

## Newspaper Clips October 2, 2015

### **NIT's proposal: Admit students to both IITs & NITs through JEE Advanced**

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/nits-proposal-admit-students-to-both-iits-nits-through-jee-advanced/articleshow/49175399.cms>

NEW DELHI: The IIT council will take up next week a proposal of the NIT council's standing committee to admit students to both IITs and NITs through a single entrance examination — the JEE Advanced. The move is likely to trigger a controversy in the IIT system. The proposal will be taken up by the NIT council at its October 1 meeting first, following which it will be taken to the IIT council — the apex body chaired by the HRD minister that coordinates between all IITs — at its October 6 meeting.

It is learnt that the Smriti Irani-led HRD ministry favours the proposal for a single exam for IITs and NITs. IITs have traditionally resisted any move to grant NITs parity and the HRD ministry had to take considerable efforts to make IITs agree to joint counselling with NITs.

"IITs and NITs draw from the same pool of students. IITs already draw the best of students through the JEE Advanced which has a reasonably high difficulty level. If the NITs — which are also excellent engineering institutes — are allowed to draw from that pool, the overall quality will improve. The aim is one exam, one ranking system and one counselling for both IITs and NITs. We hope that a final decision will be taken on this at the IIT council meeting," a member of the IIT council told ET.

While the JEE Advanced helps select about 10,000 students to enter the famed portals of India's 16 IITs, if the entrance exam is opened up to NITs, this number will go up to 34,000. The Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) alone determines admissions to prestigious IITs. While it was the All India Engineering Entrance Examination (AIEEE) that earlier determined admissions to the National Institutes of Technology (NITs) and all other engineering colleges, the format was changed when Kapil Sibal was HRD minister in UPA-II.

### **JEE Mains may have new pattern NITs/ IITs/ GFTIs admission: 60 per cent or 70 percentile in Class 12**

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/education/story/jee-mains-new-pattern-for-nits--iits--gftis-admission/1/486872.html>

National Institute of Technology (NIT) is considering to change its exam pattern by dropping weightage of class 12 marks for preparing JEE Main Merit List from the academic year 2016.

According to reports, the decision on scrapping the weightage of class XII marks is likely to come this week when Smriti Irani will meet NIT Council. The government-appointed committee is also thinking to include class 12 marks in the filtration process.

The recommendation made to Ministry of Human Resource asks for a change in pattern to make 60 per cent marks or 70 percentile whichever is lower for admission in NITs/IITs/GFTIs and other private engineering colleges. The current eligibility criteria require minimum 45 per cent marks.

Previously, JEE Merit List was prepared on the basis of JEE Main score with 60 per cent weightage and class 12 marks holding 40 per cent weightage.

The inclusion of class 12 marks in preparation of JEE Merit List was introduced in 2012 by UPA government to make students concentrate on their board exams as well instead of just engineering exams.

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## Govt may ease NIT admission norms

**New Delhi:** The human resource development (HRD) ministry is planning to drop the 40% weightage given to students' school performance for admission to National Institutes of Technology (NIT), second only to the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT). The ministry announced the move after an NIT Council meeting on Thursday.

The apex decision-making body of the NITs, headed by HRD minister Smriti Irani, also deliberated on a single entrance test for admission to both IITs and NITs. The council met at NIT Warangal (Telangana). **PRASHANT K. NANDA**

## Delayed execution and staff crunch hits IIT Ropar

It is located in the Roopnagar district of Punjab, about 50 kilometres from Union Territory of Chandigarh on the NH-21

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/delayed-execution-and-staff-crunch-hits-iit-ropar-115100100806\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/delayed-execution-and-staff-crunch-hits-iit-ropar-115100100806_1.html).

Among the eight new IITs those were established in year 2008 by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, the Indian Institute of Technology Ropar topped among its peers as per the Scopus Data with an average citation of 4.93 and an h-index of 23.

The institute, set up with an objective to facilitate cutting edge research in the region has not been able to achieve as per its benchmarks due to severe shortage of faculty and infrastructure. Currently operating out of a transit campus of 25 acre against the actual 525 acre (located 4 kilometres from the existing make shift campus), the institute has been keeping a low profile in terms of creating interventions with the local industries and nurturing startups. It is located in the Roopnagar district of Punjab, about 50 kilometers from Union Territory of Chandigarh on the National Highway 21.

### Delay in construction of new campus

The construction of new campus has been delayed by two years and [IIT Ropar](#) is the slowest among its peers in the

execution of this project.

Against an allocation of Rs 760 cr for the first phase of construction, the IIT Ropar utilized only Rs 294 cr till March 2015. This includes Rs 90 cr of advance payment made to CPWD in March 2015 to meet the deadline for the fund consumption. Despite a complete support from the Ministry of [HRD](#) and [Punjab](#) Government, the construction of new campus got delayed due to administrative laxity at the local level.

S K Das, the Director tells that teething troubles are over and the institute was graduating from Childhood to adolescence. The construction work has started and the new building would be ready by March 2017.

### **Faculty crunch**

A teaching faculty of 65, against the sanctioned strength of 90 plugged the scope of extensive research and industry-academia collaborations.

Industry in Punjab is grappling with obsolete technology. The synergies with a premier institute like IIT is imminent to sail through the challenges posed by the global competition. The agriculture sector that is the lifeline of Punjab is also waiting for innovative, customized technologies for the useful disposal of agri-waste, depleting nutri-composition of soil and solutions for the agro based industries to match the need of the hour.

“We will be holding interviews here in December to hire faculty. In summer, 2016, a delegation from IIT Ropar will travel to UK, U.S.A and Canada to recruit post doctorates with Indian origin studying in foreign universities. I am doing preparations to meet Indian diaspora who have desire to get back to their roots and keen to work in our institute.” he informed.

### **Challenges in placement**

The faculty is inadequate with this new IIT and at the same time the institute also faced the predicament of not being able to find jobs for all its graduates. The Director attributes it to more than one reasons. A tedious one and a half hour journey from Chandigarh to Ropar dampens the excitement of the big corporates to make a beeline for the hiring but more than this is the higher aspirations of the students. “The young generation hankers after the salary packages and ignores the career growth prospects, for this reason many of them miss the campus placement bus. Some of them refuse good career in expectation of a more lucrative remuneration. While the computer stream has 100% placement, the other two engineering branches offered here till now, mechanical and electrical have a lower placement ratio. We have formed a Centre for Career Development to mentor the students for the campus interviews and polish their soft skills”, apprised Das.

The 480 odd under graduates and 100 odd post graduate students, are now gearing up for the placement season that would kick off in October. One may notice students pacing up and down for the comprehensive viva classes. They understand that they have to work a tad harder than those in the mainstream IITs to become the future leaders in big corporate conglomerates. The lack of soft skills has been identified as a crucial area from the past experience where the students need attention, told one of the faculty member. So requisite care is being taken to scale up their presentation, he added.

### **Future Plans**

The new courses are in the pipeline and would be introduced in a phased manner. Civil Engineering would be introduced from the April 2016 session and new Post Graduate courses would be offered in the next session.

“It is not possible to excel in every field so at IIT Ropar we would not be the replica of old IITs by developing in all areas. We have identified four core areas for making the research based interventions in this region. These would be Agriculture Engineering with emphasis on water resources, soil, bio-waste and food processing. Bio-medical, which includes image science and cancer related studies (Malwa belt of Punjab is severely affected with cancer). Additive Manufacturing (3D printing) and upgrading the traditional manufacturing in Punjab. Energy would be another area of research that may encompass solar, hybrid, photovoltaic and other emerging areas”, he told adding that this would be formally announced in February 2016 during a retreat.

### **The startup window**

Interacting with students, one can sense the amazing passion and knack to join the league of successful startups, but there is no infrastructure and eco-system that can match their strength, skill and ambition.

The IIT Ropar set up an entrepreneurship cell in year 2010 and Centre for Innovation and Business Incubation in early 2014 and supporting some startups from other parts of India. Its own students are yet to begin their startup journey.

Limited access to funds and a small pool of mentors are the barriers to spearhead the startup wave that swept the established IITs in the last few years.

The creation of Task Forces and restructuring of administrative and academic structure in the last few months may give wings to the IIT Ropar and the relocation in the actual campus would provide the robust environment to shape the future leaders.

## **IIT Kharagpur ties up with MIT, others for cultural research**

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/education/iit-kharagpur-ties-up-with-mit-others-for-cultural-research/articleshow/49189243.cms>

NEW DELHI: In a first-of-its-kind initiative to link India's heritage and culture with science and engineering, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur has entered into research tie-ups with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and various other Indian and global universities.

Among the other universities are Australia's Curtin University, Visva Bharati University and Rabindra Bharati University in Kolkata. The research findings will be used to re-create an engineering curriculum with more 'Indian' elements.

"Most of the educational curriculum taught to engineering students is not relevant in the Indian context. The idea behind the research and these initiatives is to make the current curriculum more Oriental," said Joy Sen, head of department, Ranbir and Chitra Gupta School of Infrastructure Design and Management at IIT Kharagpur.

MIT faculty will visit IIT Kharagpur early next year to finalise the collaboration on SandHi, a science and heritage interface initiative, and the Shantiniketan project.

"We will finalise plans for longterm co-operation, which we hope will include jointly-run studies on key planning issues,

visiting faculty and joint research," Bishwapriya Sanyal, Ford International Professor of Urban Development and Planning at MIT told ET.

The objective of the collaboration is to study the heritage, culture, archaeology and ecology of India through the Shantiniketan project and SandHi initiative. Post research, the trio are planning integrate the findings to their respective curricula. Under the Shantiniketan project, the two institutes along with the Visva Bharati University, are retracing the land-river-tribal belt as an ecological retreat as identified by Maharishi Debendranath Tagore, father of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore.

While Curtin's involvement is limited to the SandHi project, the Australian university is looking at more such opportunities to understand the country's heritage. "Curtin is engaging with researchers in India's flagship SandHi research project.

Under this project, cutting edge science and technology resources will be used to understand India's ancient heritage and culture," said Sambit Datta, professor of architecture, School of Built Environment, Curtin University.

MIT — specifically the department of urban studies and planning — has been involved in 'Practicums', where students and faculty work with clients and partners, such as IIT Kharagpur, to engage in research.

The framework for SandHi was laid down in early 2014 by the Union ministry of human resource development. The projects will cover domains like language, music, iconography, CSR, end-of-life care, meditation, historical reformulation, creative or traditional economy and Varanasi. All these will primarily focus on the India story.

As part of Shantiniketan project, the institutes will study urban growth planning, preservation of historic buildings and areas, and ecological planning of the local river belts. In future, most of the research works under Shantiniketan and SandHi are expected to become part of the curriculum of the students at both IIT Kharagpur and MIT. "The empirical details of any such effort are important for both teaching and research. They are used to redefine theory, which students can learn from textbooks," said Sanyal.

IIT Kharagpur also is closely studying the culture and heritage of Varanasi and Shantiniketan along with IIT Varanasi. "Varanasi is a living lens of the SandHi programme, the Sandhi projects and the SandHi grounding," said Sen.

The institutes, along with MIT, are trying to build a meta digital archive on Varanasi and similar city based information systems covering the domains under SandHI. Other partnerships with foreign and national institutes too are in place.

IIT Kharagpur has received funds about ₹30 crore from the government to set up a centre of excellence to run the SandHi projects. The institute will also carry out SandHi projects through an extended centre at its Kolkata campus, besides a proposed research & development wing under 'Social infrastructural innovations' in the Ranbir and Chitra Gupta School of Infrastructure design and Management.

Further work will be carried out at innovative centres in institutes linked with IIT KGP, said Sen.

## Germany is a powerhouse India leans on

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/opinion/germany-is-a-powerhouse-india-leans-on/story-TfPqFBiHfrXCOBAWazw3N.html>



German Chancellor Angela Merkel's visit to India from October 4 has the potential to further strengthen India-Germany ties and rejuvenate broader India-EU relations. Germany's position as Europe's largest economy has allowed Merkel to assume a leading role within the EU during the crises dealing with debt and refugees. There is a clear recognition in Germany that it must take on larger responsibilities within Europe and in the world.

Germany had relied mainly on its economic power for influence owing to its difficult past. A close Franco-German alliance within Europe and a strong transatlantic security and economic partnership are the cornerstone of Berlin's foreign policy. Still, in a changing global order, Germany is looking for new engagements. During the last decade, it tried to focus on the Brics. Its relations with Russia are now tense owing to the Ukrainian crisis. Although China has been an attraction, Germany has started looking at India seriously, particularly under the Narendra Modi government.

With more than \$20 billion of bilateral trade and as the seventh-largest investor in India, Germany is keen on concluding the stalled India-EU FTA negotiations. If followed through carefully, Germany can be a valuable partner for 'Make in India', railway modernisation, renewable energy, Clean Ganga and skill development. As strategic partners since 2000, both countries have worked closely in matters related to trade, investment, energy, development cooperation and UNSC expansion. There are about 50 working or joint working groups.

Around 1,500 German companies operate in India, with 600 in the engineering sector. If faster clearances are assured, many more are likely to join. The Indo-German Chamber of Commerce has 7,000 member companies across sectors. A recent FICCI study reveals that German companies are favourably inclined to invest in India's high tech market. Areas identified include electronic system design and manufacturing, photonics, IT, automotive, civil aviation and airports, transportation infrastructure, water, renewable energy, heavy engineering, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, space and defence manufacturing. It's worth noting that China has already attracted about 6,000 German companies.

Moving beyond the controversy of replacing German with Sanskrit as a third language in Central Schools, both governments are keen to develop further ties in the higher education sector, especially in the fields of research, skill development and faculty mobility. Already Germany is one of the most productive collaborators in joint scientific projects for Indian researchers. IIT Madras was set up with German help. Many students in India may not know that unlike other western countries, most German universities provide free education even to foreigners. Knowing German, however, may be a key factor in securing admission.

Both India and Germany are looking for enhanced roles and new responsibilities to shape the 21st century international order. India must use Merkel's growing clout and Germany's influence in EU decision-making for improving India-EU ties, which have lost momentum in recent years. The visit could be a good opportunity to resume India-EU FTA talks. Serious engagement with Germany could also help build a consensus within the EU on India's efforts to gain entry into exclusive nuclear regimes.

# 92 pc JNU students 'reject' UGC guidelines on safety

**ARANYA SHANKAR**

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 1

AS MANY as 92 per cent of students at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) have rejected the guidelines by the University Grants Commission (UGC) on the safety of students, according to a 'referendum' held by the Democratic Students' Federation.

The UGC guidelines advocated the construction of walls at a certain height, barbed wires, installation of CCTV cameras, introducing a system of biometric

attendance and presence of police personnel within campuses, among other measures.

"Overall, 1,678 students participated in the referendum, of which 1,545 voted against it, 87 voted in favour, 43 votes were counted as invalid and three were blank. The voting was held outside classes, libraries and *dhabas* in two phases — in the morning and in the evening," said DSF secretary Ishan Anand.

DSF activists claimed the result of the referendum was a reflection of the students' recognition that the guidelines "will turn universities into jails".



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