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IIT Bhubaneswar holds exams online with full attendance

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New Delhi: Even as top IITs ditched the final year exams and an increasing number of exams were cancelled in view of the prevailing Covid-19 outbreak, IIT-Bhubaneswar showed the way by not only conducting the end-semester exams online, but ensuring 100% attendance. This second generation IIT customised the online exam system so that the examination could be conducted in a comprehensive form without any compromises, yet ensuring that students are not put at risk.

The endsemester examinations were conducted online between June 24 to 30, for the final year subjects where a total of 526 (which 100% of the batch size) students from BTech, dual degree,

MSc, MTech and PhD participated.

Even though they were called 'online exams', the requirement of the internet was limited to question paper access, answer paper uploading and invigilating the participants.

As per IIT officials, the commercially available systems for online examinations are normally designed to hold computer-based tests and not for conventional examinations in a comprehensive form and have certain limitations. The conceptual and architectural design of the system was provided by institute director Professor R V Raja Kumar and the system was developed by computer and IT services cell of the institute.

Kumar explained: "One of the challenges faced in the system design is to provide fairness of access

to students who have a lot of variation in available gadgets and internet connectivity. Though the institute scheduled two examinations to facilitate the students to acquire facilities in case they do not have, all of them have availed the first opportunity and could take the exams successfully. In this system a conventional examination hall is made virtual, distributed across the personal environment of each student at their own home and the control also partially depends on the cooperation from each student."

The institute put in place a help desk which could interact, attend to and fix problems like those related to gadgets and internet bandwidth of the students during the exams making it successful for 100% of the students.