



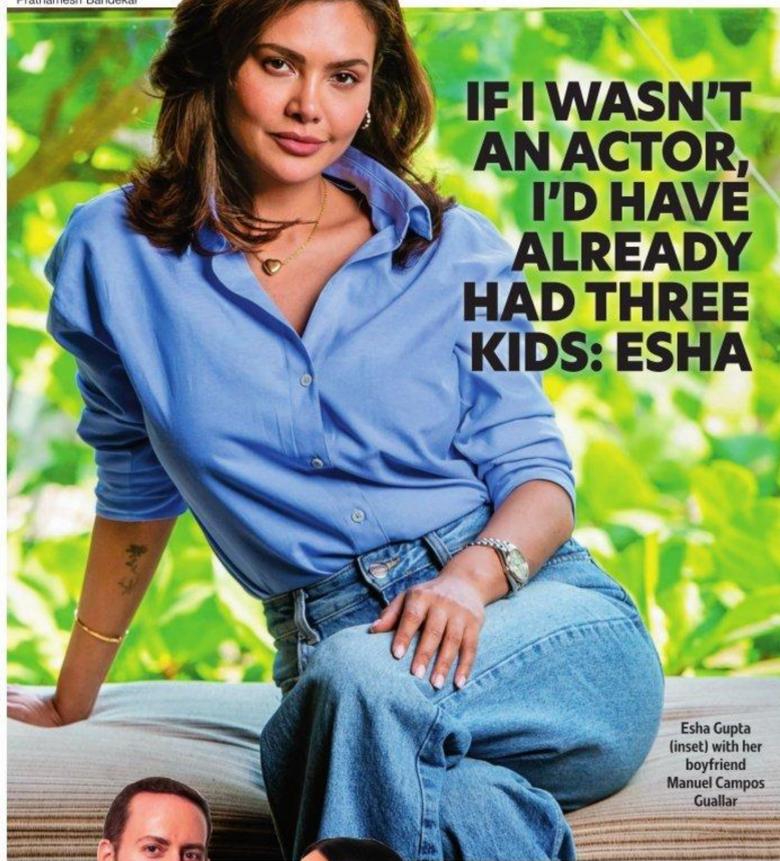
I AM LUCKY TO HAVE FINALLY FOUND LOVE: ABDU ROZIK P4

Mohit Chauhan performs in front of a massive crowd (below) at Ripple, the annual fest of University College of Medical Sciences

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OF INDIA

Prathamesh Bandekar



IF I WASN'T AN ACTOR, I'D HAVE ALREADY HAD THREE KIDS: ESHA

Esha Gupta (inset) with her boyfriend Manuel Campos Guallar



Vinay MR Mishra

Esha Gupta shuttles between Spain, Delhi and Mumbai. During her recent visit to the country, she spoke to us about love, marriage and having children with her boyfriend, Spanish-entrepreneur Manuel Campos Guallar. Excerpts:

CONTINUED ON 2

Manuel and I were very clear from the start that if it goes well, our end goal is marriage. We want to get married and have kids

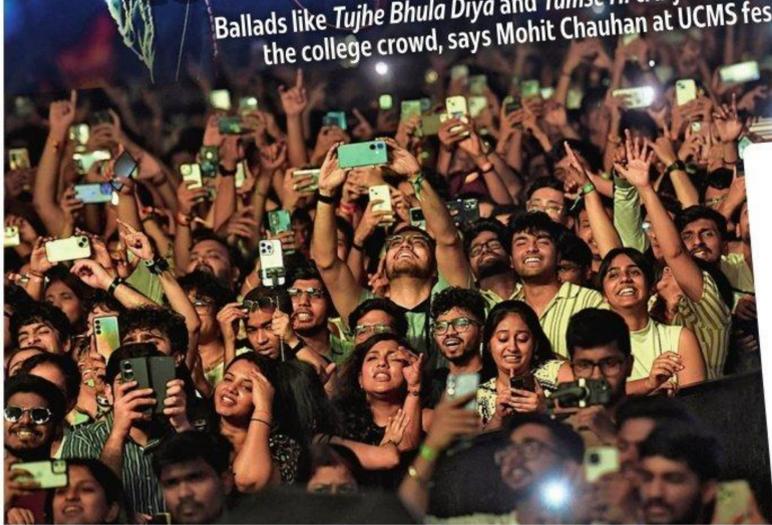
Riya Sharma

On Saturday, Mohit Chauhan performed at Ripple, the annual fest of the University College of Medical Sciences. With a set comprising his chartbusters like *Tumse Hi* and *Sadda Haq*, the singer took the crowd on a nostalgia-tinged musical journey. After performing the first number in his set, *Jo Bhi Main*, Mohit interacted with the crowd saying, "Kaise hain aap sab log? I am really happy to be here. College of Medical Sciences, thank you so much... Next song *unke liye jo mobabbat mein hain aajkal*." He then belted out *Yeh Dooriyan*.

CONTINUED ON 4

'Students at college fests love heartbreak songs'

Ballads like *Tujhe Bhula Diya* and *Tumse Hi* truly resonate with the college crowd, says Mohit Chauhan at UCMS fest



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RDA, in simple words, is daily requirement of nutrients like vitamins and minerals that our body needs to stay healthy. RDA varies basis age, gender & other factors.

While some vitamins and minerals are readily available in our diet, others may not be. The amount of food needed to fulfill one's RDA of multiple vitamins & minerals may be difficult to consume everyday.*

Let's talk about daily RDA of some vitamins & minerals, taking example of women.

Daily RDA requirements*

Calcium		3.3 cups of milk (825 ml)
Iron		425 g of Black Raisins
Vitamin A		100 g of Carrots
Vitamin B 12		265 g of milk powder
Vitamin C		25 g of Amla
Vitamin D		73 g of Mushrooms
Vitamin E		40 g of Almonds
Zinc		490 g of Red Rajmah



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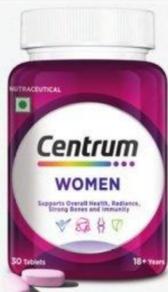
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VITAMIN D
Supports Strong bones



VITAMIN C & ZINC
Supports Immunity



WOMEN TABS



MEN TABS



50+ TABS



KIDS GUMMIES



NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR VARIED DIET. Benefits are ingredient-based. Not for medicinal use. *Approx. calculated food equivalence values considering ICMR NIN 2020 RDA in Women (sedentary activity). **Source: Nicholas Hall's Global CHC database, DB6 Q1'23. Creative Visualization. PM-IN-CNT-23-00048.

I froze my eggs before I met Manuel, says Esha

Prathamesh Bandekar



I met him (Manuel) by chance, not in his country or mine. Since then, we both knew that we were serious about our relationship. We were very clear that if it goes well, our end goal is marriage

“We want to get married and have kids,” shares Esha as she speaks of her relationship with Manuel

CONTINUED FROM R 1

‘I AM GLAD THAT I HAVE MANUEL IN MY LIFE’

Esha believes she is not a part of any rat race and enjoys working at her own pace. The *Rustom* actress says, “I’m glad that I have Manuel in my life. He helped me set up a business (a restaurant in Spain). My family comes from a service background, so I never thought that I would venture into any kind of business. I always thought I’d be employed at a law firm as it’s a reliable job. Manuel has helped me secure my life. I often joke and tell him, now you can’t even leave me. You have to marry me.”

‘MARRIAGE COULD HAPPEN SOON’

Manuel and she have been together for almost five years now. Ask her if they plan to tie the knot soon, and she replies, “Marriage could happen any time soon. I’m focusing more on just my health. Eventually, I will get married and have kids. The last two years have seen a big change in Manuel’s life, workwise. I’ve always dreamed of having kids. That’s always been important. Kids and dogs are two aspects of my life that I can never think of living without.”

‘I thought that I would rather freeze my eggs when I am healthy’

Esha reveals that she loves the thought of having kids so much that she has frozen her eggs. She says, “I froze my eggs in 2017 before I met Manuel. I thought that I’d rather freeze them when I’m healthy. If I wasn’t an actor, I would have already had three kids by now. I was single for almost three-and-a-half years before I met Manuel (in 2019). I met him by chance, not in his country or mine. Since then, we both knew that we were serious about our relationship. We were very clear that if it goes well, our end goal is marriage. Manuel knows how much I love babies, and he’s ready for fatherhood.”

“During the process of freezing your eggs, you can end up gaining weight because of the hormonal change. Your body is changing. You may end up becoming moody, but it’s bound to make you happy as it’s very exciting, too,” shares Esha Gupta



Zen and the art of travelling light



The Kolkata airport recently announced a super affordable courier service for excess baggage. Elsewhere, a couple of airlines cut back on their baggage allowances, while some budget airlines are encouraging flyers to travel light with special fares.

This begets the question: Why do we carry so much baggage?

Our overhead cabin compartments groan under the weight of handbags stuffed with anything from *soan papdi* to mangoes, duty free bottles to devices. These bags may look compact but pack in a lot of weight – pun very much intended. We also travel in large heterogeneous groups. And that means food containers inspired by Russian dolls. You could easily find a three-course meal for three generations with a wide range of food habits packed into one bag.

Then there are gifts for family and friends: fruits from the Himalayas, coffee from the South, Mysore pak, Nagpur oranges, spices, shawls, *ghee*, tea, *sandesh* and other must-carry items ranging from hotel soap and shampoo dispensers (a favourite with travellers) to kitchen utensils. In short, we love to carry our world with us.

There is perhaps some genetic memory at play here. Those of a vintage would remember the good old days of train travel when families carried a contraption called the ‘hold-all’. Made of sturdy canvas, it was essentially a versatile bag-cum-bed where you could pack your blankets, your pillows, some clothes, a transistor (aka radio), cutlery, books and even a small kid.

But now we carry smart strollers with USB ports and celebrity-approved suitcases that look like a Van Gogh painting. And yet, given a chance, we would pack in a mini stadium in there and pray we are able to stuff it into the overhead cabin, when no one’s looking.

We have legit reasons to highlight how the airlines are getting things wrong. But it would also help if we were a little mindful about how we pack. And how much. Travelling light helps reduce the time waiting for takeoff and at the conveyor belt, besides making things just a little more pleasant for everyone.

Pack what you must. For the rest, there’s always a courier service.

Agree? Disagree? Got a POV idea? Write to us at: pov@timesgroup.com

EVENTS

EXHIBITION
India Habitat Centre: Rупantar - Multiple Encounters presents Rупantar five decades of Art & Printmaking. Till May 14, Visual Arts Gallery, IHC

DANCE

India Habitat Centre: Bharatanatyam by Manju V Nair, disciple of Adayar K Lakshman and Braga Besse, May 15, 7pm. Stein Auditorium, IHC

Email us at tims.delhitimes@timesgroup.com

SUDOKU CHALLENGE

Level: Medium

	2			1				
			2	3	8			
5	7				2	4		
7	8	4						8
4								
2	1	9		7				
8	9			7	5			
		9	5	2				
3						6		

HOW TO PLAY

Fill in the grid so that every horizontal row, every vertical column, every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9, without repeating the numbers in the same row, column or box. You can’t change the digits already given in the grid. Every puzzle has one solution.

TIMES HITORI

3	2	2	4	1	3	8	5
3	5	2	9	1	6	8	4
4	4	4	2	4	1	4	6
2	6	1	5	3	7	9	2
3	8	2	7	1	2	8	1
4	7	3	1	5	8	2	9
1	1	9	1	6	1	3	5
1	3	5	6	2	9	4	8

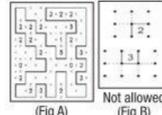
8	5	5	7	3	5	4	6
4	5	1	6	7	6	5	2
2	5	7	1	5	4	6	8
5	6	2	4	3	7	6	3
1	6	6	4	3	5	7	
7	8	4	6	2	3	3	7
8	4	5	2	3	5	7	1

Example

LOOP THE LOOP

RULES

- Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A).
- Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B).
- Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines.
- You can’t draw lines around zeroes.
- Each puzzle has just one unique solution.



		3					
1	2		3				
	2	3	1	1			
	2			2			
					1	1	
0	3	2					
	2	2	2				

HOW TO BEGIN:

Example (Fig A) - Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn’t possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a deadend (Fig B).

THE DAILY CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14				15				16				
17				18				19				
20				21				22				
23				24				25				
26				27				28				
29				30				31				
32				33				34				
35				36				37				
38				39				40				
41				42				43				
44				45				46				
47				48				49				
50				51				52				
53				54				55				
56				57				58				
59				60				61				
62				63				64				
65				66				67				
68				69				70				

By Susan Gelfand

13/05/2024

ACROSS

- Graceful long-necked bird
- Hoover Dam lake
- Colorful quartz
- Roof spot for holiday lights
- Moreno who owns the MLB’s Angels
- Like some pools
- Cabbage side often served in tiny cups
- Online journals for DfYers
- “The Little Mermaid” role for Halle Bailey
- Take up again, as a case
- Warm alcoholic beverages with sugar and spices
- Back in time
- Twisty letter
- Neckline shape
- “I” topper
- Cereal container
- Update to reflect new districts, say
- Nondairy spread
- Step in for another, and what the answers to the starred clues literally do
- Printer stoppages
- The “C” of CEO
- Signs off on
- “C” la vie!
- Turkish title
- Gibbon or gorilla
- Former GM division with a globe in its logo
- “Horse-drawn” excursions
- Respectable
- Divination deck
- “Low-effort posts of vacation pics, say
- Brood
- Charitable sort
- Uncommon
- Peevishness

Saturday’s Puzzle Solved

F	O	S	T	E	R	F	A	I	L	S	P	C	A
A	N	T	I	P	I	R	A	C	Y	E	R	A	S
S	A	L	V	A	D	O	R	A	N	W	E	B	S
D	U	O	M	O	N	D	E	T	A	I			
S	A	K	E	S	A	N	T	E	A	T	E	R	S
P	R	E	D	I	C	T	S	S	W	E	E	T	S
Y	E	S	B	U	O	Y	S	T	I	N	T	S	
H	E	R	B	A	L	I	S	T					
S	A	T	I	R	E	K	I	W	I	O	H	S	
A	T	A	R	I	B	A	D	S	P	O	T		
M	A	K	E	A	P	I	L	E	E	L	E	G	Y
I	C	E	N	I	N	E	R	I	N				
S	A	N	E	V	A	V	A	V	A	V	O	O	M
E	M	I	T	O	N	E	T	I	M	E	U	S	E
N	A	N	A	T	E	L	E	P	O	R	T	E	D

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SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters in the four word jumbles, one letter to each square/circle, to make four ordinary words

IEEER

TVIIS

LODNSU

AELDDP

Better be ___ for too anxious apprehensions, than ___ by too confident security. - Edmund Burke (8,6)

HOW TO PLAY: Now arrange the letters in the circles to form the answer to the riddle or to fill in the missing word as indicated

FINOLEX FORTUNE

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See what the stars have in store for you - according to your moon sign.

ARIES: There are plenty of opportunities to excel in business at this time. The way you work is transforming. Close relationships take on new depth and meaning. Financially, you are also in a strong position. So trust your judgment.

TAURUS: One of the challenging days; you can wade through the difficulties. Make some very positive decisions. Look for alternative ways to achieve a healthy balance between your need for excitement and the responsibilities. Contacts you make now could help you move ahead.

GEMINI: You may be meeting influential people. You are in a powerful and meaningful world of emotions. Don’t put much value on your irrational hunches and do not try to swim against the tides. Listen to the advices you get.

CANCER: Review your professional achievements. You might think of ways to improve and perhaps be more effective in your career. It is important to listen your colleagues in financial matters. This evening you will be occupied with your hobbies and spiritual matters.

LEO: You are in an adventurous and outgoing mood. Intuition is a fact of life for you. Someone needs your guidance. Everything points to your taking the initiative. Concentrate on what you can achieve. Don’t trust unreliable people.

VIRGO: It’s only now that you’re beginning to understand the nature of the unexpected twists and turns of the past week or two and, even more, how they’ll help you disentangle yourself from restrictive arrangements.

LIBRA: You are successful at revealing the answer to difficult situations. Your problem-solving abilities are high today. There are new thoughts and sudden insights available for you. You must act in a clear and direct manner. It seems someone else is setting your priorities.

SCORPIO: Obviously you dislike leaving decisions to those who are ill-equipped to make them. Yet, recent circumstances gave you no choice. That being the case, stay in close touch with individuals in question. Make it clear that you’ll be happy to discuss plans.

SAGITTARIUS: Embark on new beginnings. Seek constructive outlets for your energies. Make the right decision about something that has puzzled you recently. Be discreet, detached and diplomatic. You will find a new way forward.

CAPRICORN: Reach out to others instead of waiting for them to reach out to you. You can play the waiting game like no other sign, but the real question is: Does this behaviour really serve you? Be willing to make the first move.

AQUARIUS: A news you hear today could put you in a strong position. Postpone all decisions and let others take the lead. You will achieve more in the long run if you give yourself a break. Release the arrow of intention and let your feelings sail into the open. Results bring you gratification.

PISCES: This morning seems very rushed; patience should be in order. Your personal life hinges on pursuing your own growth and success. This is a time to take risks and dare to be a little unconventional. It may not be a productive day, as you would want to be.

SPELLATHON

Today’s Ratings: 10-outstanding | 11-good | 13-average

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today’s puzzle? In making a word, a letter can be used as many times as it appears in the puzzle. Each word must contain the central letter. There should be at least one seven letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are not allowed. British English Dictionary is used as reference.

DENNIS THE MENACE

“WOULD DINNER AND A MOVIE MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER?”

“I THINK I JUST NEED A BAND-AID AND A HUG.”

- seed bun
- Arctic mammal with tusks
- Makes use of) Banister post
- 5 Angle desktop
- 6 Make a mistake
- 7 Pong producer
- 8 Stick up for
- 9 Optimally
- 10 Arizona river
- 11 Cute as can be
- 12 Identity, as on Facebook
- 13 Above-the-street trains
- 19 James of “The White Lotus”
- 21 Be honest (with)
- 24 First stage in many an HGTV renovation show, informally
- 25 Gradually stop nursing
- 27 ___ for it: takes a chance
- 28 Kitchen gadget brand
- 33 “Treasure Island” writer’s monogram
- 34 Bench press muscle, for short
- 35 Gut punch reaction
- 36 Art world fraud
- 37 “This is it for me!”
- 38 Hair or carpet style
- 39 Express relief
- 40 Artichoke core
- 41 Get some exercise on the track
- 44 Compact Ford succeeded by the
- 45 Snow coaster
- 46 Time in office
- 48 Skilful
- 49 Human beings
- 50 Regard highly
- 53 “That could happen”
- 54 Poetic feet in Shakespeare
- 56 Venerable British school
- 58 Kissing in the park, briefly
- 59 Harley bike
- 60 Post-opposite
- 61 French “his”

SOLUTIONS TO GAMES/PUZZLES

TIMES SUDOKU

2	6	9	7	8	4	5	1	3
1	3	8	2	5	6	9	7	4
4	5	7	9	1	3	6	8	2
9	1	3	6	9	1	8	2	5
8	2	6	3	7	5	9	4	1
9	1	3	6	9	1	8	2	5
4	5	7	9	1	3	6	8	2
1	3	8	2	5	6	9	7	4

LOOP THE LOOP

TIMES HITORI

8	7	6	2	9	5	3	4	1
3	5	2	9	1	6	8	4	
4	4	4	2	4	1	4	6	
2	6	1	5	3	7	9	2	
3	8	2	7	1	2	8	1	
4	7	3	1	5	8	2	9	
1	1	9	1	6	1	3	5	
1	3	5	6	2	9	4	8	

SCRAMBLE

Words: Ferie, Ferie, visit, unsold, paddle
 than ruffled by too anxious apprehensions.
 sell, SALLING, snags, snags, snail
 alling, align, gain, lean, nail

Go Goa Gone gave me a lot of confidence as a writer: Kunal



Goa Goa Gone released in May 2013; (inset) Kunal Kemmu

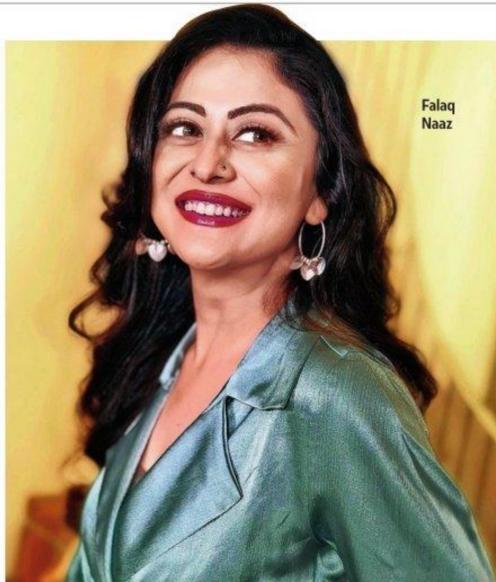


The zombie apocalypse movie *Go Goa Gone* recently clocked in 11 years. About the film and the milestone, Kunal Kemmu noted that *Go Goa Gone* remains one of the most special films of his career. He said, "Raj and DK are exceptional filmmakers and deserve all the recognition for *Go Goa Gone*." "I am glad that I could contribute more than just acting to the film. As an actor, I learnt so much more about filmmaking and writing through this film. Previously, I only wrote for myself, but *Go Goa Gone* changed that, giving me a lot of confidence as a writer. It's truly a film that brings me immense happiness and pride." Agencies

I felt typecast in the mythological genre: Falaq Naaz

After her stint on a reality show, Falaq Naaz waited for a project that offered her a compelling role and also allowed her to break away from mythological and historical genres. Her nine-month wait ended with *Pandya Store*. The actress, who has been part of shows like *Sasural Simar Ka*, *Radha Krishna* and *Ram Siya Ke Luv Kush*, says, "I didn't like the offers that came my way after *Bigg Boss OTT*. Besides, I wanted to avoid mythological and historical genres as I felt typecast. All this while, I was either offered mythological shows or roles where I played a mother to grown-up actors. While I have no qualms about portraying a mother, the character has to be strong."

All this while, I was either offered mythological shows or roles where I played a mother to grown-up actors



Falaq Naaz

— Neha Maheshwari

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20 Lakhs	Innovation Group (Qatar)	
15 Lakhs	TalentServe	
12 Lakhs	Property Pistol	
11 Lakhs	Ujjivan Finance Practically	
5-7 Lakhs	MG Motors Atlas Copco Berger Paints Sophos Tech. Deloitte Airtel Nestle PhonePe IndusInd Bank Indigo Airlines Bajaj Capital Aditya Birla Swiggy Odoo	
Other Recruiters		TCS L&T Alembic Reliance Adani Apollo Piramal SBI

Top-Notch Placements?	Engineering	Diploma B.Tech M.Tech
	Architecture	D. Arch B.Arch B.Des M. Plan M.Des
	Applied Science	B.Sc & M.Sc
	Management Studies	BBA MBA
	Law	LL.B B.B.A., LL.B B.Com., LL.B B.A., LL.B
	Arts	BA & MA
	IT & Computer Sciences	BCA MCA B.Sc IT M.Sc IT
	Pharmacy	D.Pharm B.Pharm M.Pharm Pharm.D Pharm.D (PB)
	Commerce	B.Com B.Com. Hons. M.Com B.Com + M.Com With CA Preparation
	Design	Diploma, B.Sc, B.Design & M.Design Fashion Interior Product Film VFX
	Social Work	BSW MSW MSW - HRM
	Medicine	MBBS MS MD M.Sc
	Ayurved	BAMS MD MS
	Nursing	B.Sc GNM ANM M.Sc PB - B.Sc
	Para Medical & Health Sciences	Diploma B.Sc. M.Sc
	Hotel Management	Diploma & Bachelor in Hotel Management
Aviation	Diploma & Bachelor In Aviation Management	
Fine Arts	Bachelor of Visual Arts	
Physiotherapy	BPT MPT	
Performing Arts	BPA DPA in Music Dance Drama	
	Public Health	B.Sc MHA MPH

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Pics: Ranjit Kumar

ROCKSTAR MUSIC HAS A CULT LIKE FOLLOWING: MOHIT

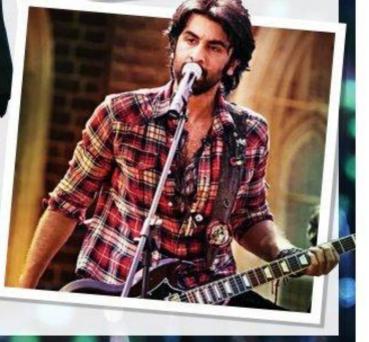


Mohit's performance, which featured some of his hits from films including *Rockstar*, *Tamasha*, and *Barfi* among others, was a nostalgic trip down memory lane



'I love performing Rockstar songs'

While the crowd sang all songs with the singer, one song that was requested the most was - *Sadda Haq* - from *Rockstar*. Talking about the song, Mohit told us, "There are a whole lot of people who love Rockstar songs. Whether it is *Sadda Haq*, *Nadaan Parinde*, *Tum Ho*, *Jo Bhi Main* - Rockstar music has got a cult kind of a following so *main har jagah, jahan bhi jaata hoon*, I have to do Rockstar and I love performing those songs and people love singing along those songs."



A still from *Tune Jo Na Kaha* (2009)



A still from *Yeh Dooriyan* (2009)

Mohit's tracklist for UCMS fest

- Yeh Dooriyan
- Pee Loon
- Tujhe Bhula Diya
- Jo Bhi Main
- Sadda Haq
- Dooba dooba
- Tune Jo Na Kaha
- Abhi Kuch Dino Se
- Matargashti
- Nadaan Parinde
- Ishq Mitaye
- Tum Se hi
- Te Amo
- Tujhe Bhula Diya
- Masakali

CONTINUED FROM R 1

"Students at college fests are really enthusiastic about music, they have that energy. *Maza aata hai*, it is great fun performing for the younger audience," says Mohit. He also shared that students at college fests demand songs that are emotional and romantic. "They love heartbreak songs and songs like *Tujhe Bhula Diya* and *Tumse Hi* and they love to sing these songs. All these songs are iconic songs, whether it is *Yeh dooriyan*, *Pee Loon*, *Tujhe Bhula Diya*, *Jo Bhi Main* or songs

Students at college fests are really enthusiastic about music, they have that energy. *Maza aata hai*, it is great fun performing for the younger audience

from *Tamasha* or *Barfi*. People connect to these songs, emotionally," shared the singer.

Before singing *Dooba dooba*, the song from his first album, Mohit shared that he had written the song when he was completing his MSc in Geology in Dharamshala. "I had written this song then but af-

ter that, I came to Delhi to look for work. *Socha yahan kaam karuga aur sangeet bachpan se hi mere saath chal raha tha toh yahan kuch log mile aur hamara ek band bana jiska naam tha Silk Route*. And this song became the part of our first album *Boondein*, and the video was launched in April, 1998," said Mohit as he later performed the most requested song of the evening, *Sadda Haq*, *Nadaan Parinde*, among others, for the cheering crowd.

My fiancée is taller than me, but that doesn't matter: Abdu



Prathamesh Bandekar

This is not a PR strategy! We are not promoting any music video or my work. Maybe people find it hard to believe that a small guy like me has found love

'Salman Khan sir called to congratulate me'

Abdu and Amira will have a grand wedding in Dubai in July. He reveals, "I plan to call all my friends from showbiz and Salman Khan sir will also come to the wedding to bless me. He already called to congratulate me. We plan to have a big celebration and I am looking forward to this new chapter in my life."

Abdu Rozik; (below) the engagement post shared by him

Tanvi Trivedi

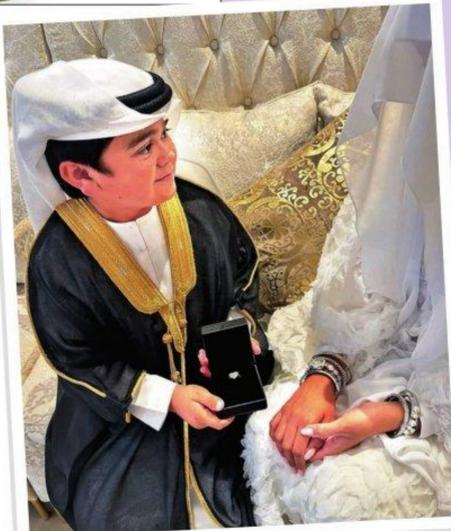
Abdu Rozik, a musician from Tajikistan who was last seen on *Bigg Boss 15*, is set to tie the knot with Amira, who hails from Sharjah, on July 7. The two met in Dubai four months ago and became friends. They got engaged on April 24 in Sharjah.

'SHE IS VERY UNDERSTANDING'

The 20-year-old says, "I am lucky I have finally found love. I met Amira at an eatery and I instantly liked her. She is pretty, has long hair and beautiful eyes. We have known each other for four months now. She is a student of Business Administration." Sharing why he decided to take the plunge so soon, Abdu says, "I realised that I had found the one. She is very understanding and we have good compatibility, so I decided to take it to the next level."

'WE BOTH LOVE AND RESPECT EACH OTHER A LOT'

Abdu, who is a little less than four feet, shares how his height is not an issue. "I am 115cm tall while she is 155cm (5 feet) tall. There are many people in this world who



are specially-abled and they do find their companion. When I was younger, I thought it would be difficult to find a partner. But with God's grace I have found someone who maybe taller than me, but that has never come in the way of our relationship. We love and respect each other a lot," he says.

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Global elections, tech disruptions increase job challenges for Engg grads

While the IT sector has been the worst hit, several new-age technologies such as cybersecurity, data science, AI and electronics have seen a rise in demand

Priyadarshini Gupta
@timesgroup.com

Engineering graduates, including ones from the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), are facing an increasingly tough job market. Companies are scaling back their hiring and offering lower salary packages. Media reports claim that fresh IITians are being offered annual salary packages below Rs 10 lakh, which is far lower than what was offered earlier. Placement cells in the IITs are hopeful of better news as the ongoing placement season (likely to stretch till June) may have a turnout of bigger corporates. This year, recruiters picked only a few students, prompting colleges to expand their outreach to more companies.

Manpower needs

The IT sector is the most impacted, due to which most companies that went to colleges for recruitment in 2023, are yet to send out the joining dates, while some companies have rolled back internship and job offers made to the fresh grads. "Un-

In 2022-2023, when the workforce started returning to office, there was a need for physical manpower which led to huge recruitment

certainties due to the global economic slowdown have led companies to delay or reconsider their hiring plans to adapt to evolving circumstances. Additionally, companies might be reassessing their manpower needs or restructuring their operations in response to changing market conditions. It is also possible that companies are facing internal challenges, such as budget constraints or strategic shifts, which are affecting their hiring decisions," says Balasubramanian G, chief placement officer, BITS Pilani.

He adds that the situation has been grim for a few months now. "Companies hire based on the indicators from the US market; if there is trouble in the US, it percolates down to the emerging Indian mar-

ket too. Tech companies are also in a layoff mode to suit their budget; 10%-15% of the workforce is being laid off. While the IT sector has been the most affected, the electronics sector has not been impacted all that much," says Balasubramanian.

Companies still cautious

Eswaran Narasimhan, professor and dean, Centre for Industry Collaboration, IIIT University, says, "Multiple

factors including longstanding conflicts and global elections can create uncertainty, affecting business decisions including hiring. While the world has almost recovered from the Covid-19 pandemic, business companies are still being cautious when it comes to recruitment to avoid risks in this uncertain scenario." He adds, "The hype around AI also has led some companies to invest

Continuous adaptation

The duration of the hiring trend depends on several factors, including the pace of economic recovery, the demand for talent skilled in automation and AI. "While some sectors may rebound quickly, others might undergo structural changes requiring long-term adjustments. Companies will likely prioritise flexibility and efficiency in their hiring practices, necessitating continuous adaptation to evolving market conditions," says Sumit Kumar, chief strategy officer, TeamLease Degree Apprenticeship.

more in automation and AI technologies, potentially reducing their reliance on human labour. This could contribute to a decrease in job opportunities. Despite the challenges, Computer Science Engineering remains a popular choice among students due to its promising career prospects, and specialisations in AI, data science, and cybersecurity continue to attract learners."

Varied interests

"There is an unnecessary hype around the placements. In the previous years too, there has ne-

ver been 100% placements. We try to facilitate and achieve good number of placements, however, students have different interests, while some want to go for further studies, others may be interested in cracking UPSC. IIT Delhi is working through faculty contacts, and alumni network, and trying to get the students placed based on their interests," says an IIT professor.

"The prestige associated with IITs has not diminished. Students have received good packages; only the number of offers has gone down this time due to the recession. During the pandemic, when everybody was working from ho-

me, many firms did not hire. In 2022-2023, when the workforce started returning to office, there was a need for physical manpower which led to huge recruitment. The placement data during this period is skewed due to the post-Covid effect. Now again, the placement figures are coming back to normal; however, due to recession, the placements are touching over 76%-77% instead of the usual 85%," he says.

"There is a slowdown in the IT sector, however, there is an increase in demand for other sectors of the industry such as cybersecurity, IoT, data science, and AI," says Anjani Bhatnagar, deputy director, Amity Technical Placement Centre, Amity University, Noida. "Companies such as Cloud4C, IBM, etc, having their business/ client/ demand flourishing in the cloud space, analytics, informatics, and designs have shown interest in participating in the drives. Other profiles such as networking, testing, gaming, etc have also shown a brighter side in terms of hiring," says Bhatnagar.

Three new foreign exam centres added for JEE Advanced

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Three new exam centres overseas have been included besides the 229 exam centres in India, as per the exam city list for JEE Advanced 2024 released by the exam-conducting institute IIT Madras. The new foreign centres include Abu Dhabi, Kathmandu and Dubai. Post the pandemic, this is the first time after four consecutive years, that JEE Advanced will be conducted on foreign shores. Before 2020, the IIT entrance exam was conducted in multiple foreign countries, including centres in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Colombo (Sri Lanka), Dhaka (Bangladesh), Dubai (UAE), Kathmandu (Nepal) and Singapore. This year, the new centres have been strategically chosen so that students who reside in those areas can give



their JEE Advanced more easily without having to fly to India to participate in the exam and incur additional expenses. Speaking to *Education Times*, a spokesperson of JEE Advanced 2024, says, "The cities were chosen based on the previous record. Moreover, IIT Delhi now has a campus in Abu Dhabi, which makes an exam centre in the city more feasible." Highlighting the fact that around 200 students in total have registered at the overseas centres in Abu Dhabi, Kathmandu and Dubai, the spokesperson dismisses the possibility of having additional foreign centres in the Philippines, Malaysia or even Europe. Further, explaining the reason behind conducting the exam in the three overseas centres, the spokesperson says, "Foreign centres were not used for a while, largely because of the Covid situation. We have started the trend again this year," breaking the four-year hiatus that had inconvenienced many international test-takers.

Who are foreign nationals

Candidates who are not citizens of India/Persons of Indian Origin (OCI/PIO) candidates who have secured OCI/PIO card on or after 04.03.2021 shall be considered as foreign nationals. The foreign national candidates, at the time of registering for JEE Advanced 2024 are not required to write JEE Main 2024 and may register for JEE Advanced 2024 directly subject to fulfilment of other eligibility criteria. Source: <https://jeeadv.ac.in/foreign.html>

NEET PG introduces time-bound MCQs format to combat paper leaks

With only a month left for the exam, changes in the exam pattern would add to the stress and impact the performance of candidates

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With looming cyber security threats and concern over alleged dark web hacking, it has become essential to secure our web systems, especially when it comes to national exams conducted in computer-based format. Recently, the National Board of Examinations for Medical Sciences (NBEMS) has introduced the mandatory time-bound multiple-choice questions (MCQs) format for the NEET PG 2024 exam to combat the emerging threats of cybercrimes for exams conducted in computer-based tests (CBT) mode. According to NBEMS, the same question format will be applied to all medical exams conducted in computer-based mode including NEET-PG, NEET-MDS, NEET-SS, FMGE, DNB-PDCET, GPAT, DPEE, FDST and FET.

Speaking to *Education Times*, Prof Dr Minu Bajpai, executive director, NBEMS, says, "With over two lakh students appearing for NEET PG exams every year, it becomes necessary to safeguard the question papers from potential cyber frauds.

Candidates will not be able to review their questions or modify their responses for a section after the completion of its allotted time

CBT mode exams are conducted by a cyber-secure system enabled through government-appointed agencies, possessing advanced IT software and vast experience. With risk of cyber breach always looming, the system is constantly guarding the data against phishing. "The NBE is constantly on its toes, taking updates from these agencies on the advances in cybersecurity. We learn from global mishaps or their potential related to cybersecurity from the information gathered through discussions with the agencies. Following this, pre-emptive steps are taken if there is any likely risk of cybersecurity breach. The NBE has been successful in maintaining the sanctity of the system and the exams, to remain a step ahead when it comes to cybersecurity. Based upon cybersecurity risk analysis from the provider company, the NBEMS has taken



preventive steps to enhance the safety and security of the forthcoming CBT-based NEET PG examination, in the interest of the examinees," adds Dr Bajpai. According to NBEMS, in the new format, the question paper will be divided into multiple time-bound sections. In NEET-PG 2024, if there are five time-bound sections (A, B, C, D and E) in the question paper, each section will have 40 questions and 42 minutes allot-

ted. Candidates will be restricted from proceeding to the next section until they complete the allotted time for the previous section. Additionally, candidates will not be allowed to review the questions or modify their responses for a section after the completion of its allotted time. The questions for the next section will start automatically after the completion of the allotted time for the previous section. The actual number of time-restricted sections in an examination will vary based on the total number of questions in the question paper and the operational feasibility of creating such sections.

The NEET PG 2024 exam has seen several changes this year. The exam was initially

scheduled for March 3 and was later postponed to July 7. The NMC recently advanced the exam date to June 23 due to the Rath Yatra festival in Puri. With last-minute changes in the exam format, the medical associations have condemned NBEMS and have asked it to reconsider its decision. Dr Aviral Mathur, president, FORDA, says, "With the new rule, the question paper will be divided into different sections which will help the candidate to concentrate in one section at a time. This will give them more mental clarity. But, the NBE could have informed the candidates well in advance; announcing this about 50 days ahead of the exam has created anxiety among aspirants.

MSDE pushes Drone Didi Yojana to upskill 500 women

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) will conduct two pilot programmes under the initiative Drone Didi Yojana to upskill 500 women in batches of 20. The 15-day curriculum, approved by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, will be conducted by Remote Pilot Training Organisation (RTPO) instructors at National Skill Training Institutes (NSTI) in Hyderabad and Noida. The programme is being conducted in partnership with Mahindra & Mahindra. Two NSTIs in Hyderabad and Noida have been chosen for the pilot programme to empower rural women in agriculture.

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After arrests in Bihar in alleged NEET UG paper leak case, experts demand strong action

While NTA is in touch with authorities to control malpractices, stronger surveillance is needed

Ayushi Gupta1
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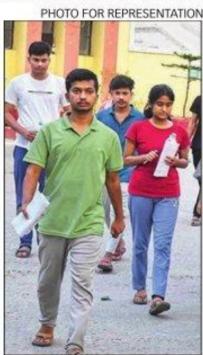


PHOTO FOR REPRESENTATION

There have been claims of impersonation, for which arrests were made by state police of Bihar, UP and Karnataka

NTA is also continuously receiving reports from various exam functionaries and other authorities, but we have not received any strong evidence of an alleged paper leak. With the help of AI-based technological tools, CCTVs and surveillance inside the exam centre, we have identified students indulging in malpractices. NTA will take action against such students," Singh adds. While the arrested impersonators have claimed that they received question papers a night earlier to the NEET exam, Dr Rajiv Ranjan Prasad, former Bihar state president, Indian Medical Association (IMA) told *Education Times*, "There have been cla-

says NTA was quick in brushing aside the claims of paper leak. "It should have allowed a proper inquiry instead of issuing a statement denying the paper leak within the next 24 hours of the exam day. The process of investigation is currently on, several arrests have been made and some are underway," adds Dr Prasad. Furthermore, the Patna police has arrested one of the main conspirators Sikander Yadavendu (56) and his driver Bittu Kumar (38), a resident of Rohas district, from the Shastri Nagar police station area, and the aspirants and their parents were held after the examination.

Following speculations over the alleged question paper leak on May 5 when the NEET UG exam was held, several aspirants on social media demanded re-examination to get a fair chance. The allegations led to multiple arrests in Bihar, Delhi, and Rajasthan largely for impersonations. National Testing Agency (NTA), the exam conducting body, has denied the claims of paper leak, but the experts demand a thorough investigation into the matter. According to a *TOI* report, the question paper of NEET-UG and the answers were provided to around 20 aspirants a day before the NEET exam. This was revealed days after the arrest of 13 people, including four examinees and their parents. Candidates from different places in Bihar were brought to a rented accommodation at Ramkrishna Nagar in Patna, where they were provided with question papers and answers. Subodh Kumar Singh, director general, NTA says, "Several candidates were caught by the state police after getting a tip-off from their sources. Several candidates were caught cheating inside the examination hall by the exam centre superintendents. The Unfair Means Committee consti-

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Good time management can get one into top varsities after CUET

Students must stay focused, disciplined, and believe in their abilities while appearing for the exam, writes **Amitendra Kumar**



Preparing to appear for the Common Universities Entrance Test (CUET) can be intimidating for students, but with a proper approach, preparation strategies, and tips, students can amplify their chances of success in this national-level examination. CUET, conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA), serves as a critical exam for students aspiring to pursue various undergraduate, postgraduate, diploma, and certification programmes offered by top-ranked institutes and universities across India. With good CUET scores, students can gain admission to their preferred institutions. Here are some invaluable tricks and tips

Analysing previous years' question papers can provide valuable insights into exam trends

to help students prepare effectively for CUET.

Syllabus familiarisation

Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the CUET syllabus is important for the exam. Apart from comprehensive knowledge, students should cover all essential topics and subject areas relevant to the examination. Students should also prioritise topics based on weightage and importance.

Exam pattern

Self-analysis of the CUET exam pattern can provide valuable insights into the structure, format, and distribution of marks across different sections. Understanding the types of questions asked and the allocation of time and resources accordingly can help students score better. Analysing previous years' question papers can provide valuable insights into exam trends and recurring topics.

Preparation plan

Develop a well-structured study plan outlining your daily, weekly, and monthly goals. Break down the syllabus into manageable segments and allocate sufficient time to each

topic. Stick to your study plan to ensure disciplined preparation. Efficient time management is crucial during the exam. Students must practice solving mock papers and sample tests within the stipulated time frame to improve speed and accuracy. Allocate more time to challenging sections while ensuring adequate coverage of topics. Regularly solve mock and sample papers to familiarise yourself with the exam format, question types, and difficulty level. Analyze your performance, identify areas of strength and weakness, and focus on improving your weaker areas.

Study material

Use reputable preparation guides or reference books specifically designed for CUET preparation. These resources cover all relevant topics, provide practice exercises, and offer solutions for comprehensive learning. The exam will be conducted in a hybrid mode with some papers going offline depending on the registrations. CUET takes place once a year, with the upcoming exam scheduled from May 15 to May 31, 2024. By adopting a systematic approach to preparation students can boost their confidence, competence, and overall performance in the examination. Students must stay focused, and disciplined, and must believe in their abilities.

(The author is the product head, Career Launcher)

Choose the right B-school for better job opportunities

Exercise caution when evaluating programmes that lack accreditation, writes **Pratik Modi and Akshita Arora**



The admission season is underway, and aspirants are seeking advice from professors, coaching centres, and seniors on selecting the right business school. Choosing the right institution is crucial as students invest considerable time, effort, and money in this journey, which can significantly impact their career prospects. An MBA programme is a two-year course designed to equip individuals with both technical and interpersonal skills that are essential for their professional growth. This transformative journey can help students transition into polished professionals. This article offers key criteria for graduates to read various forms of English literature, from classic works to contemporary literature. This would not only familiarise them with socio-political and cultural contexts but also enhance their comprehension skills.

● **Curriculum:** A comprehensive curriculum prepares students for the realities of professional life. Ensure that it is regularly updated to reflect current industry requirements and that the specialisations align with your interests and aspirations. Investigate the school's emphasis, whether in innovation, entrepreneurship, leadership, sustainability, or other specialised areas. The school should prioritise experiential learning, industry exposure, and practical pedagogy to equip students for real-world challenges. Seek courses that encourage collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving strategies.

● **Campus visit:** A prospective student should visit the campus before making a final decision. It is crucial to evaluate the school's infrastructure, including smart classrooms, a well-equipped library, laboratories, study spaces, hostels, sports facilities, and cafeterias. Campus visits help you visualise yourself in the environment and determine if it aligns with your expectations.

● **Rankings and accreditations:** Rankings and accreditations are useful when shortlisting business schools. Reputable global and national rankings based on academic performance, faculty profiles, and alumni success can provide clarity and confidence in your decision-making. Exercise caution when evaluating programmes that lack accreditation, and prioritise those vetted by standard national and global ranking institutions. Pay special attention to mandatory regulatory accreditations to ensure quality. (The writers are dean and associate professor of School of Management, BML Munjal University respectively)

ned success and long-term career growth. Make sure to interpret placement statistics carefully, as some schools may emphasise the average salaries of top-performing percentiles, such as the top 10% or 25%, and the highest salaries, which might not reflect the entire cohort.

● **Faculty:** The faculty is the intellectual backbone of any business school, shaping the minds of future managers. More relevant than infrastructure or facilities, students should consider the intellectual resources available, the curriculum quality, and the institution's commitment to teaching and learning processes. Seek faculty members who are dedicated to fostering a well-rounded, supportive learning environment that encourages critical thinking, creativity, and

initiatives. A robust alumni network can provide valuable connections and career support. Assess if alumni have successful careers in their respective fields and whether they maintain a strong connection to the school. This network can be instrumental in providing insights, practical guidance, and mentorship throughout your academic and professional journey.

● **Placements:** While placement records provide valuable insights into the companies visiting campus and the packages offered, they do not capture the full trajectory of your career. The initial placement might secure your first job, but a solid foundation of knowledge and holistic professional development is crucial for sustained success.

Candidates are advised to visit college campus and engage with current students and alumni to gain insight into the institution's ethos

visit the campus before making a final decision. It is crucial to evaluate the school's infrastructure, including smart classrooms, a well-equipped library, laboratories, study spaces, hostels, sports facilities, and cafeterias. Campus visits help you visualise yourself in the environment and determine if it aligns with your expectations.

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Top IT careers you can pursue without a formal tech degree

Knowledge of data, ML can unlock high-paying data science jobs, writes **Abhinanda Sarkar**



Information technology remains a core part of our tech-driven world, offering several opportunities and a way for professionals to build aspirational careers. With India continuing as a significant IT hub, the market is robust and expansive enough to survive the inherent volatility. Skilled aspirants with up-to-date industry knowledge will consistently find roles in abundance within the sector.

The reason these skills are valued and in great demand today is due to the IT sector's ever-increasing technicality. In the past, an IT career depended on having a relevant tech background. Nowadays, there is incredible diversity in the job roles. While the work is more technical, organisations value skills over degrees in the face of constantly changing trends and updates. The shift in hiring patterns is good news for non-tech candidates from diverse fields looking for rewarding opportunities. If individuals can showcase initiative and intent, they can grow into various IT roles without any formal education. A few thriving tech roles that aspirants from non-tech backgrounds can explore are:

● **Data scientists:** These professionals go through complex data for critical insights, helping organisations make the right decisions. If you have a strong foundation in maths, statistics, and programming, you stand a good chance of landing a role.

● **Cybersecurity analysts:** Given the evolving nature of the threats and cyberattacks, organisations want skilled talent who can respond to high-pressure situations. Essential certifications like CompTIA Security+ and CISSP will give you a foothold in the domain.

Coders and software developers

We have moved on from when a computer science or related degree was a must for a software developer. Now, coding is no longer some arcane knowledge. People have easy access to learning material that breaks down the subject for those without prior training. Many software developers are self-taught or have undertaken coding bootcamps. For individuals going down this path, it is vital to translate learning into action by building a portfolio of projects that showcase they are comfortable with a host of programming languages. Organisations will invest in talent that can code and create software that seamlessly meets varying user needs, whether mobile apps or enterprise cloud systems.

● **Business analysts:** These professionals use data to make strategic business choices—they usually work across multiple teams and involve other decision-makers like senior managers/external stakeholders to achieve steady and efficient operations.

In today's digital world, where continuous learning is prioritised, there are multiple ways of launching a successful career in the IT sector. (The writer is academic director, Great Learning)

Improving language comprehension skills for CUET UG

Comprehension passages are a slippery slope, challenging your understanding of grammar and vocabulary by placing them within real-world context helps, writes **Amit Baveja**

The Common University Entrance Test (UG) is one of the crucial national-level exams that enables candidates to fulfil admission criteria for a wide range of universities and colleges.

While the exam structure encompasses several domains, the common language section, if tackled properly, may give candidates an advantage in scoring higher. Data reveals a 48% surge in the number of students opting for the English language in CUET UG 2024 as compared to 2022, which confirms that the English language segment is an integral aspect of admission selection.

The English language section is predominantly comprehension-based, with 35-40% of the questions testing comprehension skills. Comprehension passages are a slippery slope, challenging your understanding of grammar and vocabulary by placing them within real-world context. However, understanding language in context is the key to acing this section.

Let us forget the rules of simple-past and simple-present in the high school grammar books for an instant. Research shows that traditional rote learning methods have little to no effect on improving students' language

Exposure to authentic English language media, such as movies, television shows, and music, can significantly enhance language comprehension skills

skills. Instead, aspirants should work towards constructing an immersive language-learning environment for themselves.

Here are five tips to ace the comprehension section:

Practice modules

Practice makes a man perfect. Go over practice modules and past-exam question papers as many times as possible. Doing so will ease you into the logical thought process required to tackle certain questions and introduce you to logical techniques that may otherwise appear theoretically complex.

Building the context

Contextual grammar refers to language usage in real-life scenarios. An understanding of contextual grammar would enable students to read and decipher comprehension passages insightfully. CUET aspirants should cultivate knowledge of contextual grammar by engaging in activities such as role-play, contextual sentence construction, and analysing English texts. This

would help them develop a strong sense of language comprehension beyond the surface-level understanding of grammar rules.

Multimedia resources

Exposure to authentic English language media, such as movies, television shows, and music, can significantly enhance language comprehension skills. Watching English movies with subtitles, listening to English songs, and engaging with English-language podcasts or authentic language influencers expose students to diverse linguistic styles and accents, thereby improving their comprehension abilities. Moreover, observing the use of correct grammar and composition in media reinforces proper language usage.

Cultivating healthy learning practices

Language acquisition is a life-long process. While the

CUET exam is integral to your future studies, inculcating healthy learning habits such as reading will strengthen your overall communication skills. We advise aspirants to read various forms of English literature, from classic works to contemporary literature. This would not only familiarise them with socio-political and cultural contexts but also enhance their comprehension skills.

Seeking feedback

Aspirants should actively seek guidance from experienced educators and language experts to fine-tune their language comprehension skills. Participation in language workshops, seeking feedback on written assignments and constructive criticism will help students remedy the gaps in their understanding more effectively. Mastering language comprehension skills is not just a requisite for cracking the CUET UG exam but a life-long asset that opens doors to academic and professional success in the long run.

(The author is managing director, Burlington English India & Southeast Asia)



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UGC issues advisory on implementation of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act 2013

The UGC has issued an advisory regarding the proper implementation of the Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, Redressal) Act 2013 (PoSH Act 2013). It said that all HEIs have been instructed to constitute an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) and a Special Women's Cell under their administrative control to deal with gender-based violence and conduct gender sensitisation programmes. "The University Grants Commission has also notified the University Grants Commission (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal of Sexual Harassment of Women Employees and Students in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2015, in the Gazette of India, which are available on the UGC website, ie, www.ugc.gov.in. These regulations clearly describe the responsibilities of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), grievance redressal mechanisms, the process for making complaints and conducting inquiries, interim redressal, punishment and compensation, consequences of non-compliance, etc," reads the official notice. The commission has also asked the institutes to display banners and posters at visible places, names and contacts of members of ICCs on display boards and portals, and Women's Helpline Number and Emergency Support Number 112 for ease of access to women in distress.

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Strategies to crack Ivy League institutions

Take challenging courses, excel in your classes, and strive for high grades, write Kunal Mehra and Benito Rodriguez



The college application process is a daunting task and getting an acceptance to an Ivy League requires a combination of academic excellence, personal distinction, and demonstrated impact in the community. While there is no dearth of advice on application tips, strategic advice for putting together a compelling application is hard to come by.

Emphasis on grades

Focus on academic excellence and maintain a strong academic record throughout high school. Take challenging courses, excel in your classes, and strive for high grades. Ivy League colleges place a strong emphasis on academic achievement.

Pursue your interests

Engage in meaningful extracurricular activities and showcase leadership qualities. Participate in activities that align with your interests and passions. Show depth of involvement, leadership, and im-

colleges on your list are a good match for your academic and personal goals.

Compelling college essays that demonstrate personal conviction and authenticity are key. Write essays that showcase your personality, experiences, and aspirations and use your essays as an opportunity to demonstrate self-awareness, resilience, and the unique perspective you bring to the table.

Solicit feedback

Be open to constructive criticism. Solicit feedback on your application materials from teachers, counselors, or mentors. Revise your essays, résumé, and other components of your application based on their input to ensure clarity, coherence, and effectiveness.

During the application process, be mindful of certain common mistakes. Most students are prone to making mistakes at some point of their application journey. Watch out for some of those pitfalls.

Do not run after rankings. Take the time to research the Ivy League and other top colleges that interest you and understand their ethos and values

part in a few select activities rather than spreading yourself too thin across numerous pursuits. Focus on quality over quantity.

Ensure you have personalised and meaningful recommendations from your teachers, counsellors and mentors. Cultivate strong relationships that can provide guidance, support, and letters of recommendation. Seek opportunities to engage with them outside the classroom and demonstrate your commitment to learning and growth.

The right fit

Do not run after rankings. Take the time to research the Ivy League and other top colleges that interest you and understand their ethos and values. Identify colleges that align with your academic and personal goals, and demonstrate genuine interest in them through your application. Do not underestimate the importance of fit when selecting colleges to apply to. Consider factors such as academic programmes, campus culture, location, and resources to ensure that the

Be honest

Do not plagiarise or embellish your application. Admissions officers value honesty and integrity, and any dishonesty could have serious consequences for your application and future academic endeavours.

Don't procrastinate on your college applications. Start early, gather materials, and work on your essays and other components of your application well in advance of deadlines to ensure a polished and timely submission. There is a tendency among Indian students to focus solely on academic achievements and standardised test scores, often overlooking the importance of holistic personal development, extracurricular engagement, and genuine self-expression – all of which are greatly valued by Ivy League admissions officers.

(The authors are managing director and CEO of Crimson Education, India, and IVY League admission consultant, Crimson Education and former admission officer at Harvard respectively)

Outreach programmes by HEIs attract more Indian students

India with its democratic ethos and English-speaking population is seen as a natural partner by the UK varsities

Sonal.Srivastava
@timesgroup.com

With Brexit, some of the structured frameworks that enabled student exchange among the UK universities and the European universities were disrupted, leaving the universities in the UK to explore collaborations and partnerships with other countries. India with its democratic ethos and students who are fluent in English was seen as a natural partner by the UK universities that are now increasingly forging academic collaborations with the Indian universities and developing India outreach programmes.

Besides robust democratic values, India has the demographic advantage with a significant proportion of the world's young population living in its cities. "Young people are the foundation of future discovery and its application; hence it is important to forge collaborations with a country that has inherent dynamism. There is a huge investment in Indian higher education including in public sector

It is important to create a domestic workforce that is sensitive to cultural differences and competent to work across continents

universities and private institutions. Some of these institutions might improve their international rankings making them viable propositions for Russell Group universities. There is a shared heritage and language between the UK and India and that makes collaborating with Indian universities easier than some of the other countries," says Charlie Jeffery, Vice-Chancellor and president, University of York, UK. The University has one of the most successful student outreach programmes and it has seen a 62% increase in Indian students over the past five years, the university recorded 550 Indian students in 2022-23, and in 2018, there were only 45 Indian students. An increasing number of international



There is a shared heritage and language between the UK and India and that makes collaborating with Indian universities easier than some of the other countries.
— Charlie Jeffery, VC and president, University of York, UK

Affordable housing

The University has created several new low-cost rooms. It is also working with the city councils and developers to find ways of producing affordable student accommodation. The university also supports students who encounter financial difficulties in various ways including rent.

students in the UK also translates into enhanced international goodwill for the country. "We value the interaction of different cultures and nationalities; it brings value to the UK students and to international students who choose to study here. To have a domestic workforce which is sensitive to cultural differences and can work across continents is important. Most of our international students return to their home countries, and most of them would have built a fondness for the city and the country, and it is invaluable for the UK to have lots of goodwill internationally," says Professor Jeffery.

However, international students in the UK may not always be comfortable as they face escalating rents and the

high cost of university accommodation that may impact their quality of life in a foreign country. "There are a few structural challenges in the UK which are impacting rents and interest rate is one of them. We are working towards making sure that any regulation of the rental sector takes into account the situation of the students," adds Professor Jeffery.

The university also supports students who encounter financial difficulties in various ways including rent. "Second-year students have access to a rent support grant as well as various other funding support opportunities that the university makes available," says Professor Jeffery.

Talking about the future of postgraduate and undergraduate programmes in a volatile world, Professor Jeffery says that universities will continue to offer a comprehensive set of undergraduate programmes, however, in future, it will be in smaller chunks. "Most courses in this university have 20-credit size components. We combine them into an undergraduate degree of 360 credits or a postgraduate degree of 180 credits. In future, we will allow people to get their 180 credits over 10 years. We will have to be responsive to the changing economy," explains Professor Jeffery.

Challenge yourself for incomparable exposure

Assam boy forays into the pulsating financial epicentre for transformation and opportunities

Sachin Baid, hailing from a small town, Bongaigaon, in Assam, is a second-year student at Frankfurt School of Finance and Management. While pursuing a Master's in Management programme, specialising in the Global Strategy Track, he is also working in the Société Générale Frankfurt office, Finance Department. "If one's passion lies in finance or investment banking, Frankfurt is undoubtedly a gem," says Sachin, adding, "It is a pulsating financial hub and immersing oneself here will provide one with incomparable exposure and opportunities in the financial world."

Prior to joining Frankfurt School, Sachin pursued BCom with a major in Management at Gauhati University. "My decision to join Frankfurt School for a Master's in Management was more than an academic pursuit. It was an adventure that would shape my identity and future. It was not merely an academic decision but a step into a new world, filled with opportunities, growth, and transformation," he says, adding, "The diverse students' body and forward-thinking faculty turned Frankfurt School into a melting pot of ideas where innovation thrived."

"The academic experiences paved the way for greater responsibilities. My role as a class represen-



My decision to join a Master's in Management was more than an academic pursuit; it was an adventure that would shape my identity and future.
— Sachin Baid

tative has taught me the art of empathy and communication. I became the bridge between my classmates and management, ensuring every voice was heard," says Sachin. Before arriving in Germany, Sachin was quite apprehensive as he had heard that Germans might be unfriendly or cold. "The reality couldn't be more different. I found a warm, welcoming atmosphere here where people respect and value cultural diversity. The support from the community has been incredible, and to my immense pride, I was elected to the students' council at Frankfurt School," he says.

"Adapting to the practical and hands-on style of education was a bit of a challenge initially since it was vastly different from what I was used to in India. However, with time, and the unwavering support from exceptional professors and academic staff at Frankfurt School, I found my footing," says Sachin. Reminiscing his time at Frankfurt School as a medley of academic brilliance, leadership, friendship, and per-

Robust networking

"At Deloitte Consulting, I stepped into the role of a technology strategy and transformation intern within the Financial Services – Banking Division. Transitioning from Deloitte to my current position at Société Générale in Frankfurt, I have embraced the role of a working student," says Sachin.

sonal growth, Sachin says, "It is a journey I would recommend to anyone seeking to challenge themselves, to grow, and to become a part of something bigger. The Assam boy had also undertaken a summer internship which was a thrilling ride of growth and discovery. "At Deloitte Consulting, I stepped into the role of a technology strategy and transformation intern within the Financial Services – Banking Division. Transitioning from Deloitte to my current position at Société Générale in Frankfurt, I have embraced the role of a working student in the corporate

and investment banking division," he says. "The evolution from strategy consulting to a focus on compliance and accounting within the banking sector has been a valuable expansion of my skill set, equipping me with a versatile understanding of finance that bridges the gap between theory and practice," says Sachin.

Embrace the challenges

For those looking to study in Germany, Sachin says, "Embrace the challenges. Life abroad is not a cakewalk, but it is through these challenges that you will find yourself growing and evolving. Do not be disheartened by obstacles or rejections, especially during job hunts. Resilience and perseverance are key, and maintaining a positive attitude will eventually open the right doors."

An indispensable piece of advice from Sachin is to take German language seriously. "It is advisable to at least complete the basics before arriving in Germany, as initially one might find oneself swamped and lose track," he says. As an international student, Sachin says, "It is imperative to be adaptive to the cultural diversity that Germany offers. This country is a mosaic of traditions and cultures, and respecting this diversity will not only enrich your own experience but will also help you build a robust network of relationships that could be invaluable in your personal and professional life."

Kiran Sahani becomes first South Asian to receive Canada's MacCall MacBain Scholarship

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kiran Sahani has become the first South Asian to receive the MacCall MacBain Global Scholarship awarded by the McGill University in Montréal, Canada this year. With this, she is now one of the 10 global recipients of the scholarship.

The MacCall MacBain Scholarships are Canada's largest leadership-based scholarships for master's and professional studies. They are the result of a C\$200 million gift (about Rs 1,240 crore) in 2019 by John and Marcy MacCall MacBain, the then-largest single donation in the country's history. Designed to encourage purposeful leadership, the scholarships enable students to pursue a fully-funded master's or

I am committed to leveraging this opportunity to further my mission of advocating for access to education, particularly for marginalised communities.
— Kiran Sahani



professional degree while participating in mentorship, coaching, and a leadership development programme.

Expressing her gratitude, Kiran Sahani, a student of Ashoka University, said, "I am deeply committed to leveraging this opportunity to further my mission of advocating for equity, empowerment, and access to education, particularly for marginalised communities." Kiran will pursue a master's degree in public health at McGill. Born and raised in Kolkata, Kiran holds a bachelor's degree in Biology and a Postgraduate Diploma in Sociology and Anthropology from Ashoka University.

Are foreign students in the US caught in the crossfire

As the nation grapples with pressing challenges and debates its future direction, it is imperative to recognise the integral role that international students play in shaping the cultural and intellectual landscape of American universities, writes Rajiv Dabhadkar

International students in the United States find themselves entangled in a complex web of socio-political issues that often dominate the landscape during election seasons. As the nation gears up for another round of pivotal elections, issues such as immigration, inflation, and rising crime rates come up, shaping the discourse in presidential debates and public discourse alike. However, amidst these overarching narratives, it is evident that international students, particularly those of colour, are not mere bystanders but active participants.

For many international students, the allure of the American dream serves as a beacon, drawing them to the US in pursuit of academic excellence and professional opportunities. Among these students, Indian nationals represent a significant cohort, with a substantial number securing student visas to enrol in American universities each year. Statistics from the previous academic year underscore this trend, revealing that out



of the approximately 1 million international students studying in the United States, nearly 1,40,000 were of Indian origin, reflecting the enduring appeal of American educational institutions.

Uncertain situations

Despite the promise of opportunity, recent events have cast a shadow of uncertainty over the experiences of international students, particularly those hailing from marginalised communities. Instances of discrimination and

xenophobia, fueled by divisive rhetoric and sporadic incidents, have increasingly targeted specific groups of international students. Such occurrences not only exacerbate feelings of vulnerability and insecurity but also challenge the notion of inclusivity and diversity within the higher education landscape.

The tightening of immigration laws and the imposition of restrictive measures not only impede the mobility of in-

ternational students but also contribute to a climate of uncertainty, where the prospect of deportation looms large, casting a shadow over their academic pursuits and prospects. In this regard, the upcoming elections hold profound implications for international students, as the outcomes may shape the trajectory of immigration policies and influence their experiences in the US.

Not a passive observer

Nevertheless, amidst the cacophony of political discourse and policy debates, it is essential to recognise that international students are not passive observers but active stakeholders with aspirations and ambitions beyond the realm of politics. Like their domestic counterparts, international students prioritise their academic and career goals, striving to excel in their chosen fields and contribute meaningfully to society. While political developments may command headlines and shape public opinion, the everyday concerns of international students often revolve around academic deadlines, career opportunities, and personal growth.

International students often navigate complex visa regulations and bureaucratic hurdles

In this context, the disconnect between the political rhetoric of elections and the lived realities of international students becomes glaringly apparent. While policymakers and politicians engage in heated debates over contentious issues, international students remain focused on navigating the complexities of student life, balancing academic commitments with personal aspirations. As the nation grapples with pressing challenges and debates its future direction, it is imperative to recognise the integral role that international students play in shaping the cultural and intellectual landscape of American universities. Policymakers must acknowledge their critical contributions and address the complexities and challenges they face, fostering a more inclusive and diverse higher education landscape that values international students' experiences and aspirations.

(Views expressed are personal)
(The author is founder of National Organisation for Software and Technology Professionals, NOSTOPS)

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Vol 24, No. 11, RNI No. DELENG/2001/4848. Published for the proprietors, Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd., by Rajeev Yadav at Times House, 7 Bahadurshah Zafar Marg, New Delhi and printed by him at Times of India Press, 3, Site IV Industrial Area, Sahibabad (UP). Editor: Priyanka Srivastava. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part without written permission of the publisher is prohibited.

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