the exam by one

mark. Similar complaints were registered from a large number of students from across the country.

Monday's notification does not mention anything about the extension of deadline for JEE Advanced registration.

CBSE spokesperson Rama Sharma declined to comment on the matter and CBSE Chairman Vineet Joshi did not respond to calls or text messages.

The JEE Main exam replaced the All India Engineering Entrance Examination for admission to NITs, IIITs and other centrally-funded institutes this year. Also, for the first time, the entrance for admission to IITs is being conducted in two stages: JEE Main and JEE Advanced.

FOR THE 1st TIME, SCORES OF CIVIL SERVICES EXAMS MADE PUBLIC

53%: That's what this year's UPSC topper scored

Vishwa Mohan | TNN

New Delhi: For the first time in the history of the elite civil services examination, the UPSC on Thursday made public the final marks of all successful candidates who were recently recommended for appointment to IAS, IFS, IPS and other key central services.

Interestingly, only four of them, including two women, obtained more than 50% marks in the exam, which is considered one of the toughest in the country. Three of the four are from Kerala.

The move to display final marks on the UPSC (Union Public Service Commission) website came following a direction from the Central Information Commission (CIC). Earlier, UPSC used to send the marks to all candidates individually. The absence of final marks of successful candidates in the public domain had seen a number of people moving the CIC, seeking a direction to the UPSC.

The list for this year shows that the topper, Haritha V Kumar, a woman engineer from Kerala, scored 53% marks (1193 out of 2250). It also shows that 'general' category candidates who scored between 48% and 50% got selected for the top three services — IAS, IFS and IPS — indicating that it is tough to score high marks for even those who opt for science or engineering subjects.

In the 'general' category, the cut-off was 42%, while in other categories it went as low as 35%. However, a number of SC, ST and OBC candidates scored much higher marks, which put them in the bracket of toppers along with 'general' category candidates.

CRACKING THE CIVILS

General category candidates who got **between 48% and 50% marks got selected for top three services**, indicating that it is tough to score high marks in civil services exam

42% is the minimum cut-off in the general category

In other categories, it went as low as 35%

► Move to display final marks on UPSC website comes after a CIC directive

The marks of successful candidates, which were a closely guarded secret for long, also brought into the open the scores in the interview (personality test), which carried 250 marks and which used to play a key role in deciding the future of aspirants.

An official said making marks of all successful candidates public would not only spare the panel of thousands of RTI requests every year, it would also bring transparency to the examination which is conducted in three stages — preliminary test, mains examination and personality test.

Though there has been a long pending demand to make answer sheets of all candidates who appear in the mains examination public, UPSC is not in favour of this. The matter is currently pending in courts where the commission has vehemently opposed the move to share answer sheets with either the candidates or third parties.

Business Line ND 17.05.2013 P-19

Enrolments in Russian varsities on the rise

Our Bureau

Kolkata, May 16

There has been a steady rise in the number of Indian students pursuing higher education in Russian universities.

The number of students enrolling in Russian universities increased by almost 60 per cent to 450 in 2012 as compared to 280 in 2011. A majority of these students enrol for medical or paramedical courses in Russia, said Timur Akhmetov of Kazan

State Medical University.

Indian students account for nearly 15-20 per cent of the total number of international students in Russia.

"While medicine is an area that attracts a large number of students, we are also seeing interest for other courses such as engineering, foreign relations and humanities," Akhmetov said at a press meet to announce the Russian Education Fair 2013 here on Thursday.

Jointly organised by Rus Education and Russian Centre for Science and Culture, the fair is aimed at informing students about the availability of education options in Russia.

Talking about the unique advantages of higher education in Russia, Akhmetov said, "The cost of higher education is much cheaper than that in US and UK and the Russian education system is well recognised and accepted throughout the world."

There are nearly 700 State higher education universities in the country offering courses in over 500 specialities.

"We have seen a rise in the number of international students coming to Russia for higher education. With the Russian universities are fast expanding its contacts into countries like India, we hope that the number will soon witness a rise in the days to come," he said.

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HT Mumbai, May 17, 2013

Visually-impaired Indian student joins Stanford

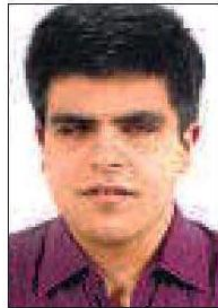
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MUMBAI: A visually challenged student, who was nearly deprived of the chance to pursue his passion for science in India, is now set to go to the University of Stanford for undergraduate studies in computers.

Kartik Sawhney, 18, a student of Delhi Public School, RK Puram, loved science, but CBSE rules before 2010 forbade visually-challenged students from pursuing the subject in Class 12.

While he managed to get the



CONSTANT HURDLES

Kartik Sawhney, 18 studied at the Delhi Public School, RK Puram. When he was entering Class 11, he got the CBSE to change its rules, which, prior to 2010, didn't allow blind students to study science after Class 10

While applying to the IITs, he found that the entrance was not blind-friendly. He moved court in 2013 regarding this.

board to change its rule, he encountered his next hurdle while applying for the entrance exam to the Indian Institutes of Technology, which, too, was not blind-

friendly. For three years, he struggled to find a way to write the test, and moved court this year.

Sawhney, in the meanwhile, applied to universities abroad and

was accepted by Stanford in March. "The journey was discouraging at times," said Sawhney. "But it's satisfying to have gotten into Stanford, which has a support system for visually-challenged students. The IITs don't have such a facility." Stanford has assigned people to assist Sawhney when he joins.

"People believe the blind can't do maths and science," said Neha Trivedi, project consultant, Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged, which helped Sawhney with the battle. "Sawhney's story might change this."

Regulations for Deemed Universities

Creating another entry barrier

UGC regulations make it difficult for private universities to function

HISTORICALLY, political leadership in our country has always connected education with economic development as reflected in the various national documents like the Radhakrishnan Commission Report on University Education (1948-49), the Report of the Education Commission (1964-66), the National Knowledge Commission Reports (2006-09) and the National Skill Development Initiative (2009). The main objective always being to meet the needs and aspirations of a self-reliant nation committed to democracy.

Since Independence the private sector has played a critical role in meeting aspirations of the society and industry demands. Particularly in the last two decades the private sector participation has increased dramatically, accounting for 64% of the total number of institutions and 59% of the enrolment in the country. Although it's established that the government alone will not be able to meet the growing demand for higher education in the country and achieve 30% gross enrolment ratio (GER) by 2020, the entry barriers for private sector remain as stringent as ever.

Today, the only way a private entity can set up universities at the national level is through the deemed-to-be-university route under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956. The basic idea behind deemed-to-be-universities was to promote, strengthen and bring those institutions that were doing exemplary work in specialised academic field comparable to a university under the purview of University Grants Commission. In the last one decade, a few states recognising the need for private sector participation in higher education have introduced the State Private University Bill, which opens another entry route at state level but has its own issues and challenges.

It's interesting to note that in 1970 the number of deemed universities were only seven, which rose to 130 by 2009. According to 2011-12 data, almost 6 lakh students—3%—were enrolled in 130 deemed-to-be-universities. Most deemed-to-be-universities are rated by independent accreditation

bodies and qualify as centres of excellence in specific fields and have contributed immensely in making our youth employable. However, it cannot be ignored that the rapid approvals of the deemed to be universities has lowered the quality parameters in some institutions. The responsibility for such quality dilution lies both with the government and the private sector and there is no argument against the need for bringing appropriate regulations to rectify the scenario.

The question remains, should the regulations encourage centres of excellence to perform better and provide adequate support to those that are not up to mark to improve their performance or put all institutions in one basket and regulate in same parameters irrespective of performance? The industry consensus is that the regulator must differentiate between reputed institutions from those that do not meet minimum (or basic) standards. Accreditation of institutions and of programmes should be the basis for such differentiation. Further, regulations should facilitate appropriate governance structure in the institutions that would allow them to effectively offer new academic programmes as per the industry and society's needs.

Unfortunately, UGC Regulations on Deemed Universities 2010 impinges on the autonomy and defeats the very purpose and idea behind the provision in the UGC Act 1956. Not surprisingly, these regulations have been challenged by several private deemed-to-be-universities in various courts and are under review by the ministry of human resource development. There are several stringent provisions that deters a private not-for-profit entity to invest in the sector. According to a Ficci analy-



TV
MOHANDAS PAI

By 2025, India will have 25% of the world's total workforce. However, India's public spending on higher education is just 1.2% of GDP while the private sector spending is 1.8% of GDP, totalling 3% of GDP

sis, the following modifications in regulations 2010 are needed to improve the environment and re-establish the faith of private sector in the system:

(a) Retrospective application of the regulation has caused immense difficulties and hardship for the established deemed universities that have started off-campus centres or programmes prior to May 2010. More importantly, the future of the innocent students is at stake due to the uncertainties caused in the minds of employers owing to such regulations. UGC should accord approval to those off-campus centres that were set up before regulations became effective, viz. May 2010, and meet the quality standards for higher education.

(b) The regulations insulate the management of a deemed university from the promoter society by insisting that the president of the promoter society (or his closer relative) may not be the chancellor of the university. There is no evidence that quality of governance or education will improve simply by insulating university's management from promoter society's influence. Further, there is no justification when this is also applicable to those institutions that have a proven track record, are highly rated by experts, and acknowledged by students and employers for their quality of education. To ensure transparency, accountability and quality in governance, every deemed-to-be-university should be required to strengthen its board with more independent members or directors, as also adopt a code of conduct for its board, its members, and university administrators including senate members. To ensure transparency, the minutes of the meetings of the board should be put in public domain.

(c) The regulations require all

deemed-to-be-universities to seek prior approval of AICTE before offering a new programme, or starting an existing programme in a new centre impinging on their academic autonomy.

(d) Assets transfer of a deemed-to-be-university to UGC in the event of serious and continued default is indeed irrational. Instead, it should mandate such institution to ensure successful transfer of their students to another UGC-approved institution at their own cost.

(e) The new regulations prohibiting distance education by deemed-to-be-universities is against the government's own policy of 'education to everyone'. Given the potential for distance education is enormous, participation by deemed-to-be-universities should be encouraged with appropriate regulations to effectively monitor the outcome.

It is our good fortune that India, at present, is one of the younger nations in the world with over 50% of the population in the age-group of 18-30 years. It is estimated that by about 2025, India will have 25% of the world's total workforce. However, India's public spending on higher education is just 1.2% of GDP, while the private sector spending is 1.8% of GDP, totalling to 3% of GDP. The key concern in India today is the creation of an 'employable' workforce in order to harness its demographic dividend. Several surveys by Ficci have revealed that both public and private employers as well as students prefer self-financing private institutions as they ensure better quality of education when compared to state-run government colleges and aided private colleges. The private sector is willing to play an instrumental role through the creation of knowledge networks, research and innovation centres, corporate-backed institutions, and support for faculty development, provided the reforms in the sector are implemented on a fast track.

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