The Circle

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***Abstract*—Solved problems from JEE mains papers related to 2D circles in coordinate geometry are available in this document. These problems are solved using linear algebra/matrix analysis.**

1 A circle passes through the points $\mathbf{A} = \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ 3 \end{pmatrix}$ and $\mathbf{B} = \begin{pmatrix} 4 \\ 5 \end{pmatrix}$. If its centre $\mathbf{O}$ lies on the line

$$\begin{pmatrix} -1 & 4 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{x} - 3 = 0 \tag{1.1}$$

find its radius.
Solution: Let

$$\mathbf{C} = \frac{\mathbf{A}+\mathbf{B}}{2} \implies \mathbf{C} = \begin{pmatrix} 3 \\ 4 \end{pmatrix} \tag{1.2}$$

The direction vector of AB is

$$\mathbf{m} = \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ 3 \end{pmatrix} - \begin{pmatrix} 4 \\ 5 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} -2 \\ -2 \end{pmatrix} \tag{1.3}$$

$$\because OC \perp AB,$$
$$OC : \mathbf{m}^T (\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{C}) = 0$$
$$\implies \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{x} = 7 \tag{1.4}$$

Thus, $\mathbf{O}$ is the intersection of (1.1) and (1.4) and is the solution of the matrix equation

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ -1 & 4 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{x} = \begin{pmatrix} 7 \\ -3 \end{pmatrix} \tag{1.5}$$

From the augmented matrix,

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 7 \\ -1 & 4 & 3 \end{pmatrix} \leftrightarrow \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 7 \\ 0 & 1 & 2 \end{pmatrix} \leftrightarrow \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 5 \\ 0 & 1 & 2 \end{pmatrix}$$
$$\implies \mathbf{O} = \begin{pmatrix} 5 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix} \tag{1.6}$$

Thus the radius of the circle

$$OA = \left\|\mathbf{O} - \mathbf{A}\right\| = \sqrt{10} \tag{1.7}$$

2 If a circle C_1, whose radius is 3, touches externally the circle

$$C_2 : \mathbf{x}^T\mathbf{x} + \begin{pmatrix} 2 & -4 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{x} = 4 \tag{2.1}$$

at the point $\mathbf{P} = \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix}$, then find the length of the intercept cut by this circle C on the x-axis.
Solution: From (2.1), the centre of C_2 is

$$\mathbf{O}_2 = \begin{pmatrix} -1 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix} \tag{2.2}$$

The radius of the circle is given by

$$r_2^2 - \mathbf{O}_2^T\mathbf{O}_2 = 4 \implies r_2 = 3 \tag{2.3}$$

Since the radius of C_1 is $r_1 = r_2 = 3$ and $\mathbf{O}_1, \mathbf{P}, \mathbf{O}_2$ are collinear,

$$\frac{\mathbf{O}_1 + \mathbf{O}_2}{2} = \mathbf{P}$$
$$\implies \mathbf{O}_1 = 2\mathbf{P} - \mathbf{O}_2$$
$$\implies \mathbf{O}_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 5 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix} \tag{2.4}$$

The intercepts of C_1 on the $x-$axis can be expressed as

$$\mathbf{x} = \lambda \mathbf{m} \tag{2.5}$$

where

$$\mathbf{m} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} \tag{2.6}$$

Susbtituting in the equation for C_1,

$$\left\|\lambda \mathbf{m} - \mathbf{O}_1\right\|^2 = r_1^2 \tag{2.7}$$

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which can be expressed as

$$\lambda^2 \|\mathbf{m}\|^2 - 2\lambda\mathbf{m}^T\mathbf{O}_1 + \|\mathbf{O}_1\|^2 - r_1^2 = 0$$
$$\implies \lambda^2 - 10\lambda + 20 = 0 \quad (2.8)$$

resulting in

$$\lambda = 5 \pm \sqrt{5} \quad (2.9)$$

after substituting from (2.6) and (2.4).

3 A line drawn through the point

$$\mathbf{P} = \begin{pmatrix} 4 \\ 7 \end{pmatrix} \quad (3.1)$$

cuts the circle

$$C : \mathbf{x}^T\mathbf{x} = 9 \quad (3.2)$$

at the points **A** and **B**. Find $PA.PB$.

Solution: Since the points **P**, **A**, **B** are collinear, the line PAB can be expressed as

$$L : \mathbf{x} = \mathbf{P} + \lambda\mathbf{m} \quad (3.3)$$

for $\|\mathbf{m}\| = 1$. The intersection of L and C yields

$$(\mathbf{P} + \lambda\mathbf{m})^T (\mathbf{P} + \lambda\mathbf{m}) = 9$$
$$\implies \lambda^2 + 2\lambda\mathbf{m}^T\mathbf{P} + \|\mathbf{P}\|^2 - 9 = 0 \quad (3.4)$$

The product of the roots in (3.4) is

$$PA.PB = \|\mathbf{P}\|^2 - 9 = 56 \quad (3.5)$$

4 Find the equation of the circle C_2, which is the mirror image of the circle

$$C_1 : \mathbf{x}^T\mathbf{x} - \begin{pmatrix} 2 & 0 \end{pmatrix}\mathbf{x} = 0 \quad (4.1)$$

in the line

$$L : \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}\mathbf{x} = 3. \quad (4.2)$$

Solution: From (4.1), circle C_1 has centre at

$$\mathbf{O}_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad (4.3)$$

and radius

$$r_1 = \mathbf{O}_1^T\mathbf{O}_1 = 1 \quad (4.4)$$

The centre of C_2 is the reflection of $\mathbf{O}_1$ about L and is obtained as

$$\frac{\mathbf{O}_2}{2} = \frac{\mathbf{m}\mathbf{m}^T - \mathbf{n}\mathbf{n}^T}{\mathbf{m}^T\mathbf{m} + \mathbf{n}^T\mathbf{n}}\mathbf{O}_1 + c\frac{\mathbf{n}}{\|\mathbf{n}\|^2} \quad (4.5)$$

where the relevant parameters are obtained from (4.2) as

$$\mathbf{n} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}, \mathbf{m} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 \end{pmatrix}, c = 3. \quad (4.6)$$

Substituting the above in (4.5),

$$\frac{\mathbf{O}_2}{2} = \frac{\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} - \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 \\ -1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}}{4}\mathbf{O}_1 + c\frac{\mathbf{n}}{2}$$
$$\implies \mathbf{O}_2 = \begin{pmatrix} 3 \\ 4 \end{pmatrix} \quad (4.7)$$

Thus

$$C_2 : \left\|\mathbf{x} - \begin{pmatrix} 3 \\ 4 \end{pmatrix}\right\| = 1 \quad (4.8)$$

5 One of the diameters of the circle, given by

$$C : \mathbf{x}^T\mathbf{x} + 2\begin{pmatrix} -2 & 3 \end{pmatrix}\mathbf{x} = 12 \quad (5.1)$$

is a chord of a circle S, whose centre is at

$$\mathbf{O}_2 = \begin{pmatrix} -3 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (5.2)$$

Find the radius of S.

Solution: From (5.1), the centre of C is

$$\mathbf{O}_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ -3 \end{pmatrix} \quad (5.3)$$

and the radius is

$$r_1 = \sqrt{\mathbf{O}_1^T\mathbf{O}_1 - 12} = 5 \quad (5.4)$$

From (5.3) and (5.2),

$$O_1O_2 = \|\mathbf{O}_1 - \mathbf{O}_2\| = 5\sqrt{2}$$
$$\implies r_2 = \sqrt{O_1O_2^2 - r_1^2} = 5 \quad (5.5)$$

6 A circle C passes through

$$\mathbf{P} = \begin{pmatrix} -2 \\ 4 \end{pmatrix} \quad (6.1)$$

and touches the y-axis at

$$\mathbf{Q} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (6.2)$$

Which one of the following equations can represent a diameter of this circle?

a) $\begin{pmatrix} 4 & 5 \end{pmatrix}\mathbf{x} = 6$
b) $\begin{pmatrix} 2 & -3 \end{pmatrix}\mathbf{x} + 10 = 0$
c) $\begin{pmatrix} 3 & 4 \end{pmatrix}\mathbf{x} = 3$
d) $\begin{pmatrix} 5 & 2 \end{pmatrix}\mathbf{x} + 4 = 0$

Solution: Let **O** be the centre of C. Then the equation of the normal, OQ is

$$\begin{aligned} \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} (\mathbf{O} - \mathbf{Q}) &= 0 \\ \implies \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{O} &= 2 \end{aligned} \tag{6.3}$$

Also,

$$\begin{aligned} \|\mathbf{O} - \mathbf{P}\|^2 &= \|\mathbf{O} - \mathbf{Q}\|^2 \\ \implies 2 (\mathbf{P} - \mathbf{Q})^T \mathbf{O} &= \|\mathbf{P}\|^2 - \|\mathbf{Q}\|^2 \\ \text{or, } \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{O} &= -4 \end{aligned} \tag{6.4}$$

(6.3) and (6.4) result in the matrix equation

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{O} = \begin{pmatrix} -4 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix} \tag{6.5}$$

yielding the augmented matrix

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 & -4 \\ 0 & 1 & 2 \end{pmatrix} \leftrightarrow \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & -2 \\ 0 & 1 & 2 \end{pmatrix} \implies \mathbf{O} = \begin{pmatrix} -2 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix} \tag{6.6}$$

Hence, option b) is correct.

7 Find the equation of the tangent to the circle, at the point

$$\mathbf{P} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix}, \tag{7.1}$$

whose centre **O** is the point of intersection of the straight lines

$$\begin{pmatrix} 2 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{x} = 3 \tag{7.2}$$

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{x} = 1 \tag{7.3}$$

Solution: From (7.2) and (7.3), we obtain the matrix equation

$$\begin{pmatrix} 2 & 1 \\ 1 & -1 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{O} = \begin{pmatrix} 3 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} \tag{7.4}$$

yielding the augmented matrix

$$\begin{aligned} &\begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 & 1 \\ 2 & 1 & 3 \end{pmatrix} \leftrightarrow \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 & 1 \\ 0 & 3 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \\ &\leftrightarrow \begin{pmatrix} 3 & 0 & 4 \\ 0 & 3 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \implies \mathbf{O} = \frac{1}{3} \begin{pmatrix} 4 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} \end{aligned} \tag{7.5}$$

Thus, the equation of the desired tangent is

$$\begin{aligned} (\mathbf{O} - \mathbf{P})^T (\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{P}) &= 0 \\ \implies \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 4 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{x} &= -3 \end{aligned} \tag{7.6}$$