

Where do the new IITs stand?

As students preparing for the IIT joint entrance examination consider their options, we kick off an eight-part series profiling the new institutions which opened their doors three years ago

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In 2008, the union human resources development ministry announced eight new IITs in a bid to set up institutes of excellence throughout the country, taking the number of all IITs to 15. Recently, the government said it would set up four more of these as laid out in the 12th five-year plan. However, even as the new ones are announced, the second generation of IITs – in Hyderabad, Ropar, Patna, Gandhinagar, Indore, Bhubaneswar, Mandi and Jodhpur – seems to be struggling to live up to the IIT brand, with classes operating out of makeshift campuses, faculty shortages and unfilled seats.

But it's not all bleak, and all they need is time, say former and present IIT directors. IIT-Guwahati, set up in 1995, and is among the newer of the old IITs, had its share of similar problems and scepticism. "There are issues when any new IIT starts," said Gautam Barua, director of IIT-Guwahati. "We started out 15 years ago, but when we moved to the campus in 2000, within time, everything had become smooth."

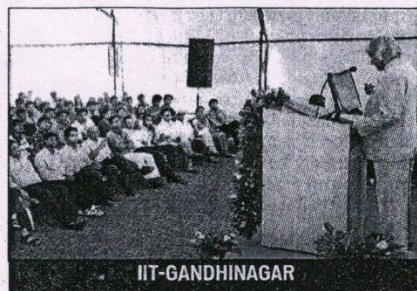
"The rationale was that some parts of the country don't have an IIT," said Bhaskar Ramamurthi, director of IIT-Madras. "There are so many good candidates who don't get through the JEE (Joint Entrance Examination)."

Adding seats hasn't blunted the competition, which means the demand for an IIT education is as high as ever, despite an array of other options now available. This year, 4.85 lakh students competed for 7563 seats. Therefore, only one exam taker out of every 64 got in. "Students are considering the new IITs as options," says Vinay Kumar, CEO, Rao Academy, which coaches students for the IIT-JEE. "However, in my experience, these institutes are preferred only after BITS Pilani, which is more established."

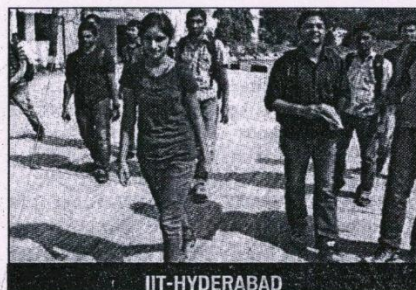
"I have received good feedback about the new IITs from



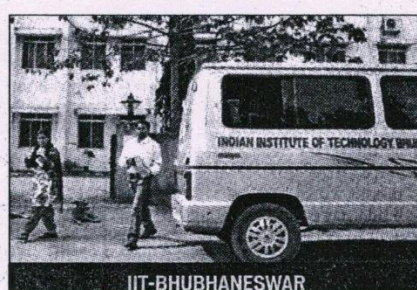
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IIT-GANDHINAGAR



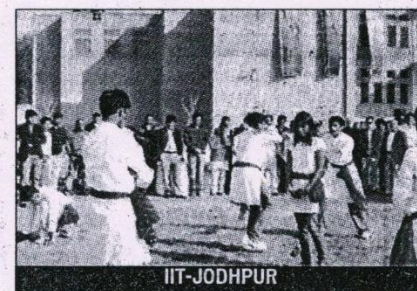
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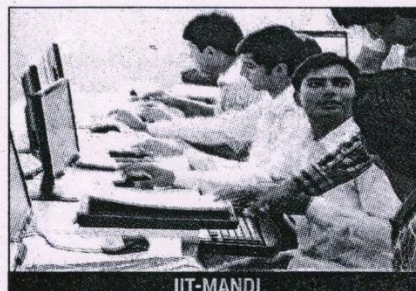
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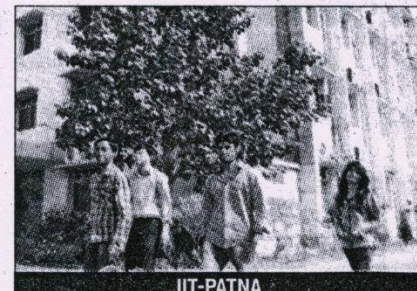
IIT-INDORE



IIT-JODHPUR



IIT-MANDI



IIT-PATNA

former students," says Pravin Tyagi, director, IITianSpace, a coaching institute. "What they say is that the syllabus remains the same, and only the infrastructure is not at par with the other IITs. That will take time."

Full profile of IIT-Patna, page 13

"It all depends on my son's score. Our first preference is, of course, the old IITs, but we will definitely consider the new ones as well, if he can't make it to the established institutes. The quality can't be that different."
– Vilas Gatlwar, parent of IIT aspirant

"I've heard that the quality of education is not at par with the older IITs, so frankly, I'm not considering the new IITs. I would rather go to BITS Pilani or the Vellore Institute of Technology, if I don't get into any of the established IITs."
– Mihir Kulkarni, IIT aspirant