IIT refuses to change wrong answer keys

Akshaya Mukul | TNN

New Delhi: IIT’s new measure of inviting queries on the answer keys of JEE (advanced) evoked a huge response and IIT Kharagpur, the organizing institute, even acknowledged that answers to four questions carrying 12 marks were wrong.

But despite admitting the mistake IIT said, “Answer keys remain unchanged and are frozen.”

Of all the wrong answer keys, there were several hundred queries about one question that asked ‘largest value of the non-negative integer ‘a’. On solving, two values — zero and two — were obtained.

Two, being the largest, was the correct answer, but the answer key had zero.

The question was worth three marks.

Some students got the problem solved by mathematical websites like Wolfram Alpha and Texas TI-89 Titanium and found two to be the correct answer.

One student, who approached chairperson of JEE (advanced), was told that IIT’s verdict is final. “Due to extremely competitive merit-list, each mark affects the rank of a candidate significantly,” said a student.

IIT also did not give any clarification regarding the “imprecise marking scheme for questions in Section 1”, which have more than one correct choice out of the given options.

For the full report, log on to www.timesofindia.com
8 IITs sanctioned in 2008 still have no campus

Estimated cost jumps by 156%; HRD Minister to hold meeting of state education scions today

ADITI TANDON

NEW DELHI, JUNE 16

The BJP government's promise of one Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) for every state is to be challenged by some hard realities. None of the eight new IITs sanctioned in the Xth Five Year Plan (2007-2012) have yet managed to get a permanent campus. Worsening the expenditure estimated on creating infrastructure for the eight IITs has shot up since July 17, 2008, when the then Cabinet approved the detailed project reports. The Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry's calculations show that the cost has escalated by a whopping 156 per cent from $9,080 crore in 2008 to Rs 15,349 crore in 2012. The revision, ministry documents reveal, was necessitated due to the need for allotment for campuses by states and revised Central Public Works Department (CPWD) rates. The cost for the IITs is awaiting the Finance Ministry's approval.

HRD Minister Smriti Irani has called a meeting of state education secretaries tomorrow, her first major meeting after assuming the charge. One of the agenda items is "infrastructure for new IITs", besides discussions on the BJP's poll manifesto promise of one IIT in every state. The eight institutions include IITs at Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh), Patna (Bihar), Jodhpur (Rajasthan), Bhubaneshwar (Odisha), Roorkee (Uttarakhand), Gandhinagar (Gujarat), Indore (Madhya Pradesh) and Mandi (Himachal Pradesh).

IIT Mandi wants airport for better access

The IIT Mandi authorities have urged the Centre to construct an airport at Mandi for better access to the new institute. Former HRD Minister MM Pallam Raju had forwarded the request to the Ministry of Civil Aviation, with a positive note. "Seemandhra to get new IIT, IIM, NIT, IIT

The HRD Ministry on Tuesday will urge Seemandhra authorities to intervene at University of Nottim. After the decision of the IIT Hyderabad to eventually go to Telangana. IITs without buildings

The eight institutes sanctioned in 2008 include IITs at Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh), Patna (Bihar), Jodhpur (Rajasthan), Bhubaneshwar (Odisha), Roorkee (Uttarakhand), Gandhinagar (Gujarat), Indore (Madhya Pradesh) and Mandi (Himachal Pradesh). IITs", besides discussions on the BJP's poll manifesto promise of one IIT in every state. The eight institutions include IITs at Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh), Patna (Bihar), Jodhpur (Rajasthan), Bhubaneshwar (Odisha), Roorkee (Uttarakhand), Gandhinagar (Gujarat), Indore (Madhya Pradesh) and Mandi (Himachal Pradesh).

Infra Woes Plague New IITs & IIMs; Delays Escalate Cost

Eight new IITs, set up in 2009, are plagued by delays out of temporary premises; three out of seven new IIMs also face infrastructure-related hurdles.

URMIA DASWAMI
NEW DELHI

Infrastructure problems continue to hamper the higher education sector even as the government moves ahead on its ambitious plans of "one IIT, one IIM in every state". Problems and delays with infrastructure—construction of campuses—continue to be an issue for the "new" Central University, IITs, IIMs and IIMAs of some institutes have been operational for nearly five years now. The delays will require higher than sanctioned expenditure in some cases, more than double the initial cost. Delays in setting up adequate infrastructure are expected to figure prominently at state higher education secretaries meeting, which will be chaired by human resource development minister Smriti Irani on Tuesday.

Campus Crossroads

The revised costs are expected to be approved by the Expenditure Finance Committee of the government, which approved the initial cost in 2008 and approved by the Cabinet in July 2009, valued at Rs 6,000 crore. However, delays in allotment of land, revision of CPWD rates led to major escalation in costs—more than double the original budget. The revised project is valued at Rs 12,565 crore.

Emergence of escalation costs is a major issue for the HRD Ministry. The detailed project report for the Bhubaneshwar campus was approved by the Cabinet in July 2009, valued at Rs 6,000 crore. However, delays in allotment of land, revision of CPWD rates led to major escalation in costs—more than double the original budget. The revised project is valued at Rs 12,565 crore.

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Of the seven new IIMs that were set up between 2008 and 2011, the Ministry found that infrastructure-related issues persist with three of the IIMs—Ranchi, Rohtak and Udaipur. At the time, the Centre decided to expand the IIM network, it was decided that state governments would provide land free of cost and encourage the state IITs. The Centre has approved nearly 56 acres for the IITs, Ranchi, however, in order to expedite construction, the state government needed to acquire and transfer 1,522 acres. Professor Uday Mohanty, who was inducted in 2010-11, is in charge of land use certificate by the Haryana state government, which is still ongoing. The group has decided that state governments will have to address this issue. Meanwhile, the group is looking at acquiring land in other states as well. The centre has maintained that the state governments will have to address this issue. Meanwhile, the group is looking at acquiring land in other states as well.

II&Sc devises portable setup to detect explosives

EXCLUSIVE

By Aravind Gowda in Bangalore

IN A PATH-BREAKING achievement scientists from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, have developed a new non-invasive technique to identify explosive and hazardous chemicals in liquids, including non-metallic ones like explosives, plastic, and coloured glass bottles.A portable easy to operate table-top sensor for explosive materials and according to the scientists, it can be used to detect the presence of the police and the armed forces. The technique also has applications in airports, railway stations, bus stations and petrol pumps. Prof. Siva Umaphatgy J.C. Bose Fellow Professor, Department of Inorganic and Physical Chemistry, IISc, who co-developed the technique, said this method is based on Raman spectroscopy — Universal Multiple Angle Raman Spectroscopy (UMARS) and relies on illuminating the sample with light, which produces scattered light, offering molecular specific signatures to identify a substance. The research paper has been published in the prestigious Nature Scientific Reports journal in its June edition. The UMARS technique employs the principle of deep penetration of photons and diffusion using non-absorbing media to illuminate multiple scattering and detection of signals from all the observation angles. UMARS is a geometry independent, flexible, robust technique to be used in various fields of science and technology, who is also Special Professor, Department of Chemistry, IISc, added. For instance, the method can be used to detect and identify explosives packed in liquids in bottles such as water, milk, cream, emulsions, alcohol or other chemicals — which is not possible with the conventional X-ray baggage screening methods currently in use. The II&Sc scientists plan to commercialize the work for franchisee sale, said Prof. Siva. He is now at the High Energy Material Research Laboratory, Pune, pointed out that they have been developing this technique for several years. The laboratory-based prototype is ready and is in progress for miniature tweaking of the UMARS instrument, added. In the second phase, the scientists plan to have different geometry for specific applications. Raman spectroscopy, originally discovered by Hungarian physicist, who won the Nobel Prize in 1930, has been used in various fields of science and technology. The technique has been traditionally used for chemical identification of materials from the scattered light due to interaction of laser light with the sample. The group has already filed two patents for this new technique.
State higher education ministers' meet tomorrow

Press Trust of India  |  New Delhi  

June 16, 2014 Last Updated at 21:23 IST

Higher education ministers from the states are meeting here tomorrow to review the progress of a host of programmes, including the roll out of Rashtriya Uchatar Shiksha Abhiyan and mandatory accreditation of educational institutions.

Crucial on the agenda will be setting up of IIT, NIT, IIM and IIIT in Seemandhra, the land for which has to be allotted by the state government.

The meeting, to be chaired by HRD Minister Smriti Irani, assumes significance as it is being held for the first time after the NDA government came to power at the Centre last month.

The issue of accreditation of higher educational institutions would also be deliberated at length.

The UGC has decided that no higher educational institution or its faculties, schools, departments, centres or any other units therein, by whatever name called, shall be eligible for applying or receiving financial assistance from the Commission from April 1, 2015, under any of its schemes without having undergone assessment and accreditation on or before June 1 this year.
**Guntur to house IIT, IIM, AIIMS**

Guntur: The government is likely to set up all-India institutions like IIIT, IIM, NIT and AIIMS, a new railway zone and an international airport in Krishna and Guntur districts. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu held a meeting with the Guntur and Krishna district collectors and asked them to furnish details of the availability of land for setting up other all-India institutions like the Tribal University, Petro-chemical Corridor and Petrochemical University.

At the behest of the CM, district collector Suresh Kumar directed the revenue officials to conduct a fresh survey to identify government land and prepare a detailed report within four days. He will submit a fresh land availability report to the government. Based on it, the government will take a decision to establish the all-India institutions in Guntur district.

As part of this exercise, the government is thinking of upgrading the existing Gannavaram airport into an international airport or alternately construct an international airport near Nuzvid. As many as 30,000 acres of forest land is available near Nuzvid, and if this land is denotified, the government would take steps to construct an international airport there.

At a meeting held with Union civil aviation secretary Krishna Kishore, Mr Naidu decided to set up international airports at Vijayawada, Vizag and Tirupati. At least 4,000 acres of land is required for an international airport. The government is in favour of allocating land at Nuzvid for the international airport and the all-India educational institutions.

M.P. Rayapati Sambasiva Rao submitted a memorandum to Mr Naidu to take steps to establish the new railway zone in Guntur district. Recently, the Guntur Bar Association passed a resolution requesting the government to re-establish the High Court in the district and honour the gentlemen’s agreement.
Chief secretary I.Y.R Krishna Rao and DGP J.V. Rayudu visited the 6th battalion of the Andhra Pradesh Special Police in Mangalagiri and inquired about the facilities available.

Centre’s Initiative on IITs Welcomed

http://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/thiruvananthapuram/Centre%E2%80%99s-Initiative-on-IITs-Welcomed/2014/06/17/article2284781.ece

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: IIT Kerala Group, comprising professionals who have been associated with one or more of the Indian Institutes of Technologies (IITs) in India as students, administrators, faculty or governing board members, has welcomed the Centre’s initiative to establish IITs in all states.

“As a state which has been denied an IIT so far despite its academic credentials and persistent demands, Kerala should benefit from the policy change. Kerala, with its cent percent literacy and top priority to higher education, is ideally poised to become the higher education hub of the country,” said a press note from the IIT Kerala Group.

“We request the State Government to make energetic efforts to realise the dream of Kerala and make sure that the state gets an IIT.

We also urge the State Government to allocate suitable land in an appropriate location and make it available and ready, which will attract the best faculty and students to the Institute,” the press note said.

Prominent members of the IIT Kerala Group include IIT Madras Board of Governors former chairman A E Muthunayagam, Kerala State Higher Education Council vice-chairman T P Sreenivasan, Additional Chief Secretary Nivedita P Haran (a PhD holder from IIT) and Prof M P Rajan of Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Thiruvananthapuram.
Is education necessary?

The real challenge is to prize skill over grades in our education system and to put an end to all sham degrees.

By Prasenjit Chowdhury

In India's vast pool of unemployable graduates, it must count as a stuff of fantasy for someone who is not even a graduate to become the HRD minister requiring him to deal with the entire gamut of Indian education — its literacy rate, education both at primary and secondary level, university and technical education. By this one single move, Modi has nailed our system of academic brahmanism. If Smriti Irani turns out to be an imaginative HRD minister, it would once again prove, which we were long suspecting, that formal education and academic degrees in India, are cosmetic appendages, just to gain entry in a select few professions, politics not being one of them.

In the academic world, however, hierarchy runs supreme. Media and corporate houses before hiring people scrutinise very carefully what public school, college or varsity has an applicant attended. An Ivy League or Oxbridge education universally carries more weight than one acquired at home. Or even at a baser level, a degree from Jadavpur University or Jawaharlal Nehru University is seen to have greater academic recognition than one obtained through distance education mode. To acquire an engineering degree from an IIT (the IITs have also their grades) is deemed more valuable in the job market than a degree from some nondescript private engineering college much in the same way a management degree from an IIM has got to be qualitatively different than one from an ordinary B-school.

Quality and specialisation do matter when they are requisites for a job. Academia is one such thing. The medical or legal profession is another. But in India as elsewhere, academic qualifications and professions are often quite unrelated. Historian Ramchandra Guha recently pointed out how Moraji Desai as prime minister showed vision taking recourse to professional expertise in roping in an economist (Manmohan Singh) as secretary in the finance ministry, a plant scientist (MS Swaminathan) as agriculture secretary, a chemist (Lovraj Kumar) as petroleum secretary, an engineer (Manuel Menezes) as secretary of defence production as a departure from the tradition of secretary-level appointments being monopolised by IAS officers, who can theoretically be a graduate from any, often unrelated, discipline.

Though there is near general consensus that education helps in formulating better policies or nurturing richer insights, we cannot be very sure always. For all his education, Murli Manohar Joshi defended Vedic astrology as an imprimatur to save India's ancient, necessarily Hindu, culture against the 'self-hating, secularised westernised elite.' Former prime minister Manmohan Singh's formidable education, an MA in Economics from Punjab University, with academic laurels from both the Cambridge and Oxford University, did not prevent him from surrendering his dignity and own mind to a lady who had been known more for her cunningness than her education. That Singh was comprehensively electorally defeated by an 'average' student from a Vadnagar school who grew later to become Narendra Modi, a graduate with an extramural degree through distance education in political science from Delhi University and later an MA in the subject from Gujarat University was another travesty of Singh's education.

Middle class parents complain that they are spending 50 per cent or more of their disposable income on education and extracurricular activities for children, which, according to a report by Assocham, come down to a whopping Rs 55,000 per annum on education per child at school level, and let's assume that it is the cost of an average English medium school. If the fees for IITs hiked from Rs 50,000 to Rs 90,000 per annum look modest, an MBA degree in India from a reputable college can easily cost between Rs 10-16 lakh per annum.

Our colleges and varsities routinely churn out unemployable graduates or hand out worthless diplomas without caring to develop the skills prized by employers, confirmed further by the National Skill Report 2014 prepared by the CII, PeopleStrong and Whebox. Pointing to our threatened public university system, President Pranab Mukherjee recently noted that out of top 200 universities in the world, not a single Indian institute finds its place, ruling that none out of over 600 universities, 30,000 degree giving colleges and 16 IITs in India is world class. Therefore, the requirement for the Modi government should rather be to increase the core strengths of renowned institutes before it embark on setting up more IITs and IIMs in every state.

If politics is a profession where a school dropout can rub shoulders with a PhD in cardiac anatomy from the University of Denver, what would become of the hundreds of thousands of unskilled workers, and of the vast, unemployable pool of graduates without a professional education by dint of which they can find gainful employment, supposing that not all of them are going to join politics? Some 90 per cent of India's working population — the casual or informal workforce — many of whom are illiterate or less educated (not studied up to class VIII) remain outside the loop of India's vocational training system which, in plain terms, means that India lacks sufficient skilled workers. As per one estimate, of the 1.5 million engineering students in India, over 70 per cent are unemployed.

The growing mass of a largely undereducated and unemployable young people who aspire to a better life but clueless as how to get there accounted, to a large degree, for the overwhelming mandate for Modi. Not all of them can become ministers, or pracharaks. The real challenge for MS Smriti Irani, therefore, would be to prize skill over grades in our education system and to put an end to all sham degrees.
T
hen years ago, about a dozen students from IIT Madras came together to build
something unique: an underwater vehicle that could
swim autonomously, without human control.
They were like the pioneers of the modern era of
underwater robotics, working on their project in the
campus labs and in the nearby waters around the
city.

They faced the same challenges as an Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV), a
technology that is now widely used in industry. But the students were confident in
their abilities and had a strong sense of purpose.

The project was funded by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC),
which provided them with the resources and guidance they needed to make their
vision a reality.

After two years of hard work, the team presented their
development to a competition in India, where they
gained recognition and awards for their efforts.

In 2017, the team even went to Japan to participate in the
capstone project at the University of Tokyo, where
they were able to showcase their skills and
innovation.

Their hard work paid off, and they received several awards for their
demonstrations in Japan.

Today, the students from IIT Madras are proud of what they accomplished, and they
hope to continue to push the boundaries of underwater technology.

Their story is a reminder that with determination and hard work, anything is possible.

Giving back to the community

The students have also been giving back to their community by sharing what they have
learned with others. They have participated in various events and competitions, and
they have even started a new project to build an AUV for a local company.

They believe that their work can make a difference in the world, and they are
excited to see where it will take them.

The students have come a long way, from a small group of
students working on an underwater vehicle to a major
success in the field of technology.

They have shown that with dedication and hard work,
you can achieve your goals, no matter how
difficult they may seem.

The story of IIT Madras is a inspiration to all those who aspire to
make a difference in the world.

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Engaging students in STEM

The students from IIT Madras have
learned that engaging students in
STEM subjects is critical to their
success.

They have created an environment
where students are encouraged to
think creatively and to push the
boundaries of what is possible.

The students have shown that
when students are engaged and
motivated, they are able to
achieve great things.

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Making a difference

The students from IIT Madras
are proud of what they have
accomplished, and they hope to continue to make a
difference in the world.

Their story is a reminder that with
determination and hard work, anything is possible.

The students from IIT Madras are
inspiring others to pursue their dreams,
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UGC slams DU’s reservation policy, asks it to recall affidavit

Akshaya Mukul | TNN

New Delhi: Delhi University’s assertion that it is a ‘state’ has attracted the wrath of the University Grants Commission. The commission has taken exception to an affidavit filed by the university in Delhi High Court in which it said “the university falls within the definition of ‘state’ under Article 12 of the Constitution and therefore university can have its own policy of reservation under Article 16 (A)”.

In a strongly-worded letter, the UGC has asked DU to withdraw its affidavit. The affidavit pertains to a petition filed by the Delhi University SC/ST/OBC Teachers’ Forum against the university for not following the reservation policy as per the 200-point post-based roster system. While the commission’s missive to DU will come as a big relief to agitating teachers who protested against the method adopted by the university in implementing reservation, it comes as a big blow for the university administration.

TEACHERS’ FIGHT

In a strongly-worded letter, the UGC has asked DU to withdraw its affidavit. The affidavit pertains to a petition filed by the Delhi University SC/ST/OBC Teachers’ Forum against the university for not following the reservation policy as per the 200-point post-based roster system. While the commission’s missive to DU will come as a big relief to agitating teachers who protested against the method adopted by the university in implementing reservation, it comes as a big blow for the university administration.

As per DU executive council’s 2003 decision, all the reserved category posts occupied by general category candidates will be given to the reserved categories only after the current general category occupant vacates it. Hany Babu of the forum says it will create a situation in which reservation will never be followed.
Review and reconsider 4-yr degree: UGC to DU

Akshaya Mukul | TNN

New Delhi: The countdown for the end to Delhi University’s Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP) may well have begun. After outrightly rejecting the programme on Friday, the University Grants Commission on Monday took the next step by asking Delhi University to review and reconsider it immediately. The letter was sent to registrar Alka Sharma.

UGC said the full commission unanimously came to the conclusion that FYUP was illegal and not in consonance with the national education policy. The DU has been asked to comply with UGC’s order.

“There is very little option left for the DU administration. A major lacuna has been found. The university never took the approval of President who is the Visitor. Instead, of telling DU directly and bluntly to abolish FYUP, UGC is letting university do it on its own,” sources said. Education secretary Ashok Thakur had said in the full commission meeting last week that DU never went to the Visitor.

UGC sources said in case DU does not review/reconsider FYUP, HRD ministry will swing into action. The ministry can, with the approval of the Visitor, reject FYUP.

A senior official said, “In case DU goes to the Visitor to seek approval of the new system of under-graduation, it will find it very difficult to justify it. You do not go to the highest Constitutional authority to seek approval on retrospective basis.”

Meanwhile, DU VC Dinesh Singh continues to expand FYUP. He has called a meeting of DU’s academic council on June 21 to approve it for new courses. However, many in the UGC say the entire controversy surrounding FYUP could have been easily avoided. “Last year HRD ministry refused to listen to many UGC members who wanted the government to look into it. The plea was university’s autonomy. Now both UGC and ministry want FYUP to go. In the process, students will suffer,” said one UG official.
TERI univ under ministry, UGC lens over deemed tag

Manash Pratim Gohain | TNN

New Delhi: TERI University has come under the lens after an RTI activist levelled various allegations against it. Taking cognizance of accusations, the University Grants Commission (UGC) on June 3 asked the “deemed to be university” to submit a detailed report. The Human Resource Development ministry’s public grievance section, too, requested joint secretary (higher education) on May 30 to settle the case expeditiously.

The institute’s website doesn’t mention that it’s a deemed varsity. Besides, authorities have rented out space on the campus to two commercial organizations.

It has been alleged that the university is misleading public by not mentioning itself as ‘deemed university’ on its website. The complainant added that it has “rented out a large space to two commercial organizations” and that this space could have been otherwise utilized for accommodation students and for other facilities. In his representation marked to UGC and HRD, a copy of which is with TOI, the RTI activist alleged that the institute has violated deemed university regulations by renting out two acres of land on campus to two commercial organizations.

For the full report, log on to www.timesofindia.com
Soon, TCS may be world’s 2nd biggest tech employer

Sujit John & Shilpa Phadnis

Bangalore: With over 3 lakh employees, TCS has become the world’s third largest employer of people in the technology sector. And given the pace at which it is growing, it could become the second largest employer this year, crossing Hewlett-Packard, and would be fast closing in on IBM.

In India, TCS is one of the biggest creators of jobs in recent years, maybe even the biggest. Except the Indian Army, the Indian Railways, India Post and Coal India, there’s perhaps no other organization that has more employees than TCS. Unlike government departments, which are mostly cutting numbers, TCS numbers are rising each year by between 25,000 and 35,000.

Last fiscal, the $13.4 billion Tata Group company hired 61,200 people, with the net addition being 24,298, discounting for those who left the company. The net addition in each of the past several years has been along similar lines or higher.

On the contrary, for some of the leading global technology companies, numbers are dropping given the transformations they are going through to deal with shifts in technology towards areas like cloud computing and mobility. HP had 3.48 lakh employees in 2011, but that number is now down to 317,500. IBM, which has about 4.3 lakh employees, is also in the midst of layoffs. TCS has said it will hire 55,000 people this year. If the net addition is half of that, it will be well ahead of HP’s number by the end of this fiscal. Among Indian IT companies, Infosys is almost 50% of TCS, with 1.6 lakh employees.

Sanchit Vir Gogia, chief analyst at Greyhound Research, observes TCS is ahead of many of its Indian peers in identifying new areas of growth, making investments and all the right noises. “It is betting big on the Digital Five Forces — mobility, big data, cloud, social media and robotics,” he says.

Analysts find it remarkable that it has grown its people strength so quickly yet created an organizational structure nimble enough to handle these numbers. Equally, it has kept its people costs under such control that it is seen as a major factor in its extremely high operating margins (over 28%), perhaps the highest among large companies in the global IT services industry. Pradeep Mulkherji, president and managing partner in the global management consulting firm Avasant, says TCS is managing its huge workforce by breaking it into smaller business units that each function virtually as a smaller company. “The depth and breadth of middle management and work delegation, managing a good onshore and offshore mix are some of the key drivers in managing employee pyramid effectively.”

TCS’ employee cost has risen from $80 billion in 2007 to $319.2 billion in 2013, but the cost per employee has barely risen in these past seven years. The cost per headcount has grown from Rs 11.5 lakh in 2007, to Rs 12.4 lakh in 2013, an annual increase of a mere 1.2%, says a report by the US-based IT advisory firm HfS Research.

“A conservative estimate of an 8% annual wage hike in India, a 2% hike in developed countries and a 4% hike in developing countries will lead to about 7.5% weighted average annual wage hike for TCS’ mix of employees,” says HfS analyst Pareekh Jain. In other words, TCS has been able to offset its salary hikes through other measures. One of the biggest of these seems to be a sharp increase in its fresher intake relative to the intake of experienced employees. The percentage of freshers hired (in total hiring) increased to 81% in 2013, from 51% in 2007, finds HfS. “They have stretched the employee pyramid with an army of junior employees. TCS is aggressively hiring in tier-2 and tier-3 cities that offsets cost to a large extent. TCS has also focused on automation and reusable software tools and frameworks to improve employee productivity,” says Sudin Anand, CEO of the IT advisory firm Offshore Insights.
Essar seeks to join IB report in suit against Greenpeace

MEGHNA YELLURU
Mumbai, June 16

A WEEK after the Intelligence Bureau (IB) submitted a report to the Prime Minister’s Office calling foreign-funded NGO Greenpeace “a threat to national economic security”, the Essar Group on Monday sought to include the IB report as supporting evidence in the defamation suit filed against the NGO in the Bombay High Court.

On January 22, Greenpeace had rolled down a banner that read “We kill forests: Essar” along the Essar House, the company’s headquarters at Mahalaxmi. The Essar group then filed a Rs 500 crore defamation suit against the NGO. The protest was against Essar Power’s plans to start mining at Mahan in Madhya Pradesh. Besides Greenpeace, the other defendants in the suit include NGOs Clear Sweep and Mahan Sangharsh Samiti.

“A defence they (Greenpeace) have raised is that the agitation was in public interest and it is a fair comment. We wanted to justify whether it is in public interest or not and whether it is a fair comment or a motivated comment,” said senior counsel Venkatesh Dhard, who argued for the firm.

Counsel for Greenpeace Mihir Desai said, “The Essar Group had sought time to file an affidavit, to bring on record, facts arising out of the IB report.” The suit filed by Essar alleged that the 12 demonstrators from Greenpeace, entered the company’s premises under the pretext of cleaning the building.

However, they rolled down the 36x72 feet defamatory banner along the highrise located in Central Mumbai.

Earlier, the court had come down heavily on the NGO and asked them to remove defamatory content against the Essar Group including that from their website, posters and leaflets. The court had also restrained the NGO from entering the Essar House premises or holding agitations within 100 metre from the building.

The Intelligence Bureau report on foreign-funded NGOs accused Greenpeace of unlawful funding, allegedly aiding an Aam Aadmi Party candidate in the recent Lok Sabha elections and called it “a threat to national economic security” by protesting against nuclear and coal plants.

The report also stated that Greenpeace, “actively aided and led by foreign activists visiting India”, of violating the provisions of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act of 2010 (FCRA), and financing “sympathetic studies” at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) and at IIT-Delhi.
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Real change in the economy will take at least three quarters

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IT, software development and e-commerce: Technology and digital marketing-related skills are in huge demand as e-commerce companies have had big-ticket investments,” says Asim Hands, CEO, GI Group India. E-commerce jobs, according to him, may see a growth of 18-20% in 2014 compared with the previous year.

Project management and civil engineering for heavy industries: Owing to the government’s focus on infrastructure and power, project managers with experience or certification in these sectors will be in high demand. This will also help people with expertise in urban planning, civil engineering, water resource management, etc. The power sector may also seek in large numbers piping engineers, lead engineers, unit control engineers, safety engineers and utility engineers, besides people with experience in desk operations or field operations, or as site in-charge or shift in-charge.

Sales and marketing skills: Sales and marketing skills are likely to be in demand across sectors, but particularly in consumer goods and financial services. Sales will assume great importance if the general positive sentiment continues to improve.

“With the installation of the new government at the Centre, hopes of a speedy economic revival have led to expectations that employment will get a boost, especially in sectors such as infrastructure, manufacturing and defence. Experts caution, though, that the coming boom will benefit only those who possess the relevant skills. According to staffing consultancy Kelly Services, overall demand for skills in areas and functions such as sales and marketing, mobile technology, analytics and in information technology (IT), relationships in banking and R&D is likely to grow 10-15% in 2014 compared to the previous year. The new economy sectors of IT, business intelligence and data, and e-commerce have been witnessing a spurt over the past few months. The financial services industry has received a push from reforms and new licences while consumer durables and automobiles sectors are likely to pick up if the positive sentiment translates into increased purchasing power. Aviation, too, may see an upturn in demand with the arrival of new carriers.

Technology skills are expected to be in demand across sectors while offers are likely to pour in for civil engineers, accountants, people managers and sales experts. Here is a look at the top six skills that are likely to command a premium over the next few quarters.

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Treadmill that washes clothes

A South Korean industrial designer has invented a ring-shaped treadmill that lets runners use their kinetic energy to wash clothes, reports PTI from Seoul.

The concept treadmill by Si Hyeong Ryu has wash canisters inside that can be filled with dirty clothes, soap and water like any other washing machine. The size and shape of the canisters reduces the need for a lot of water. When the jogger runs, the motion spins the canisters, agitating the laundry. Extra power gets saved onto a battery as electricity to run the machine on days when the person is not jogging, Discovery News reported.

A flexible display on the front of the wheel gives the runner a visual experience.

The treadmill, called The Wheel, is an entry for the 2014 Electrolux Design Lab competition, a global design competition that challenges artists and designers to rethink how people live and work.