

eNewspaper Clippings**June 26-28, 2010****TOI****IITs say no to common engg entrance test***Hemali Chhappia / TNN*

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TOI has a copy of the interim report of the committee, which is headed by IIT-Kharagpur director Damodar Acharya and comprising IIT-Madras director M S Ananth, IIT-Bombay director Devang Khakhar and IIT-Roorkee head S C Saxena. They wrote the report after extensive discussion with state officials, university heads, faculty and other stakeholders nationwide.

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To soften stress, it has been proposed to make NAT an online test conducted throughout the year. Every students' composite weighted performance score will then be drawn up; it will be based on marks in NAT and marks each student totals up in science subjects in Class XII boards.

'Deemed' by Arjun's HRD, minus checks*Akshaya Mukul / TNN*

New Delhi: The fate of 44 deemed universities found unfit by a high-powered review committee of the HRD ministry is to be decided by the Supreme Court but a close perusal of files accessed through RTI reveals how during the five years of Arjun Singh's tenure from 2004-09, the HRD ministry and UGC doled out deemed status, flouting all norms. If that was not the case, how come the HRD ministry's own panel found 29 of the 44 deemed universities which got deemed status between 2007 and 2009 to be unfit to be a deemed university by late 2009?

The broad modus operandi of granting deemed status that emerges from the records went under one of these categories:

In many cases — Manav Rachna, Nehru Gram Bharati, Saveetha Institute of Medical Sciences, Santosh World Medical Academy, Ponnaiyah Ramajayam Institute of Science & Technology, Jaypee Institute of Information Technology and Maharishi Markandeshwar University — the directive to expedite granting of deemed status came directly from the minister's office even before the mandatory process was in place.

HRD min-UGC exploited 'de-novo' norm to give deemed tag

In some others — Vignan's Foundations for Science, Technology & Research, Graphic Era University, Siddhartha Education Society, Lingaya's Institute of Management & Technology, Vel Tech Rangarajan, Karpagam Arts & Science College and Christ College — there were two situations. One, the approval of state government, a necessary condition, was not adhered to. Two, in case of difference of opinion between expert committees of UGC

and All India Council for Technical Education on the issue of granting deemed status, the HRD ministry always sided with the former. For instance, in the case of Periyar Maniammai Institute of Science and Technology, a smaller review panel of UGC within a month and a half negated and overturned the decision of its own expert committee that the institute did not deserve deemed status.

Both ministry and UGC also exploited the de novo category, meant to acknowledge emerging areas of knowledge. By taking the de novo route, new institutes could circumvent the requirement of 10 years to become a deemed university. But UGC/HRD was not always fair in its dealing. For instance, Sumandeep Medical University got deemed status for conducting “evidencebased learning system” for the students as also for holding rural health programmes. Shobhit Institute of Engineering & Technology got the status not for starting any innovative course but for planning to launch bio-medical engineering, bio-informatics and agriinformatics. The entire notesheet on Jaypee Institute of IT does not even mention which emerging areas the institute is teaching to get the status of deemed university.

Noting the misuse of de novo category in the case of Maharishi Markandeshwar University, a joint secretary in the ministry wrote, “De novo category is being exploited. It appears to side-step the conditions of eligibility.’ The same joint secretary in case of Rajah Muthiah Chettiar Charitable and Educational Trust — it too got deemed status under de novo category — wrote, “There has to be some mechanism to assess the granting of programmes which are claimed to be in emerging areas.”

The ministry itself was never short of innovative methods to grant approvals: if a senior official raised an objection, it waited for him to go on leave and then clear the proposal.



TALKING HEADS

Balanced approach

A committee set up by the HRD ministry has proposed that 70% weightage be accorded to class XII marks for the IIT Joint Entrance Examination. Education Times gauges the possible implications of the decision

— *Proyashi Barua*

SANJAY DHANDE Director, IIT Kanpur

The proposed initiatives are welcome and long overdue. Today, many students aspiring for IITs neglect their +2 boards as they are embroiled in their coaching classes. This, at one level, is leading to a lot of unrest at a social level. For one, it puts tremendous pressure on the parents in terms of identifying the right coaching institutes and arranging the required funds. Needless to say, students themselves are unduly stressed and constantly under peer and societal pressure. I firmly believe that we as a nation must respect the school boards. There are variations in terms of existing schools but the standards of assessment followed by the board examinations irons out these subtle discrepancies. Moreover, a student who demonstrates proficiency in science and mathematics in the school boards is a student with bright potential. In fact, in the 1960s admission to IITs was based only on school board performance. In my view, in the proposed system, since 70% weightage is accorded to +2 results, the IITs will engage in dialogue with the school board in terms of improving their standards (standards of the school boards). This is necessary and something that should have been initiated long ago. The IITs have a moral mandate to raise the standards of mathematics and science in schools. They should make recommendations in terms of syllabus and try and implement a uniform syllabus. Under the proposed system, hopefully a beginning will be made in this regard.

SURENDRA PRASAD Director, IIT Delhi

The committee set up by the HRD (Human Resource Development) ministry has not yet made the final recommendations, in terms of a shift from the current scheme of admission to the country's premier engineering institutes. However, at this stage it does seem likely that several factors incorporated in the recommendations in the interim report will find place in the final set of recommendations. It is expected that due weightage will be accorded to both the class XII results and the proposed aptitude test. The recommendations are likely to recognise the special needs of the IIT system to continue to conduct JEE, though for a smaller (pre-screened) number of candidates.

RL TRIKHA Head of Department (distance education and faculty mathematics) FIITJEE Ltd

Till 2005, the IITJEE entrance examination was a two-tier examination. Around 21,000 candidates were shortlisted through a screening test held in April. The screening test had an objective set of questions. This was followed by the Mains that was held in May. The Mains included a set of subjective questions. Thereafter, in the ensuing years, the test pattern was entirely tailored to an objective pattern. As a result, at one go, successful candidates are declared out of a pool of nearly 5 lakh candidates. The new pattern, recently proposed by the committee instituted by the HRD, embraces the initial two-tier selection process. However, it accommodates a significant difference — the first cut-off is on the basis of +2 results and an aptitude test where questions are based on reasoning, numerical ability and communication skills. The top 40,000 shortlisted will take an additional test in physics, chemistry and mathematics. This newly proposed scheme of selection reiterates the belief that the class XII exams are indeed important.

If the proposed scheme is realised, then students shall place more emphasis on their board preparations. Unfortunately, today many students cannot balance between boards and coaching classes. But actually both the courses are intrinsically related. FIITJEE envisions to develop the foundational learnings of class XII. Students can harness conceptual understanding, analytical ability and lateral thinking only if they are well grounded with their +2 studies.



Published on June 27 2010 , Page 4

'Dissenting teachers may face legal action'

Joyeeta Ghosh

joyeeta.ghosh@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Teachers of Delhi University who have dissociated from the admission process, citing their differences over introduction of semester system from this academic year, may be liable to legal action for acting against the High Court order.

A letter, dated June 25, sent by M.A. Sikandar, registrar (legal) of the university to the principals have asked them to send the names of those teachers who did not take part in the admission process.

"It has come to the notice of

the University that despite the restraint order dated 21.6.2010, issued by the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi, against DUTA and its officers, not to obstruct the admission process in any manner whatsoever, many of the college teachers who are the members of the admission committee are not performing their duty," said the letter.

It further states, "You are, therefore, requested to send the names of all such members of the admission committee constituted by the college who failed to perform their duties. The requisite information must reach the University latest by Monday, 28th June 2010."

While some principals said they are yet to receive the letter, others said the decision whether to send the names or not will be taken after a meeting with the teachers.

"I have convened an emergency meeting of the admission committee and will place the matter before them and then take a decision," said one of the principals.

The letter also urges the principals "to place the matter before the Governing Body for taking appropriate action as per the provisions of Ordinance XII of the ordinances applicable to college teachers."

Meanwhile, Aditya Narayan Misra, president of Delhi University Teachers' Association (DUTA) said, "The DUTA abides by the order of the High Court and has not

obstructed or shall not obstruct the admission process. It continues with its appeal to the teachers to dissociate from the admission process peacefully."

"The threat issued by the registrar is uncalled for. Such threats cannot substitute for lawful and democratic functioning for an educational institution," Misra added.

He also added that DUTA urges the Vice Chancellor to hold consultations rather than issuing letters in the interest of the university.

In the absence of teachers, colleges had to manage the admission process with the help of non-academic staff this year.

This not only inconvenienced colleges but also students, who were found wanting for guidance through the admission process.

JNU HOSTELS TO GET WI-FI

NEW DELHI: Students at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) will soon be access to internet anywhere in the hostels. The college authorities and MTNL signed a MoU on Saturday under which MTNL will provide WiFi connectivity to all hostels, free of cost. Sachin Pilot, Union Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology said that MTNL has set-up four 3G towers on campus to help students access the varsity's Local Area Network.

HTC

‘Disappointed with turf wars over NCHER’

NEW DELHI: The report of the Prof Yash Pal-led committee on Rejuvenation of Higher Education may be the core of HRD Ministry’s reform agenda, but the eminent academic is “terribly disappointed” with the way “the most important of legislations” for creation of an overarching National Commission for Higher Education & research (NCHER) is shaping up.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Prof Yash Pal said he was disappointed with the “turf wars” over the issue and felt that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh “must put his weight behind this crucial reform to see it through”.

The committee had recommended creation of NCHER to replace multiple regulatory bodies in higher education —University Grants Commission, All India Council for Technical education, Pharmacy Council, Dental Council, Bar Council and even Medical Council of India — an idea earlier proposed by the PM-backed National Knowledge Commission. While both the committees proposed that medicine and agriculture be under the purview of NCHER, the Health and Law ministries are against it. Health Ministry wants a separate National Council for Medicine.

“The basis of NCHER from the start was to have one single body for all disciplines so that the same is restored in universities also. IITs must be full fledged varsities and Indian universities should be able to offer course in agriculture, medicine or whichever discipline a student wishes to study. Separation of disciplines will defeat the purpose behind the reform. The PM must step in to correct this because it’s something that will not happen in another 50 years,” Prof Yash Pal said.

The proposal that NCHER oversee all disciplines was backed by the task force that drafted the NCHER legislation and also by the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) that is represented by education ministers of all states and educationists.

“There is a turf battle on and not enough effort is being made... This is not really a HRD Ministry commission, it is going to be independent of it. It must be remembered that you cannot have medical education divorced from the study of Physics and Chemistry. This part of our

report has not been appreciated and I feel I have failed,” Prof Yash Pal said.

The task force is likely to submit a final version of the NCHER legislation next month. It is likely to be placed before Parliament in the winter session.

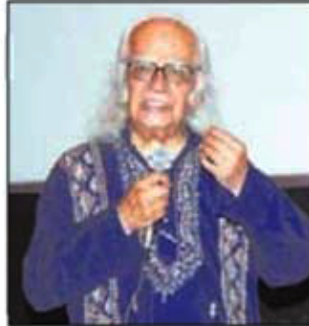
ANUBHUTI VISHNOI

Report on varsities sidelined to serve interests of politicians: Prof Yashpal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, JUNE 25

PROFESSOR Yashpal, who heads the Committee to Advise on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education, on Friday expressed his "deep disappointment" over the government's response to the panel's report on universities. He said that sidelining of the report served the interests of "bureaucrats, politicians and some so-called academicians".

Delivering a lecture at the National Institute of Design



Prof Yashpal speaks at NID on Friday. ADAM HALLIDAY

(NID), Ahmedabad, he said the committee's idea of a university meant, among other things, autonomy from organi-

sations such as UGC and AICTE, and their "interferences".

"Politicians, bureaucrats and so-called academicians cannot get away from (interference). And here, I squarely blame the highest authorities of the government. And I stand deeply disappointed," he said.

He echoed the report, submitted to the HRD Ministry last year, and reasserted that a university should offer a wide range of courses and that the students of such universities should have the freedom to

study a mix of subjects and not specialise in one. "The idea of a university is that you are not put in cubicles — cubicles of expertise; that you can wander around, that you can meander," he said.

Prof Yashpal, former chairman of the NID Governing Council, was delivering a lecture on "Was God an Architect or Designer?" "God must have been a designer because an architect needs something to work on, as does a manager," he said by way of answering the title, which he himself had come up with.

IITs: Panel wants XII, NAT scores to screen candidates

ANUBHUTI VISHNOI

NEW DELHI, JUNE 27

TO CHECK the mushrooming JEE coaching industry and ensure only the best get into engineering colleges, a committee formed by the HRD Ministry to review IIT-JEE has suggested that candidates be admitted on the basis of scores in a GRE/SAT-pattern National Aptitude Test (NAT) and Class XII marks.

In its report, which was accessed by *The Indian Express*, the committee headed by IIT Kharagpur Director Prof Damodar Acharya has suggested that more weightage be given to Class XII marks which along with scores in NAT will be the criterion for admission to engineering colleges. IITs and IISERs, however, will use the Class XII and NAT scores — the total of the two known as Composite Weighted Performance (CWP) — only “as a screening criterion” to reduce the number of applicants who can then take an add-on in pure sciences

Nearly 5 lakh candidates compete for the 10,000 IITs seats and NAT will help bring down this number substantially, the report said. NAT is envisaged as an online test that will not require extensive preparation or coaching.

The questions asked in the test will be of 10+2 level. It will test candidates’ raw intelligence, aptitude, general awareness, comprehension and written communication skills. A candidate can take the test thrice in a year and the highest of the three scores will be considered for his admission.

The committee has also recommended that students be relieved of the pressure of multiple JEEs held by various state governments. On an average, a student appears in 5 JEEs within a few days of the Class XII examinations.

The new admission system is needed, the report says, as IIT-JEE has become a huge “money spinning activity” for coaching centres. “The influence of coaching for JEE needs to be minimized and urban-rural and gender bias has to be eliminated,” it says.

Besides, a shift to a “conventional pen and paper examination with well designed long and problem solving oriented questions should be revived as the objective type of examination lends itself to undue influence of coaching” and also led to students “ignoring their Class XII studies and dropping attendance”.

The committee has also suggested reforms in Class XII examination.

Deccan Chronicle Hyderabad 25.06.10 p-3

AICTE rejects 70% applications

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

June 24: The All India Council for Technical Education has rejected 70 per cent of applications it received to set up new engineering colleges in the state this year, after the crack-down on corruption in the council.

Most of these applications were submitted by the managements of existing engineering colleges. The can-

cellations came as a shock to the college managements as getting approvals from the AICTE was earlier called a "formality."

The AICTE had approved about 150 colleges each year over the last two years.

The CBI raids on AICTE offices over the year and the arrest of several of its top bosses on bribery charges changed the scenario. To check corruption, the entire approval process is now done online. The inspection

committees that have been deputed to verify the proposals have suddenly turned vigilant.

Of the 150 applications that it received this year, the AICTE approved only 37. Of them, it recommended 22 institutions to set up new colleges which means that another 6,000 seats will be added to the existing 2.25 lakh engineering seats. The officials are also minutely scrutinising the 1,700 applications made existing col-

leges to increase student intake and to launch fresh courses the AICTE took an undertaking from these managements, signed a first class magistrate, stating that they will comply with all the norms regarding the faculty and infrastructure within a stipulated timeframe.

All proposals will be examined by the AICTE's executive on June 28, and the list of approved colleges will be placed on the council's website by June 29.

Economic Times Kolkata 24/06/2010 p-9

IIMA to introduce course in sports

Institute Will Charge Rs 80,000 For The Week-Long Programme

Our Bureau
AHMEDABAD

THE Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, (IIMA), has taken baby steps to professionalise sports management in the country that just hosted the successful Indian Premier League (IPL) and is gearing up for the upcoming Commonwealth Games.

The country's premier B-School will introduce a course in sports management from this academic year and will draw relevant faculty from outside the institute. The institute will charge a Rs 80,000 for the week-long course.

"There is a severe dearth of managerial talent in the country as far as managing sports events are concerned. Be it the IPL or the Commonwealth Games, most of the talent is sourced from outside the country. And the amounts paid are handsome," said Samir Barua, director of IIMA which will launch the course titled 'Professional Management of Sports Organisations'.

"This is first move from IIMA to



professionalise sports and related events," Mr Barua said adding that an official associated with the Commonwealth Games had motivated the institute to begin such a course.

Professionals say opportunities for sports management executives are few and far between. "In India, most of the sporting events are run by the government. So the opportunities are fewer," says Latika Khaneja of Collage Sports Management, a

firm that manages cricketing personalities like Virender Sehwag, Amit Mishra, Ishant Sharma.

"Unlike the US and England, there are no long-duration courses in sports management in India. Whatever little expertise is shared is through workshops or day-long symposia," Ms Khaneja said.

At the IIMA, the course curriculum is being prepared by Professor Jerome Joseph, who himself was a sportsperson, Mr Barua said. The course is one of the 11 MDP courses that the institute plans to offer during the year 2010-11.

Peoples Issues in Business Process Outsourcing, Infrastructure Development and Policy and Strategic GMP for senior Public Enterprise Executives are some of the other courses that will be offered this year.

Last year, IIMA had discontinued the one-year Post Graduate Programme in Public Management and Policy (PGP-PMP) course. "We are currently reviewing the course. Once the process is over, we might either restart the course or follow the suggestions of the review committee," Mr Barua added.

The Tribune, ND 26/06/2010 p-11

New UGC norms to impact private varsities

RAKESH LOHUMI
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, JUNE 25

The state government will have to review its norms for opening private universities with the University Grants Commission, framing comprehensive regulations for the deemed universities.

The government has been under fire from all quarters for opening the floodgates for setting up private universities on vague norms and without any regulatory mechanism in place. However, these insti-

tutions have come under a scanner as norms pertaining to physical infrastructure, faculty, endowment fund and other related matters for the deemed university are far more stringent. The new UGC regulations have set the benchmark for minimum physical infrastructure, faculty and other facilities which will have to be enforced by the state in respect of private universities sooner or later.

The minimum requirement of land for main campus has been pegged at five acres in the metropolitan area, seven

acres in non-metropolitan urban area and 10 acres in non-urban areas or as per the norms of the statutory regulatory body concerned, whichever is higher. In case of multi-disciplinary institutions, the aggregate land requirement will be the sum of the land area prescribed by various statutory councils for all courses. Further, the administrative building of at least 1,000 sqm, academic building, including library, lecture theatres and laboratories, at least 10,000 sqm with the central library alone being

of about 2000 sqm.

There should be undergraduate courses and at least five postgraduate academic departments, each having in position a minimum permanent faculty comprising one professor, two readers and three lecturers for general courses and in case of other disciplines such as engineering, medicine and other professional courses the faculty will be as per the number and guidelines of the respective statutory council having the qualifications and pay scales prescribed

by the commission. Private universities have been maintaining that they need no approval from the statutory councils under the state law and running various courses without requisite staff and other infrastructure. It is hardly surprising that there have been a spate of complaints against private universities which have become functional over the past one year.

The state had increased the endowment fund of Rs 3 crore to Rs 5 crore recently but the new UGC regulations have fixed an amount

The Tribune, ND 26/06/2010 p-12

Exam reform for IITs

National Aptitude Test is a welcome move

THE IIT-JEE reform panel, set up in February this year, has submitted its recommendations. It is now for the IIT Council to ratify and implement them. It has been known for some time that the country's premier engineering colleges are not quite happy at the quality of students getting admission in IITs year after year. Ever since the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) opted for multiple choice questions and numerical solving skills, the number of students with analytical and communication skills has nosedived. This has also coincided with the mushroom growth of coaching institutes, which train students to mechanically crack the entrance examination, without having to grasp basic concepts. What is more, large sections of students have been led to believe that they can afford to neglect their classes in high school and ignore Board examinations as long as they are able to cope with 'coaching'. Since there are fundamental differences between the teaching at coaching institutes and the teaching offered in schools, the panel's recommendation to place more reliance on Board examinations and a National Aptitude Test is specially welcome. This would force students and teachers alike to attend and engage high school classes, necessary to develop an understanding of both sciences and the arts.

With an estimated 4.5 lakh students appearing at the JEE this year for just around 10,000 seats in the IITs, the urgency for reforms was never higher. Paradoxically, while a large number of students who fail to get into IITs deserve better education than they eventually receive in other institutions, an equally large number of students admitted to the IITs fail to meet the rigour there. Students who perform exceptionally well in other engineering colleges can possibly be allowed into the IITs while those who fail to cope with the demands made by the IITs can be moved to other institutions.

Brand IIT is far too valuable to the country and they should remain exclusive institutions for the best and the brightest. That should be reason enough for the reforms to be implemented promptly. The over-dependence on coaching institutes, which give an unfair advantage to well-heeled students from urban areas, requires to be neutralised to provide a level playing field to those who are poorer and slower but not necessarily less bright.

Thought for the day

He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves, and sharpens our skill. Our antagonist is our helper.

— Edmund Burke

Times of India, ND 27-Jun-10 p-1

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Hemali Chhapia | TNN

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► Proposed NAT can be taken all year, P 17

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