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## Indians barred from taking test for US practice

*Hemali Chhappia / TNN*

Mumbai: Tens of thousands of Indians who went to the United States to cash in on the health industry boom have been served a blow as the federal government has decided against allowing Indians to sit for the National Physical Therapy Examination (NPTE), a licentiate test without which students cannot practice in the US.

The decision was taken by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy, a national body, reasoning that it found "systematic and methodical sharing and distribution of recalled questions by significant numbers of graduates of programmes in the affected countries as well as several exam preparation companies specifically targeted to these graduates". Apart from Indians, students from Pakistan, the Philippines and Egypt have also been barred from taking the exam.

"The federation recognizes the significant consequences of this policy decision but feels that it needs to be made clear to all candidates that the federation will not tolerate security breaches," it stated in a notice sent out to all the candidates who had registered to take the NPTE. Candidates will now have to wait for a year, which is when the federation is likely to introduce a more secured version of the test.

A parent from Mumbai whose daughter is enrolled with the University of Pittsburg said the US government's decision was not fair as they had found no evidence against Indian students sharing the questions with their friends.

Even in the communication released to students, the federation stated, "Evidence was obtained through extensive forensic analyses of exam performances as well as a variety of legal actions brought by the federation in the United States and abroad. Most notably, this includes the raid and seizure of evidence from the St Louis Review Center in Manila, Philippines, and its alleged owners/operators, Gerard L Martin, Roger P Tong-An and Carlito Balita, which revealed the widespread sharing of hundreds of live test items."

Announced on Sunday, the decision caused ripples among the student community, some of whom are speaking of filing a case suit in an American court.

"This unfortunate news has disheartened me and shattered my dreams. What should I do next? I am not able to find any way," noted Vijayta on a blog that has several students agitated with the United States government's decision.

July 16

## Rupee becomes only 5th currency to get a symbol

*Design By IIT Grad Cleared By Cabinet**TIMES NEWS NETWORK*

New Delhi: In keeping with India's growing economic might and its status as a major investment destination, the hitherto humble rupee is all set to get a distinct identity in the form of a new symbol. The Union Cabinet on Thursday gave its approval to the symbol which combines the Roman letter 'R' with the Devnagri 'Ra'.

The symbol will catapult the rupee into the company of four 'elite' currencies which have similarly distinct identities — the US dollar, euro, yen and British pound.

The symbol has been designed by D Udaya Kumar, an IIT Bombay post-graduate, who has just joined as a teacher at IIT Guwahati. Kumar will receive a prize money of Rs 2.5 lakh for his efforts. The symbol will standardize the expression for the Indian rupee in different languages, both within and outside the country.

“It’s a big statement on the Indian currency. It would distinguish the rupee from those countries whose currencies are also designated as rupee or rupiah, such as Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Indonesia,” I&B minister Ambika Soni said after the Cabinet meeting. The symbol, she added, would reflect the strength and robustness of the Indian economy.

Till now, the Indian currency was simply denoted by Rs or INR. Kumar’s symbol was chosen after a public competition was held among resident Indian citizens inviting entries for a symbol which “reflects and captures the Indian ethos and culture”.

Over 3,000 entries were received. These were evaluated by a jury headed by the RBI deputy governor, which included experts from reputed art and design institutes.

“The entries were presented to the jury in such a manner that the identity of the competitors was not revealed to the jury members. The jury selected five final entries and also gave its evaluation of these five entries to the government to take a final decision,” said Soni.

#### **Re symbol to be adopted in 6 mths**

New Delhi: The new symbol for the rupee, cleared by Cabinet on Thursday, will not be printed or embossed on currency notes or coins, but it would be included in the ‘Unicode Standard’ and major scripts of the world to ensure that it is easily displayed and printed in the electronic and print media.

Unicode is an international standard that allows text data to be interchanged globally without conflict. After incorporation in the global and Indian codes, the symbol will be used by all individuals and entities within and outside the country.

The symbol will be adopted in a span of six months in the country, and within 18 to 24 months globally, Soni said, adding that it will feature on computer keyboards and software for worldwide use.

“It is a perfect blend of Indian and Roman letters — capital ‘R’ and Devanagri ‘Ra’ which represents rupaiah — to appeal to international and Indian audiences. My design is based on the tricolour, with two lines at the top and white space in between,” Kumar told a news agency.

After encoding of the symbol in the Unicode Standard and National Standard, NASSCOM will approach software development companies for incorporating the rupee symbol in their operative software, as a new programme or as an update, to enable computer users worldwide to use the symbol even if it is not embedded on the keyboards (much like the way Euro symbol is used even though it is not embedded in the keyboards in use in India).



**MAKING A MARK:** The new symbol blends the Devnagri ‘Ra’ and Roman ‘R’. Its design is based on the tricolour, says creator D Udaya Kumar



D Udaya Kumar, a research scholar from IIT, who designed the rupee symbol

INDIA SHINING

## Of goalposts & GM penalties

*Technology Must Face And Accommodate Sceptic And Convert Alike*

BY AMBUJ SAGAR

After sticking to his guns, Sepp Blatter, the head of FIFA, conceded during the recently-concluded World Cup that there was a need to introduce goal-line technologies to avoid the kind of snafu that happened in the England-Germany game. But he still stood firm against introducing video replays to help referees.

On another continent, the European Commission has proposed that member states opt out of community decisions on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) so that individual countries can make policy decisions as they see fit – this is a way out of the deadlock within the EU since different states have different positions on GMOs.

The common thread here is how “society” deals with new technologies. In case of FIFA, there seemingly was a reluctance to sully a traditional approach with new technology, long after other sports such as tennis have realized that machines can help reduce the number of errors on court, thereby reducing player frustration and leading to fairer outcomes. Not that the hallowed Wimbledon took the decision to introduce ‘Hawkeye’ (the system that assesses whether the ball is in or out) into the courts lightly – it was first used in a cricket match in 2001, Wimbledon adopted it only in 2007.

GMOs, of course, have a much more checkered history. The first commercial cultivation of a genetically modified crop was in 1996. The area under cultivation has grown steadily since then but only a handful of countries – US, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, China, and India – account for the majority of this area. Europe has been much more cautious about the introduction of this technology, partly because the environmental implications are still not fully understood. But in part, there are also concerns about the wider role of such a technology vis-a-vis

‘traditional’ crops, the possibility of private-sector control over the food sector, and the consequences for farmers in developing countries. Proponents of this technology suggest it can help overcome food insecurity in the world and also help make crops more tolerant to the vagaries of weather, climate change and pest attacks.

So what is it that we can learn from such examples?

First of all, not everyone has the same view of a new technology. Different people may – no, will – have different perspectives and even those who may have similar views may have them for different reasons. Second, just because some have a different view, does not make them wrong or irrational. In fact, given the thicket of economic, social, environmental and other issues that may surround a technology, there is no simple ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ view. Third, any new technology creates ‘winners’ and ‘losers’; that is to say, some individuals, organizations, or groups will benefit from the introduction of a new technology while others might suffer some losses. And not all of these groups will have the same level of resources (financial, human, institutional, network) to influence the decision about the introduction of the technology.

Given this, how do we navigate the complexities surrounding new technologies? First of all, we must proceed with caution and base our thinking on real data and research, not just assertions and rhetoric. We need to ensure we have participation and input from all key stakeholders. And lastly, we must make sure that we understand who the potential ‘losers’ are and protect/compensate them accordingly. Public policy has a role to play in all three areas, especially protecting the disadvantaged who do not have a strong voice.

Policy-makers must be looking ahead (or interacting with those who are looking ahead) so that policy is proactive, not reactive. If Sepp Blatter had done that, England would rightly have been given the goal in their game against Germany (not that it would have mattered, given the performance of the over-hyped English team, but that’s another column).

**The author is professor of policy studies at IIT Delhi**



# River linking ushers growth

*Kolhapur civic administration has taken up many ambitious projects, thanks to the initiatives by Vijay Singhal, municipal commissioner. He recently received an award from the Prime Minister for the river-linking project he had taken up during his stint at Jalgaon*

*Correspondent*

Moving fast on the growth track, Kolhapur has come a long way. City's face is changing with good roads, flyovers and well-maintained gardens. Civic amenities are also moving up the chart. The civic administration has taken up several ambitious projects, which are set to contribute to overall development of the city in a big way.

Vijay Singhal, municipal commissioner, has been leading from the front. He has been in the thick of things in developing the modern-day Kolhapur while keeping its cultural heritage intact. This gold medallist civil engineer from IIT Roorkee and [M Tech from IIT Delhi](#) recently received award in administrative excellence from Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh. It was bestowed on him for the riverlinking project during his stint in Jalgaon.

He is a person who knows how to convert challenges into opportunities. In 2005, when many parts of the state were witnessing floods, Jalgaon district was reeling under drought. Seven tehsils of the district were largely affected. Rivers and nallahs were going dry and consequently, water reservoirs were empty and groundwater level was depleting while in the neighbouring Nasik district, the Girna dam was overflowing. Singhal implemented a project to divert the Girna dam spillover to water-scarce regions of Jalgaon by interlinking rivers.

He not only achieved interlinking of rivers but also linked diverse interests of all stakeholders. He was instrumental in marshalling the resources from the irrigation department, state government and people's representatives. The transparency in the planning process and stakeholder consultations allowed the project to gain wider acceptance.

He also involved citizens in that project. "The villagers willingly parted with parts of their land to enable the interlinking of rivers. The fact that not a single voice was raised in opposition to the project is a testimony to the success of the participatory approach in planning," says Singhal.

The project solved drinking water problems of one municipal corporation, five municipal councils and 123 villages. The irrigated area also increased from 13,000 hectares in 2005 to 30,000 hectares in 2008.

"The administrative cost was just Rs three crore while the project is giving benefit worth Rs 40 crore annually. The Maharashtra Government issued a circular to other districts to study this model. It was also sent to secretaries and irrigation departments of various states," adds Singhal.

The department of administrative reforms, Government of India, has identified the project as a model one and as one of the success stories of Indian public administration. "The government also directed to send documentation to the Parliament, secretaries and irrigation departments of various states," he says.

Singhal was called by Vasundhara Raje Scindhia, the then chief minister of Rajasthan, to share his experience in implementing the project. He was also invited by the Australian government to present the project at the 9th International River Symposium 2006 held in Brisbane and attended by about 550 delegates over 50 countries. He also presented the project details at an international conference in China in 2007. He was also invited by the state university of New York, USA, in 2009 to present this project.

Besides the coveted award for excellence, the river-linking project also bagged Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar National Fellowship Award of the National Bharatiya Sahitya Academy of India.

Of course, he doesn't live on past laurels. "In fact, this award has increased my responsibility. At Kolhapur, we have undertaken a number of ambitious projects that will change the face of this culturally rich city. My priority is to facilitate this transformation."

It is essential that Kolhapur, the second-most important commercial centre in Pune division, gets this infrastructure in place if it wants to get reckoned with developing cities like Nagpur and Nasik. "We have already started upgrading infrastructure with commencement of the Rs 500 crore Integrated Road Development Plan. Though the work was stalled for six to seven months due to tree felling issue, it's in full swing and would be completed on time. We have deployed more machinery and pumped in extra resources. A number of rating agencies have appreciated the work," informs Singhal.

The state government has launched Nagar Utthan Scheme in January. "Of the total around Rs 400 crore sanctioned for the scheme, Kolhapur would be getting Rs 216 crore. We have also received funds of Rs 75 crore from the National River Conservation Project for cleaning Panchaganga river," the municipal commissioner adds.

Singhal has also presented proposal worth Rs 2,099 crore to the state Government for holy city development

project. "The proposal will be first presented to the state government and will be forwarded for Centre's consideration. If sanctioned, this project will help in development on lines of Nanded."

The civic body is also concentrating on the preserving the city's heritage and Rankala Lake tops the list. "Rankala work is being done under the National Lake Conservation Plan. It includes checking pollution from point and non-point sources, catchment area treatment, desilting and weed control et al," he says. In fact, desilting of the lake was done for the first time after construction of the lake 100 years ago.

Panchganga pollution has been another major concern for the city for nearly three decades. With him at the helm, Rs 116 crore have been earmarked to address the issue. Another Rs 160 crore have been sanctioned for water supply and drainage line works. The city sanitation plan is being prepared and housing for poor under the IHSDP is also in progress. "We are also laying emphasis on traffic management and parking issues," the municipal commissioner says.

In one year's time, Singhal avers, one would witness a new Kolhapur. The city is also one of the three cities in the state to be selected for pilot phase of Centre's service level benchmarking scheme. "Under this, we would be undertaking works related to water supply, drainage lines, storm water drainage systems and solid waste management. All these projects combined will give a facelift to the city," he concludes.

### The recognition

Vijay Singhal recently received award in administrative excellence from Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh. It was bestowed on him for the river-linking project during his stint in Jalgaon. The department of administrative reforms, Government of India, has identified the project as a model one and as one of the success stories of Indian public administration. The government also directed to send documentation to the Parliament, secretaries and irrigation departments of various states.



Integrated Road Development Plan is changing the face of Kolhapur.



Vijay Singhal, Kolhapur municipal commissioner, who implemented the river-linking project during his tenure in Jalgaon, receiving the award from Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh.

## Benefits of online universities

# Benefits of online universities

Getting a degree online brings multiple benefits to those who may not have had an opportunity to get a college degree from a traditional school. For those with families or full-time job commitments, attending classes on campus may have been difficult to impossible to achieve, but with online universities, non-traditional students can finally get the degrees they seek. Many online universities offer more affordable opportunities to get a higher education.

The benefits of online universities are many. Online universities provide flexible scheduling and, frequently, accelerated programs that allow students to do more studying in a shorter time frame.

Not having to drive to and from a campus, working in the comfort of your own home, and the reduced cost of book expenses that may be eliminated due to online access to these same materials are other important benefits to attending an online university. But how do these online universities measure up to traditional colleges and career schools?

Those in charge of hiring graduates from both traditional and online schools are also looking favourably upon online education. Not only do a large majority of employers now see online education as credible as a traditional education, they are also willing to hire qualified students with online degrees. With the high standards of many online MBA programs and a perspective from employers that those students working online are also managing to hold down full-time careers, many employers welcome online graduates.

A 2006 study indicates that 62 per cent chief academic officers at schools already engaged in online education believe that "the quality of online instruction is no more difficult than for face-to-face, and an increasing majority

## Benefits of online universities

view the quality of online education as the same or better than face-to-face instruction." [www](#)

[www.bestuniversities.com](http://www.bestuniversities.com)



## ADMISSION ERROR

# IITs want to make up, but don't know how

Charu Sudan Kasturi

■ letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The IITs are divided over how to compensate for an error that robbed 52 students of seats at the Institutes and possibly in other engineering colleges, earning a rap from an upset human resource development ministry.

The divide came up during a meeting of the Joint Implementation Committee (JIC) of the IIT Joint Entrance Examination on Wednesday. IIT Madras Director M.S. Ananth objected to the creation of extra seats, sources present at the meeting told *HT*.

The IITs are expected to announce their plans to redress grievances of these students on Friday, along with the declaration of results of their second round of admission counselling. The HRD ministry has also asked the IITs for a report on the case.

"I am very concerned about the error. But I simply cannot comment on what we will do for these 52 students at the moment," Professor D. Srinivasan, co-chairman of the JIC said, speaking over the phone from Chennai.

But sources have told *HT* that the IITs and the HRD ministry effectively have two options before them.

The IITs could create extra

## IIT MADRAS DIRECTOR OBJECTED TO CREATION OF EXTRA SEATS. HRD MINISTRY COULD ASK NON-IIT INSTITUTES TO CREATE SPACE

seats to admit these students — unless some of them earn seats in the second round of counselling on their own merit.

The HRD ministry could alternatively ask the Central Counselling Board of the All India Engineering Entrance Examination (AIEEE) to create extra seats at non-IIT institutions like the National Institutes of Technology.

The 52 students were sent invitation letters to join architecture and pharmaceutical sciences courses on June 28. But the IITs on July 8 declared on their website that these students would not be admitted and that they were earlier invited by "mistake."

The students have, however, complained that the IIT error not only robbed them of seats they were promised at the institutes, but also fooled them into not taking seats in other engineering colleges, thus jeopardising their academic year.

HindustanTimes

Title : Oil India brings 'Super - 30' advantage to underprivileged IIT aspirants

Author :

Location :

Article Date : 07/16/2010

## Oil India brings 'Super - 30' advantage to underprivileged IIT aspirants

**T**hirty young IIT aspirants, selected from amongst the economically backward families in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, set on their dream journey under a special Coaching Programme, which was formally launched by the Chief Minister of Assam, Tarun Gogoi, at a function recently.

The 10 month fully resi-



dential programme is being run under the aegis of the 'Utkarsh Superb - 30 Coach-

ing centre set up for this purpose, by the Oil India Limited, a PSU in cooperation with the centre for Social Responsibility & Leadership, a well known NGO. The CMD of Oil India Limited, N.M. Borah, Abhayanand, Director (Finance), Oil India Limited, Director (E&D) of Oil India Limited and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.



# At Central university, face HEAT, qualify FEAT and take TREAT

...for admission to undergraduate, postgraduate  
and research degree programmes, respectively

## EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, JULY 14

THE Academic Council of the Central University of Himachal Pradesh, coming up at Dharamsala, has decided to introduce an innovative method of selecting students for admission to various courses.

For admission to any undergraduate (UG) programme, a candidate will have to fill up a single common form, indicating choices in the order of preference.

The meeting of the newly constituted Academic Council was held in New Delhi earlier this week and approved a new pattern of admissions to set multidisciplinary and higher standards of teachings.

The three common tests for admission to UG, postgraduate (PG) and research degree programmes have been named HEAT, FEAT and TREAT, respectively — a pattern followed by most world-class universities.

Vice-Chancellor Dr Furqan Qamar, who chaired the meeting, told *The Indian Express* that all applicants to UG programmes would be required to face the HEAT (Higher Education Aptitude Test), and the selection of



**DR FURQAN QAMAR**  
V.C., Central University of  
Himachal Pradesh

students will be made strictly on the basis of scores. For admission at the postgraduate (PG) level, candidates will have to qualify the FEAT (Further Education Admission Test), and to get selected in MPhil and PhD programmes, applicants will have to take the TREAT (The Research Entrance Aptitude Test).

“The Central Universities Act 2009 mandates that universities will admit students from all over India on the basis of a common admission test, conducted individually or

jointly,” he said.

Dr Qamar said the idea of an aptitude-based common entrance test to screen applicants for admission across board was mooted at a brainstorming workshop on “vision of the university” held at the Himachal Institute of Public Administration. The meeting was attended by directors and vice-chancellors of several institutes and universities.

The first meeting of the Executive Council is slated to be held at Dharamsala on July 24. Vibha Puri Das, Secretary, Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource and Development, is expected to attend the meeting.

[IE, July 15, 2010](#)

## To free JEE of errors, IIT heads to meet next month

ANUBHUTI VISHNOI

NEW DELHI, JULY 14

IIT Directors are slated to meet next month to review the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) process in order to prevent a repeat of the embarrassing errors that marred the JEE 2010.

On the anvil is recourse to the time-tested process of maintaining minutes of every detail related to JEE and getting it verified by IIT Directors.

“There have been a number of errors— all human errors— that can’t be defended. The processes need to be streamlined for early detection of errors. An adherence to the old school minutes approval process is probably needed and will be done. IIT Directors will meet next month to review this year’s IIT-JEE and look at what can be done to accommodate students who were allocated wrong seats,” an IIT Director said.

IIT JEE 2010 saw printing mistakes, incorrect information on subject heads in English and Hindi versions of question paper, paper, wrong instructions and wrong allocation of seats to some 52 students.

After the JEE, the HRD Minister had summoned IIT Directors and sought explanation from them.

[DNA, July 15, 2010](#)

### **Ist year students in IIT-B will undergo pre-internship**

To get students excited about research, IIT Bombay, for the first time, plans to introduce "pre-internship" opportunities for first year students this year. They will get to work with faculties on specific projects, and the aim is to make them understand that even academics and research can be challenging. The initiative will start this year. "We are still working on how to implement it. We have several hi-tech labs across the campus. The idea is that for the first time, students in the first year will get to do an apprenticeship within IIT Bombay at one of its labs. They will get to see the culture and know what happens at the institute," said S Biswas, dean of academic programmes at IIT Bombay. Currently, students get to do internship at the end of second year or third year. It will be made competitive for the students and not everyone will be selected. "It may be interdisciplinary and students may get a chance to work in an area that interests them. For instance, a computer science student, who is also interested in chemical engineering, may get to work in that area," said Biswas. This is one among many initiatives being planned by the institute. All post graduate students of IIT Bombay, who attend conferences abroad and get to showcase their projects and research and development work, will now be explaining the same to the first year students. "The first year students have just passed their Std XII. So the senior students will have to explain their projects in a manner that makes them understand as well as connect with whats happening at IIT Bombay," said an academician. Whats more, during their orientation, the first year students will also get to see a film by students where the seniors will talk about research being done at the institute. "The initiatives will give the freshers a perspective from the students point of view," said an official.