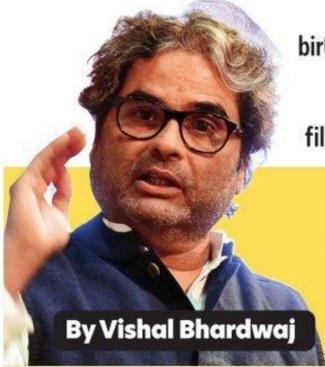




DELHI IS...
A FUN-
FILLED
KOREAN
CARNIVAL
P3

HOW HINDI CINEMA ADAPTED SHAKESPEARE



By Vishal Bhardwaj

April is the month of remembering Shakespeare, with both the birth and death anniversaries of the great playwright falling in this period. What's Bollywood got to do with Shakespeare, though? A lot, if you are Vishal Bhardwaj. We asked the acclaimed filmmaker to take us through his on-screen Shakespearean trilogy

Like many of us, I was introduced to Shakespeare in my school. But it was more of a chapter in a book to be read and written in an exam, than to be actually grasped. It was not only because of their matured themes, but also the complexity and toughness of their language," shares Vishal Bhardwaj, reiterating the 'highbrow' view of the Bard in pop culture today. However, in his own time, Shakespeare was anything but highbrow. From *Maqbool* to *Omkara* and *Haider*, Bhardwaj's adaptations of the Bard's classics has been a study in Shakespeare's genius - replete with pure theatre, drama and sentiment.

'Maqbool's adaption was an accident'

My first film in the Shakespeare trilogy, *Maqbool*, an adaptation of *Macbeth*, was accidental. I was on a train, on the way back from my godson's boarding school, and happened to chance upon it in the form of a short story in his schoolbook. Back then, I was searching for a story which could be based in the backdrop of the underworld, and I found *Macbeth* to be a perfect fit for it. It was only after that did I read all the other works of Shakespeare. Not only are they timeless, but also human in a way which can be moulded into any culture or setting. The human traits remain the same, making Shakespeare's characters contemporary and relevant throughout the world.

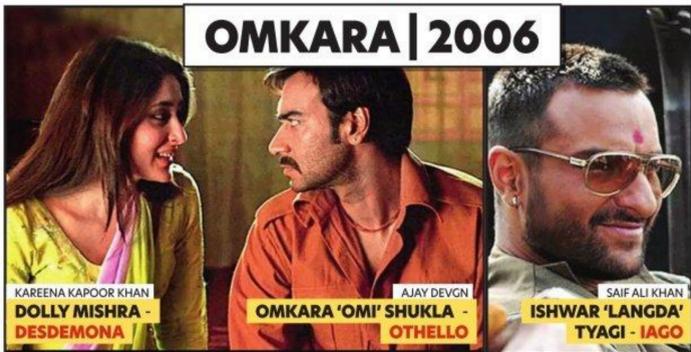


MAQBOOL | 2003

PANKAJ KAPUR
JAHANGIR KHAN - KING DUNCAN

TABU
NIMMI - LADY MACBETH

'Iago is one of the best negative characters written by the Bard'



OMKARA | 2006

KAREENA KAPOOR KHAN
DOLLY MISHRA - DESDEMONA

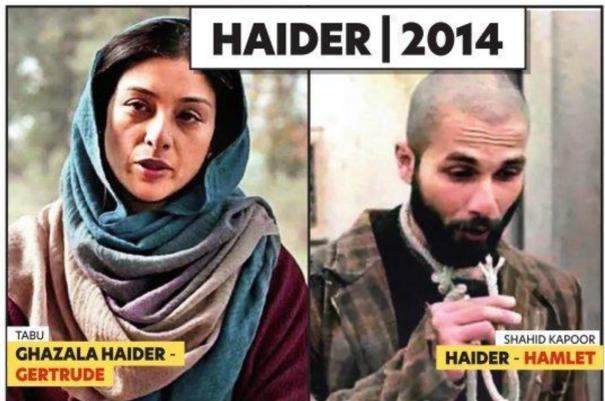
AJAY DEVGN
OMKARA 'OMI' SHUKLA - OTHELLO

SAIF ALI KHAN
ISHWAR 'LANGDA' TYAGI - IAGO

Othello was Shakespeare's second play that I adapted. Naseer Bhai (Naseeruddin Shah), whom I look up to him for creative validation, was of the opinion that *Othello* was Shakespeare's weakest play. But I was very fascinated by the character of Iago, who ultimately becomes the weaver of the protagonist's tragic arc. To me Iago is one of the best negative characters written by the Bard. I wrote my script and presented it to Naseer bhai, who loved my adaptation and gave me a go-ahead. And that's how Shakespeare's *Othello* became my *Omkara*.

'Kashmir, like Hamlet, was in a similar state of affairs - to be or not to be'

After that, it took me eight years to complete the trilogy. There were so many plays and the myriad of ways in which they could be adapted that the process took such a long time. Finally, the only competition left was between *King Lear*, *Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet*. I decided to go with *Hamlet*, which became the third entry in my trilogy in the form of *Haider*. *Hamlet* offered an unusual complexity and I found the characters more fascinating for me to explore. The characters of *Hamlet* are unlike any other seen, yet had familiar angst. The mother, the uncle, the father, the ghost, the relationships they shared with each other had their own intricacies. They're deeply layered and dark. Once I found its backdrop in Kashmir, I got even more excited. Kashmir, like *Hamlet*, was in a similar state of affairs. Like *Hamlet*, it asked - "to be, or not to be."



HAIDER | 2014

TABU
GHAZALA HAIDER - GERTRUDE

SHAHID KAPOOR
HAIDER - HAMLET

I will be a working mom, for sure: Yami Gautam



Yami Gautam opens up about growing up in a middle-class family with middle-class values; (inset) with husband, filmmaker Aditya Dhar

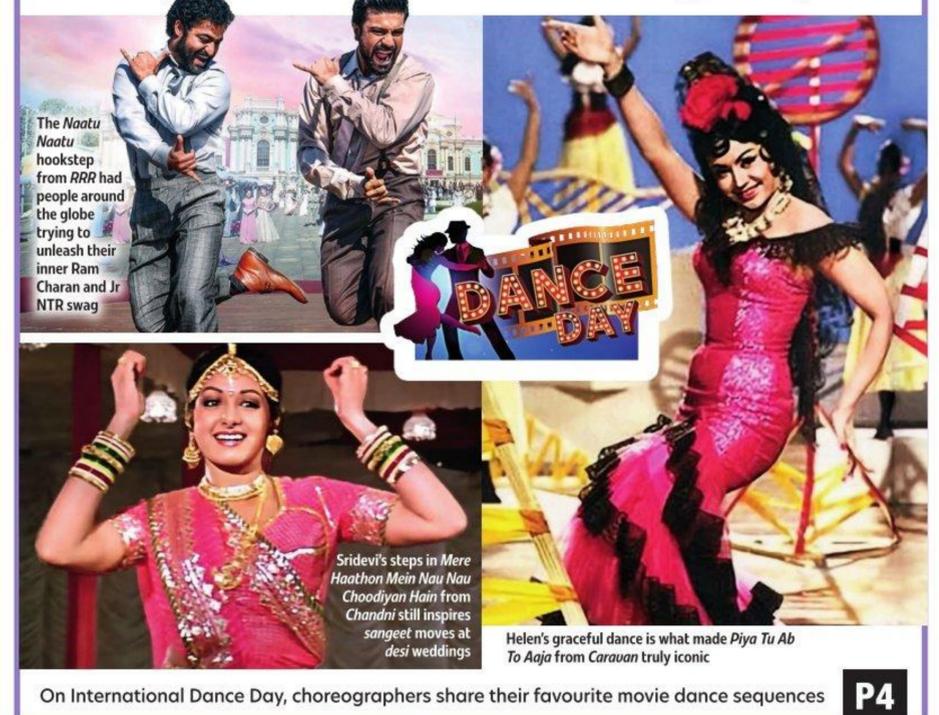
Onkar Kulkarni

Yami Gautam Dhar and her husband, filmmaker Aditya Dhar, are all set to welcome their first child. The actress, who is in the last trimester of her pregnancy, says that when it comes to motherhood, she draws inspiration from the women in her family - her mom, Anjali Gautam, and sister, Surilie Gautam. "My mother has been an incredible parent who raised us with patience and love. I remember she was very playful with us. I also liked the way she would correct us and keep us occupied. I keep asking my mom how she did it, and she tells me that you can't take notes because it doesn't work like that. My sister, too, has done a great job with raising my nephew, who I am very close to," she says.

My mother and mother-in-law have been working women and have balanced it well. They have set an example for me. Also, I am glad I have a very supportive husband

CONTINUED ON P 2

Thumkas, jhatkas: Dive into Bollywood's dance legacy



The *Naatu Naatu* hookstep from *RRR* had people around the globe trying to unleash their inner Ram Charan and Jr NTR swag

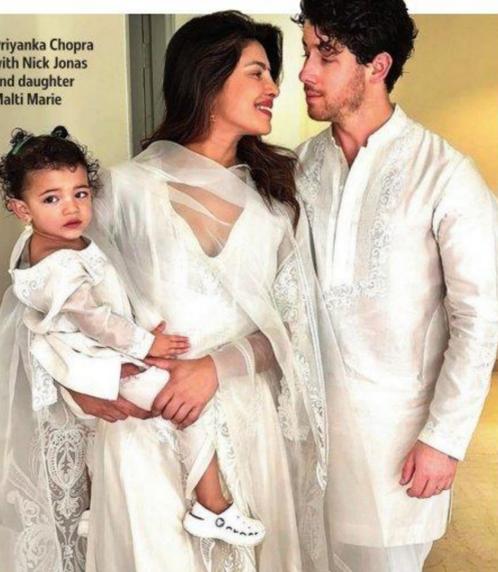
DANCE DAY

Sridevi's steps in *Mere Haathon Mein Nau Nau Choodiyan Hain* from *Chandni* still inspires sangeet moves at desi weddings

Helen's graceful dance is what made *Piya Tu Ab To Aaja* from *Caravan* truly iconic

On International Dance Day, choreographers share their favourite movie dance sequences

P4



Priyanka Chopra with Nick Jonas and daughter Malti Marie

Had to learn a lot: Priyanka on cultural gaps with Nick Jonas

Diving into the cultural contrasts between her and husband Nick Jonas, Priyanka Chopra has opened up on the changes she had to navigate post their marriage in 2018. During an interaction on the *Read the Room* podcast, the actress shared, "Nick and I embraced each other's cultures in a big way. But it was the cultural things that were different... So for Nick, he had to learn to cut people off, speak over everyone... I had to learn how to wait, let someone finish their sentence."

Nick had to learn to cut people off, he had to learn to speak over everyone. I had to learn to let others finish their sentence

Buzzstop

STYLE ACTOR SAHIL KHAN DETAINED IN MAHADEV BETTING APP CASE



The Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Mumbai Crime Branch has detained style actor Sahil Khan in connection with the Mahadev betting app case. Khan was apprehended on Saturday from Chhattisgarh, where he had reportedly been evading authorities for nearly 40 hours. His attempts to secure a pre-arrest bail failed as the Bombay High Court rejected his plea. Khan had fled Mumbai, constantly changing his location to evade authorities. The actor stands accused of running a betting site and promoting illegal betting activities.

Agencies

A Korean carnival for Delhiites



Samulnori, a traditional Korean musical performance, was presented at the event

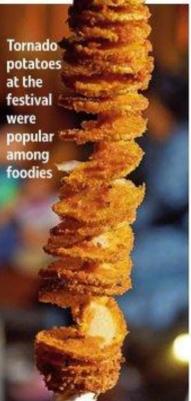


Monalisa Rai from the Rigmona band

Riya Sharma
K-lovers were in for a treat as they got to celebrate all things Korean at the recently concluded Korean Carnival in the city. With corn dogs and ramyeon that their favourite Korean actors gorge on in K-Dramas and some traditional and K-Pop performances, the carnival offered culinary delights and cultural experience in equal measures.

RAMYEON, KIMBAP AND KOREAN CORN DOG WERE A HIT AMONG REVELLERS AT THE CARNIVAL

Selfies with friends, sharing ramyeon with loved ones and queuing up around food stalls, these were some of the visuals at the carnival. "I got to know about this event through social media. I came here with my friends as we all are addicted to K-Dramas and we usually do not miss out on events like these," shared Tinzin, a resident of Malka Ganj.



Tornado potatoes at the festival were popular among foodies

6 I came here with my family. I love K-Pop and Korean food. Though there were only limited options in terms of food, I really enjoyed the whole vibe of this carnival
- Sakshi Malik, a resident of Ashok Vihar



No Korean carnival can be complete without ramyeon



Medium doesn't matter, what matters is good content: Sayli

Sayli Salunkhe is gearing up for her next show

Sayli Salunkhe's last show *Baastein Ankahee Si* may have ended in nine months, but the actress takes it in her stride. She says, "In fact, I have not done any show which has been on air for more than nine months. I don't understand why shows go off air... maybe because of ratings or decisions taken by channels. I'm just happy that almost every year, I have got to play different roles and show my versatility."

The actress, who started her career with Marathi shows like *Chhatruwali* and *Sukh Mhanje Nakki Kay Asta*, never got a chance to play the lead there. "It never mattered to me as long as my role was good. I come from a theatre background and we have always been taught that the medium doesn't matter, what matters is good content. But in Hindi shows now I'm playing the lead and I'm enjoying that, too," says Sayli, who will now be seen in the show *Pukaar - Dil Se Dil Tak* where she will play the role of a lawyer.

I'm happy that almost every year, I have got to play different roles and show my versatility

— Hasti Doshi

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The smooth and velvety taste of dark chocolate often adds a rich touch to ice creams, desserts and more. The brand's dark chocolate ice cream range offers a fun and dark twist to sweet treats

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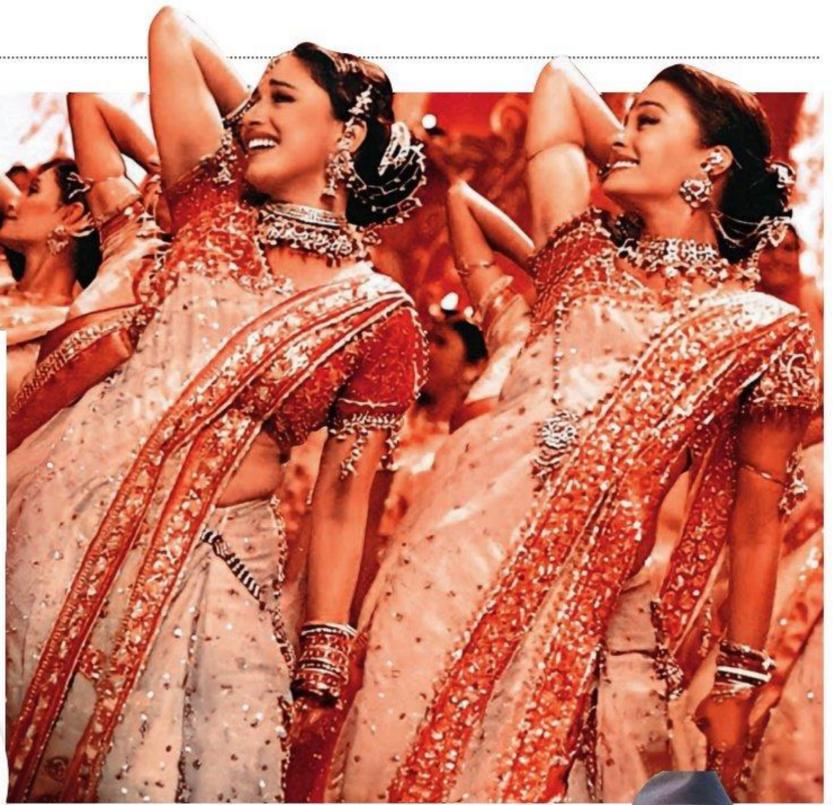
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CHOREOGRAPHERS' FAVE DANCE PICKS



On International Dance Day, choreographers talk about some of Bollywood's most iconic moves

Niharika Lal



Govinda's Goriya Chura Na Mera Jiya was brilliant: Ganesh Hegde

When I started dancing, Govinda was a big rage. I was quite inspired by Michael Jackson's break-dance. So, for me, in Hindi films, it was Govinda's *Street Dancer* that set the trend. Govinda's *Goriya Chura Na Mera Jiya* (Coolie No 1) was also a brilliant song. Then I really liked Saroj Khan's choreography for Yeh *Kaali Kaali Aankhein* (*Baazigar* 1993) for Shah Rukh. Later, I did a song for Salman - *O O Jaane Jana* - which also became a trendsetter.

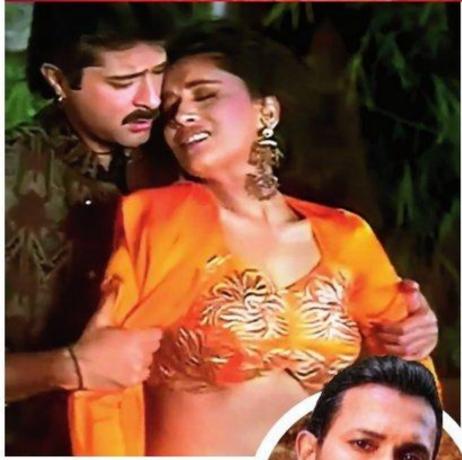
All the songs from Sridevi ji's *Chaalbaaz* (1989) were iconic. Madhuri ji's *Aaja Sanam* (*Khilaf*) and many others were trendsetters. Her song *Choli Ke Peeche* (*Khalnayak*) is one of my favourites.



Dola Re really stands out: Bosco Martis

A song whose choreography really stands out is *Dola Re Dola* (*Devdas*, 2002). If we look at cinema before that, Vijay Anand's songs - from the way they were conceptualised to their executed - are quite iconic. One of his films, *Teesri Manzil* (1966), had some really good songs.

The best dancers we have at present are Allu Arjun and Ram Charan; they have some iconic moves. Hrithik Roshan has so much swag and ease in his dance moves.



It's Dhak Dhak and Dola Re for me: Terence Lewis

There are two songs of Saroj (Khan) ji that stand out. One is *Dhak Dhak* (*Beta* 1992), I find the composition of this song very rich because here is an actress, along with her choreographer, who proved that they didn't need 100 dancers, fancy costume changes, and elaborate multiple sets to make the song memorable.

Another song, in contrast, had a large number of dancers, immaculate sets, and costumes that weighed several kilos is *Dola Re* from Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Devdas* (2002). This took approximately 20 days to shoot, which was unheard of at that time but every frame is a masterpiece and understandably so because it had Sanjay sir at the helm.



Hothon Mein Aisi Baat is iconic: Remo D' Souza

A song that I find iconic is *Hothon Mein Aisi Baat* from *Jewel Thief* (1967). I've never seen any song choreographed quite like that. Of course, I love all the songs choreographed by Saroj ji (Saroj Khan), but there's another choreographer who, I believe, transformed the choreography scene in Indian cinema, and that's Ahmed Khan.



Snake dance sequence and Piya Tose Naina Laage Re in Guide were awe-inspiring: Vaibhavi Merchant

Choreography-wise, *Piya Tose Naina Laage Re* and the snake dance sequence in *Guide* were simply awe-inspiring. B Hiralal ji was the director of choreography who happens to be my maternal grandfather. I was 17 when I realised his body of work and all the wonderful choreographies he did.

Indian cinema has iconic songs and iconic artists such as Asha Parekh ji, Helen ji, Mumtaz ji, Hema Malini ji, Rishi Kapoor ji, Neetu Kapoor ji, Kamal Hassan ji, Reena Roy ji, Govinda ji, and many other dance enthusiasts like Jaaved Jafferji ji, Aruna Irani ji, who have given us some wonderful dance numbers that have become iconic. Shahid Kapoor, Ranbir Kapoor, Katrina Kaif, and Ranveer Singh are among the contemporary talents who are effortless dancers.



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Engg colleges will also have exams in local languages

AICTE initiative will help regional students learn better and overcome the initial hitch

Priyadarshini Gupta
@timesgroup.com

The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has directed all technical universities to initiate steps for preparing bilingual exam papers: in English and a local language. It has also instructed teachers to use local languages while communicating with the students in classrooms. This will help students who have had schooling in a regional language. Recognising the diverse linguistic landscape of India, the AICTE move is aligned with NEP 2020, which underscores the importance of the mother tongue and increasing the use of local language in the teaching-learning process. "Nowadays, all entrance exams in the country are being conducted in Indian languages. Similarly, we have asked all technical universities to conduct exams in a local language along with English. The students will be allowed to answer the questions in regional languages too; it is just to facilitate regional students with limited proficiency in English to adjust to the new environment. There is an initial hesitation among students who come from regional and state boards to ask questions in classrooms or write exams. This will help bridge the gap and build confidence," says Rajive Kumar, member secretary, AICTE.

AICTE has allocated additional seats for UG and diploma engg courses conducted in regional languages

Medium of instruction

"For a long time, institutes have taken it as a rule to conduct classes and exams in English; AICTE has no rule which says the medium of instruction should be English. To bring about a cultural change, we have requested the institutes to prepare questions in local languages; however, we have not made it mandatory. The universities can take help of Anuvadini, a voice and document AI translation tool, by the AICTE, to translate the questions. It is totally up to the universities," he says.

Furthermore, the AICTE has promoted technical education in Indian languages by allocating additional seats for UG and diploma engineering courses conducted in regional languages. Kumar says there has been an increase in the number of takers for the last two years, however, bringing about changes in the system needs time. "For now, the AICTE initiative is just to bring awareness among institutes and students," he says. The students can visit AICTE portal, e-KUMBH, which offers books in regional languages for first and second-year students enrolled in Computer Science, Electrical, Mechanical branches. Over 11 scheduled languages have been covered like Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Gujarati, Marathi, Punjabi, Odia, etc. The AICTE has also provided hard copies of first-year books to colleges for the ease of students, adds Kumar.

Instilling confidence

"The AICTE initiative can increase access to technical education for students who are more comfortable with their local language. Students may find it easier to comprehend technical concepts in their regional language, leading to better retention of knowledge," says Prof Balvinder Shukla, vice-chancellor, Armiti University, UP.

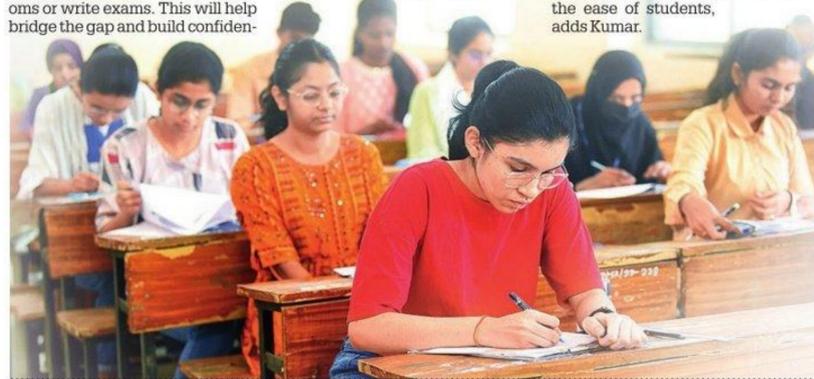
Takers in regional language

"In Tamil Nadu, government has provided 20% reservation in jobs and higher studies for those coming through Tamil-medium UG courses. Textbooks in Tamil medium have been prepared, however, teaching, learning, and consulting materials in Tamil are not adequately available, suited for PG and research programmes in these subjects," says PV Navaneethakrishnan, former professor and director, Entrance Exams and Admission, Anna University, Chennai.

As per Union minister Subhash Sarkar, the number of students enrolled in the BE/BTech programmes in the 11 regional languages were 928 in 2023-24, 683 in 2022-21 and 245 in 2021-20. Compared to the total number of candidates admitted in BE/BTech programmes, which was 36.6 lakh in 2020-21, the enrolment in regional language streams remains relatively small.

Quality of translation

Ensuring accurate translation of technical terms and concepts is crucial. "Poor translation could lead to misunderstandings and confusion among students. Maintaining consistency and standardisation in bilingual question papers across different universities and regions may pose challenges, particularly regarding language proficiency and technical accuracy," says Prof Shukla, adding that implementing bilingual question papers will also require additional resources, including training for faculty, translation services, and printing materials in multiple languages, which could pose logistical challenges. "It is essential to maintain fairness in grading, regardless of the language in which the exam is taken. Overall, while the initiative has the potential to enhance inclusivity in technical education, its success will depend on effective implementation," adds Shukla.



UGC to reinforce research culture by allowing FYUP students to take NET for PhD admission

This will contribute to developing research infrastructure as outlined in NEP 2020

Ayushi Gupta
@timesgroup.com

The University Grants Commission (UGC) in a recent notification stated that students with four-year graduate degrees can now appear in the National Eligibility Test (NET) and pursue the PhD in the subject irrespective of the subjects of their undergraduate degree. The provision has been introduced to strengthen the research ecosystem by increasing the pool of PhD candidates. Moreover, the UGC aims to shatter the perception that a PhD is an 'elite qualification'.

The four-year graduate students enrolling for PhD will promote innovation, generate new knowledge, and boost advancements across various fields, including science and technology. Speaking to *Education Times*, M Jagadeesh Kumar, chairman, UGC, says, "Doctoral studies provide students with the opportunity to delve into their chosen fields, develop critical thinking and research skills, and become subject matter experts. This will prepare them for careers in research, academia, or industry leadership roles. By investing in human capital through accessible PhD programmes, UGC is directly contributing to the goals outlined in NEP 2020."

Furthermore, the provision of a four-year undergraduate programme (FYUP) has been introduced to promote flexibility and create alternative pathways for higher education. It shall not replace the need for specialised, advanced, and professional PG degrees. "A PhD should not be looked at as an elite qualification. The expansion of eligibility criteria will provide a wider view of pathways to students. By dismantling the perception of a PhD as an elite qualification, UGC aims to bring out the full potential of these graduates into the mainstream," adds Kumar.

Relevance of PG degree

"The goal of obtaining a PG degree extends beyond simply acquiring another credential in higher education. Rather, it broadens the opportunities available to students, enhancing not only their knowledge and expertise but also increasing their career prospects. The expertise gained through postgraduation distinguishes learners in the competitive job market," says Kumar.



New guidelines for PhD

FYUP students will have to adhere to the following rules:

- Students with a minimum of 75% marks can pursue a PhD after qualifying NET
- Those with less than 75% will have to undergo a one-year master's before appearing for NET
- Three-year graduates can pursue a PhD after passing two-year master's and NET

one-year master's programme if they wish to pursue a PhD. "These provisions maintain the importance of undertaking PG degree programme and ensure high academic standards for PhD programmes while offering flexibility. The master's degree remains a valuable pathway for those seeking specialised subject knowledge or aiming to improve their academic credentials without pursuing a PhD," adds Kumar.

Calculated move

"Considering the recommendations of NEP 2020, the UGC launched important regulations such as the Curriculum and Credit Framework, PhD Regulations, and National Credit Framework. When the UGC introduced the Regulations on the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Award of PhD Degree in November 2022, the provision allowing PhD admissions to candidates who have completed a four-year or eight-semester bachelor's degree was incorporated into it. With this move, the UGC has opened options for appearing in PhD entrance exams and opportunities for Junior Research Fellowship (JRF). Starting from the June 2024 NET cycle, graduates will be able to take the entrance exam and enrol for PhD programmes," says Kumar.

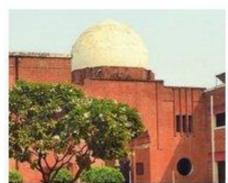
JMI Entrance Exam dates rescheduled for Non-CUET courses

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) has rescheduled the entrance exam dates for admission to various undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. The dates are being revised due to the ongoing Lok Sabha Elections 2024.

As per the revised schedule, the JMI entrance exams 2024 will be held on June 9, 10, and 11 for various non-CUET courses. In the earlier schedule, JMI Entrance Exams for Non-CUET courses were scheduled to be held on May 24, 25, and 26.

It is to be noted that the admission to JMI in 2024 will



be conducted through entrance exams for various non-CUET courses.

An official notification issued by JMI on rescheduling of entrance exam dates due to elections stated that due to the announcement of dates of Lok Sabha Election 2024 by the chief election commissioner of India, the entrance test of the university has been rescheduled.

While MA in Economics, MA in Applied Psychology, Diploma in Engineering (regular, self-financed), MBA, MBA-IB (self-financed), MBA in Entrepreneurship and family business (self-financed), will all be conducted on June 9; BE, MA in Human Resource Management and MA in Arabic will be conducted on June 10; MA in Social Work, MA in English, BSc Aeronautics, MCA and MA in History will now be held on June 11.

States must set up district-level anti-ragging committee: UGC

The UGC has reiterated that ragging is a criminal offence and action will be taken against the HEI if it fails to take adequate steps. "It is once again brought to your kind notice that ragging is a criminal offence and UGC has framed regulations on curbing the menace of ragging in higher educational institutions to prohibit, prevent and eliminate the scourge of ragging. These regulations are mandatory, and all institutions are required to take necessary steps for its implementation in toto including the

monitoring mechanism. Any violation of these regulations will be viewed seriously. If any institution fails to take adequate steps to prevent ragging does not act by these Regulations or fails to punish perpetrators of incidents of ragging suitably, Institutions will attract punitive actions as per UGC Regulations for Curbing the Menace of Ragging-2009," states the UGC. In a letter addressed to the chief secretary of all states, the Commission has asked them to set up a district-level anti-ragging committee.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELLOR

Those struggling with self-harm need attention, not lecturing

DR HARISH SHETTY
Child psychiatrist,
Mumbai

Delusional thoughts
My son came back from a college picnic recently and has been behaving abnormally ever since. He has started saying meaningless things that he owns Mumbai city. He remains restless and does not sleep. He is studying BSc IT but now wants to join IIT. At times, he gets excessively happy and wants to go out on a drive in the family car.

-Anonymous

You may have already seen a psychiatrist and are probably wondering why this has happened to your son. Did you notice any signs of mild, irrelevant thinking or erratic behav-

our before this episode? Check if he has taken any addictive substances during the picnic with his friends. The doctor must have suggested a few tests to identify the substance he has presumably consumed. Follow the prescription and instructions of the doctor to help him recover. You need to be supportive and not aggressive in your approach as this looks like a clear case of addiction.

Voices in my head
My daughter is just 15 and has been bruising her arm very often for the last

six months. She claims to hear voices that instruct her to indulge in self-harm. Her studies are being affected. Her school management has asked her to stay at home and join classes only after she is completely cured.

-PS

This needs to be evaluated by a psychiatrist immediately. Thoughts of self-harm usually appear because of the inability to cope with life or studies

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avoided. This condition shows a fractured mind that needs attention and not lecturing.

Haunted by past trauma

My son suffered burn injuries when he was 7. He is 12 now and suffers from sudden bouts of palpitations (increased heart rate), panic attacks, and breathlessness. At times, he starts trembling and refuses to attend school. Sometimes, he wakes up in the middle of the night or cries in his sleep. He had recovered from the burn injuries, and we assumed that he did not remember it at all.

-KM

After a traumatic event or any other form of abuse or an accident, there is a flurry of emotions. They may be experienced soon after

the incident or may get automatically pushed down in the mind. It gets repressed momentarily but comes back as a sudden gush of water. One might get to battle the faded and repressed memories later in life. This condition is known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which may have a late arrival. Your child is getting panic attacks due to PTSD. You need to check the trigger points that have evoked the emotions which were blocked for some time. Nightmares and memories of past events are common in children who suffered accidents and it can be treated by regular counselling.

ADHD or ADD

My son makes silly mistakes in examinations. He has been battling this problem for some time

now. I have been told that he has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). However, I do not want to believe this because my child is calm and not hyperactive. He suffers academically, which is concerning.

-Anonymous

If your son loses his stuff in school, makes silly mistakes, and is lost in the class, he may have just Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). This condition comes without any hyperactivity or impulsiveness. This condition is generally not identified in childhood and as a result, the student suffers poor grades and is reprimanded by parents and teachers. Effective treatment through counselling and medications can be helpful. Every child with inattention may not have hyperactivity and impulsivity.



How a degree in Economics and DS can reap benefits

Demand for skilled professionals who can derive insights from data is expected to soar in the coming years, writes **Jeeten Giri**



In today's digital age, all organisations rely heavily on complex data and statistical models to make strategic decisions. There is a huge demand for skilled individuals who can effectively handle large datasets, generate insights, drive innovation, and shape business strategies. Hence, a degree in Economics and Data Science emerges as a field brimming with opportunities where students will acquire all the necessary skills to fit into the role of a data scientist. According to a report by IBM, data scientist jobs are expected to increase by 28% by 2025 and continue to grow in the future.

Data is a collection of facts in the form of numbers, or texts, or images, or even videos, or a mixture of these. Gathering data is not something new to us. We have been doing it for thousands of years. However, the form and scale of collecting data have changed, especially in the last two decades. This has a lot to do with the advent of large servers and cloud storage facilities where trillions of gigabytes of data can be stored, if not more. This transformation in data collection underpins the significance of integrating economic theories with data science methodologies.

Today, every detail of our lives pops up as a data point in some database or the other. For example, the number of hours we are on the phone, the time we spend on social media, the products we usually check on e-commerce platforms, the paths we generally take to go to school or work, the money we spend on food delivery apps, are all data points. Similarly, the thousands of goods imported and exported by India daily, stock prices at every second, the number of children going to school daily, and the monthly income of daily wage workers, are all data too; we call it economic data. Since the volume of data is so large, we must rely on modern developments to handle Big Data. These modern techniques and approaches are what

we learn in Data Science. Economists rely on data to analyse and make causal inferences about economic phenomena, make forecasts, and formulate policies by employing data science tools such as machine learning algorithms, predictive modelling, and data visualisation techniques.

The complementarity between economic modelling and data science methods has gained traction in the past decade. Industries highly rate individuals proficient in economic theory and can use data science methods to model and analyse data and at the same time prescribe policies and strategies to governments or businesses. This recognition has opened a plethora of opportunities for individuals looking to pursue a career that blends traditional economic theories and cutting-edge data science techniques. Recognising this trend, several universities are offering a curriculum tailored to meet the demands of today's job market

where candidates are valued for their abilities to handle and analyse data. A degree in Economics and Data Science equips students with the vital skills for today's data-driven economic decisions, including analysing complex datasets, applying statistical models, and using tools like Python, R, and SQL. It enhances critical thinking for real-world problem-solving and teaches effective communication of complex data to stakeholders. This skill set opens doors to numerous opportunities where analytical and strategic capabilities are crucial, preparing graduates for impactful roles across industries.

As businesses and governments continue to prioritise data-driven approaches, the demand for skilled professionals who can interpret and derive insights from data is expected to soar in the coming years. (The author is assistant professor, School of Liberal Studies, UPES)

CAREER COUNSELLOR

To excel in Data Science, a strong foundation in Maths is a must

PERVIN MALHOTRA
Director, CARING Career Information & Guidance,
New Delhi
e-mail: pervinet@careerguidanceindia.com

Managing assets and risks

What exactly is asset management? For that matter, what does one have to do to make a career in this field?

Anant Rawat, Jaipur

Asset management is all about professionally managing investments on behalf of clients or investors. The goal of asset management is to grow and preserve assets over time while managing risks according to the client's objectives and risk tolerance. Asset managers make investment deci-

sions based on analysis of financial data, market trends, economic conditions, and risk factors. It is a dynamic field that demands continuous learning and adapting to new technologies, investment approaches, and market dynamics. Asset management can be a rewarding and challenging career path. To prepare for this field, obtain a bachelor's degree in finance, economics, business admin, commerce, etc. Pursuing certifications such as Chartered Financial Analyst or Chartered Alternative Investment Analyst would enhance your credentials. Make sure you seek internships or entry-level positions in financial institutions, investment firms, or asset management firms to gain practical experience and industry knowledge.

You may even consider specialising in a specific asset class or investment strategy, for example, equities, fixed income, real estate, or alternative investments to carve a niche and advance your career. Ad-

ditionally, it would help to develop strong analytical skills to assess and analyse investment opportunities, financial data to make informed decisions, keep abreast of market trends, economic developments, and regulatory changes that may impact investment strategies. Networking can open up opportunities for mentorship, job referrals, and career advancement.

Maths in Machine Learning

Everyone is talking about Machine Learning as the career of the future. Is Maths very important for getting into this field?

Suniti Mishra, Raipur

Data science is a dynamic field that combines various disciplines, with Mathematics at its core. In fact, Maths is the language of Data Science. It provides the tools and frameworks for understanding, analysing, and interpreting data. To excel in Data Science, you need a strong mathematical foundation for several reasons. ML requires a strong base in Maths. When you deal with concepts like entropy, you will understand how prediction and probability in a system work with the help of math-

Get your doubts cleared. Post your query on the Get Untangled section at www.educationtimes.com

ematical formulas. To select the best algorithm, you need to keep track of accuracy, model complexity, number of parameters; for that, you need to have a strong foundation in Mathematics. No doubt ML is a great and paying field to be in, but the key thing to remember (like for any other job, howsoever, publicly valued) is to honestly assess whether you have a genuine interest in the subject. Do you love playing with data and algorithms? Do you find the underlying maths beautiful? It is important to isolate the public opinion from your own.

Keen on food science
Watching my mother and grandmother cook, I have developed an interest in researching the various aspects of food. Is food science a viable option?

Manish
Khurana, Delhi



Students with disabilities require college-readiness programmes

Bridging the divide between inclusive policies and practical challenges faced by specially-abled students in transitioning from elementary to secondary and higher education is essential, writes **Reena Gupta**

The 'd' in the word 'disability' can very well stand for 'differences'. It is a matter of mindset and attitude towards human diversity which are set early on in life. While a child, who may look different from others or may have different ways of learning, can be frowned at, or made to feel inferior, there can be another child in the same situation who is supported for their areas of challenge and valued for their strengths.

In both the above cases, it is mostly the adults who react in a certain way first and then the peers around the child. That puts the spotlight on the value of awareness and education amongst our community. While seeing a disability as a difference needs well-designed awareness campaigns; education, being fundamental to leading an independent fulfilling life, deserves better attention and effort. It is a well-known fact that a community thrives on education and if it includes its every member, the progress is manifold. However, it is also true that we tend to ignore the value people with disability can bring to the education system, and also the fact that, for them to contribute to the system, they need to be able to access it.

Less likely to participate

As per the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia's country profile of India titled 'Disability-Inclusive Education Practices in India (2021)', "they [students with disabilities] are less likely to participate in and complete their education compared to their peers without disabilities."

According to the All India Sur-

Specific bridge courses will enable students to become independent learners

vey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2021-22, the total estimated enrolment in HEIs is four crore, out of which, there are approximately 88,000 students with disabilities enrolled in higher education. This means that out of the total population of students enrolled in HEIs, only about 0.2% comprise those who have disabilities. It also marks a decline in the number of enrolled students with disabilities from 92,000, as in AISHE 2019-20. National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP)'s white paper on India's National Education Policy and Disability Inclusive

Education, 2021, also highlights the sharp drop in enrolment in higher education, stating that enrolment at secondary school is almost half that at the elementary level.

Seeing disability first

Addressing this issue is crucial to bridge the divide between inclusive policies and the practical challenges faced by students with disabilities in transitioning from elementary to secondary and then to higher education. Adults tend to see the disability first before they see the student; they see the limitations before seeing the abilities.

The overall prevailing appro-

ach tends to be centred around caregiving and hand-holding, creating a void in fostering an environment conducive to responsibility-taking, self-awareness, and decision-making for the students. The systematised lack of motivation tends to breed contentment with mediocrity, accompanied by diminished interest and capacity to function at one's best. Career awareness, aspiration building, communication skills and overall readiness for higher education and integration into an inclusive society is thus, significantly impacted.

Developing skills to not-let oneself fall behind and to self-advocate are essential for college success. It is not that difficult for students to integrate college and future readiness into their academic activities and daily tasks; however, their families and schools have a critical role to play there.

There is a huge scope of creating programmes that facilitate effective transition of students with disabilities from one stage of their academic life to the next. We need, not one, but many college-readiness-like bridge programmes to be developed, which can offer students a broader range of experiences. Specific bridge courses also need to be developed that can enable students to start their journey of becoming independent learners early and be future-ready. These courses can help students build their own toolkit of strategies to manage their academics and daily work while they are still at school.

(The author is director, Office of Learning Support at Ashoka University)

Integrating AI in learning is viable by tackling challenges

Updates are crucial to ensure AI tools give accurate information, writes **Dhaval Mehta**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) holds immense potential to revolutionise the field of education. However, integrating AI effectively presents a set of challenges. The main concern is the lack of human connection. Over-reliance on AI-powered machines for learning or teaching can diminish the importance of human-to-human interaction and emotional intelligence, which are crucial aspects of learning.

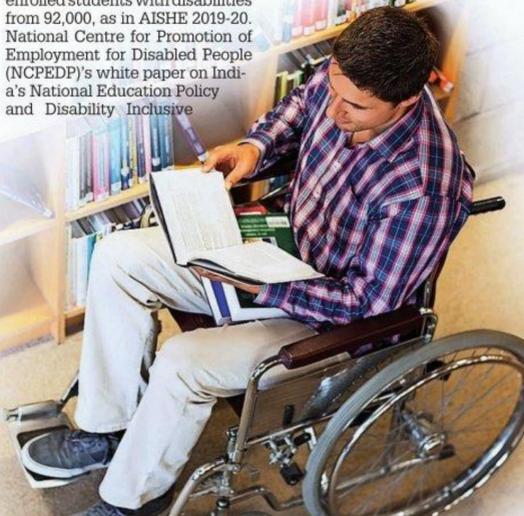
Robust data protection policies

Data privacy is yet another challenge in integrating AI into education. AI systems gather vast amounts of student data which are stored in central databases, leading to concerns about

its security and potential misuse. There is a need to implement robust data protection policies to ensure data safety. Underdeveloped infrastructure, especially in areas with no or limited internet access can hinder the implementation of AI tools, impacting the learning experience.

Further, the accuracy of AI-generated content requires careful consideration. Regular knowledge base updates are crucial to ensure AI tools provide the latest and most accurate information. Finally, there is a need to properly train faculty to effectively leverage AI tools in the classroom. Educators lack familiarity with these technologies in many places, necessitating ongoing training and support to bridge the gap. AI offers exciting possibilities for education, but acknowledging and addressing these challenges will be key to ensuring its proper integration into learning.

(The writer is programme chair and assistant professor at Navrachana University, Vadodra, Gujarat)





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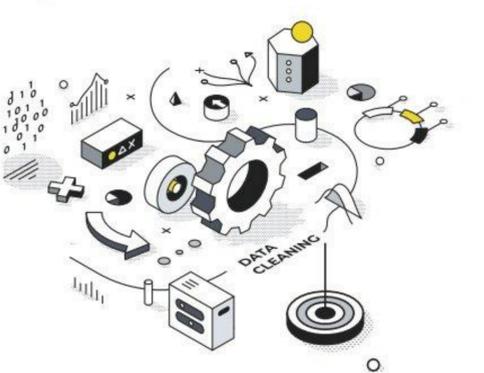
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Cracking IITs gets tougher as cut-off for JEE Advanced increases

The rise in cut-off by 2.45% in 2024 confirms the growing craze and intense competition to secure a seat in the IITs

Shuddhanta.Patra
@timesgroup.com

The recently released Joint Entrance Examination (Main) Session 2 result shows an increase in cut-off by 2.45%, which confirms an increase in competition among aspirants, to get admission into IIT and other premier engineering colleges.

According to NTA, the JEE Advanced qualifying cut-offs for all categories are: 93.2362181 for UR; 79.6757881 for OBC; 81.3266412 for EWS-ALL; 0.0018700 for UR-PWD; 60.0923182 for SC-ALL and 46.6975840 for ST-ALL.

For general category candidates, the cut-off for JEE Advanced is 93.23 which is up from 90.77 in 2023, 88.4 in 2022, 87.9 in 2021. The qualifying scores for general candidates were 90.3 and 89.7 in 2020 and 2019, respectively.

Meanwhile, for SC candidates, the cut-off is 60.09, which is much higher, as compared to 51.97 (2023), as against 43.08 (2022), 46.8 (2021), 50.1 (2020), and 54.01 (2019). The cut-off for ST students is 46.69, up from 37.23 in 2023, 26.7 in 2022, 34.6 in 2021. The bar was higher in 2020 and 2019 with qualifying scores of 39.06 and 44.3, respectively.

The OBC (non-creamy layer) cut-off has also increased to 79.67 this time from 73.61 in

JEE Advanced 2024 qualifying cut-off	
Category	Cut-off for JEE Advanced
General	93.2362181
Gen-PwD	0.0018700
EWS	81.3266412
OBC-NCL	79.6757881
SC	60.0923182
ST	46.6975840

2023, as against 67 in 2022, 68.02 in 2021, 72.8 in 2020. For the EWS category candidates, the cut off this time is 75.62, compared to last year's 63.11.

This year, 56 candidates have scored 100 percentiles with Telangana registering the maximum number of 100 percentiles. In 2023, there were 43, while in 2022 only 14 candidates scored 100 percentile. In all, 2023, 11 candidates from Telangana had a 100 percentile score which rose to 15 this year. Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh follow thereafter, with seven candidates having 100 percentile, as against two and five in 2023, respectively.

Road to IITs, IITs getting more difficult
Speaking to Education Times, Prof Chandrashekar Ramnathan, dean (Academics),

Nowadays, students have clear career goals and pursue them diligently from a very young age, which could contribute to the cut-off going up

IIIT-Bangalore, says, "A total of 2,50,284 candidates from JEE Main have successfully qualified for the JEE Advanced 2024. The increase in cut-off compared to last year does not necessarily mean that the criteria of cut-off has become more stringent nor does it indicate increased difficulty levels of the exams. The increase in the cut-off only shows an increasing interest in students

appearing in JEE Mains exams each year. The number of candidates who are eligible for JEE Advanced remains more or less around 2.5 lakhs every year. This notable surge in the cut-off only indicates increasing competitiveness and evolving standards of the examination over the years."

According to him, the competition among the students to enter top engineering colleges has increased with large number of aspirants vying for a spot in the top 2.5 lakh rank.

"Ending up in the top 2.5 lakhs among the nearly 14 lakhs JEE applicants surely indicates an upward increase in the relative performance levels of candidates, indicating their growing profi-



PHOTO FOR REPRESENTATION

ency and adaptability to the evolving nature of the test itself. These developments have likely empowered aspirants to enhance their knowledge and skills, thereby enabling them to achieve higher scores in the examination, thus, gaining a ranking edge over fellow students. This would also mean admis-

sions in premier institutes like IITs and IIITs closing off at higher cut-offs on account of the overall good performance this year," he adds.

According to Prof Vijeth J Kotagi, IIT Dharwad, the increase in cut-off signifies enhanced education infrastructure and teaching methods. "The rigour of JEE Ad-

vanced sets apart the most exceptional candidates, offering them the chance to pursue studies in the country's premier institutes under the guidance of world-class faculty. Overall, JEE Advanced serves as a crucial mechanism for identifying and admitting top-performing students to the IITs, thereby

contributing to the advancement of education, research, and innovation in India," says Prof Kotagi.

"The rise in JEE Advanced cut-off scores directly mirrors the intensifying competition and heightened awareness among parents and students. Enhanced education infrastructure, teaching methods, and the availability of free study resources, including online lectures on social media, have equipped students better, leading to elevated cut-off scores. The increase in cut-off scores may also stem from students' higher aspirations from an early age. Nowadays, students have clear career goals and pursue them diligently from a very young age, which could contribute to the rise in cut-off score," he adds.

"JEE Advanced is expected to provide a fair and comprehensive assessment of candidates' knowledge and aptitude in various fields of science and mathematics. Overall, a high number of candidates passing JEE Main with good scores can indicate a competitive landscape for JEE Advanced, prompting aspirants to strive for excellence and optimise their preparation strategies to meet the challenges of the exam effectively," Prof Ramnathan adds.

EducationTIMES



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- Q1. In T minutes, the time would be 8:00 a.m. If 40 minutes ago, the time was 3T minutes past 2:00 a.m., then find the present time.**
a. 6:20 a.m. b. 6:40 a.m. c. 5:20 a.m. d. 5:40 a.m.
- Q2. There is a rectangular garden of dimensions 100 m × 80 m. Two paths are laid running midway in the garden, one parallel to the length and the other parallel to the breadth. What is the total area of the paths in sq. m, if the width of the path is 2 m?**
a. 356 b. 360 c. 344 d. 336
- Q3. A train, 600 m long, is running at 45 kmph. In what time will it cross a person moving at 9 kmph in the opposite direction?**
a. 36 sec b. 40 sec c. 34 sec d. 38 sec
- Q4. The average runs scored by a batsman, who has played 52 innings, increased by one after an innings of 126. Find the average runs of the batsman before this innings.**
a. 71 b. 73 c. 64 d. 58
- Q5. The present age of a father is thrice that of his son. Fifteen years hence, he will be twice the son's age. How many years ago was the father six times the son's age?**
a. 5 b. 6 c. 8 d. 9
- Q6. A number when divided by 162 leaves a remainder of 60. Find the remainder when the same number is divided by 27.**
a. 2 b. 4 c. 6 d. 8
- Q7. Mohan sells T-shirts at a fixed price, such that the total cost of 6 shirts is the same as the total selling price of 5 shirts. What is Mohan's profit percentage in selling each T-shirt?**
a. 10% b. 15% c. 20% d. 30%
- Q8. The average speed for an entire journey is 60 km/hr without considering the stoppages. When the stoppages are considered, the average speed becomes 48 km/hr. How many minutes per hour on an average were the stoppages?**
a. 10 b. 12 c. 16 d. 18
- Q9. In how many ways can 149 be divided into two positive parts such that one part is divisible by 5 and the other part is divisible by 8?**
a. One b. Two c. Three d. Four
- Q10. At a party, each person greeted every other person once. If a total of 600 greetings were exchanged, then the number of persons who attended the party is**
a. 25 b. 15 c. 20 d. 24
- Answer key for the last week's quiz:** 1.(b) 2.(a) 3.(e) 4.(c) 5.(d) 6.(b) 7.(c) 8.(d) 9.(c) 10.(a)

Following a good mentor is important, says JEE Main topper in J&K

Sushant Padha developed an interest in Maths while learning programming during Covid times

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Extreme weather conditions in Jammu did not deter Sushant Padha from pursuing his aspirations to prepare for JEE Main 2024. Sushant, 17, bagged rank 1 in J&K and rank 506 across India after securing 99.97 percentile in Session 1. Having done his schooling at Jodhamal Public School, Jammu, Sushant has always been studious and hardworking. Despite his father being an anaesthesiologist, and his mother a state civil servant posted in Jammu, Sushant was never inclined towards both these fields. Maths is all that interested him. He had tried to learn programming, Mathematical Computing in class IX-X during the Covid pandemic, and that is when he developed an interest in Computer Science, Mathematics and Computing branches. "My hobbies also include programming (Python, Julia and Javascript), playing the guitar, sketching, and playing video games," he says.

Interest in subjects

Sushant, while preparing for JEE, mostly stayed focused on understanding the concepts properly and maintained an interest in the subjects. I learnt about JEE only in class XI. While Sushant was going to a local coaching centre in Jammu till class XII, he enrolled himself for online coaching in class XII. While

he studied all subjects properly, he gave special emphasis on Physics.

Maintain a good routine

Sushant says that aspirants should be focused on learning the subject first since that makes the entire process smooth. "It is important to maintain a good routine. What matters is the quality of study rather than the quantity of time. The exam syllabus and pattern are more competitive nowadays. It is more about how much the students can solve, rather than how much students can cover, he adds. About his JEE Advanced preparation, he says, "There is no different strategy for JEE Advanced. I am trying to focus on learning the fundamentals very well and then move on to more advanced topics which creates a solid foundation for the subjects. I am trying to give as many mock tests as possible to find out the areas where I lack and how to improve them."

An urge to learn more

Having not given much thought about the future, Sushant has an urge to work in research related projects. "Aspirants should follow a good mentor, a good coaching institute or platform and stick to it. It is important to stay focused; staying connected to family and friends is important as it helps maintain an idea of the bigger picture," he says.



There is no different strategy for JEE Advanced. I am trying to focus on learning the fundamentals very well and then move on to more advanced topics which creates a solid foundation.
- Sushant Padha

Astrophysics enthusiast Aaditya Kumar took regular breaks to bust stress

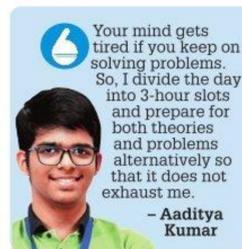
Scoring a 100 percentile, the Bengaluru boy never counted the hours, but passionately studied each chapter

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Aaditya Kumar, who scored 100 percentile in JEE Main Paper 1, built an interest in Astrophysics in class IX after he came across his seniors who pursued the field after studying computer science. "I see my future in Astrophysics, which offers a lot to explore. I have seen my seniors diving deep into the world of Astrophysics after studying computer science and I wish to follow them. However, I will have more clarity once I enter the field," says the 18-year-old. A Bengaluru boy Aaditya moved to Kota to prepare for the JEE, his immediate goal is to make it in the top 50 in JEE Advanced and get admission in Computer Science Engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-B).

Aaditya relocated to Kota in June 2022 after class X to prepare for JEE with his mother Minu Prabha Bej, while his father Prakash Kumar works with an Agritech startup in Bengaluru. He completed class X at National Public School, Indiranagar, and scored 97.8%.

Unlike many JEE Main aspirants, Aaditya does not believe in having set hours for studies, instead he divides his day into targets. "It is difficult to divide your studies into hours in a day. I make a target—for instance, if I decide to finish three to four chapters, I simply finish it without looking at the watch. Once I am satisfied with my preparation, that is enough for me," he says. Besides coaching classes, Aaditya gave sufficient hours to self-studies. Aaditya balanced his study rou-



Your mind gets tired if you keep on solving problems. So, I divide the day into 3-hour slots and prepare for both theories and problems alternatively so that it does not exhaust me.
- Aaditya Kumar

time by dedicating equal time to studying theories and solving problems. He organised his day into 3-hour slots and prepared for both the aspects alternatively. "Your mind gets tired if you keep on solving problems. So, I divide the day into 3-hour slots and prepare for both theories and problems alternatively so that I don't get tired," he says.

"While preparing for Main, the most challenging subject for me was Inorganic Chemistry, so I gave it more time. My teachers guided me on how to prepare better," he adds.

Aaditya believes that recreational activities are important while preparing for JEE exams. "I gave an hour for relaxation, which involved chatting with my mother, listening to music, playing badminton, talking with my friends, or simply taking a walk."

He advises JEE aspirants to never lose hope and have faith in their preparation. "It is extremely important to believe in yourself when you are preparing for the tests. Ups and downs, good and bad scores in tests, are a part of the process. JEE Main and JEE Advanced are not the end of the world. There is a lot to explore and learning is an endless journey," adds Aaditya.

Kadapa boy wants to set up a startup post-IIT to fulfil his father's dream

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At a time when most IITians aim to work with an MNC to earn an attractive salary, Sai Divya Teja Reddy who scored 100 percentile in JEE Session 2 (April) wants to be an entrepreneur. Sai has secured AIR 15 in JEE Main 2024 and looks forward to having his startup. "After completing college, if ever it can happen, I would like to have a startup of my own," says Sai. Hailing from Kadapa city of southern Andhra Pradesh, Sai moved to Hyderabad in class XI along with his mother to start his



I am targeting to reach IIT Bombay to study Computer Science Engineering.
- Sai Divya Teja Reddy

JEE preparations at a coaching institute. His mother left her job as a software engineer to support Sai. His father is a Biology teacher in a government school in Andhra Pradesh and has always dreamt of having a startup. Sai mostly studied from NCERT books for JEE Session 2. He says, "The reason I appeared for JEE Session 2 was to improve my score. I secured 275 marks out of 300 in JEE Session 1 in January. I practised NCERT books as well as the regular practice material given by the coaching centre, which helped me score full marks this time. I am targeting to reach IIT Bombay to study Computer Science Engineering. A solid preparation for JEE Advanced is the only way to reach there," he adds.

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Multidisciplinary approach in liberal arts equips students to succeed in new-age careers

The philosophy of the liberal arts education at Bennett University helps students make informed choices about future jobs, writes Om Prakash Dwivedi

At a moment when the world is undergoing rapid transformations on a scale that is unprecedented, the education system also requires major reformation. This, therefore, marks a shift from the disciplinary education system to a multidisciplinary model. While discipline-specific education is focused and limited, the multidisciplinary methodology and pedagogy link the dynamic interactions of different disciplines to resolve the complex challenges plaguing 21st century.

Our quotidian lives are driven by technological advancements and disruptions, thus, pushing the limits of human cognition and humanistic applications to world-making exercises. No one will deny that the purpose of university education is to produce and disseminate knowledge that is attuned to the demands of society. In academic parlance, this is known as the 'impact factor' of a particular university. An education system that is divorced from civic engagement is not only predatory but also impedes employability opportunities for its most important stakeholders, which happen to be students.

Diverse disciplines matter

The multidisciplinary education

model always promotes intellect-based methodologies that cut across disciplines and yet bind them together, thus giving shape and order to chaos and uncertainties, looming large in our global age. For example, the ethical concerns that pervade Artificial Intelligence (AI) or the medical field can hardly be addressed by experts from these disciplines unless the student is also trained in humanities and social sciences and the-

ir application for society in ways that are liberating, empowering, and flourishing. STEM skills look up to the multidisciplinary education models to register their impact and enhance employability skills. It is no wonder that the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 rigorously promotes the implementation of multidisciplinary education. As envisaged

in NEP 2020, multidisciplinary education "aims to develop social, physical, intellectual, emotional, and moral capacities of human beings in an integrated manner."

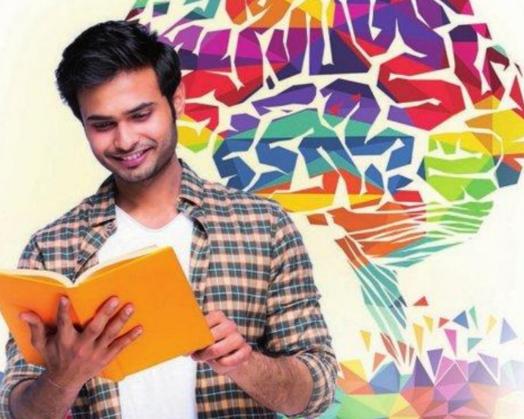
Integral approach

Integrity is the way forward for 21st-century universities and industries. As society and industries are becoming increasingly interconnected, demands are also amplifying for employees who think integrally, adapt to changing times and spaces, and convincingly demonstrate a cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary management approach. For example, to understand the dynamics of industrial practices, the education system also needs to understand that industries do not exist in isolation but need to respond and cater to the sociology and psychology of people around them.

This sort of integral approach that underpins the multidisciplinary education model is practised in the School of Liberal Arts at Bennett University (BU). The curricula and pedagogy are enriched with multidisciplinary approaches. The school provides a liberal platform for its students, making them see everything from dif-

ferent perspectives and different dimensions, that is, to examine life in its entirety, which in real sense are iterations of life skills. The multiple lenses provided to BU students cultivate in them some of the most essential learning components of the 21st century, ranging from critical thinking to adaptability, and versatility. The philosophy of the liberal arts education at Bennett University is suited to align with the changing times to help them make informed choices about future jobs, also making them future-ready. The nature of jobs in the 21st century is not static, rather it keeps changing and will continue to become more dynamic in days to come. For example, Sundar Pichai, Google CEO points out, "In the past, people were educated, and learned job skills, and that was enough for a lifetime. Now, with technology changing rapidly and new job areas emerging and transforming constantly, that's no longer the case." At Bennett University, the multidisciplinary model opens the gateway for future jobs.

Admissions are open, visit www.bennett.edu.in
(The author is Dean in Charge, School of Liberal Arts, Bennett University)



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AAU wants thought provoking dialogue between universities in the US and India

To develop a strong working in both nations, AAU plans to establish a new joint US-India Global Challenge Institute

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A strong promoter of innovative teaching and top-tier research, Indian American academic Sunil Kumar has been working on creating a robust research ecosystem beneficial for the world. An engineering graduate from NIT Karnataka, Sathkhal, and a master's from Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Prof Kumar has been exploring opportunities for well-meaning research in medicine, public health services, biotechnology, and liberal arts. In his recent interview with *Education Times*, he talks about academic collaboration, AAU initiatives, and the safety of Indian students in the US.

What are the strategic priorities for Tufts University in terms of internationalisation and academic collaborations with Indian varsities?
The university has several longstanding and successful research relationships with counterparts in India, particularly in the fields of infectious disease and public health research. For example, Dr Ramnath Subbaraman, infectious diseases physician and associate professor at the Tufts University School of Medicine, has collaborated with ICMR-National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis (ICMR-NIRT) researchers since

2006 on research that has direct relevance for measuring and improving tuberculosis care delivery in India. Based on these successful relationships, we want to grow our partnerships in India, particularly in the fields of infectious disease, public health, food, nutrition, materials, and the application of AI. Tufts is a compelling option and a popular choice for international students and over 14% of our international student population is from India.

How is AAU planning to strengthen ties with India?

The Association of American Universities (AAU), an organisation of leading American research universities, created the AAU Task Force on Expanding US-India University Partnerships, which I co-chaired, to study expanding research and higher education partnerships between the US and India. Our work looked at key focus areas for bilateral research and education cooperation, to identify existing programmes that could provide blueprints for future partnerships, and to formulate strategies on how best to move forward. The recommendation made by the task force aims to provoke a thoughtful dialogue between universities and university leaders in both countries as well as their respective governments and other important stakeholders (such as

Over 1,97,000 remarkable Indian students chose to study and participate in research at US universities last year.
- Sunil Kumar, Indian American academic

industry leaders) concerning ways to improve and strengthen higher education, increase scientific research and technological advancement, and enhance workforce development in both nations. The plan is to establish a new joint US-India Global Challenge Institute to address social and scientific grand challenges. This is truly a bilateral effort that has the support of both countries' governments.

How was your journey to becoming the 14th President of Tufts University? Does US academia offer equal opportunities to international students and researchers?

I got an outstanding education in India. That education, especially my years at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), was transformative and set me on a path that eventually led to my appointment to leadership positions at Stanford University Graduate School of Business, University of Chicago's Booth School of Business, and more recently, as provost of Johns Hopkins University. My journey culminated with the honour of becoming the

Four of the six Nobel Prize winners last year in Chemistry, Physics and Medicine were immigrants to the US

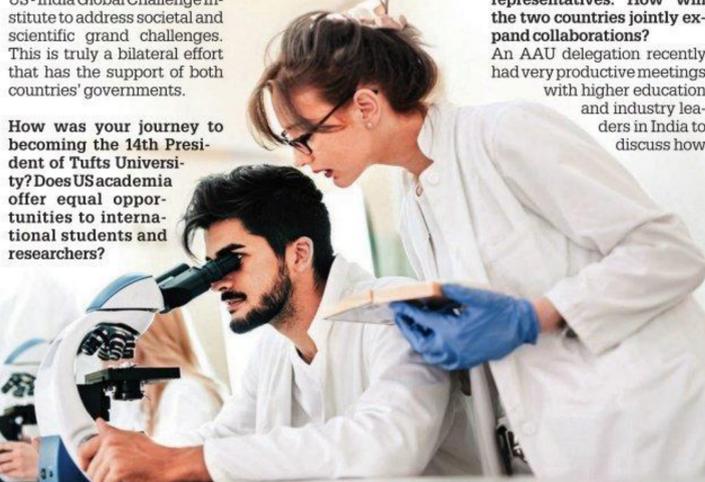
14th president of Tufts in July 2023. Higher education in the US provides countless possibilities for international students and researchers. Our collaborations internationally can help make our world a better place. Four of the six Nobel Prize winners last year in Chemistry, Physics and Medicine were immigrants to the US.

The Tufts University delegations had a meeting with the DST Secretary, IIT and IISc representatives. How will the two countries jointly expand collaborations?
An AAU delegation recently had very productive meetings with higher education and industry leaders in India to discuss how

to implement recommendations. A select group of Indian universities – in collaboration with US universities, are well positioned to host a competitive programme inviting multidisciplinary teams to create projects that address shared societal challenges. We have met with senior officials and visited the Department of Science and Technology (DST), and leaders of several IITs and the IISc. These meetings will lead to growing relationships between US institutions and our counterparts in India.

The increasing number of cases of death/murders of Indian students in the US university campuses has been concerning. How do you react to such unfortunate incidents?

My heart goes out to all the victims and the families who are suffering from these tragic losses. Providing a safe environment in which to learn and conduct research is a top priority for US universities. We are proud that over 1,97,000 remarkable Indian students chose to study and participate in research at US universities last year and many of those students did so at Tufts. The safety and security of our campus is taken very seriously and Tufts' campuses are very safe. We have police, student affairs and mental health professionals in place to create a web of support for our students.



Appreciating the impact of music on human mind

Nordic countries have developed systems of music therapy which assist in comprehensive research



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While taking rhythmic Bharatanatyam steps and listening to Carnatic music as a child, Nandhini Natarajan never realised the deep impact of music on the human mind. Years later, as a student of Biotechnology, Nandhini realised the outcome of combining Psychology and Neuroscience. It was an unconventional idea, but Nandhini decided to do her PhD on this topic.

Finland and other Nordic countries have highly developed and standardised systems of music therapy which foster conducive environments for comprehensive research. "I am extremely lucky to be conducting research on music therapy in a place where the researchers are the practitioners, facilitating a direct translation of research findings into clinical applications," says Nandhini, who aims to provide neurophysiological evidence for the efficacy of music therapy to advocate its widespread adoption.

Popular science books on Biology that Nandhini read as a high school kid at Somerville School, Vasundhara Enclave, New Delhi, introduced her to the unique world of neuroscience. "Deciding a career path based on the allure of some books might not be ideal but luckily, it worked out for me. India did not have undergraduate programmes in neuroscience at that point," says Nandhini, who pursued BTech (Biotechnology) at Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT), Chennai.

Her passion took her to Austria, where Nandhini worked as a research assistant to study learning and memory in mice, in the molecular neuroscience lab at IST Austria. "While I was in Austria, I realised that I was passionate about understanding the intricacies of the brain, but animal research was not for me," she adds. This prompted her to pursue a master's in Neuroscience at Teachers College, Columbia University,

Researchers must emphasise the significance of prioritising research groups over the university's name or ranking.
- Nandhini Natarajan, researcher

New York. This programme focused on human subject research which aligned Nandhini closely with her research interests, providing a strong theoretical foundation in Neuroscience. "My project looked at how music can help in memory recall in older adults. Being passionate about music since childhood, working on the intersection of music and neuroscience felt like my calling," she adds. The thesis was a systematic review on music-based interventions for depression and integrative improvisational music therapy on participants with depression.

Hoping to explore more, Nandhini connected with researchers at University of Jyväskylä Finland, where studies on neurophysiological mechanisms behind music therapy were conducted. "Initially, I was apprehensive about going to Finland, mainly because of the cold weather, but the work aligned perfectly with my research interests, and conversations with other students in Finland gave me the impression that it was a great place to live," she says.

Academia in Finland is becoming diverse and are welcoming international talent. "Finns prioritise a work-life balance which is great for everyone's mental health. But academia might be different from a corporate job where it becomes important to know the local language." Although all master's programmes have a language requirement, Finnish is a relatively difficult language and people should consider investing time to learn the language if they wish to stay here for long.

Increasing power of Maths in digital era

Mathematics is shaping every aspect of our lives, writes Ian Vander Burgh

The digital age is in many ways, a mathematical age because Mathematics serves as the language and foundation of nearly every facet of digital technology and innovation. Examples include AI, cryptocurrency, Data Science, and Cybersecurity. Any future advancements in digital technology must build upon a foundation of mathematical knowledge.

In this digital age, Mathematics has transformed into an all-pervading influence, shaping every aspect of our lives. From the algorithms suggesting our next binge-worthy show on Netflix to the intricate calculations guiding financial markets, Mathematics forms the bedrock of the digital landscape we navigate. Its impact extends beyond mere computation; Mathematics stands as the primary language through which our tech-driven world communicates.

In an era of constant data streams and increasing technical complexity, mathematical principles have become indispensable in almost all the technology we rely on.

Actionable insights
Algorithms, the lifeblood of modern technology, rely on mathematical reasoning to decipher the overwhelming amount of data generated daily. Whether refining search engine results, predicting weather patterns or enabling autonomous vehicles to navigate traffic, algorithms are mathe-

The domains of cryptocurrency and blockchain technologies challenging traditional financial systems, also rest on a mathematical foundation.
- Ian Vander Burgh

mathematical constructs that transform raw data into actionable insights. Machine learning, a fundamental aspect of artificial intelligence, exemplifies the synergy between Mathematics and the digital domain. The domains of cryptocurrency and blockchain, technologies challenging traditional financial systems, also rest on a mathematical foundation. Cryptographic protocols that

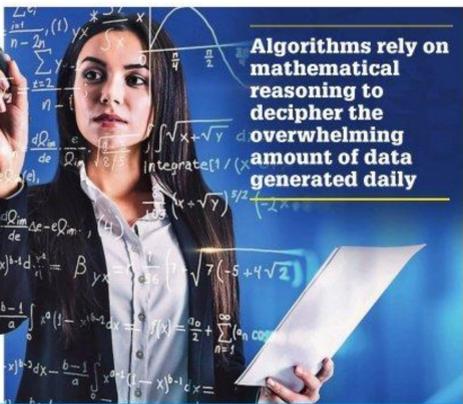
ensure secure transactions involve sophisticated mathematical concepts like prime factorisation and elliptic curve cryptography. These mathematical mechanisms safeguard the majority of financial transactions today.

Numbers unified
In data science, another facet of the digital revolution, Mathematics plays a central role. Big data is inherently mathematical, a vast expanse of numbers unified by statistical methods. Insights derived from big data guide decisions across various industries, from healthcare to marketing, ushering in an era driven by data where mathematical modelling shapes strategies and innovations. However, the digital age presents new mathematical challenges. Cybersecurity, for instance, emerges

as a battleground where Mathematics serves as both an offensive and defensive weapon. It is not an exaggeration to claim that Mathematics is the cornerstone of the digital age, which functions as the language through which technology communicates, the rationale behind algorithms, and the foundation of data analysis. Its influence extends beyond computation, shaping our interactions with the world in diverse areas, from entertainment and art to finance and science.

As we navigate this evolving landscape, the potency of Mathematics propels us into a future where the digital and the mathematical merge seamlessly. So what does this reliance on and ubiquity of mathematics mean? It means that we must no longer fear Mathematics; we need to embrace it. It means that we must not consider mathematics merely a "supporting discipline"; we should recognise that those who delve into advanced Mathematics have something to offer in every field of importance in our world. Furthermore, it means that even individuals who do not perceive themselves as regular users of Mathematics should tap into their innate mathematical abilities. A solid foundation in the mathematical sciences provides a compass, guiding us toward innovation and continued growth in the digital era.

(The author is director, Centre for Education in Mathematics and Computing, University of Waterloo)



Algorithms rely on mathematical reasoning to decipher the overwhelming amount of data generated daily

How New Entrant Route under Skilled Worker Visa benefits Indian students looking to work in the UK

It would add to the diversity, provide access to a global talent pool, and support cultural and economic exchange, writes Suneet Singh Kochar

In the dynamic global world, the UK remains a leading destination for proficient individuals searching for novel prospects and stimulating challenges, especially Indian students who are looking to study and work abroad. While there is a lot of conversation surrounding the short skilled list being abolished, there is little or no awareness of the 'New Entrant Route' for the Skilled Worker Visa. It is important to shed light on the New Entrant Route and how Indian students who go to the UK for quality education and building sustainable career paths can benefit from it.

Eligibility criteria
The Skilled Worker Visa was introduced in 2020 (replacing the Tier 2 visa) essentially enabling international workers with the necessary skills and eligible occupation to stay and work in the UK. This visa opens doors to prospects in a variety of industries, including technology, healthcare, finance,

and engineering. It is a long-term visa that is initially granted for up to 5 years and can be renewed based on sponsorship. After 5 years you might also be eligible to apply for "indefinite leave to remain" which is another name for permanent residency in the UK. This would then grant you the freedom to come and go as you want, live, work, and study here, and to apply for benefits, if you qualify. While many know about the Skilled Worker Visa, what stands to benefit Indian students who study in the UK specifically is the New Entrant Route under this visa. To apply through this route, you must be a student or recent graduate or undergoing professional training or under the age of 26.

Feasible option
The significant benefit that the student has is that if they apply through the New Entrant Route, they can be paid 70% of their job's standard going rate by the employer if the minimum salary threshold for their occupation is £30,960 per year. This means the student gets a 30% discount which is significant for Indian students aiming at employment in the UK. For example, if you are a mechanical engineer, then the standard going rate/minimum salary threshold for your

occupation is £42,500, but if you opt for the new entrant route, then it becomes £30,960. This makes it more feasible for Indian students to find employment and qualify for the skilled worker visa. To qualify for the New Entrant Route of the Skilled Worker Visa, candidates need to fulfil some requirements as elucidated below:

● **Minimum skill and salary threshold:** The offered position must pay at least 70%

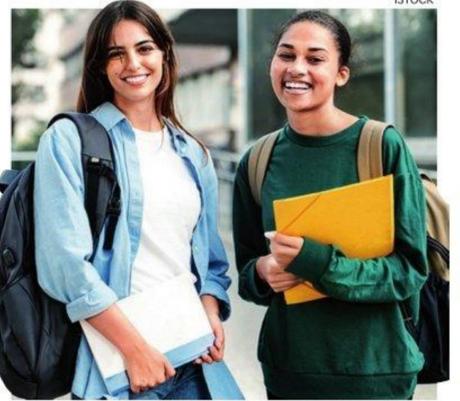
of the salary threshold or meet or surpass the "going rate" for the occupation by 70%, and the offered employment must have a skill level corresponding to RQF level 3 or above.

● **Age parameter:** Students who are under 26 years old or have completed a degree-level course or above at a UK institution with a valid Tier 4 sponsor licence can apply.

● **Job offer from a licensed sponsor:** Together with meeting the necessary skill level and income standards, the employment offer must come from a UK employer and be listed as an acceptable occupation on the Home Office's list. They have to make the candidate a real offer of employment, usually for a post that fits the skill standards speci-

41% Indian women chose Aussie varsities in latest intake

With 95% of the universities globally ranked, Australia offers opportunities for students to excel in their careers



TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Australia's expertise in the education sector, combined with India's great scale of education requirements, has made education the flagship sector between the two countries. Australia has become the second-largest destination for Indian students and all international students.

Indian women are increasingly choosing Australia for higher studies, with 41% of women opting for it in the latest intake. It is evident that Australia is a top destination for young women seeking quality education, research, and global career opportunities, given its reputation as a safe, welcoming, and supportive country.

With a commitment to international students' experience while undertaking world-class qualifications, Australia is increasingly the preferred option for families across the world.

The recently announced QS World University Rankings 2024 have brought remarkable recognition to Australian universities, with three of them – University of Melbourne (14), UNSW (19), and University of Sydney (19) – making it to the global top 20 universities. UniMelb leads a set of impressive list of universities – Caltech, Yale, Peking, and Princeton, securing an impressive all-time high ranking at #14.

With nine Australian universities in the top

The percentage of women among Indians going to Australia for higher education has been on the rise, growing from 38% in 2019-20 to 45% in 2023-24

The percentage of women among Indians going to Australia for higher education has been on a steady rise, growing from 38% in 2019-20 to 45% in 2023-24, showcasing Australia's consistent recognition globally for its research excellence, liveability, learner satisfaction, and employment outcomes.

Monica Kennedy, Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner at Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade) said, "The growth in female students from India is an indication of the trust that families place in Australia as a warm, welcoming, safe and secure destination.

The Australia-India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) has opened avenues for collaborations between educational institutions in India and Australia. It also extends special privileges to Indian students aspiring to study in Australia with a focus on skill development and enhanced employability.

100, and 95% of them globally ranked, Australia offers global opportunities for students to excel in their careers. Choosing Australia for higher education can provide young women with the necessary tools and skills to succeed in their careers and make a positive impact in the world.

The Australia-India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) has opened avenues for collaborations between educational institutions in India and Australia. It also extends special privileges to Indian students aspiring to study in Australia with a focus on skill development and enhanced employability.



(The author is CEO and co-founder, Fateh Education)

AICTE steps away from 'partial' approval process for ODL/ODL courses

As per AICTE, approving ODL/OL programmes without any information about conventional or classroom programmes goes against its spirit

Shuddhanta.Patra
@timesgroup.com

The UGC recently notified that all central, state and private universities will no longer need to take prior approval from the AICTE for offering undergraduate, postgraduate and postgraduate diploma programmes under the disciplines of management, computer application and travel and tourism in ODL and/or online mode. This decision came after the AICTE stated that it did not want to give partial approval.

In February 2024, AICTE approached the UGC to express their concern. A letter to UGC by Rajive Kumar, secretary, AICTE, stated, "AICTE does not issue 'partial approval' and if UGC wishes to ensure that approval of concerned regulatory authority is mandatory for ODL/OL Programmes/Courses, then an appropriate regulation should be brought mandating Universities to see AICTE approval for all their technical Programmes/Courses (Conventional/Regular & ODL/OL)."

AICTE claims the UGC regulation 2020 on ODL/OL was confusing for the state and private universities, where they were required to take prior AICTE approval or recommendation to offer programme/courses in ODL/OL mode. The new rule was initiated by TG Sitharam, chairman, AICTE, as it was creating confusion for state/private universities. Speaking to Education Times, he added, "As per AICTE policy, institutions cannot seek partial approval, hence institutions keen on seeking approval from AICTE need to get approval for all its technical courses. Therefore, just approving the ODL/OL programme without any information or data about conventional or classroom programmes goes completely against the Council's spirit. So, AICTE decided to do away with the approval for ODL/OL courses."

The new decision was taken by the UGC, based on the Supreme Court judgement in Bharathidasan University and Another Vs. All India Council for Technical Education and Others (2001) 8 SCC 676. Under this law, universities do not require AICTE approval to start a new department for imparting a course or programme in technical education. "Therefore, as the other technical courses offered by state and private universities do not require the Council's prior approval, we decided to



do away with the AICTE mandate for undergraduate, postgraduate and PG diploma programmes in open distance learning and in online mode," Sitharam adds. "We approached the UGC for feedback on this matter and they agreed to have new guidelines for approval," he adds.

The deemed-to-be-universities will continue to follow the regular rules where they will have to require approval/

recommendation/NOC from AICTE to offer programmes in ODL/OL mode, before submitting their application to the UGC. Explaining why the deemed-to-be universities are not part of the new rule, Sitharam says, "According to the Supreme Court judgement, the deemed universities come under the AICTE ambit. Therefore, unlike other universities, they have to seek AICTE approval to start

The higher education institutions planning to offer new courses in ODL/OL mode can apply online on the UGC website

any technical course in ODL/OL mode." Addressing the concern over the quality of education declining in the absence of AICTE approval, Sitharam says, "Quality of education in state, private and public universities is an issue in such a scenario. Universities

need to introduce quality initiatives." Manish Ratnakar Joshi, UGC secretary, says, "The higher education institutions (HEIs) planning to offer new courses in ODL/OL mode can apply online on the UGC website. A committee will look into the faculty, study materials, curriculum and admission procedure for such courses to maintain the quality and standard of the education imparted through online and distance education mode. The new rule will apply to all universities except the deemed-to-be universities."

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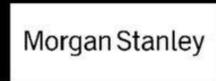
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