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Torn between boards, entrances

PRESSURE Little gap between CBSE exams, IIT-JEE; school teachers say not getting into IIT is not end of road

Shaswati Das and Divya Sethi

NEW DELHI:This week, science students have a double dilemma: preparing for the CBSE Board exams and the Indian Institute of Technology-joint entrance exam (IIT-JEE).

With these two crucial exams falling around the same time, students are buckling under the pressure of performing well in both.

The pressure is mounting as with three weeks left for the exams, students are unable to equally divide time between preparing for the Boards and the entrance exams. While the best students for all science students end on April 13, the IIT test will be held on April 8.

“My parents have told me that I cannot drop a year in any circumstance. I have no option but to prepare for both the Boards and engineering entrance exams along with the board exams. It is a lot of pressure because I feel that I may end up under performing in both,” said Amit Sinha (name changed), a student of Delhi Public School, Mahim Road.

Principals say that the problem has more to do with the increasing number of students appearing for the entrance exams, which makes it tougher to crack these exams. At the same time, they say not being able to crack the test is not the end of the road.

“Students have to crack the board exams no matter what. It is a choice that they don’t have. If they are well prepared, the pressure does not matter. The competition is increasing because of the sheer number. But they must keep in mind that this is not the end of the world and there is a world of opportunities for them,” said Lata Vaidyanathan, principal, Modern School (Barakhamba Road).

The faculty at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi stress that parents need to understand the kind of pressure their expectations put on their children.

“Several IIT students from across the country appear for the IIT entrance exam but a lot of them have weaknesses. That is something that the parents need to accept and not put undue and unnecessary pressure on the children. This is just the first of the entrance,” said Rakesh Sharma, registrar, IIT Delhi.

Students have the option of appearing for other entrance exams such as the AIEEE, Birla Institute of Technology and Science-Pilani, West Bengal joint entrance exam, COMEDK and Velodyne Institute of Technology, among others.

“There are many other institutes which are as good as the IITs and not being able to make it onto one of the IITs is not the end of the road,” added Sharma.
Indian IT makes quiet progress in Europe

CONTINENT DISCOVERED TCS, Infosys, Wipro and HCL log big deals; only discretionary spending is seeing delays, say experts

MUMBAI: Infotech biggies based in Europe seems to have weathered the current euro zone crisis.

While domestic major TCS signed four big deals in Europe and the UK, Infosys clocked two $500 million-plus deals of the total 14 deals that the company won in Europe. HCL has also signed deals with AstraZeneca in the healthcare sector and Deutsche Bank in the financial services sector in Europe in the last six months.

TCS CEO N Chandrasekaran said that though the macro-economic conditions in Europe are difficult, the company has won good deals on the ground.

“We are cautious and observing the euro zone crisis but we see a healthy deal pipeline. It’s the discretionary spends that are seeing delays,” he said.

BG Srinivas, head of European operations and board member, Infosys, said Europe was Infy’s second-largest market, contributing around 22.6% to the company’s revenues.

“Despite the crisis in Europe, we see good opportunities for growth and have been investing in expanding our capability across Europe and enhancing our strengths in the near shore centres in Czech Republic and Poland, which are beginning to reap benefits for the company,” said Srinivas.

“As economic uncertainties prevail, the biggest challenge facing IT service providers is to remain relevant to changing customer needs,” a HCL spokesperson said.

“Organisations are increasingly looking at IT services as strategic growth enabler.”

“European companies are now open to offshoring their projects due to the economic crisis,” said Ankita Somani, analyst, Angel Broking.

“Earlier they used to outsource to local vendors. Also there is a lot of vendor churn in Europe which is landing a lot more deals in India,” she added.
Ved Prakash, IIM-B director in race for top UGC post

ANUBHUTI VISHNOI
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

The search-cum-selection committee for the appointment of a new chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC) has shortlisted a list of top contenders. The list includes IIM-Bangalore director Prof Pankaj Chandra, Koraput Central University V-C Prof Surabhi Banerjee, former V-C of Hyderabad University Prof S E Hasnain and acting chairman of UGC Prof Ved Prakash.

The committee will now hold interaction/interviews with each of them before sending a list of three names to the HRD Ministry later this month.

While Banerjee is the official biographer of the late Left leader Jyoti Basu, her appointment as Pro V-C of Calcutta University had earlier run into trouble. She currently heads the new Central University in Orissa.

Prof Hasnain has been a contender for the top jobs at DU, JNU and a clutch of other top central educational institutes.

Prof Chandra, a visiting professor at a host of international varsities, has a number of publications to his credit and is also on the board of several firms and institutions.

It is learnt that while Prof Prakash’s candidature was at first re-considered owing to the fact that his area of expertise and experience is largely in the school education sector, the fact that he has been engaged with UGC for nearly a year now has brought him back in the reckoning. Prakash is also considered the government’s favourite for the job.
Aakash 2 not to be world’s cheapest

DISTANT DREAM Suppliers want higher price for faster, stronger version of tablet

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NEW DELHI: The updated version of the world’s cheapest tablet, Aakash 2, may not come as cheap — Rs 52 or Rs 4,400 — as promised by HRD minister Kapil Sibal earlier this month.

Both public and private sector suppliers of the tablet have made it clear that the water and shock-proof tablet with a four times faster processor and a longer battery life may cost about Rs 100 ($4,900) each.

Sibal said Aakash 2 would not cost more even with higher specifications, as the ten-fold increase in the ministry’s order — from one lakh to one million — would bring down the price.

“The minister launched the Aakash tablet in October. Montreal-based Datawind won the order to supply one lakh tablets to the government at Rs 850 each. The Centre then subsidised the sale of the tablets to students. But since the first version failed to meet the expectations of 600 Indian Institute of Technology students across the country, the IIT-Rajasthan set stricter test criteria for the tablet.

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Aakash 2 not to be world’s cheapest

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The institute wants the waterproof Aakash 2 to run at -20 degrees to 50 degrees Celsius temperature and withstand steep and sudden fall. It has specified a 1.2 gigahertz instead of the 3.66 megahertz — microprocessor and a random access memory of 700 megabytes, double the original size.

Two public sector companies, Indian Telephone Industries and Bharat Heavy Electricals were willing to manufacture a million updated tablets, but not at original price.

“The US dollar appreciation will push up the cost. Insulation costs are also very high,” A government official said.

THE INSTITUTE
WANTS WATERPROOF
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“It will be difficult to sell even at Rs 100 each.” Maypad, a tablet with similar specifications, costs about $100, while the others, such as Claspad, cost even higher — about Rs 150 ($7,350).

The tablets sold under the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) project promoted by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) match the Aakash 2 specifications, but are priced at $230 ($1,270) each.
Molecular marvel: World’s first ‘biological computer’ is here

Made From Biomolecules, It Can Decipher Images On DNA Chips

Washington: Scientists in the US claim to have developed the world’s first ‘biological computer’ that is made from Biomolecules and can decipher images encoded on DNA chips. A team from the Scripps Research Institute in California and the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology claims it has created the computing system using the molecules, degenerate Chemical Journal reported.

In the research, when suitable software was applied to the biological computer, the scientists found that it could decrypt, separately fluorescent images of Scripps Research Institute and Technion logos. And, although DNA has been used for encryption in the past, this is the first experimental demonstration of a molecular computing system.

"The hard drive and software in three devices, Kerman notes, are complex biological molecules that activate one another to carry out a specific chemical reaction. The input is a molecular instruction that is decoded by a particular biological molecule, which then activates another specific biological molecule that does the actual work," Kerman said.

"For example, all biological systems are made up of a collection of components, and the output of this chemical computation process is an array of other molecules," Kerman said.

Now, glasses with in-built computer

London: Google is to soon launch its tech glasses with an in-built computer display, a media report said, quoting a company insider as saying.

"Speculations are rife that hi-tech head-up display glasses will be developed at Google’s secret ‘Google X’ lab for marines. The company is likely to unveil a prototype of the product, Daily Mail reported.

The glasses will be armed with cameras, an Android-operating system, and could be used for navigation and other applications.

President stresses need for building human resource

President Pratibha Patil today stressed the need for building human resources, saying it is the vital and work of our people that will determine the trajectory of becoming a good and strong nation.

"We have to focus on building our human resource. All human beings who set foot on this planet and live, it is human beings who establish institutions that are engaged in multiple activities, free providing services in understanding research and scientific activities for the betterment of humanity," she said at the inauguration function of the Kurukshetra University.

"Human beings stand at the center of creative thinking and of ideas, which can bring many changes of head and heart, material and spiritual," she added.

The occasion was graced by the presence of the Minister of State for Human Resource Development, Dr. J.P. Singh, and the Minister of State for Human Resource Development, Dr. J. P. Singh.

President Pratibha Patil looks on as Harvansh Gaurav, Vice-Chancellor, puts the first stone of the new block on the campus of Kurukshetra University. The foundation stone ceremony was held on Wednesday — PTI photo
Test opens doors for management grads

Bridging the gap between academia and industry, a pan-India test will help management grads reach out to recruiters

RAI UMRAOPATI RAY

Abhishek Kumar from Gaya, Bihar is a happy man today. Much to his delight, he has joined TCIL as a marketing officer at a salary of ₹18,000 per month. An MBA graduate from an institute in Varanasi, Kumar was only able to prove his mettle when he decided to take the Management Aptitude Test conducted by AIMA and score a good percentile. He got three job offers within weeks.

Popularly known as MAST and conducted by the All-India Management Association (AIMA), this is a screening test to spot talented and job-ready management graduates. “The test opens new avenues for all management graduates who are from the not-so-well known institutions and colleges. I could not have dreamt of getting an offer like this at the start of my career. It is a good platform for graduates like me coming from smaller cities,” says Kumar.

The test is the product of a joint research conducted by AIMA, an apex body of management in the country, and the Indian Market Research Bureau, which showed that despite the large number of management graduates passing out annually, most of them were not appropriately placed.

Says Rekha Sethi, director general, AIMA, “With this test, we have taken up the task of bridging the gap between academic education and the industry. The 2,000 plus management institutes are churning out over 3,00,000 students every year. Most of these schools do not necessarily have the bandwidth or the access to attract pan-India recruiters to screen their students. Students struggle to understand which job would best fit their unique managerial skill sets and aptitude.”

Adding credibility to the novel initiative is the support it enjoys with some of the leading companies like J.K. Cements, ITC Lifestyle, Larsen & Toubro, MoserBaer India, Nokia, Britannia, Fabindia and Mother Dairy. “The test caters to the specific needs of the industry and provides them with direct access to students. It is not possible for any recruiter to visit all business school campuses. Moreover, it is developed in a way that is a secure and standardised common measurement yardstick with which to assess candidates from across business schools in India. It evaluates a student’s important skills sets in a structured way and makes the recruitment process efficient,” says Saugata Mitra, chief people officer at Mother Dairy.

The test is divided into three main sections -- psychometric assessment, general aptitude and domain knowledge -- to assess skills like critical thinking, communication skills and competence in discipline. While management students understand their requisite managerial skill sets, corporates too gain access to the best possible talent in a cost-effective way.

“The best thing about MAST is that it provides the student with a level playing field irrespective of the geographical location of the B-schools. It opens doors for students and supports them in reaching out to recruiters at a pan-India level. Thanks to it, I am now employed with Mother Dairy,” says Deepak Kumar Nanda who completed his management degree from Bhubaneswar.

AIMA may conduct this test twice a year in the near future. The next MAST is scheduled to be held on September 23 this year. “We are happy with the response. We look forward to more recruiters endorsing MAST and integrating it with their recruitment process so that more students like Kumar can realise their goals,” says Sethi.
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Honoured
IIT Kharagpur alumni association honoured its alumni Harish Hande, who has been conferred with the Magsaysay Award for the year 2011, and Jaideep Sarkar, who is at present the private secretary to the prime minister. Hande was awarded for his pioneering work of providing solar power in thousands of houses in villages and slums.
सीमैट के कॉलेजों की सूची जारी

नई दिल्ली (कारण)। आल इंडिया इंस्टीट्यूट फॉर टेकनोलॉजिकल एजुकेशन (एआईएसटीई) ने उन तमाम कॉलेजों की सूची जारी की है जो कॉमन मैनेजमेंट एडमिशन टेस्ट (सीमैट) के अंतर्गत के आधार पर दाखिला लेंगे। इस सूची में ऐसे कई नाम गिरामी संस्थान हैं जो छात्रों को सीमैट स्कोर के आधार पर दाखिला देंगे।

एआईएसटीई द्वारा जारी की गई इस सूची में बिहार इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ टेकनोलॉजी, मिसरा, रांची, बनस्थली विश्वविद्यालय, राजस्थान, के.जे.सी.मायथा इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ मैनेजमेंट स्टडीज एंड रिसर्च, मुंबई, युनिवर्सिटी ऑफ पेट्रोलियम एंड एनर्जी स्टडीज, देहरादून, जेदियर इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ सोशल सर्विस, रांची आदि के नाम शामिल हैं। गौरतलब है कि एआईएसटीई द्वारा कस्टम जाने वाली परीक्षा 20 से 28 फरवरी तक आयोजित की जाएगी। इस ऑनलाइन परीक्षा का आयोजन 61 शहरों में किया जाएगा। तीन घंटे के लिए वाली इस परीक्षा के माध्यम से अभ्यर्थी एआईएसटीई द्वारा प्रमाणित देश के सभी मैनेजमेंट स्कूलों में दाखिला पा सकेंगे। पहली बार एआईएसटीई इस्तेमाल कर सकेंगे। पहली बार एआईएसटीई इतने बड़े स्तर पर मैनेजमेंट परीक्षा का आयोजन कर रहा है। इस परीक्षा का देशभर के एआईएसटीई द्वारा प्रमाणित कॉलेजों की तकरीबन चार लाख सीटों पर छात्र दाखिला पा सकते हैं।