

Newspaper Clips

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IIT admission: Senates reject proposed changes from next year

Vanita Srivastava

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NEW DELHI: With most of the IIT senates claiming that it is too late to bring in any sweeping reforms in IIT-JEE from 2013, the government may have to roll back its plans to change the selection procedure for IITs from next year. The government wants to hold a common engineering examination and give 40% weightage to board examination marks as part of the IIT admission reforms.

According to sources, the senates of IITs in Delhi, Bombay, Kanpur and Khargapur are firm in their opinion that implementing any change from 2013 in the JEE exam would be unpragmatic and confusing for the students. The senates have strongly felt that there should be a lean period of at least two years before the actual implementation of the reforms.

They also said the common engineering exam, which the government has proposed from next year, could be simply a 'filtering' exercise. IIT Delhi senate, which met on Wednesday, proposed that the number of students, who would qualify the exam, could be around five times the total number of seats. But the final selection would depend on a student's merit and performance in a separate exam that would be thought-provoking, theoretical and not based on multiple choice answers.

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mon engineering exam, a student should secure around 80% marks in the board exam. This, they feel, will ensure students don't neglect board examinations.

The Open House of IIT Kanpur Faculty has expressed that 2013 would be too early to effect any change in the exam pattern. "We are the stakeholders and we have to first observe. The implementation can be done only after two years. But the common exam will be used only for filtering students. We can think of allowing first 10% of the AIEEE rank holders to appear for the IIT-JEE exam. But we will not let the common exam become a selection criteria," said a member of IIT Kanpur senate.

The HRD ministry had had consultations with different stake holders last month and had asked the senates of different IITs to give their recommendation before May 10.

Major IITs reject exam change from next year

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Two erroneous JEE questions to be cancelled

Bhavya Dore

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MUMBAI The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) have decided to cancel seven marks worth of questions in this year's Joint Entrance Exam (JEE) on account of errors. The answer solutions to the two JEE papers for the exam held on April 8 were uploaded online on Thursday.

JEE determines entry to around 10,000 seats at the IITs. This year around five lakh candidates appeared for the JEE, with 76,600-odd candidates

appearing from the IIT-Bombay zone.

"Two questions stand cancelled," said AV Mahajan, JEE chairperson at IIT-Bombay. This year IIT-Delhi was in charge of organising the JEE. The decision to nullify the two questions was taken after a meeting between institute officials.

Both cancelled questions are from paper two. While one is a chemistry question, the other is a mathematics question. The total quantum of marks has as a result come down from 408 marks to 401 marks.

"Institutes like the IITs should-

BOTH QUESTIONS ARE FROM PAPER 2. ONE IS A CHEMISTRY QUESTION AND THE OTHER MATHS

n't be making such errors," said Praveen Tyagi, managing director of coaching class IIT-ian's Pace. "Students work for years to get into the IITs and for them to commit such a mistake could cost a student a seat."

Last year the JEE had 36 marks worth of errors, which the IITs later compensated stu-

dents for in some measure.

Candidates will also, for the second time this year, be able to see their Optical Response Sheets online from Saturday until May 10. If candidates feel there has been any error in computing their score, they can apply with their complaints through the website until May 10. JEE results will be announced on May 18.

Last year the IITs decided to make answer sheets available to students online in a bid for greater transparency and to give students a chance to air their complaints.

Asian Age ND 4/05/2012

P-6

A good move by IITs

The decision of the Indian Institutes of Technology to display online the answer papers of all candidates who appear for the Joint Entrance Examination is laudable. As JEE chairman G.B. Reddy has rightly said, this will be a key step in bringing transparency in high-stakes entrance exams and raise the trust of students and parents in the IIT system. Exam answersheets are currently available to people for scrutiny under the Right to Information Act, following a Supreme Court ruling on this in August 2011. A number of bodies that conduct exams, including the Central Board of Secondary Education, had petitioned the court against the move.

In our country, where the results of exams like the school boards, JEE or IAS entrance can transform lives, it is vital that these tests should be completely fair, and seen to be so. Despite staggering disparities and poverty, the vast majority of Indians still believe in the idea of India. One reason for this is that it is still possible for people to study hard, work hard, and do well for themselves. The popularity of the Super 30 institute in Patna, which has so far helped 263 underprivileged youngsters enter the IITs, provides ample evidence of this.

If ordinary people come to believe they have no chance of advancement on the basis of merit, through education and hard work, the resulting feeling of hopelessness may well pose a threat to the stability of our social order. Hopelessness is the stuff that Maoist revolutions are made of.

Indian Express ND 04/05/2012

P-4

IIT Jodhpur-France ties hit roadblock

ANUBHUTI VISHNOI
NEW DELHI, MAY 3

ANNOUNCED more than two years ago when French President Nicolas Sarkozy visited New Delhi in December 2010, the much-publicised collaboration between IIT Jodhpur and France is still floundering — and due to a rather unusual situation. France has termed the IIT Jodhpur academic environment and faculty rather unimpressive and the IIT in turn has said what the French are offering them is far too little for an institute of its stature.

Highly placed sources revealed to *The Indian Express* that France has conveyed to India in writing that it is “not impressed” by the leadership, faculty or infrastructure at IIT Jodhpur — one of the six new IITs set up in 2009. The IIT

Jodhpur, in turn, finds little worth in the collaboration being offered by France and feels it would hardly contribute towards the long-term development of the institute.

The mutual dissatisfaction, it is learnt, is keeping the Memorandum of Understanding from materialising for two years now even as letters fly thick and fast between India and France on the issue.

France is learnt to have written to the Ministry of External Affairs, on its dissatisfaction with the academic leadership and environment at the IIT. A French delegation visited the campus in January to explore the possibilities of a wider collaboration and reportedly returned disappointed. This was followed by the letter to the MEA.

“The MEA forwarded the communication to the Union HRD Ministry which sought

the views of the Director IIT Jodhpur on the issue. IIT Jodhpur, however, responded saying they were disappointed with what France was offering,” said a senior official. “While it was first agreed they would help set up six centres of excellence, they only finalised three of them later. When the IIT wanted to extend the collaboration in other areas, the French refused to commit to anything further. Mainly the feeling in the IIT is that what France is offering does not match the stature of an IIT.”

France is offering about 2 million Francs which the IIT feels is not as expected. As diplomacy requires that an MoU that has been announced must be respected, sources said a rather timid MoU is in the works for HRD Minister Kapil Sibal to sign when he visits Paris in July.

Times of India ND
04-May-12 p21

Harvard, MIT to launch free online courses soon

New York: Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology have joined hands to launch an ambitious \$60 million initiative under which they will offer free online courses to students, a collaboration that will be headed by Indian-origin professor Anant Agarwal.

The new online education platform 'EdX' would be overseen by a Cambridge-based not-for-profit organization and be owned and governed equally by the two universities. MIT and Harvard have committed \$30 million each in institutional support, grants and philanthropy to launch the collaboration.

Director of MIT's Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, Agarwal led the development of the platform.

At Harvard, Provost Alan Garber will direct the effort, according to statements from the two universities.

"EdX represents a unique opportunity to improve education on our own campuses through online learning, while simultaneously creating a bold new educational path for millions of learners worldwide," MIT president Susan Hockfield said. PTI

Hindu ND 4/05/2012 P-4

Court notices to Centre, UGC

Continuation of Vice-Chairman Ved Prakash challenged

Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court has issued notices to the Centre, the University Grants Commission and others on a public interest litigation by a journalist challenging the continuation of Ved Prakash as Vice-Chairman of the Commission in violation of the University Grants Commission Act.

Issuing the notices, a Division Bench of the Court comprising Justice A.K. Sikri and Justice Rajiv Sahai Endlaw asked the respondents to file replies to the petition

in two weeks.

The petitioner, C.S. Kalra, submitted that according to the Act a person could be appointed to the post of the Commission's Vice-Chairman for three-year period but Prof. Prakash was continuing in the chair even after completion of his term.

He further charged that the Commission and the Union Ministry for Human Resources was in connivance with Prof. Prakash in allowing him to continue on the post.

He said that as per the terms and conditions of his appoint-

ment, Prof. Prakash, who is also doubling as Chairman of the Commission in the absence of a regular incumbent to head the regulatory body, his term came to end on March 2 this year.

He also alleged that his appointment to the post was not done through a gazette notification which was mandatory but through an executive order which was violative of the procedures and rules.

The petitioner urged the Court to declare the Vice-Chairman post vacant and quash his continuation as the Acting Chairman of the Commission.

Hindu ND 4/05/2012 P-5

Supreme Court slams destruction of answer sheets, orders fresh test

NEW DELHI: Upholding a woman Scheduled Caste candidate's plea that answer sheets were deliberately destroyed by the authorities to favour certain candidates, the Supreme Court has directed the Haryana Public Service Commission to conduct fresh written test and interview to recruit Hindi lecturers.

A Bench of Justices G S Singhvi and S J Mukhopadhyaya agreed with the complaint of the candidate

Poonam Rani that the Commission had destroyed mala fide the answer sheets of the examination held in October 2008 to avoid judicial scrutiny of the selection process.

Noting that the destruction of the answer sheets was contrary to the apex court's earlier judgment and a resolution passed by the Commission, the Bench rejected the authorities' plea that the scripts were destroyed due to certain confusion and inadvertence.

"The explanation given by the Secretary for not preserving the answer sheets for three months is frivolous and wholly unacceptable because it is neither the pleaded case of the Commission nor the counsel appearing on its behalf argued that the officers concerned were not aware of resolution dated October 1, 1994.

"Therefore, the action of the officers of the Commission to destroy the record cannot but be termed as

wholly arbitrary and unjustified. The sole object of this exercise appears to be to ensure that in the event of challenge to the result of the selection, the court may not be able to scrutinize the record for the purpose of finding out whether the selection was fair and objective or the candidates had been subjected to invidious discrimination," Justice Singhvi writing the judgment said. -- PTI

Indian express Pune 3-5-2012 P-3

Missed AIEEE exam, get ready for online tests

Tests will be held on May 12, 19 and 26

SAMARPITA BANERJEE

MAY 2

A CENTRAL Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) notification has said all those students who were not able to appear for the offline exam of All India Engineering Entrance Examination (AIEEE) on April 29 will be able to appear for online tests on May 12, 19 and 26.

The circular also mentions that a different date can also be allotted by the CBSE to the candidate in case the seat is not available on the selected date.

The online exam that started this year has not received a good response from candidates. Hardly any candidate from different coaching centres have opted for the online test. Vaibhav Bakliwal of the Bakliwal tutorials said, "The online exams have got a

very bad response this year. While it is good that candidates have been given a second chance, it is probable that the ones who decided not to sit for the exam have done so on purpose."

Shailendra Parolkar, director of Go Get It coaching centre in Viman Nagar, said, "The online exam this year has been a failure probably because when it comes to competitive exams, nobody wants to take any risk. So almost everyone is going for offline exams."

The notification released by CBSE also mentions that 'Irrespective of the request submitted, only those candidates will be considered valid who could not appear on April 29, 2012, AIEEE offline examination'. The last date for submission of request for the online test is May 5.