Sanjam Garg, a graduate of the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, has won the 2013 Doctoral Dissertation Award for developing a technique to protect against cyber attacks.

He will receive the award presented by the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) and its $20,000 prize at the annual ACM awards banquet on June 21, in San Francisco. Financial sponsorship of the award is provided by Google Inc.

According to ACM, the innovator of breakthrough cryptography technology won the award for developing tools that enable the first secure solution to the problem of making computer programme code “unintelligible” while preserving its functionality.

Garg’s “approach makes it impossible to reverse-engineer the obfuscated software without solving mathematical problems that could take hundreds of years to work out on today’s computers,“ ACM said.

**Mathematical tools**

This problem, known as software obfuscation, conceals the programme’s purpose or its logic in order to prevent tampering, deter reverse engineer-
आईआईटी छात्र को डॉक्टरेट डिसर्टेशन अवार्ड

नई दिल्ली। दिल्ली स्थित भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान से स्नातक संज्ञम गर्ने को साइबर हमलों को रोकने के लिए विकसित की गई तकनीक के लिए वर्ष 2013 का डॉक्टरेट डिसर्टेशन अवार्ड दिया जा रहा है। उन्हें एसोसिएशन फोर कम्यूटिंग मशीनरी द्वारा सैन फ्रांसिस्को में 21 जून को एक कार्यक्रम के दौरान अवार्ड के साथ 20,000 डॉलर की पुस्तकार राशि दी जाएगी।

हिंदुस्तान ND 10/05/2014 P-6
26,000 give JEE (advanced) a miss

Vanita Srivastava
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NEW DELHI: Despite the hype over IITs, more than 26,000 students have not registered for the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE advanced), the entrance exam for admission to 16 IITs. Registrations for the exam closed on Friday at 5pm.

According to official sources of the top 1, 53,981 students who had been filtered from the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE mains), 1,26,990 have registered for the JEE (advanced) exam to be held on May 25.

Last year also roughly around the same number of students had not registered for JEE (advanced).

“There are many students who do not want to be away from their home and parents. There are some states which are no more conducting their own engineering exam. In such a case, the child prefers to take admission in a state engineering college on the basis of his rank in JEE (mains),” said HC Gupta, JEE (advanced) 2013 chairperson.

According to preliminary data of those who have qualified for the JEE (advanced) exam, eight students from Nepal and Bhutan had also qualified for the IIT entrance exam this year.

Interestingly students from Andhra Pradesh, UP and Rajasthan accounted for nearly 38% of those who have qualified for JEE (advanced). JEE (mains) is the filtering exam for JEE (advanced). More than 12 lakh students had appeared for JEE (mains).
IIT-Gandhinagar to strengthen industry partnerships

AHMEDABAD: Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar (IIT-Gandhinagar) saw leading industrialists from across the country discuss ways to strengthen industry-academia relationship on Friday. Titled 'Industry Partnership Retreat', it was held for the first time as a part of IIT-Gandhinagar's plan to expand and scale-up its engagement and communication with industry.

More than 30 industrialists took part in the discussions that had Professor Sudhir K Jain, director, IIT-Gandhinagar, and several senior faculty members participate. IIT-Gandhinagar currently has industry relations with Underwriters Laboratories (UL), The Ricoh Company Ltd and Nielsen LLC. The event will help develop a roadmap for engaging with industry in an effective and sustainable manner.

The discussions covered topics like how industry looks at academia and how to build effective communication channels that can bridge the gap between different expectations of academia and industry. They also identified various ways in which IIT-Gandhinagar can contribute to industry.

"IIT-Gandhinagar has benefited immensely from its engagement with several eminent people from industry, in the area of research, academic and professional programmes. This retreat will help us widen this relationship and identify our priorities towards it over the next few years," said Professor Jain.
The case against privatisation of education

The state must remain in higher education as the private sector is yet to demonstrate its capacity to create knowledge on a sufficient scale

Pulapare Balakrishnan

The impending inauguration of a new government finds interested parties bringing into the public arena matters of importance to them. One of the issues that has been raised recently is whether higher education in India should be privatised. This question merits serious attention. And though interest is usually confined to the so-called professions, namely, engineering and medicine, it is important to consider the entire higher education sector. After all, the purpose of higher education is the creation of knowledge, and we don’t want to place this knowledge in silos.

Proponents of private education

Proponents of private education start with the observation that the supply of publicly provided professional education has not expanded commensurately with the growth in demand, thus signalling a failure. This is entirely well taken, and prima facie makes a strong case for allowing private entry. However, the associated argument often found, that the government should cease regulating institutions that it does not fund, is surely wrong. The case for regulation in education is motivated by considerations no different from the concern for a patient’s well-being, which leads us to prescribe standards of medical practice. Similarly, we insist on a driver’s licence to ensure the safety of pedestrians on our roads. Note that public intervention here is guided by the motivation to defend private interests, as the actions by doctors and drivers, undertaken in their private interest, have an impact on the well-being of others. So, what is so special about educators? Their performance actually determines the ‘life chances’ of a very large number of individuals in society.

Another argument for privatisation of professional education that has been made is that doctors and engineers, trained using the tax payer’s money, have now begun to enter politics. As a democracy, we should actually be rejoicing that public life is now attracting individuals from a more diverse educational gene pool. Of course, there could be a problem if all our young doctors and engineers deserted their original professions, but this does not appear to be the case yet. On the other hand, it is only a false consciousness that makes us proud when many of them who have been trained using the tax payer’s money leave the country to practise overseas. But the answer to this malaise is surely not the privatisation of professional education, but to expect that these youth in question serve in India, if not in the public sector itself, for a brief period after graduation, in lieu of which they repay the cost of their education. Versions of this principle are invoked in many parts of the world while we have not given much thought to the issue.

Regulation

When calling for the regulation of even privately funded professional colleges, it must be flagged and not merely acknowledged that India’s regulatory agencies can be ham-handed in their interventions and are perceived to be corrupt. No public interest is served by an overbearing government, and we need continuing social audit of regulation in higher education. Also, it is believed that politicians influence the regulator to a further interest of private institutions owned by them or their clients. But this deficit only provides an argument for drastically reforming how our regulatory bodies are populated and run rather than a case for dismantling them.

We have all read reports of professional surgery or flying passenger aircraft. The counterpart to this is the regulation of education. While the government has at times intervened intrusively, especially when it comes to admission, it has by and large left unregulated the functioning of even aided public colleges. The most egregious instance of this is the practice of publicly aided colleges auctioning their faculty positions, State governments have chosen to look the other way for fear of hurting vested commercial interests and electoral vote banks. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh’s inclusive observation about India’s economy, that it is over-regulated but under-governed, especially rings true in the educational sector. This must make us reflect upon how the higher education system is to be governed to serve public interest.

The arts and sciences

It is when we go outside the professions altogether that we find the case for retaining the public sector in higher education the strongest. The private sector is not a presence much felt among the arts and sciences as these subjects do not always command open social audit, prior to it being thoroughly reformed. All expansion should be put on hold till the latter task is completed. But there is no case for it to be privatised wholesale, not even its professional colleges. Equally, once an effective regulatory framework is in place, it makes little sense to stymie the growth of the private sector in higher education.

Even when it comes to the mere training of professionals, it would be difficult to hold that a significant number of private institutions have surpassed the IITs and the IIMs.

More Involved: Even in ‘professional’ courses there is more research in public institutions than in the private ones. – Photo: V. Ganeshan

The Hindu, 10 May 2014
This image contains two articles. The first article is about Arvind Singh, a leader of the Hindu Mahasabha (HT), who has written a letter to the President of India complaining about the process of appointing vice-chancellors (VCs) at Central universities. Singh has questioned the urgency of the selection process and the inclusion of extra academic considerations. The letter was published in the Times of India on 5 April 2014.

The second article is about a professor in Delhi University who has been arrested and flown to Mumbai on charges related to Maoist links. The article was published in the Times of India on 6 May 2014.

The text is not legible due to the image quality, but the article is broken down into sections for easier reading:
Harvard students to adopt honesty pledge

New York: Harvard University is set to adopt a student honesty pledge in which pupils will promise not to plagiarise or cheat in their coursework and exams, according to a media report.

It will be the first time the US university has asked students to make a public commitment not to plagiarise or cheat. The proposals will mean students at Harvard from 2015 agreeing to an "affirmation of integrity", BBC reported. "Honour codes" are used by US universities as a way of discouraging students from cheating in exams or submitting material that has been copied from the internet. The faculty of Arts and Sciences has voted to introduce an honour code and to create a board to supervise it.

The honour code will mean Harvard students have to commit themselves to academic work that "adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions,” the report said. AGENCIES

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Punishments to 3,500 students, caught cheating during the Plus II examination

BHUBANESWAR: The Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE) is planning to award different types of punishments to 3,500 students, who were caught using unfair means during the Plus II examination.

Last year, 2000 students were found copying. All of them had got the same penalty of cancellation of their respective papers.

CHSE chairman Basudeb Chhatotai said a committee has been constituted to review the malpractice cases individually. "If there is no conclusive evidence against an examinee, he or she will be let off. However, depending on gravity of the crime, the punishments may go up," Chhatotai said.

Chhatotai said the committee will decide whether to debar a student for a particular period of time from appearing for the examination, scrap the particular paper or any other punishment on case to case basis.

Official sources said CHSE, which has already completed evaluation of Plus II answer sheets, is busy in tabulation of marks. "Hopefully, the tabulation work will be over by another couple of days," Chhatotai said.

Chhatotai said the council is most likely to publish results of all the streams, science, commerce, arts and vocational, by the first week of June. "We are completing works of science stream on priority. If we fail to complete the process for other streams, results of science will be published first," he said.

The state government has been insisting on publication of results of science at the earliest as the same would be required to draw merit lists of JEE (main). Plus II marks are being given 40% weightage in JEE (main), whose ranks will be the basis of admission in many central-funded technical institutions such as NITs, besides engineering colleges in Odisha.
AIIMS proposes age of retirement at 70
Director And Teaching Faculty To Get Benefit

Durgesh Nandan Jha | TNN

New Delhi: Days before the parliamentary election results are announced and a new cabinet formed, the Congress-led UPA government has moved yet another controversial proposal – to increase the retirement age of the director and teaching faculty of AIIMS from 65 years to 70 years.

An “extraordinary” meeting of the institute’s highest decision making body has been called by health minister Ghulam Nabi Azad on May 12 to discuss this. Earlier, the UPA government had to revoke its decision to appoint a Lokpal panel and new Army chief as the Opposition cried foul.

According to the meeting agenda, a copy of which is with TOI, the age of superannuation of the director needs to be enhanced “to bring stability in administration to ensure adequate time period to take up developmental activities.” It adds, “The age of superannuation of teaching faculty needs to be enhanced from the present 65 years to 70 years on the pattern of other higher educational institutions like IITs, so the services of the talented and experienced senior faculty members could be retained…”

Dr M C Misra, the present AIIMS director, was appointed in October last year and many faculty members opposed to this move say it is clearly aimed at favouring him. “The meeting is being called on an election day and with only four days to go for formation of the next government. It is illegal and smacks of favouritism,” alleged a senior doctor, who did not want to be identified. The meeting of the Institute Body, highest decision-making body of AIIMS, is proposed by the director and approved by the health minister, who is president of the medical institute.

Though Misra refused to comment, AIIMS officials defended the move on the grounds of shortage of senior and experienced medical teaching faculty at the institute. “The increased requirement of assistant professors - which is entry level - can be met, but it would be difficult to provide replacement at professor level immediately. Senior faculties keep on leaving the cadres owing to the attraction of other sectors,” said an official.

He pointed out that 43 faculty members, including senior professors, would be retiring between 2014 and 2017.

The agenda of the meeting cites the example of IITs, where the board of governor has been authorized to give an extension of three years initially and another two years later to the faculty in order to enhance the retirement age.

“This is ridiculous. When will new people get a chance if we keep on promoting the old? There is enough talent, young graduates and post-graduates who are armed with knowhow about latest technology and research. They should be promoted,” said an AIIMS doctor.
Soon, China to begin work on Asia’s longest tunnel

CONTINENTAL NETWORK

China is planning to build a 13,000km rail line to run bullet trains to the US via a tunnel underground the Pacific Ocean.

- The track will be about 3,000km further than the Trans-Siberian Railway.
- Beginning from China’s north east, the line will travel up through Russia’s eastern Siberia, across the Bering Strait to Alaska and down through Canada before reaching the contiguous US.
- Trains will run at 350km per hour, enabling passengers to travel from China to the US in less than two days.
- Crossing the Bering Strait between Russia and Alaska would require about 200km of underwater tunnel, four times the length of UK’s Channel Tunnel (50.5km).
- If completed, it would become the world’s longest underwater tunnel and mark an unprecedented feat of engineering.

OTHER TRACKS

China will begin next month construction of the Trans-Asian Railway connecting China with Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. It will involve building a 30km long tunnel, which will be the longest in Asia.

Another track China is working on is a rail link to Europe via Paris, Berlin and Moscow, along with a second route to Europe following the silk road to reach as far as Germany via Iran and Turkey.

Continued from P 1

China has already completed 11,600km of high-speed rail network and another 12,000km tracks are under construction. Chinese officials in 2013 spoke of China’s wish to build a high-speed rail network connecting Pakistan and India. In fact, China has already built a rail network up to Kigarz, close to Arunachal Pradesh border.

Meanwhile, the official said the construction of ambitious Trans-Asian Railway Network connecting China with Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore is set to commence next month. The plan will begin with the construction of a 30km long tunnel, said to be the longest in Asia connecting China with Myanmar.

The engineering difficulties equivalent to those found in the construction of high-speed rail lines on the permafrost in Siberia, said Wang Mengshi, a tunnel and railway expert at the Chinese Academy of Engineering.

The National Development and Reform Commission approved the project, and engineers and workers have come up with techniques to overcome geological complexities that could pose challenges, Wang said. Another important project, the Mianshan River Rail Bridge, will also be launched soon, Wang added.

China has already commenced an oil and gas pipeline from Myanmar.

The rail lines constitute the southern part of the Trans-Asian Railway, which was initiated in the 1990s and began to take shape after 18 countries endorsed an agreement in November 2006, it said. Some sections of the railway suitable for high-speed operation will allow trains to run at 250 km per hour. Other sections will hold speeds to a maximum of 180kmph, Wang said.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, who is currently touring Africa, has offered to construct a host of high-speed rail lines.

While railway construction engineers are pushing for more grand projects, some officials have warned the government to think seriously about them as the Chinese railway is in red with losses to the tune of billions of dollars.

Experts in Beijing Jiaotong University said China should make sure it has enough money for such a massive project.