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(NAAC Accredited B+ Grade)

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CIRCULAR

Subject: Participation in National Inter-College Crossword Expedition (NICE-25)

Crossword-solving is recognized as a powerful cognitive exercise that enhances analytical thinking, decision-making, memory, concentration, and creativity. It strengthens problem-solving abilities, fosters a competitive spirit, and expands vocabulary—skills essential for academic and professional success.

In this regard, the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), in collaboration with Extra-C, IIM Mumbai, and IIT Madras, is organizing the National Inter-College Crossword Expedition (NICE-25) under an MoU signed on 21st May 2024.

The competition will be conducted from May 4 onwards in a hybrid format, comprising online preliminary rounds followed by offline zonal and national finals. This national-level event offers students a unique opportunity to sharpen their intellectual capabilities and compete with peers from across the country.

Students who wish to participate are requested to fill out the Google Form by **01-05-2025 (positively by tomorrow)** for onward submission to higher authorities.

Registration Link for Participation:

<https://forms.gle/AZWatCexRu2GbKYEA>

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Annexure

GUIDELINES/FORMAT FOR National Inter-college Crossword Expedition 2025 (NICE-25)

"We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet"

-Swami Vivekananda

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has set the bar high for higher education institutes in the country. It envisages nurturing a vibrant campus life, incorporating a holistic and multi-disciplinary approach to imparting education with the objective of developing a work force which is creative and multitalented. This calls for a holistic educational ecosystem which goes much beyond the traditional curricula teaching. A focused pursuit of co-curricular activities, therefore, would be a key to achieving the NEP 2020 goal.

2. Crosswords have a proven track record of being an excellent learning tool and at the same time providing a fun-filled pastime. It is one exercise which comes with multiple benefits.
 - Enhances Logical Reasoning
 - Strengthens Memory
 - Stimulates Problem-Solving Skills
 - Sharpens Focus and Concentration
 - Enhances Lateral Thinking and Creativity
 - Ensures a Decision-Making Bent of Mind
 - Provides a Sense of Accomplishment
 - Builds Confidence
 - Enables You to Take Challenges
 - Augments Your Vocabulary
3. At a time when the job market is getting increasingly competitive, all the above together are a sine qua non of building a bright career. Introduced in India in 2013 in competitive formats across different levels, solving cryptic crosswords has become not only a popular pastime but also a mental training aid for thousands of students, professionals and even empty nesters.
4. Keeping the above in mind, it has been decided to bring about the crossword-solving culture in the institutes of higher education through a **National Inter-college Crossword Expedition (NICE)**, a contest involving solving of cryptic crossword clues. It is scheduled to be held between **May-August 2025** and registration will begin from **30th March 2025** on <https://nice.crypticsingh.com>. The contest will be conducted through both online (initial rounds) and offline modes (zonal and national rounds).

5.GUIDELINES/FORMAT FOR NICE 2025

5.1 Registrations

5.1.1 Students of all recognized colleges/universities of India are eligible to participate in NICE 25

5.1.2 Eligible students may Register for the contest on <https://nice.crypticsingh.com> from 30th March 2025. Those students who had registered for NICE and are still studying, don't need to register afresh. While their username would remain the same, they would be allotted fresh password for 2025.

5.1.3 Username and password will appear on the screen after successful registration and will be emailed. The login credentials sent may be used for all the online rounds.

5.1.4 Heads of colleges/universities with over 100 registrants for NICE 25 till 4th May 2025 will get a 'NICE Roll of Honour' certificate from the organisers.

5.1.5 The heads of institutions with the highest registrations, as on 4th May 2025, in each of the five zones will receive a 'NICE Star Promoter' plaque and a certificate.

5.2 Online Rounds:

5.2.1 There would be one online Practice Round to familiarize the students with the types of questions/clues and the pattern of the contest.

5.2.2 After the Practice Round, there would be four competitive online rounds, christened as N, I, C, E Rounds, respectively.

5.2.3. The rounds will involve solving five crossword clues with supplementary hints, which will be posted at 1030 Hours IST on every Sunday on nice.crypticsingh.com or on android app NICE-25

5.2.4 The solutions will have to be submitted by 1700 Hours IST on the same day.

5.2.5. Every Online Round will have two sets of winners, viz., NICE Round (N/I/C/E) Winners and NICE Lucky Winners.

5.2.6. NICE Round (N/I/C/E) Winners would be decided on the basis of the points won by students based on speed and accuracy. The student with the fastest all correct solutions will be awarded 1000 points. The scores will move in a descending order based on the time taken and correctness of the solutions.

5.2.7. There would be National and Zonal NICE Leaderboard for each of the Online Rounds which would be posted on nice.crypticsingh.com. A cumulative individual score of all the participants for the Online Rounds will be used for making the Final Leaderboard after the completion of the Online Rounds.

5.2.8. The national winner of any of the Online Rounds will automatically qualify for the National Finals. The zonal winner of any of the Online Rounds, will automatically qualify for the Zonal Finals. The top 3 national and zonal position holders, in each of the rounds will receive the NICE Star Performer certificates and plaques.

5.2.9. Every Online Round will have NICE Lucky Winners from the Top 50 institutions participating in the contest. Only those institutions, which have at least 25 participants, would be eligible for the NICE Lucky prizes. These winners, dubbed as N, I, C, E Lucky winners, would be given NICE Sporting Spirit certificates by the organisers.

5.3 Zonal Rounds:

5.3.1. There would be five zones, viz., **North, South, West, East and Northeast**. The Zonal Finals will be held offline. Top 50 participants from each zone after the online rounds will qualify for the zonal-level competition. The top 50 participants will have the option to form teams of two among themselves or from a chosen partner from the same institute. The eligible participants will also have the option to represent their institution individually. Each college/HEI can have a maximum of five teams (a maximum of two participants each) eligible for the zonal round. The zonal round would consist of two stages: Preliminary and OnStage (or Zonal Finals) in each zone. The zonal round qualifier will face a written prelims after which the top six teams will proceed to the On Stage Final Round.

5.3.2. The top three teams would qualify from each Zone for the National Finals to be held in Delhi in August-September. The Grand Finale may also have Wild Card entries of the winners of City-level and Institutional level crossword contests , and any other outstanding team which could not participate in the Online Rounds/Zonal finals for a valid reason. The decision regarding Wild Card entries taken by the organisers Extra , would be final and binding..

5.4 National Round

5.4.1. The final round will begin with a Written Prelims and an On-stage Qualifying Round where all the qualifying teams will participate. The quarter-finalists would be selected on the basis of the scores of the Written round and the On-stage Qualifying Round. The Quarter Final, Semi-Final and the Final of the Grand Finale would be held subsequently. The National Round would be designed to make it telecast/webcast compatible.

5.5 PRIZES & CERTIFICATES

5.5.1 The winning team of the National Round will receive a cash prize of Rs 25,000. Team members will also receive certificates and trophies.

5.5.2 The Runner-up team of the National Round will receive a cash prize of Rs 20,000. Team members will also receive certificates and trophies.

5.5.3 The 2nd Runner-up team of the National Round will receive a cash prize of Rs 15,000. Team members will also receive certificates and trophies.

5.5.4 The winning team members of the Zonal Finals will receive trophies and certificates.

5.5.5 All participants will receive certificates of participation.

5.5.6 Heads of Institutions will also have special prizes and certificates, as mentioned earlier.

6 OTHER INFORMATION

6.1 The whole exercise, right from registration of participants and execution of the Online rounds, Zonal Rounds, the National Round and also other City/Institutional Round is to be anchored by Extra-C and its official website <https://nice.crypticsingh.com>

6.2 The site will also help with engaging content like free tutorial videos that contain the basics of solving cryptic crossword clues and also walk the interested participants through solving of actual clues, practice clues, news reports and visuals on the various rounds leading to the Finals.

6.3 The participating students/institutes will be apprised of a team from Extra-C, which will be organising the contest, that can be reached for seeking any clarifications at extracindia@gmail.com regarding the modus operandi of the whole exercise.

6.4 The tentative schedule for the Online Rounds, including the Practice Round, is tentatively as follows:

NICE 2025 Online Stages' Schedule (Tentative)			
Round	Date	Time	
		Start Time	End Time
Practice Round	4 th May 2025	10:30 AM	05.00 PM
Round-N	11 th May 2025	10:30 AM	05.00 PM
Round-I	18 th May 2025	10:30 AM	05.00 PM
Round-C	25 th May 2025	10:30 AM	05.00 PM
Round-E	1 st June 2025	10:30 AM	05.00 PM