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1st revision in 20 years, govt med, dental fees see big rise

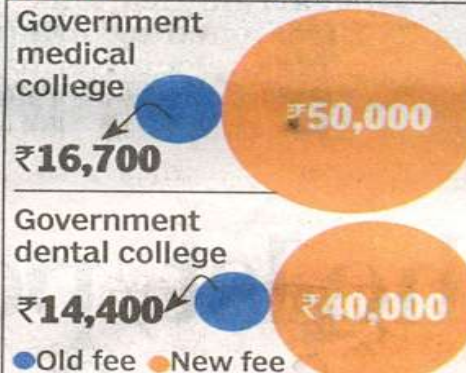
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Mysuru: For two decades now, the fees in government medical and dental colleges remained unchanged and affordable even to students from poor families – at Rs 16,700 and Rs 14,000 a year respectively. This year, with days to go for admissions, the government has increased the fees three-fold with little by way of intimation or announcement.

The revision, which will affect over 2,600 students, has not been publicised apart from a notification on the website of the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA).

An MBBS student in a government college will now

FEE STRUCTURE



pay Rs 50,000 while a dental student will pay Rs 40,000.

Students with top rankings in the NEET-UG and seeking government medical and dental college seats said the fee hike was a rude shock to them.

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Engg fee hike capped at 8%; matrix is out

The Karnataka Unaided Private Engineering Colleges Association on Tuesday agreed to abide by the 8% fee hike ceiling stipulated by the Fee Regulatory Committee.

With the resolution of the fee row, the Karnataka Examinations Authority has published the seat matrix on its website. The detailed fee structure for government seats in private colleges—discipline-wise and category-wise—will be available on Wednesday. P 2

Engg colleges bow to pressure, agree to 8% fee hike ceiling

KEA Website Will Publish Detailed Fee Structure Today

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: After driving a hard bargain for three weeks over fee hike, the Karnataka Unaided Private Engineering Colleges Association (KUPECA) relented and agreed to abide by the 8% fee hike ceiling stipulated by the fee regulatory committee.

With the fee row resolved to the satisfaction of all the parties, the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) published the seat matrix on its website on Tuesday. The detailed fee structure for government seats in private colleges — discipline-wise and category-wise — will be available on Wednesday.

"The tentative seat matrix was with us on July 7 from 215 engineering colleges and 32 architecture colleges, but the fee structure was not settled," said K Vinothpriya, executive director, KEA.

The climbdown by private engineering colleges came due to multiple factors. The government and the colleges continued to bargain over the fee hike despite them signing a consensual agreement with 10% fee hike on July 6. GT Devegowda, minister for higher education, reopened the negotiations demanding a 5% hike in the fee.

The fee regulatory committee threatened to sue individual colleges if the government and the colleges' body agreed to a fee higher than that stipulated by it. Justice DV Shylendra Kumar, chairman of the committee, had told TOI: "If the government goes against what we've approved, what's the point of setting up the committee? Moreover, if they increase the hike approved by us, it amounts to contempt. If any aggrieved parent or student complains to us, we'll take it as contempt against the college."

Sources said the higher educa-



FUTURE TENSE: Karnataka Examinations Authority plans to complete the first round of counselling by Saturday

MINISTER FOR AMENDMENTS TO END FEE TUSSLE

Higher education minister GT Devegowda is contemplating amending the law to end the annual fight over fee in private professional education colleges.

"We'll explore if amendments can be brought into the Karnataka Professional Educational Institutions (Regulation of Admission and Determination of Fee) Act 2006, so that from next year, there will be a decision on the fee taken jointly by the fee regulatory committee and the management of private engineering

colleges. We'll discuss the matter with all stakeholders and see what best can be done in three months. Private college managements have been demanding that fee hike of more than 10-30% is inevitable as the salary paid to the staff and rent of the building have increased over the years," he said.

However, he did not clarify whether this will mean setting up of a new committee or not. Sources said a new committee is being mooted with representation from KUPECA too.

"We made our point clear that KEA has to follow the statutes and the SC order to complete three rounds of counselling by July 30. But to do that, we cannot reduce the window for students to make their choices. We must give one day for mock allotment and two days for changing options, and one more day for seat allotment **—KEA official**

1st round: 55,216 seats in 215 engg colleges available

A total of 55,216 undergraduate seats in 215 engineering colleges are available for the first round of counselling as per the seat matrix published on the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) website on Tuesday evening.

KEA officials said the fee structure will be published on Wednesday, paving the way for students to choose their course and college options.

Of the 55,216 seats, 46,768 are under the general quota, 6,293 under the Hyderabad-Karnataka quota and 2,155 under the special quota for the physically challenged and sports persons, among others. Last year, 55,088 seats were available in the first round.

Also, 884 BArch seats have been made available for students to enter choices in the first round of counselling. Of this, 745 seats are under the general quota.

tion department was wary of a situation where the government and colleges tied themselves in legal knots, stalling admissions. There was also the issue of meeting the Supreme Court deadline to finish counselling for technical and professional courses by July 30 and admissions by August 15.

Things were, in fact, stacked against the engineering colleges, from the day the private medical and dental colleges' association agreed to stick to the 8% fee hike cap. On July 5, medical education minister DK Shivakumar convinced the colleges that any fee increase above 8% would have legal ramifications. The KEA too threatened to unilaterally complete the counselling process by July 14. "But we made our point clear that KEA has to follow the

statutes and the SC order to finish three rounds of counselling by July 30. But to do that, we cannot reduce the window for students to make choices. We must give one day for mock allotment and two days for changing options and one more day for seat allotment. We want to finish the first round by Saturday," said an official.

MK Panduranga Shetty, secretary of KUPECA, however, said he was not forced by the government but circumstances prompted him to retract.

"We are in an unfortunate situation. We're also worried that students will suffer if the entire process gets delayed and the SC will treat it as contempt. But my idea of subsidizing poor students has been taken well by the minister," he said.

Students seek rollback

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When the state proposed 8% increase for the engineering seats, there was a hue and cry. But this fee revision had been kept under wraps," said a student.

Students said it was unfair to increase the fees just before admissions without any intimation and demanded a rollback. "I came to know about this four-fold increase in the fee only through the KEA website. When there is so much resistance to revising the fees of government quota seats in private engineering colleges, why this silence on medical fees?" said Vinuthan Kumar, a seat aspirant.

They also fear there will be a ripple effect as private managements point to this hike and seek higher fees.

HC orders 196 'grace marks' in Tamil NEET, stays admissions

Srikanth Dasarathy & Pushpa Narayan | TNN

Madurai: In a ruling that will disrupt ongoing MBBS and BDS admissions, the Madras high court has ordered that 196 "grace marks" be awarded to more than 24,000 students who wrote the NEET-2018 in Tamil for MBBS admissions. The court stayed ongoing MBBS admissions and gave CBSE two weeks to come up with a fresh list of candidates.

Lambasting CBSE for framing inaccurate and wrong translations in 49 questions, each carrying four marks and totalling 196, a division bench of Justice C T Selvam and Justice A M Bas-

LOST IN TRANSLATION

➤ Madras high court says 196 grace marks be awarded to **over 24,000 students who wrote NEET-2018 in Tamil**

➤ Lashes out at CBSE for framing inaccurate translations in **49 questions** — each carrying **four marks** and totalling **196**

24,000 students stand to automatically qualify for MBBS/ BDS admissions even if original score was zero

heer Ahmed said: "The list of qualified candidates shall be kept in abeyance, as would the counselling, pending publishing details of the qualifi-

ed candidates afresh."

The order divided parents and students. While more than 24,000 students who wrote the exam in Tamil were excited as almost all of them will now automatically qualify for MBBS/BDS admissions even if their original score was zero, or even -100, smiles fell off the faces of those who had already bagged seats.

"My son spent a year after Class 12 studying hard to get a high score. It would be unfair to snatch the seat that was given to him," said S Maheshwari, whose son has been placed in a government medical college.

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HC: Tamil students have to be given level playing field

► Continued from page 1

On the contrary, E Manikantan, a parent, said: "There is some justice finally. Our son wrote the exam in Tamil and had scored 182. But he was unable to get an MBBS seat as the cut-off for the BC category in all colleges in state counselling was 344. Now, with 378 marks, he will get a seat in a government college."

Others awaiting the second round of counselling, both state and AIQ, also fear this will scuttle their chances of getting placed in a medical or dental college.

The Madurai bench of the Madras high court was passing orders on a PIL filed by CPM MP T K Rangarajan who claimed there were translation errors in the Tamil NEET question paper and sought grace marks for all the students. For instance, the word "cheetah" was translated literally as "Seetha" while technical words like "multiple allele" and "ureter" were translated incorrectly, he said.

The judges, observing that students who took the exam in Tamil should be given a level playing field, directed the CBSE to grant four marks each for the 49 erroneous questions — in all, a total of 196 marks — for those who took the exams in Tamil.

They also rejected the



There were translation errors in the Tamil NEET question paper, according to Madras HC

Madras HC stays IIT rank list order

Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur on Tuesday earned a huge reprieve from the Madras high court when a division bench stayed a single judge order directing the institute to redo the rank list of JEE (Advanced) 2018 giving preference to candidates who had answered numerical values rounded off to two decimal points. TNN

CBSE's response, submitted to the court on July 6, that subject experts in the regional languages concerned had been requested to translate the NEET question paper from English, and that since they were already teaching the subjects in the regional medium they were aware of the technical terms and so were the students.

Madras HC orders 196 NEET grace marks to Tamil-medium students

Directs CBSE to publish a fresh list of qualified candidates within two weeks

Respite for IIT (K), bench stays single judge's order

Chennai: PROVIDING respite to IIT-Kanpur, a division bench of the Madras High Court has stayed the operation of an order of a single judge directing it to re-do the rank list of JEE Advanced 2018, after giving preference to candidates who answered numerical values rounded off to two decimal points. When the evaluation of exam had already been done, the order of the single judge is unwarranted, a bench of Justices Hlurvadi G Ramesh and Dhandapani said on Tuesday.

Madras HC confirms death sentence for child rape convict

Chennai: A division bench has confirmed the capital punishment imposed by a lower court on Daswanth (23), who raped a seven-year-old child and murdered her in February last year. "This court is conceivably satisfied that any sentence other than death would not commensurate with the gravity of the offence committed and therefore, the case falls under the category of 'rarest of rare cases' and definitely demands the sentence of death.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@MADURAI

THE Madurai Bench of Madras High Court has ordered the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) to grant grace marks to the Tamil medium students who took the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test this year. It has directed the CBSE to publish a fresh list of the qualified candidates within two weeks and has stayed all the current proceedings which are being undertaken based on the present candidate list.

A division bench comprising Justices C T Selvam and A M Basheer Ahmed passed the order following a Public Interest Litigation which was filed by T K Rangarajan, MP from the Communist Party of India (Marxist) seeking direction to provide 196 marks as grace marks for the Tamil medium students citing errors in 49 out of the 180 questions in the Tamil medium question paper in NEET exam this year.

Stating that the students who have taken NEET-2018 examination in Tamil medium should be suitably compensated to provide them with a level playing field in the exam, the Judges directed CBSE to grant four marks for each of the 49 erroneous questions; that is in all 196 marks, to the candidates who took the exam in Tamil.

"Consequently, the Board should revise the list of qualified candidates and publish the same afresh. It shall then be open to the authorities concerned to go about counseling the eligible candi-

dates," said the Judges, adding that the list of qualified candidates shall be kept in abeyance as would the counseling sessions, pending publishing details of the qualified candidates afresh in keeping with the above order.

Earlier, the Judges stated that they could not accept CBSE's explanation that 'in case of ambiguity in questions in regional language, their English version is final' and criticised CBSE asking how can the Board determine the mark of Tamil medium students in NEET based on their proficiency in English language.

They also re-remarked that, "the issue of CBSE publishing key answers etc, calling for challenges there to on payment of cost arriving at a decision upon which a decision is taken on what is the most appropriate answer and that such answer would form a basis of correction and grant of marks has been raised before us. We are left wondering whether the CBSE, a board entrusted with the conduct of examination at the national level can be so uncertain about the answers to questions raised by it". They said

that attaining such level of precision of answer will be very difficult in NEET exam which is attended by students in the age of group 17 to 18.

The Judges further expressed that if the Supreme Court permits the using of technical terms which are not capable of easy translation into a regional language, then the student who is to take the NEET exam, be it in any regional language, should be apprised of such terms.

Bringing the attention of the authorities to how students who pursue private study in class 12 are being declared ineligible to write the exam by the Board, the Judges said, "We have tens of thousands of children having to support a mother, sibling, ailing parents and elders and sometimes deserving father, by eking out a living by earning that extra rupee which keeps the home fire burning and yet in real and earnest pursues private study simply because they want to be educated", and added that the Board should enable such deserving students to hope for a better tomorrow by giving them the chance to appear for the examination in future.



The Board should revise the list of qualified candidates and publish the same afresh. It shall then be open to the authorities concerned to go about counselling the eligible candidates

Judges of Madras High Court Division Bench