

eNewspaper Clippings
July -20-21, 2010

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July 20

IIT-JEE reform: Prof submits another plan

Akshaya Mukul / TNN

New Delhi: With consensus yet to emerge on the IIT-JEE reform proposed by a committee headed by IIT Kharagpur director Damodar Acharya, Rajiv Kumar, professor of computer science at IIT-Kharagpur, has submitted another proposal.

Unlike the Acharya committee, Kumar has not suggested 70% marks in class XII as the eligibility condition to appear for IIT-JEE. Again unlike Acharya's recommendation, Kumar has suggested a single examination — replacing IIT-JEE, AIEEE and all other states' JEEs — by which a student, after securing a UID card, can have both all-India as well as state rank.

A single (all-India level and state level each) merit list should be prepared by which one can seek admission in one of the engineering colleges, including IITs, IISERs, NITs, IIITs, states and others. Kumar has also said that instead of a one-time examination, there should be three sittings of the same examination conducted thrice over a fortnight or a month. An aggregated score over three sittings of the examination should be considered for the final ranking. The single test, Kumar has proposed, should be conducted with four subjects of PCMA (physics, chemistry, mathematics and aptitude) with equal weightage for all the four.

As is the practice, Kumar has said there should be add-on tests for additional skills needed, for example, for architecture, town planning, design etc. There should not be any additional test to test PCMA/PCMB, which is already tested by the single test.

July 21

Cops secure DU campus for Day 1

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: With the new academic session starting from today, Delhi University's recently started anti-stalking helpline will have a dedicated staff on North Campus. Delhi Police have made elaborate arrangements, including setting up police pickets, stationing women police personnel on duty, and deploying patrol vehicles on campus to check the menace of ragging.

The measures were decided at a meeting of the DU Proctorial Board and Delhi Police. Police pickets have been put up on University Road, Chhatra Marg and GTB Road in North Campus while intensive patrolling on foot and motorcycles will be carried out in the University area, said DCP (north) Sagar Preet Hooda.

Around 50 women police personnel, in uniform and in plain clothes, have been deployed at various locations and special checks inside buses headed to the university will also be carried out. Elaborate anti-eve teasing arrangements have also been made on and around campus and four patrol motorcycles have been deployed on the main campus. Police have also formed five anti-eve teasing squads, made up of two male and two female personnel in each team.

"An anti-stalking cell has already been set up in North Delhi police district," added Hooda.

Four PCR vans have been deployed for intensive patrolling on campus, the officer added. Other measures taken by the police and university include the setting up of two joint control rooms, one each on North and South Campus, where students can report incidents of ragging and eve-teasing, stationing disciplinary squads at all colleges, providing sealed complaint boxes, and keeping extra vigil at eating joints.

College hostels have been requested to restrict the entry of outsiders and to prominently display rules regarding the ban on ragging.

On Monday, DU said that unannounced inspections will also be carried out at hostels to check if unauthorised guests are staying over. Also, to prevent bad elements from defacing walls, SHOs have been authorised to take action, and DU's FM channel is airing talks about anti-ragging steps taken on campus.

Hindustan Times

Title : CAN'T TAKE UNIVERSITY TO CONSUMER COURT: SC

Author : Bhadra Sinha bhadra.sinha@hindustantimes.com

Location : NEW DELHI:

Article Date : 07/21/2010

CAN'T TAKE UNIVERSITY TO CONSUMER COURT: SC

Bhadra Sinha

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NEW DELHI: Statutory authorities like universities or education boards are not service providers and, thus, can't be dragged by students to consumer courts alleging deficiency in service, the Supreme Court has ruled.

Allowing an appeal filed by the Maharishi Dayanand University challenging the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC), a bench headed by Justice B.S. Chauhan said a direction couldn't be passed against such an authority to award a degree to a student.

The bench reversed the NCDRC's conclusions and held that its direction to award the B.Ed degree to the student, Surjit Kaur, was "contrary to the rules." It rejected Kaur's contention that she was a student under the Consumer Protection Act and the university was providing her with a service while holding exams.

Explaining the Consumer Protection Act laws, the bench said when a board or a statutory authority conducts an exam in discharge of its statutory function, it does not offer "services" as the examinee doesn't hire or avail any service from the board for a consideration.

Instead, it held, a candidate taking the exam is a person who asks the board to test him to ascertain if he has sufficient knowledge and assess his competence vis-à-vis others.

HindustanTimes

Title : IIT faculty slams exam blueprint

Author : Charu Sudan Kasturi charu.kasturi@hindustantimes.com

Location : NEW DELH

Article Date : 07/21/2010

IIT faculty slams exam blueprint

FLAYED Proposed test will create 2-tier entrance mechanism, fears HRD ministry

Charu Sudan Kasturi

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NEW DELHI: The faculty forum of IIT Kanpur and a senior IIT Kharagpur professor have slammed a blueprint for admissions reforms drafted by Institute directors, exposing deep divides within the premier institutions and pitting teachers against administrators.

The rejection of their blueprint by the faculty also leaves the IIT directors sandwiched between criticism from their colleagues and the HRD ministry, which is also uncomfortable with the reform draft.

The IIT Kanpur faculty dismissed the blueprint prepared by a panel, led by the Kharagpur Institute's Director Damodar Acharya, as unsubstantiated in a resolution passed at a meeting on July 14, sources told *HT*.

The panel was set up by HRD Minister Kapil Sibal to prepare an alternative to the IIT-Joint Entrance Examination (IIT-JEE) and other entrance tests.

The resolution came on the heels of criticism of Acharya panel's suggestions by IIT-K computer science professor Rajeev Kumar, who has placed an alternative on his web page.

The panel has suggested replacing the IIT-JEE and other

EDUCATION CONUNDRUM

- A panel, led by IIT-K's Director Damodar Acharya, has suggested replacing the IIT-JEE with a single National Aptitude Test.
- The NAT, however, may compel IITs to screen students through another add-on test.
- The panel was also criticised by the IIT faculty for not consulting the students and parents while formulating its report.

engineering exams with a single National Aptitude Test scrutinising students' "raw intelligence". Students will be screened on the basis of their Board marks (70 per cent weightage) and their scores in the NAT (30 per cent), the panel proposed. Institutions like the IITs could take an add-on test for students screened through the NAT before finalising admissions.

But the ministry is opposed to a two-tier mechanism. It will also find it hard to prevent other institutions from creating a similar add-on test.

Kumar in his proposal, has questioned the panel's argument that scores of students across boards can be normalised to cover for differences in evaluation levels while calculating eligibility for admissions.

Hindustan Times

Title : IIT Kharagpur confers honorary doctorate on Shiv Nadar for his contribution to Indian IT

Author :

Location :

Article Date : 07/21/2010

news briefs

IIT Kharagpur confers honorary doctorate on Shiv Nadar for his contribution to Indian IT

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur, awarded the Honoris Causa Doctorate of Science (DSc) to Shiv Nadar, founder, HCL and chairman, HCL Technologies and Shiv Nadar Foundation — for his outstanding contribution to computer hardware and software industry in the country.

The award was presented to Nadar on the 56th annual convocation ceremony of IIT Kharagpur by Kapil Sibal, Union Minister of HRD. With this award, Nadar now joins the league of luminary recipients including Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, Mother Teresa, Ratan Tata and Satyajit Ray, who had been conferred this award earlier.

The Honoris Causa Doctorate by IIT is meant to acknowledge and felicitate distinguished personalities in the country who have made commendable contributions in the field of science, engineering, entrepreneurship and academics.

Shiv Nadar's name was selected by the senate, the board of governors and the President of India, the visitor of IIT Kharagpur.

IE
July 20

Sibal seeks PM aid on stuck projects

ANUBHUTI VISHNOI
NEW DELHI, JULY 20

ROAD Transport and Highways Minister Kamal Nath's recent outburst against the Planning Commission was not an isolated case. There is friction between the Plan Panel and several other ministries, including the Kapil Sibal-led HRD Ministry.

Three of the HRD proposals have run into roadblocks posed by the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance, and Sibal is learnt to have sought the intervention of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on the issue.

Sources confirmed to *The Indian Express* that Sibal had written to the PM seeking his intervention on three stuck schemes including the proposal to set up 20 new IIITs (Indian Institutes of Information Technology) on PPP ba-

sis, which was shot down by the Finance Ministry earlier this month. Of the other two stuck projects, one is meant to finance state universities and colleges, and the second is a Rs 2,000-crore scheme to set up 2,500 vocational schools across the country.

The PMO has now asked the Planning Commission to re-examine the projects.

Sibal is learnt to have brought to the PM's notice how these projects were key to increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education. India is looking at a GER target of 20 per cent by 2020 against a dismal 12 per cent at present.

Sibal's letter follows the recent jolt that the HRD ministry got when the Finance Ministry rejected its proposal to set up 20 new IIITs in this plan period and said the project should only be taken up in

the 12th plan. The HRD Ministry envisages setting up of 20 new IIITs on PPP model and on a 85:15 fund-sharing format between the government and the industry respectively.

If the IIIT proposal has met with resistance, the ministry's proposal — shared with all state governments last year — to incentivise states for setting up new universities and colleges has also hit a roadblock. The proposal is to provide Central assistance to state governments to the tune of 1/3rd of the capital cost for setting up of new universities and colleges and also for expansion of existing institutes. The state governments will be required to bear 2/3rd of the capital cost and recurring expenditure. In fact, states have already been asked to identify land and suitable locations for these new institutions and also prepare detailed project reports.

July 21



Tathagat Avatar Tulsi shares a light moment with his friend Sushil Kumar on the first day of joining the IIT-Bombay where he will teach physics, on Monday. With a PhD from IISc, Bangalore, 22-year-old Tulsi from Patna is possibly the youngest assistant professor at IIT.

PRADIP DAS

Software tool by IITians-run firms to aid supersonic aircraft research

PRANAV KULKARNI

JULY 20

RESEARCH on supersonic aircraft may soon get a fillip as a group of city-based IITian startups have developed tools to enhance the designing process and make it faster and cheaper. Developed by Idea Research with inputs from Zeus Numerix and Tetrahedix Engineering, all city-based companies, the software tool is called Integrated Design Using Inline Optimisation Technology, (IDIOT).

"Aeronautical researches are a lengthy affair and are spread over decades. Not only that, the design process that goes through the conceptual, preliminary and detail designing stages involves solid modeling, creation of wind tunnels, trials and tests which increase the cost of the project. IDIOT comes up with the best possible design options of various aircraft components under a given set of working conditions with the help of computer programmes, reducing the cost and time of research," said Nitin Kumar



Gupta, ex-IITian and director of Idea Research. With the core team of two IIT Mumbai pass-outs along with one each from IIT Kharagpur and IIT Chennai, IDIOT was given inputs by Zeus Numerix on grid generation of the aircraft components. "We conducted as many as 450 simulations each lasting for 15-20 hours before reaching the final product," said Anurag Sharma, an ex-IITian and director of Zeus Numerix.

The group claims that this is the first time such tools have been developed in India. "India depends a lot on foreign organisations for designing such kind of tools. Private manufacturers such as

Boeing, MIG or Sukhoi have their own design tools which are designed to match their specific needs. Though the tools have been designed keeping in mind the supersonic aircraft flying at multiple mach (one mach equivalent to speed of sound), they can also be used for designing of all sorts of aeronautical structures such as civil carriers, missile systems or even helicopters. The time of research is reduced to almost one third," said Dr N Ananthkrishnan, faculty, IIT Bombay.

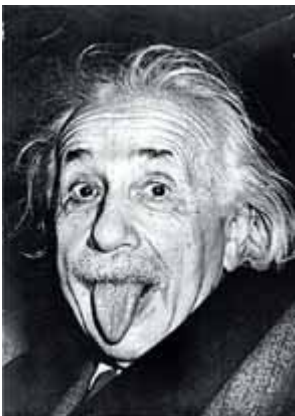
Completed in March this year, the group has been working on the project since January 2009 and have been approached by a number of aeronautical institutes. Their technical presentations on the topic has also been included in the Defence Research and Development Organisation's Defence Science journal, January, 2010, issue. "The technical paper is jointly written by Rahee Walambe, Nitin Gupta, Dr Ananthkrishnan and others and has been included in the journal," said Manish Bharadwaj, spokesperson, DRDO.

DNA
July 20

Indian students put the wow back into science

Students of the IITs, and also degree colleges across the country, are taking advantage of a TIFR programme to foster careers in research

Mihika Basu. Mumbai



Raghu Mahajan was ranked first in IIT-JEE 2006. Like most top rankers, he chose computers, at IIT-Delhi. But midway, he switched over to pure science.

"The association (with the National Initiative on Undergraduate Science, or NIUS) gave me the courage to make a switch from a safe career in computer science to an unsafe career in physics," he wrote to the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (HBCSE), Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR). The NIUS is an HBCSE initiative, an "extended nurture" programme lasting two years. As it turned out, Mahajans "association" with the NIUS was quite safe: he is at present pursuing a bachelors degree in physics at the MIT.

Not only IIT students, but also undergraduate degree college students are benefiting from the NIUS, a programme that responds to the criticism that the Indian education system is not designed to breed scientists; that it only leads students towards the lure of the dollar, which can be had through an engineering or MBA degree.

But in two years, because of the NIUS, 40 scientific articles by undergraduate students have been published in prestigious journals such as the American Journal of Physics, Physical Review, Europhysics Letters, Physica and Physics Letters.

"We started the NIUS in April 2004. Our aim is to expose students to the best in science and keep their interest alive," said Vijay Singh, national coordinator, NIUS. "We also aim to keep them involved in producing science. Our efforts have started showing good results.

"Many of the students have written back to us saying our camps have rekindled their interest in pure science, something their school education perhaps wasn't able to do."

The HBCSE started the seventh batch with 69 physics and 25 biology students.

"I am studying engineering at IIT Bombay, but I also love physics. The NIUS seemed to be the perfect opportunity to do something in the subject I like so much," said Priyanka DeSouza, a batch VI NIUS student. "I'm applying what I have learnt to engineering too."

The NIUS organises three or four camps per batch, each camp lasting two to four weeks. A third of the students who enrol for the programme complete it.

"We get students from colleges across the country. Many doing core engineering courses from the IITs come to us to do scientific research. What attracts many is research projects, which are integral to the programme," Singh said.

Another programme modelled after the NIUS is the Centre for Excellence in Basic Sciences (CBS), a joint initiative of the Department of Atomic Energy and Mumbai University. "The IITs and the IIMs have produced talented youth who have made a difference nationally and internationally. So, we should ask how come we don't have similar institutes for basic sciences in India?" said SM Chitre, chairman, academic board, CBS, and a former scientist with the TIFR. "In this respect, more programmes like the NIUS should be encouraged."