IIT 2012: 10 lakh papers, but only 200 revaluations

DEFENCE JEE officials describe initiative as great success, say small number of complaints reflect students are satisfied

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NEW DELHI: Unperturbed by complaints on wrong answers and ambiguity in questions, the JEE officials have described their new initiative of providing solutions and uploading the answer sheets of the aspirants before declaring the results, a 'great success'.

"We have got only 200 applications for revaluation. Considering the fact that there were around 10 lakh papers (2 for each candidate), this is such a small number. Does this not reflect that the students are satisfied by our evaluation and marking," organising chairman Dr GB Reddy said.

IIT had uploaded the corrected optical answer sheets of every candidate on the JEE website to maintain transparency and avoid any errors. It is for the first time that the candidates got a chance to go through their answer sheets to see if they have been evaluated properly.

The evaluated answer sheets were available online from May 5 to May 10. The facility to submit requests for revision closed at 5 pm on May 10. Ever since the solutions were uploaded by IIT, there have been complaints from students and academicians on incorrect solutions and ambiguous questions. One such complaint refers to a 'mistake' in question no 28 in paper 2 of Chemistry paper.

The complainant, Vijay Pratima Mittal, a professor of Chemistry claims the answer that has been mentioned in the solution sheet uploaded by IIT was wrong. Submitting reference material to justify that the answer provided by IIT was incorrect, the professor said she had written to the organising chairman and HRD ministry but had got no response.

"The question carries four marks and can affect the future of so many aspirants," she said.

Some ambiguity has also been found in a few questions. "The question 6 in Paper 2 of Physics is ambiguous," says a professor of Physics.

The IIT has admitted that two questions in the JEE 2012 paper were incorrect and had given zero marks to the candidates in these questions.
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COMMON ENGINEERING TEST

Most IITs reject weightage to school exams

ADITI TANDON/TNS

NEW DELHI, MAY 16
The government's proposed common engineering test 2013 for admission of students to centrally funded technical institutes has hit a virtual roadblock, with faculties of premier IITs rejecting it in its present form.

The senate (faculty bodies) of six out of seven old Indian Institutes of Technology have put their foot down so far as treating the proposed exam as an admission test to premier institutes is concerned.

In their representation to HRD Minister Kapil Sibal, Senates of all IITs - Bombay, Madras, Kanpur, Kharagpur, Delhi and Roorkee (with the exception of Guwahati) have categorically said school board exam performance will not be used for the preparation of the final merit list in respect of admission to IITs and IITs will prepare this final list on the basis of an IIT advanced test.

A majority of the professors in the IIT system have resolved that the current practice of admissions to the undergraduate program to the IITs (through IIT-JEE) should continue unchanged for 2013 and the national screening test should be held only from 2014.

IIT faculty has however red-flagged a key element of the proposed common national exam - admission of students to central technical institutes including IITs on the basis of this test whose merit list would be prepared after factoring in the school board marks and results of an objective type aptitude test.

IIT teachers say they would select the top students from the national screening and subject them to an IIT advanced subjective type test to prepare their final merit list for admission to the premier institutes (eight new ones have been added in the recent past).

In their statement to Sibal, the senates have said, "From 2014 onwards, the national entrance test be used as a screening test for the purpose of admissions to undergraduate programmes to IITs. From the national screening test, a fixed number of candidates (about 50,000) will be chosen who will become eligible to appear in the advanced test to be conducted by the IITs." This practically puts IITs out of the purview of the test.

IITs say the merit list of advanced test would not factor in board exam marks and structure would be prepared in due course.
14 marks that can scuttle IIT hopes

BASANT KUMAR MOHANTY

New Delhi, May 15: Thousands of students aspiring for a seat in the Indian Institutes of Technology may have wasted precious time chasing 14 marks in this year’s IIT-JEE exam, where the multiple-choice answers to four questions were either incorrect or confusing.

The errors came to light once the answer-keys — the correct answers to all the questions — were published on the IIT-JEE website early this month after all the Optical Response Sheets had been evaluated.

Over five lakh candidates appeared in the IIT-Joint Entrance Examination on April 8 this year to qualify for nearly 10,000 seats in the 15 IITs, IT BHU and the Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad.

The results will be declared on May 18.

According to the answer-keys, all four options to a chemistry question (No. 23 that carried three marks) and a math question (No. 60 that carried four marks) were incorrect.

The options for the other two questions that carried seven marks, both in physics (No. 6 and 15), included more than one correct answer.

In the case of the first two — the questions in chemistry and mathematics — JEE authorities have decided to award no marks to students whether or not they attempted them.

This means students who tried to tackle these two questions spent time and effort only to be marked zero.

As for the physics questions, many students would have skipped marking what they felt was the correct answer to avoid negative marking after racking their brains.

IIT-JEE vice-chairman Rajesh Khanna told The Telegraph that certain questions were found to be erroneous and all candidates who attempted them had been awarded zero.

Anybody who has blackened one of the correct answers to the other questions would be awarded marks, he added.

The JEE authorities are clueless about how the errors in the questions, set by eminent professors for the most competitive engineering entrance exam in India, crept in.

“I cannot say how the erroneous questions found place in the question papers. I do not know who prepared the questions,” Khanna said.

An IIT Delhi professor, who did not want to be named, said students who attempted the questions with the wrong answers were being “penalised” for the mistakes of those who had set the question papers. “In the case of the questions having more than one correct answer, a serious student after thorough calculation would have skipped the questions lest he or she should attract negative marking,” the professor added.

IIT Delhi conducted the test this year:

- “It is unfortunate that IITs commit mistakes in setting question papers. Such mistakes have no excuse. Action should be taken against persons responsible for such oversight,” a parent said.

This is not the first time that the premier tech schools have committed mistakes in setting JEE papers.

In 2006, the JEE papers had carried erroneous questions worth 23 marks. In 2008, wrong questions carried 18 marks. The 2010 exam saw printing mistakes and ambiguous instructions, while last year erroneous questions carried 30 marks, sources said.
IIT panel looking at JEE error

NEW DELHI: Two questions worth 14 marks were found to be having errors in the IIT-JEE this year. On Tuesday, Director of IIT-Delhi R K Shevgaonkar said a committee with representatives from all the IITs is “looking into the matter and will take appropriate action regarding the details of the problem”. Sources in IIT-Delhi said the two questions are being treated as “deleted” as they could be “perceived differently by different students”. ENS
Bringing change through education

Trends in our technology-driven economy indicate that we need to take initiatives to overhaul our education system and produce more innovative minds, writes M A Siraj

According to a report, the real cost of performing a standardised set of computational tasks fell at least 1.7 trillion-fold between 1850 and 2006 in the United States, with the bulk of this decline occurring in the last three decades.

Losing ground

What we mean is that all routine jobs that involve no creativity or analytical skills are likely to be lost due to automation, digitisation, computerisation, and possibly robotics. What has happened to the Americans may well happen to Indians ten or twenty years hence, though not in the same manner. The jobs outsourced from America fall in our life simply because we — mainly the South Indian states and Maharashtra — have a large pool of English-knowing, technically skilled workforce. Trends show that South East Asian nations (particularly Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines) may well prove to be more attractive destinations for these jobs in the near future than could we in North America.

Creation of new jobs or loss of old ones is dependent upon how our economy behaves. In the past, it happened in our ways. The productivity of an average professionist would go up considerably in the wake of the advent of calculators, computers, cameras and printers. These have eliminated the jobs of clerical assistance and accountants. Most journals now cover events, compile reports, run click polls, obtain them in record time on a computer and directly feed the reports to the newsrooms. They are not only saving the jobs of copy editors, photographers and proofreaders. Jobs eliminated

Chefs, accountants, chess numbers by themselves. Artists, architects and de-

velope their own sketches and

various fields for their benefit. Stockbrokers need fewer clerks and secretaries. A news agency that employed 70 documentar-

aries in its Delhi office until 1995, today employs just three of them today. Profe-

sors and researchers in universities require fewer research assistants. They can prepare their own PowerPoint presentations. Google and other search engines have eliminated these jobs and also reduced the required space or data bases and libraries. Automatic teller machines, ATMs, other vending machines, and interactive voice response systems are also taking away positions previously manned by people.

The second way is to happen by shifting the workload from company-employed workers to users. This has happened in a major way in India, but if economy of operations has to be achieved, the course is inevitable. For instance, we may have to pump our own petrol, wash our own clothes, use automatic car washers, and put our own garbage in mail. Outsourced jobs are now customarily frustrated with extinction. There is another factor too. Those who do these routine jobs may not be able to attend college. Compensate don't. Thirdly, it is not easy to manage a live workforce. Compensate need more maintenance. Jobs that primarily involve organi-

zation, ordering, reviewing, monitoring, and manipulating information are increasingly being outlawed in computer software and are performed by machines. In this context the report titled Grand Challenges in the Study of Employment and Technological Change by Lawrence Katz and David Auer of Harvard University provides some guidance. According to them, the real cost of performing a standardised set of computational tasks fell at least 1.7 trillion-fold between 1850 and 2006 in the United States, with the bulk of this decline occurring in the last three decades. There was a dramatic fall in four "middle-class" occupations — sales, office workers, production workers and operators — which accounted for 47 per cent of employment in 1979 but only 40 per cent in 2004 and the trend is clearly downwards.

What is clear is that all kinds of service jobs, unless they are creative, will be on. However, this will not affect low-skilled jobs that involve physical and manual work done by policemen, bakers, cooks, maids, janitors, electricians, de-

livery boys, nurses, teachers, repairmen, waiters or barbers as they cannot be replaced by computers. But these depend on the need of the economy for employment and paying capacity of society. So future workers will have to ask themselves if they are adding value to their work and whether they are doing something unique and irreplaceable.

The future is different

How do we prepare the next generation for employment? The future does not belong to those who believe that they will be the last to be hired. The future belongs to those who believe that they will be the first to be hired. In an age of computerisation, where jobs are constantly over and under what is needed, we need expert teachers to produce manpower that is totally in sync with the emerging trends in the economy.