

ANASUYA SENGUPTA RECEIVES WARM WELCOME AS SHE RETURNS TO DELHI AFTER CANNES WIN

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The film's stars Kani Kusruti, Chhaya Kadam and Divya Prabha, who joined Payal Kapadia onstage at the ceremony. Following the ceremony, Kapadia said, "We really had a very strong friendship and connection. I think when you have that in real life, that camaraderie, it shows in the film"

## Payal Kapadia's All That We Imagine As Light wins Grand Prix, the second-highest honour at Cannes

### 'Please don't wait 30 years to bring another Indian film to Cannes'

Payal Kapadia scripted history on Saturday by becoming the first Indian filmmaker to win the prestigious Grand Prix at the Cannes Film Festival. The competition jury, led by Greta Gerwig, awarded the festival's second-highest honour to Kapadia's *All That We Imagine As Light*. At Cannes, Payal was asked for the nth time why it took India 30 years to be selected for the competition section. She asserted, "There are interesting films being made in India, and I'm only a product of that."



There are a lot of films, a lot of interesting filmmakers, and a variety of work that is taking place in all languages and not just in Bollywood. Every state has a strong film industry. We (the Indian film industry) have been around for a long time, but for some reason, it took 30 years to be selected. There is just amazing work going on in our country, and I'm really glad that we see the cinema that we do from India."

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Thank you very much, Cannes Film Festival, for having our film here. Please don't wait another 30 years to have another Indian film. This film is about friendship between three women, and oftentimes women are pitted against each other. This is the way society is designed, and it is very unfortunate. But for me, friendship is a very important relationship because it can lead to greater solidarity, inclusivity, and empathy towards each other

- Payal Kapadia in her acceptance speech



Unbelievable, historic, a milestone: Film industry celebrates Payal Kapadia's win

P3

### I can't believe the fan frenzy that our film A has received even after 25 years: Chandini



Chandini Saasha (right) in a still from her first Kannada film A, in which she starred opposite Upendra who was also the director of the film

Kavya Christopher

Upendra and Chandini-starrer Kannada film A was released in the theatres after a gap of 25 years, recently. "The film has been running to packed houses. Even though it is a re-release, it has broken all opening day box office records, that too after all these years. I could not believe the fan frenzy until I saw it myself. The love people have for Upendra, and for his story that I consider to be quite different in screenplay and treatment, and of course for me, is something I am so very grateful for," says Chandini, who was in Bengaluru for some of the screenings. It is probably this very love from the audience that compelled Chandini to work with the film's producers on a part 2 of this film too. "The Kannada film industry gave me the identity of being an actor and even after having worked in various other languages, I consider myself to be a Kannada actor," says the actress who has set her mind on doing her bit for the film industry. Excerpts:



When Upendra got to the set on the first day of shoot for A, he was shocked to realise that one small, petite person (me) was chosen as the heroine. He thought he had made a mistake

CONTINUED ON P 4

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# AMAZING WORK BEING DONE IN INDIA: PAYAL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Kapadia added, "I think we have our own vocabulary in cinema, and it's very self-contained in India. We understand the gestures in our communities, and there is not always a need to send a film to a festival because we have our own (film) festivals. Lots of people go out to watch films. This is just one film amongst thousands of films, and it's good that we have all kinds of films - some festival films and some not-so-festival films (laughs). So, everything should exist together. That's what's wonderful about cinema."

Talking about Indian films, she said, "Everything is changing. Even what Bollywood is, is changing all the time. So, there is no one kind of cinema, especially cinema from Kerala has an immense amount of range of the films that are being made."

## 'THE JOY OF CO-PRODUCTION IS WE LEARN FROM EACH OTHER'

In response to a question on the sound design of



### Who is Payal Kapadia

While this is Kapadia's first feature film, she is not a newcomer at Cannes. In 2021, her documentary *A Night of Knowing Nothing* won the Golden Eye for the best documentary film. It was also part of the Directors' Fortnight section. In 2017, when she was at FTII, her short film *Afternoon Clouds* was shortlisted for the Cinéfondation section (for student films).

not understand why there was so much sound. I think this is the joy of co-production that we learn from each other."

### 'HOPE FOR MORE FILMS FROM FEMALE FILMMAKERS IN CANNES'

When asked if she thinks that female solidarity and more films by women are happening across the world, Kapadia said that she would like to believe that's true. "It's wonderful that there are more films being made by female filmmakers, female technicians, female sound recordists. We need many more, but change is happening gradually but surely. I think it only makes things more inclusive. And I hope that we could have more films from female filmmakers in Cannes."

the film, Kapadia said, "Sound is a very important element of my work. In Mumbai, if you're from there, you know that it is never silent. Even the sound of silence is specific - there is always the distant sound of trains or construction. Of course, this was torture for our sound recordist from France, who just could



(L-R) Chhaya Kadam, Kani Kusruti, Payal Kapadia and Divya Prabha

## An adbhut feeling: Chhaya Kadam on Cannes debut

Mihir Bhanage

Chhaya Kadam, who plays a prominent role in Kapadia's films, says, "This is a dream team. Payal is a brilliant filmmaker. We see so many things in our daily life but never pause to find the story behind them. Payal does that." She tells us about the team's red-carpet dance, standing ovation at the premiere and more.

### 'THE RED-CARPET DANCE WAS IMPROMPTU'

This was Chhaya's first Cannes visit and it was a memorable one. "It was an *adbhut* feeling," exclaimed Chhaya, adding, "Reaching the venue and stepping on the red carpet was something I can't explain in words. I saw my entire career flash in front of my eyes. It was like each character I have ever played was with me at that moment." When asked what led to the red-carpet jig, the *Laapataa Ladies* actress laughs, "It wasn't planned. On the way to the venue, I was a little nervous. But as we were posing, I heard a peppy song playing and couldn't stop myself from shaking a leg. It was all impromptu. Then came the standing ovation which was surreal and exhilarating. All this on my first visit to Cannes," said Chhaya.

### 'I LIVE LIFE BY MY RULES'

While Chhaya has been part of multiple Marathi films, including *Sairat*, her recent Hindi outings - *Laapataa Ladies*, *Madgaon Express* and *Gangubai Kathiawadi* - have brought her even more reach and accolades. "I don't know how to react to this love. I am speechless and I owe this to every filmmaker who cast me in their projects, in whatever capacity they deemed fit. I love being part of projects that go beyond the usual stories. Even if they stir up the hornet's nest, it doesn't bother me. I live life by my rules and my decisions are my own, and I don't care what anyone else thinks of it."



## Mainstream film industry has nothing to do with this glory: Resul Pookutty

While the country celebrates Payal Kapadia's win at Cannes, Oscar-winning sound technician Resul Pookutty shared a long post pointing out that the Indian film industry had no part to play in this victory. He also reminded people that as Kapadia returns from Cannes, she will go for a court hearing for a case filed against her during her FTII days. In 2015, Kapadia was one of the leading voices behind the almost four-month protest against the then-FTII Chairman Gajendra Chauhan, who the students felt didn't have the credentials to lead the prestigious institute. Excerpts from his note:

It would be interesting to pause for a moment and think, has Indian Film Industry anything to do with this win?! None! who all are been taken to Cannes by Govt. Of India as delegation every year?! The usual suspects and familiar faces from mainstream industry... What makes Payal's win so important?! Not just that she is from FTII, that she is from a group of people/students enthusiasts who are regular people who come from varied corners of India and signed themselves to be strugglers for the rest of their lives.

While you celebrate #PayaKapadia and her team's win at the Cannes, give it a moment of thought, the mainstream Indian Film Industry has nothing to do with this glory they only looked at us as outcasts. ...

The only reason for this National glory is all the inspiring films we saw at FTII and the atmosphere of that place nurtured by all the brilliant artists from all across the globe visited there and left their energies...



My only request is whoever or whatever or whichever dispensation are at the helm of affairs, do not destroy that atmosphere which took generations to nurture... There are many more Payals and Chidanands, Sathosh Sivans and Shaji Karuns are going to come out. Inspire them, let them show us a mirror that reflect us as a true society where original, logical and scientific temperament is celebrated. Let us create Sovereign minds, that will be a true celebration of cinema and life. #JaiHo my pals: Payal and Chidanand and the likes to follow them.

FootNote: Payal (Accused No.25) comes back from Cannes and next month goes for her court case hearing that FTII lodged against her for striking against the appointment of Mr.Chouhan as the Chairman! Interesting isn't it?!

## 'Unbelievable, historic'

**RichaChadha** @RichaChadha  
HISTORIC!!! Just beaming from this news! Congratulations Payal Kapadia, Ranabir Das, Kani Kusruti, Divya Prabha, Hridhu Haroon, Chhaya Kadam and the whole team of ALL WE IMAGINE AS LIGHT!

**anuragkashyap10**  
Congratulations Payal Kapadia... you're the hope and the inspiration..

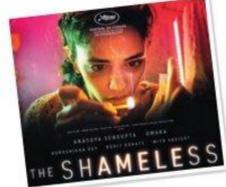
**sujoy ghosh** @sujoy\_g  
YEEEEEEEESSSSSS!!!! well done payal and zico... so so so so proud of you...

**parambratachattopadhyay**  
We watch in an awe and reverence, as two independent artists, working patiently and silently, miles away from the spotlight of their respective industries, have brought maximum honour to Indian cinema! While we sought other glories, they created history, without making any noise of it! Bravo and thank you!.

**Unbelievable day for Indian cinema.** An independent filmmaker - from much hated FTII - whose first film was a poetic love letter to the idea of dissent in a democracy, wins the second highest honour at the biggest film festival in the world. Payal Kapadia's ALL WE IMAGINE AS LIGHT wins GRAND PRIX. Dissent, in art and in life, is a tough path to choose. But sometimes it does create magic.

## I HOPE THIS BRINGS MORE WOMEN TO THE FOREFRONT: ANASUYA IN DELHI AFTER HER CANNES WIN

Ajay Kumar Gautam



Barely an hour after landing in Delhi to a warm welcome, Anasuya Sengupta, who created history at Cannes as the first Indian actor to win an award for Best Performance in *The Shameless*, shared her excitement with us. "I am absolutely elated. To have been able to play a character like Renuka was an absolute privilege. Konstantin (Bojanov, the director) must be a magician to have cast me, despite me being tucked away behind the scenes for so long. What makes it even more special is the fact that it isn't my win alone. I get to share this moment with Payal (Kapadia), Kani (Kusruti), Chhaya (Kadam) and Divya (Prabha), women who I deeply admire and adore. Though we went with different films, they made me feel like one of their own," she shared, adding, "To have ended up doing something historic is far beyond what I could have ever imagined. I hope this can contribute to more women being pushed to the forefront - which is really where they belong."



## SHOULD BE BENGALURU IS TALKING ABOUT

# INDIA PUT UP MUCH MORE THAN JUST DESI GLAMOUR AT THE FRENCH RIVIERA

By Invitation



VANI TRIPATHI TIKOO  
Actor/producer and Cannes regular



With more voices celebrating women filmmakers and discussions on gender parity, India has proven this year at Cannes that we are at the cusp of a huge change

Agree? Disagree? Write to us at: [byinvitation@timesgroup.com](mailto:byinvitation@timesgroup.com)

conversation at Cannes and I say this from personal experience. Indians being invited to become jury members, from Mrinal Sen and Vidya Balan to Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and Deepika Padukone, are a significant example of India's relevance at the festival.

Beyond the razzmatazz of a red carpet and quintessential glamour, the festival very carefully curates films to be showcased, in a bid to actually represent contemporary expression from the country they belong to. From Chetan Anand's *Neecha Nagar* in 1946, V Shantaram's *Amar Bhoopali* in 1952, Raj Kapoor's *Awara* in 1953, Satyajit Ray's *Paras Pathar* in 1958, M.S. Sathyu's *Garm Hava* in 1974, Mrinal Sen's *Kharaj* in 1983, Shaji N Karun's *Swaham* in 1994 to now Payal Kapadia's film

competing in the main competition in 2024, one can see the diversity that Indian cinema has given to the Cannes Film Festival year after year.

At the end of the day, *Manto* in Un Certain Regard in recent times and *Gangs of Wasseypur* a few years ago have been an able representation of cinema from India. In 2022, India was the honour country at Marche du Film. We took a slate of cinema from various Indian languages as representation that year. My personal experience since many years at the festival embraces one reality - when filmmakers across the world congregate at this amazing festival at the La Croisette at Cannes, deeper narratives of cinema

get created, co-production treaties get discussed and a signature of things to come for the filmmaking community gets carved out for the whole year. There are conversations around deeper collaborations for cinema at the India pavilion. Young filmmakers, whether men or women, who otherwise find it difficult to represent their independent films internationally, find a space, support, and structure, all in one at the Cannes Film Festival.

And there is space for everyone. On one hand you have Bollywood divas strutting their stuff at the red carpet, but on the other hand, deeper conversations, collaborations and communities develop for just one passion called cinema. One must also realise that India, one of the largest film producing nations of the world, benefits greatly via its participation at the festival. Opportunities like formulating international treaties for coproduction, interacting with the stakeholders of more than one and a half dozen countries of the world, and networking with global film commissions, international line producers, global film marketing mavericks and a universal gene pool of artists, enable India to make that dream better and bigger. With more and more voices celebrating women filmmakers, discussions on gender parity, and women being at the centre stage of cinematic realities across the world, India, with two young female film directors, has proven this year at Cannes that as a country we are at the cusp of that huge change.

So, let's go beyond the semantics and celebrate the various narratives of amazing films that we could showcase at Cannes this year. All's well that ends well and all that I would say is Vive le cinema!

#CannesFilmFestival #IndiaAtCannes #cinema #WomenInCinema

# I want to take Kannada films to the global audience: Chandini

CONTINUED FROM K 1

## 'AUDIENCE IS DRAWN TO POWERFUL STORIES, REGARDLESS OF LANGUAGE'

Today, cinema is not restricted to one set of audience. What we have now is a global audience that watches and accepts good stories, regardless of language. I have been working in the business side of the movie industry for the last many years, as part of distribution of films across the world, and while I see Indian films in Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam and Telugu being spoken about in the international space, I feel this necessity to do my bit to ensure Kannada films are also spoken about there. We have had films like *KGF* and *Kantara*, but there hasn't been much talk after that. I have, therefore, decided to work on a couple of things through which I can do my bit for Kannada cinema. There is a Kannada web series in the pipeline, but I have also started work on a story that could be *A* part 2, along with the producers. We are also trying to get the same technical team on board for it. We are yet to approach Upendra for this, but from the little I know him I am sure he will love this story.

## 'WATCHING A AGAIN BROUGHT BACK SOME OF MY FIRST DAY MEMORIES'

I had just come in from New York to act in this film. Upendra had just seen two portfolio pictures of mine until then. When he got to the set on day 1, I recall him coming into this area we were and asked who I was. He could not believe that this small petite person was the one chosen as the heroine. Later, for the shot, the makeup person had done his bit to make me look screen ready, but Upendra did not want me to wear any makeup. Because he thought it was not nice to ask an actress to take off her makeup on day one, he decided to shoot a scene that required me to be seen in makeup. For this scene, I had to go and fall on a coffee table. And before I could even gather up the courage to do that, as soon as the camera was rolling one of the assistant directors pushed me towards the coffee table to help with the scene, and I actually fell. I was shocked and those natural expressions actually worked out for the scene. That shot got okayed in one take and I did not know until then that getting one's first shot okayed at one take was considered to be a big deal. The rest of the day was spent with another woman pulling my hair out, and with the number of takes that went into that I was in pain. However, it was my mother who was also with me on set who was crying more than me. She could not believe the things I had to endure for this role that day and was set to take me right back to New York. Of course, we did not go back. The team was quite happy with the 'natural' performance and Upendra too was convinced finally and quite pleased to have made the right choice of heroine.



Chandini Saasha says watching *A* again filled her with nostalgia; (inset) a still from the film

Having been involved with distribution of films across the world, I see Indian films in Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam and Telugu being spoken about in the international space. I feel this necessity to do my bit to ensure Kannada films are also spoken about there



Madhuri Dixit and Karisma Kapoor; (inset) a still from their dance-off in *Dil Toh Pagal Hai!*

## 'Recreating the iconic dance sequence with Madhuri was special'

Who can forget Pooja and Nisha's iconic dance-off in Yash Chopra's *Dil To Pagal Hai!* (DTPH) Madhuri Dixit romanticised the dreamer in Pooja with grace and beauty, while Karisma Kapoor's effervescent Nisha exuded that uninhibited edginess of youth and angst of unrequited love. The duo's love triangle with Shah Rukh Khan's Rahul (*naam toh suna hoga*) set the screen on fire.

It was thus, special for fans to see Karisma and Madhuri recently recreate their dance face-off titled *Dance of Envy* on the stage of the dance reality show *Dance Deewane*. They also shared a reel that had them shaking a leg to *Koi Ladki Hai* from DTPH.

At the Bombay Times Fashion Week, while talking to us, Karisma recalled her recent reunion with Madhuri and the reel that went viral. She said, "It was amazing and a lot of fun. MDji as I

call her, is also a dear friend now. Growing up, I loved watching her movies and dance numbers. *Ek Do Teen* in *Tezaab* was my favourite track. Getting to work with her in DTPH itself was a big moment for me. Recreating the dance felt like we did it yesterday! We still remembered the steps and we laughed a lot."

Pooja and Nisha's dance-off has been recreated by fans on Instagram. Karisma who is aware how popular this song is even today, says, "I have seen those reels and I want to thank the fans. Recreating this iconic moment was special for me because she is someone I look up to." — Renuka Vyavahare



## If I was him, I'd have given up, says Dipika on Dinesh's cricket journey



Dinesh Karthik and Dipika Pallikal Karthik

A flurry of posts and anecdotes poured in after Dinesh Karthik announced his retirement from the IPL a few days ago. Virat Kohli, in a tribute video shared by RCB, recalled, "When I was really struggling for confidence, Karthik sat me down a couple of times and gave me a very honest explanation of how he is seeing things and maybe I am not able to see them myself."

However, one tribute that stood out among the rest was from Karthik's wife, squash player and Commonwealth Games medalist Dipika Pallikal Karthik. In a video, she shared that despite setbacks, Karthik is back on his feet, thinking about what to do next, in no time. She added, "I feel that if anyone else was in that position, a lot of people would have given up long back. Even me, I am an athlete, seeing him in different positions in his career, if I was him, I would definitely have given up. But I think the do-or-die or never-give-up attitude has always been there," Dipika said.

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# Educational TIMES

## Indian students in Bishkek claim they were never the target

The local students who were attacking the residential complexes belonged to a boxer gang, headed by a social media influencer

Ayushi Gupta1  
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After a week of chaos and violence among the Kyrgyz and other foreign students in the capital Bishkek, the situation has slowly returned to normal. However, on the insistence of some students, the Indian government made arrangements for their return flights. The Indian embassy in Bishkek issued a letter confirming that no Indian student was harmed in the violence and has assured their safety.

Mohammad Khalid of Nuh, Haryana, third semester studying at International Medical University (IMU), Bishkek, says, "The local students who were attacking the housing complexes belonged to a mischievous boxer gang, which is headed by a local social media influencer. According to the information circulating among the students, he has formed a boxer gang that includes local medical students and other local youth. They were allegedly beating up those students who were living in Kyrgyzstan without visas and passports. They mostly attacked students from Pakistan and Bangladesh. However, none of the Indian students were hurt in the violence."

After authorities' intervention, around 4,000 police personnel came to the college to help the students. "On the first day of the violence, local police did not intervene, rather, they were among the onlookers as the locals thrashed the Egyptians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshi students. At first, they were only hitting Egyptians, and later they attacked Pakistani students, who were mistaken as Egyptian students," adds Khalid.

Many Indian students had no choice but to shift to Kyrgyzstan after the Ukraine-Russia war dis-



■(Left) Sushmith V Anand, official from the Indian Embassy in Kyrgyzstan and Maykanaev Bolot Bekhtashevich, IMU rector, along with Indian students in Bishkek

Currently, the situation is normal, and peace seems to have been restored in Bishkek

They have also been providing free food."

Sushmith V Anand, second secretary, Consular Section, Embassy of the Republic of India in Kyrgyz Republic, visited the medical colleges to ensure the safety of the students. As per the embassy data, there are around 17,000 Indian students across Kyrgyzstan.

### Restoring confidence

Locals feel that the violence could be the result of political instigation. Dr Dhayal says, "There are rumours of the opposition party being involved in the student violence. This might be an attempt to malign the Kyrgyz government internationally, but it is hard to confirm anything yet. However, the police have arrested 25-30 Kyrgyz students and have been patrolling the areas to ensure the safety of international students. Meanwhile, as Pakistani students were attacked, the Embassy of Pakistan arranged for flights to fly their students back home. Around 250-300 Pakistani students have left the country."

Ashok Sajjanhar, former ambassador of India to Kazakhstan, Sweden, and Latvia, says, "Currently, the situation is normal, and peace has been restored in Bishkek. Indian students, however, have been advised to stay indoors and exercise caution. It is incumbent upon Kyrgyzstan to provide security to foreign students to restore their confidence and morale. This is beneficial for Kyrgyzstan, as international students contribute to their local economy," Sajjanhar adds.

rupted their medical education. Pradyuman Rana from Panipat, Haryana, is one such MBBS student who is currently completing his final year at the IMU in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. He is also preparing to appear for the Foreign Medical Graduates Exam (FMGE).

### Safety measures

"I live in a private apartment outside the college campus, which is 2 km away from the place of the incident. On May 13, when the violence broke out, the dispute started between the locals and the Egyptian students who were smoking at the Ala Too Square. The dispute was verbal at first, after which students got into physical fights. The situation worsened on May 18, when local students attacked the residential complexes of the Egyptians and other foreign students and thrashed them."

The current situation in Bishkek has been brought under control

by the local administration and the Kyrgyzstan police force. "Some arrests were made and the police are patrolling the affected areas. However, advisories have been issued to address safety concerns. Meanwhile, all colleges are conducting classes online. I did not leave my room during the first four days of the week and switched off the lights after dark since the situation was terrifying at that time," Pradyuman adds.

The viral videos of foreign students being thrashed in Bishkek have alarmed the parents and Indian authorities. Dr Anil Dhayal, founder of an educational consultancy based in Bishkek, says, "Many viral videos of the attacks have surfaced on social media, scaring the parents of students in Bishkek. However, no Indian student was harmed in the incident. As a safety measure, college authorities allowed all Indian students to stay at the campus hostels.

## Agriculture colleges receive 74% female enrolments

Attractive scholarships have encouraged girls to take up agricultural courses

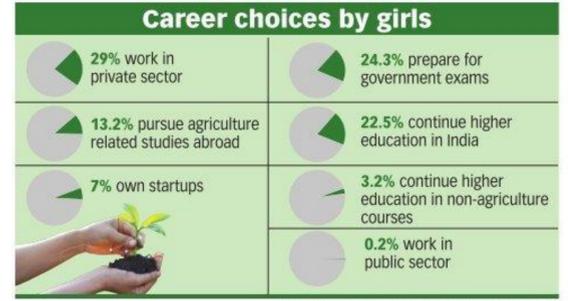
Shehwaaz.Khan  
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The number of female students enrolling in agriculture-related courses spiked from 27% in 2017 to around 50% in 2023, according to a survey by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the apex body that regulates 76 Agricultural Universities (AUs) across India and has 131 agricultural institutes in various agricultural domains. According to the data, Kerala has the highest enrolment of women in AUs with 74% of female students in agricultural courses due to the higher literacy rate in the state, followed by Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Manipur, Assam, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Nagaland and Odisha. As many as 12 states and union territories already have a female participation ratio of more than 50% in UG courses in agriculture.

Female candidates prefer courses such as Agricultural Engineering, Biotechnology, Food Technology, Veterinary, Horticulture, and Dairy Technology. The reasons that girls prefer these courses include promotion of gender equality in agricultural institutes, the desire to contribute to rural women empowerment, and the promotion of rights of women in the agriculture sector.

### Financial assistance

Special efforts have also been made to attract female students at agricultural universities. "As many campuses of AUs and agricultural colleges are outside the main town and cities due to the requirement for wide expanse of farmland, we have made provisions for residential facilities for girls," says RC Agrawal, deputy director general, Agricultural Education, ICAR. Out of the total number of 245 hostels, 140 hostels have been assigned only to girls. For the past 10 years, ICAR has been giving financial



Source: Indian Council of Agricultural Research

### The ICAR-NAHEP also reserved 33.33% slots for female students in overseas programmes

al assistance for girls' hostels.

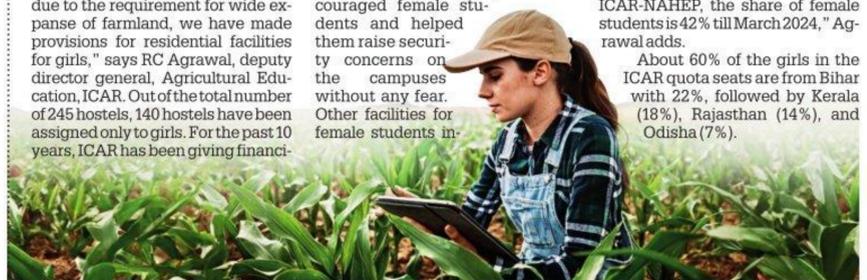
In 2018, the Government of India started a joint project called the Indian Council of Agricultural Research-National Agricultural Higher Education Project (ICAR-NAHEP) with the World Bank to attract talent and provide quality agricultural education from across India. It aimed at strengthening higher agricultural education on a 50:50 cost-sharing basis. Out of the total 5.15 lakh beneficiaries of ICAR-NAHEP, the share of female participants increased to 44% in 2023 from 28% in 2019. The project also created user-friendly campuses for a secure environment for female students. It launched a portal to address the grievances, which encouraged female students and helped them raise security concerns on the campuses without any fear. Other facilities for female students in-

clude arrangements of CCTV at girls' hostels and campus corridors, sanitary napkin vending machines in toilets, and special efforts for internships and placements for female students. Moreover, female students are bagging scholarships provided by ICAR, UGC, and the Department of Science and Technology. "We have a budget of around Rs 90 crore for competitive scholarships. Most of them are bagged by girls," Agrawal says.

The number of applications received per seat from female students is higher than the number of applications received from boys in various agriculture-related courses. In UG courses for the academic year 2022-2023, for instance, 31 girls submitted applications per seat against 18 boys. "This means that there is more competition among girls," he says.

"Out of a total of 2,700 students who visited international Higher Educational Institutes (HEIs) under ICAR-NAHEP, the share of female students is 42% till March 2024," Agrawal adds.

About 60% of the girls in the ICAR quota seats are from Bihar with 22%, followed by Kerala (18%), Rajasthan (14%), and Odisha (7%).

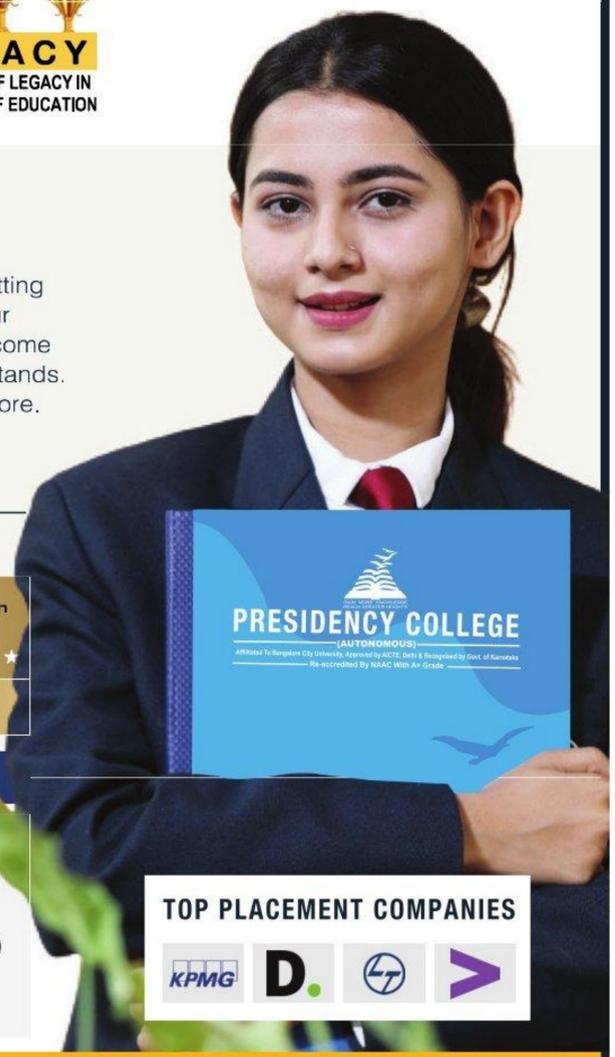


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# Transforming India's higher education sector

It is time to recognise the barriers and boundaries of knowledge that must be broken to accept interdisciplinarity, writes **Prof C Raj Kumar**

The idea of Viksit Bharat 2047 is an aspirational objective on how India ought to be when we celebrate our 100th Independence anniversary in 2047. PM Modi emphasised the role of education, universities and youth in that transformation. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 essentially outlined the basic framework for the future of education in India. This combination of the NEP and the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 lays the foundation for what universities and higher education institutions ought to be doing when it comes to building the future.

There are five critical components: First, we need to commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence and we need to provide greater access, both of which are important. But somehow access has been juxtaposed against excellence. We need to do both, and we should not put one against the other. In some ways, we simply cannot achieve the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 without focusing on building institutions of excellence and nurturing them.

## Benchmark parameters

Second, one of the major challenges we face is benchmarking ourselves with the best institutions around the world. Quality parameters are always subjective, but there is a greater consensus as to how you measure excellence and what constitutes quality. Under that framework, there are a few things that we must do. First, we should be focusing on learning outcomes and the pedagogy of teaching in our classrooms, two areas where we face challenges. Second, the quality of the faculty is essential. We need to develop the ability to attract the finest minds into our institutions, to retain them and to be able to bring



**Youngsters must have a holistic approach to education and we need to focus on the larger goals of educational transformation by bridging the gap between theory and practice**

out the best in them. The third and related dimension to benchmarking is research, knowledge creation and publications. If you look at all major global rankings, nearly 50% of the methodology or indicators of excellence are attributed to research publications and citations.

If we aim to fulfil the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 and the objectives of the NEP 2020, we need to commit ourselves to research.

## Holistic approach

Fourth is recognising the importance of interdisciplinarity in our

teaching and research. For a very long time, our educational institutions have been isolated in terms of disciplinary boundaries. With the recognition of the four-year undergraduate programme (FY-UP) and the recognition of the barriers and boundaries of knowledge that we need to break, we have become more accepting of interdisciplinarity which is embodied in the real world of problem-solving.

Youngsters must have a holistic approach to education and we need to focus on the larger goals of educa-

tional transformation by bridging the gap between theory and practice. We are facing huge challenges concerning employment, careers and the opportunities for youth. We simply do not have enough jobs and we cannot expect the government or even the private sector to fill the wide gap. We have approximately 45 million students, over 1000 universities, and nearly 50,000 plus colleges. However, even with these impressive numbers, the fact of the matter is that our Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is hovering badly around 20% to 24%. To address this imbalance, we need to increase our GER and welcome more students to this sector, but we do not have enough opportunities in the job market. The only way to address this conundrum is to focus a lot more on innovation, technological intervention and entrepreneurship.

## Harnessing talent

Finally, how do we harness the intellectual powerhouse of our university to address the big public policy issues of our country? If you look at universities around the world, especially in the West, the knowledge that gets generated in universities in the form of policy papers, publications and research reports is not lying around, but constantly feeding into the system and influencing public policy reform and governance. There ought to be a robust mechanism for universities to be connected to government ministries and departments, so that the intellectual support system, knowledge base and ideas generated in universities, including research centres and institutes, are productively used for addressing the big challenges of our time.

(The writer is Rhodes Scholar, founding vice-chancellor, OP Jindal Global University, Sonapat, Haryana)

# Hyper-personalised lessons can empower learners

Institutions must embrace collaboration and adapt to hybrid education settings, writes **Ujjwal Singh**



Education systems have undergone significant transformation from ancient to modern India. While access to education has expanded, the quality of learning has not always met expectations. In ancient India, education was a privilege of the select few, but the teacher-to-student ratio was favourable, often at 1 to 3 or 1 to 5. The guru-shishya relationship was at the heart of this system, fostering hyper-personalised learning experiences. However, this practice diminished over time, particularly with the advent of Western education.

## Cultivating a growth mindset

The Gurukul system in ancient India exemplifies the transformative power of hyper-personalised education, as evidenced by Arjun, the third Pandava prince in the epic - Mahabharat. This hyper-personalised education allows adapting teaching styles, tools, and methods to meet individual learners' unique requirements and preferences. Consequently, learners demonstrate heightened engagement, improved retention, and a deeper comprehension of concepts. Personalised learning cultivates a growth mindset, motivating learners to embrace challenges, learn from setbacks, and continuously strive for self-improvement.

## Tracking progress

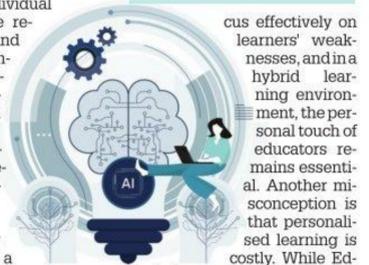
AI-driven education is a game-changer, empowering educators to track individual learner's progress, address doubts, assess understanding, and tailor teaching modules. For instance, consider twins Aisha and Ayush. Aisha struggles with algebra, while Ayush with balancing chemical equations. With AI, their educator can develop unique modules to address their weak areas. This personalised approach ensures that learners are not confined to a one-size-fits-all education style but instead receive a customised learning pathway that is dynamic, self-paced.

## Significant impact

Despite its many advantages, personalised learning has been hindered by several myths. It's often assumed that digital technologies in personalised learning diminish the role of educators. However, personalised learning enables educators to fo-

## Smart solutions

In the 21st century, the technology revolution has made it possible again to impart hyper-personalised learning through smart or hybrid education technologies at an unmatched scale. As per industry research, the global smart education & learning market is expected to grow at 22% CAGR to reach \$985.33 billion by 2030. In India, personalised learning is a part of the larger online and hybrid EdTech market, estimated to grow at 20% CAGR to \$2.28 billion by 2025. Backed by AI, online EdTech solutions can create an immersive hybrid learning ecosystem capturing the best of both worlds: the imparting of education via a teacher and continued learning through smart solutions.



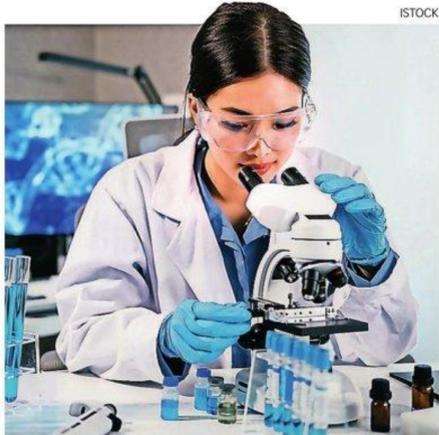
cus effectively on learners' weaknesses, and in a hybrid learning environment, the personal touch of educators remains essential. Another misconception is that personalised learning is costly. While EdTech does come with expenses, compared to the costs families incur in sending their children to coaching centres or distant towns like Kota for competitive education, EdTech solutions are cost-effective, delivering education to learners in the comfort and security of their homes. The true power of hyper-personalised learning lies in its ability to significantly impact the learning progress of millions of remote or local learners aspiring to gain admission to premier institutions through competitive exams like NEET, CUET, and JEE.

To cultivate top achievers in competitive exams, it's imperative to implement a personalised learning environment across diverse locations. This requires educational institutions, including schools and colleges, and educators to embrace collaboration and modern learning methods and adapt to hybrid education settings. Educators should adopt roles as facilitators, mentors, and supporters, guiding learners through personalised pathways.

(The author is founding CEO, Infinity Learn by Sri Chaitanya)

# It is imperative to address the gender gap in international mobility, STEM courses

Addressing inequality in academia requires collective efforts, writes **Manisha Zaveri**



In an ever-evolving global workforce, the gender gap's persistence in both education and employment remains a challenge that transcends geographical boundaries. Across the globe, gender-based disparities in education persist, creating complex challenges. The nexus between education enrolment rates, completion statistics, academic achievements, and the fields of study chosen by individuals is instrumental in shaping their career trajectories. An example in this context is the underrepresentation of females in STEM disciplines—science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. These fields not only offer higher remuneration but also promise stability and growth. However, this lack of diversity keeps certain jobs specialised, which in turn makes it more likely for people to stay in particular job types.

## Shifting trends

According to a recent report by the Institute of International Education (IIE), female enrolment in higher education worldwide has expanded nearly twice as rapidly as male enrolment. This surge can be attributed to improved equity and access, heightened income prospects, and the internationally acknowledged necessity to reduce the gender disparity across all levels.

## Economic growth

Economic growth plays a pivotal role in fostering gender equity and countries such as India and China serve as prime examples. The economic development of these nations has propelled greater female enrolment in both domestic and international higher education programmes. India has made significant strides in promoting

## Promoting equity

According to the World Economic Forum's (WEF) annual Gender Gap Report 2023, India was ranked 127 out of 146 countries in terms of gender parity—an improvement of eight places from last year. While India had closed 64.3% of the overall gender gap, the report said, it had reached only 36.7% parity on economic participation and opportunity. India has made significant strides in promoting gender equity in higher education.

gender equity in higher education. According to the All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2019-20, female enrolment now surpassed that of males, with a gross enrolment ratio of 27.3% compared to 26.9% for males. This marks an 18% increase in female enrolment from 2015-16 to 2019-20. While the gender gap in STEM fields remains a global challenge, India is making progress. Despite India producing many female STEM graduates, females constitute less than 15% of researchers in STEM fields. However, data reveals a growing number of Indian women pursuing STEM studies in the United States, particularly at the master's level. Initiatives like the Indo-US Fellowship for Women in STEM are also working to close this gender gap. Addressing the gender gap in international mobility and STEM studies requires collective efforts from individuals, society, and governments.

(The author is Joint Managing Director, Career Moosaic)

# E-attendance has potential to fix absenteeism in schools, improve educational outcomes

Implementing a digital attendance system in rural schools can be exhaustive, expensive, and time-consuming for the administration

Priyadarshini Gupta  
@timesgroup.com

To enhance transparency and accountability in school attendance, several state government schools are implementing digital attendance systems. A system has been initiated where teachers record attendance using tablets or computers, and parents receive daily updates on their children's attendance. The system allows regular monitoring and involvement of parents in their children's education. The initiative was first launched under the Vidya Samiksha Kendra in Gujarat in 2022. Recently, Tripura has also decided to launch an e-attendance system for teachers and students in government schools to enhance education quality and performance. This was necessitated as the traditional manual attendance methods have been prone to inaccuracies, and manipulation.

## No scope for proxy

Sudha Acharya, principal, IITL Public School, Delhi, says, "Besides keeping a record of students and teachers, several Delhi government school principals have been provided with tabs to monitor absenteeism. An attendance record is maintained for tea-

## By leveraging technology to track attendance, the government aims to instil a culture of accountability

chers, on the manual register and biometric system, which ensures that all teachers are present for their classes, and there is no scope for proxy."

"The pandemic significantly accelerated the adoption of digital tools in education, including online attendance systems, and comprehensive digital record-keeping solutions," she says, adding, "The move is aimed at addressing longstanding challenges related to teacher absenteeism. By leveraging technology to track attendance, the government aims to instil a culture of accountability among teachers and improve the overall educational outcomes. Teachers are required to mark their attendance electronically, providing real-time data on their presence," she says. While urban schools may have the necessary resources, rural schools often struggle with basic digital infrastructure. With incon-

sistent electricity supply, poor internet connectivity, and unavailability of digital devices, many remote areas still lack adequate digital infrastructure. This can hinder the implementation of online attendance systems.

Acharya says, "E-attendance is a good initiative, but implementing it across the country can be a difficult task, especially when the country faces a huge digital divide. Recording attendance digitally requires teachers to consistently use tablets or computers, which will be challenging in schools with limited resources and unstable internet connections. Also, teachers need to be trained in digital systems. This can be time-consuming and affect the daily academic tasks."

## Sense of punctuality

Sushmita Kar, a government school-teacher in Purulia, says, "The introduction of e-attendance will also bring a sense of punctuality. This will avoid the malpractices involved in the pen-paper attendance method. It is the teachers' responsibility to stay updated and take it forward to the children." She adds, "Digital attendance will require teachers to be adequately trained in using digital tools. Many teachers in government schools may not be familiar with the technology needed to operate these systems effectively. Training is important for such initiatives; however, it should not be lengthy as it will make it monotonous, and teachers will lose interest."



# Technology is democratising job opportunities

AI is providing data to organisations, enabling them to make informed hiring decisions, writes **Chocko Valliappa**

## Do not underestimate the value of consulting faculty, librarians for advice



According to the recent AISHE report, a staggering 4.33 crore young Indians are pursuing undergraduate studies in Arts, Sciences, Commerce, and Engineering & Technology. A back-of-the-envelope calculation translates to over 1 crore students entering the job market annually. Students are aware of the harsh reality: there aren't enough jobs waiting for them. In this situation, it is imperative to supplement college studies with additional knowledge and skills to gain an edge over others. Students have abundant online resources at their fingertips to build a stronger foundation.

## Valuable resources

SWAYAM platform, a government initiative, offers over 6,000 programmes created by IIS as part of NPTEL, across various fields. These include Engineering, Science, Humanities, Management, Information Technology, Education and Teaching, Data Science, Health and Medicine, Personal Development, and Art and Design. While SWAYAM courses themselves are free, certifications cost Rs 1,000. Do not underestimate the value of consulting faculty and librarians for advice on additional courses. Many libraries subscribe to online learning platforms that might grant access to these resources.

## Bolstering knowledge

College students must develop well-rounded skills to participate in multiple research projects. Besides bolstering knowledge, it will hone a student's critical thinking skills. Polishing communication and social skills is crucial. These skills will help you get picked for industry internships, which often lead to job opportunities for committed performers with exceptional work ethics.

Ambitious students can consider international online learning options, those offer a vast selection of courses from top universities and companies worldwide. The quest for knowledge will benefit students not only in their job search but



also throughout their careers. Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) and tools like ChatGPT and Gemini are poised to play a significant role in the future workplace, helping you understand complex concepts and gain different perspectives.

## Smart matchmaking

AI-proctored HireMee, an assessment and recruitment platform, has been filling the gap between talent

workplace readiness. This streamlines the hiring process, makes it efficient and quicker for companies and opens doors to a wealth of job opportunities. Students from the hinterland must learn to use such tools as Artificial Intelligence and machine learning algorithms to bridge the geographical divide to match candidates with jobs.

This 'smart matchmaking' ensures companies have access to vetted qualified applicants who are a good cultural fit. It means targeted job applications, improving your chances of being discovered. These tools eliminate face-to-face rejections commonly seen in campus drives, where typically only 5-10% of students are hired, leaving the remaining 90-95% to face rejection, which can negatively impact their psyche. The increased demand for technically skilled youth can lead to more jobs for educated youth.

(The author is vice-chairman, Sona College of Technology)



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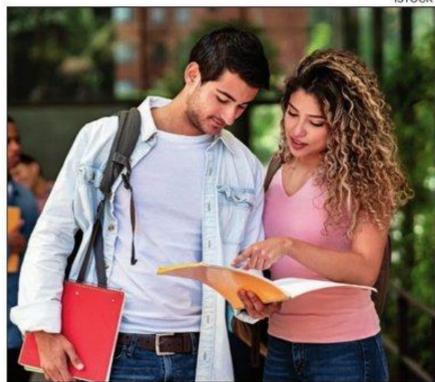
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## Studying abroad is safe if you follow these simple rules

An indepth understanding of laws pertaining to, but not limited to driving, drugs, dress codes, etc will help students avoid legal or cultural misunderstandings, writes **Saurabh Arora**



Studying abroad is an experience that offers students the opportunity to immerse themselves in new cultures and broaden their horizons. As per the University Living Indian Student Mobility Report 2023-24, 1.3 million students from India pursued higher education in overseas destinations in 2023, out of which an estimated 58% are enrolled across Canada, US, UK and Australia. While we all have access to information, navigating unfamiliar territory can present its own challenges if not treated with caution. It is essential to prioritise one's safety and tick simple check boxes at the planning stage itself.

### Research and plan ahead

A thorough research of the destination country and specific city is a must before leaving your home country. If possible, speak to some people in the destination country who can familiarise you with the law of the land, customs, cultural shift, and potential safety concerns. This will enable one to make informed choices and reduce chances of landing in trouble.

### Book verified accommodation

Accommodation plays one of the most crucial roles in an international student's journey. Since 'safety' and 'comfort' both reflect on criteria filters of international students, one must always opt for, and book verified accommodation only. Start by looking for accommodation near the university or institute as early as receiving the offer letter and blocking your seat with fee deposits. An early start not only gives you the benefit of choosing from a variety of available accommodations in the preferred vicinity but is also easy on the pocket by 20-30%.

### Stay informed

Keeping track of current events and safety advisories in the host country is crucial. Students must regularly check travel advisory websites, apps or any other me-

dia, to stay informed about potential risks and plan their routines accordingly.

### Register with home country's embassy

Upon arrival in the host country, students should register with their home country's embassy or consulate. This way they will receive regular alerts and advisories that may be important for students from a particular country or ethnicity. This may particularly be important in case of emergencies, ensuring they have the necessary support needed during challenging situations.

### Stay connected

A regular connect and communication with friends, family, and fellow students can be beneficial. Having a close-knit circle or a set of trusted individuals to share plans, contact information, etc regularly fosters a support circle, and adds a layer of safety net for students.

### Respect local laws and customs

Every country has its own laws and cultural norms. Students must familiarise themselves with these laws as soon as possible to avoid landing in distress situations unknowingly. A thorough understanding of certain laws pertaining to, but not limited to driving, drugs, dress codes, acceptable public behaviour, possession of illegal material, etc will help students avoid legal or cultural misunderstandings.

### Plan for emergencies

Establishing a plan for emergencies is vital. Save and have access to local emergency contacts, such as the nearest hospital and police station, university support services and home embassy's support contact details. Students must keep in regular touch with their emergency contact and keep them updated about their plans from time to time.

(The author is founder & CEO, University Living)

## US consulates increase its interview capacity to meet amplified student visa demand

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we have increased our student interview capacity this year to meet that demand.

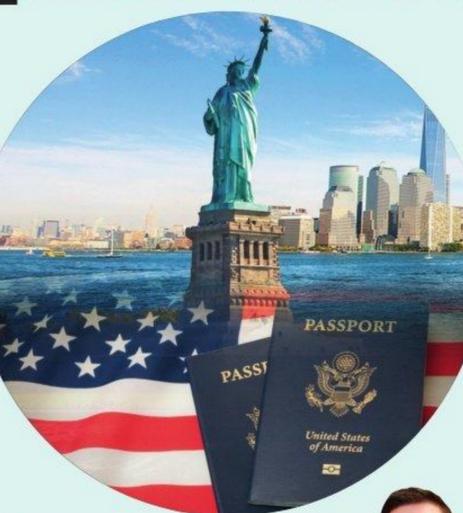
More Indian students received a US student visa in 2023 than students from any other country, which makes up over a quarter of all international students in the US. Looking at the trend, the Embassy this year starts student visa appointments two weeks earlier to meet anticipated student demand. **US Embassy spokesperson Chris Elms** speaks about the rising interest to study in the US, the security threats and the impact of the Presidential elections in November.

**What are the measures taken by the US consulates to address the rising applications for student visas? Are there more officials deputed to speed up the visa process?** Our goal is to allow every first-time student visa applicant to interview ahead of their scheduled programme start date, along with as many second-time applicants as time permits. To meet that goal, we are continually evaluating and adjusting our schedule, staffing, and processes to maximise appointment availability. For example, this year we are starting student visa appointments two weeks earlier to give us more time to meet anticipated student demand.

**The first tranche of the interview process starts in late May and will continue till August. Is there a set number of applications that the consulates are expecting?** We are opening tens of thousands of appointments, and

**In 2023, a record 253,355 visas for international students were denied by consular officials across the globe. What are the top reasons for visa rejections? How can students prepare better?** We encourage students not to focus on denials, as most student visa applicants in India will receive the visa on their first try. When a visa is denied, it could be for several reasons. The most common is that the applicant couldn't demonstrate during their interview that they have the intention to return to India and depart the US at the end of their temporary visit. We may also deny a visa if we need more documents or information from the applicant or if we need to do more work on the case. In these cases, the denial may be overcome once we receive the information we need. Students can prepare for their interview by ensuring they have their documents in order. Mandatory documents include I-20, SEVIS receipt, DS-160 barcode page, valid passport, application fee receipt, and two recent photographs. We also recommend that students bring financial records and previous academic records though these may not be required at the interview. Students should also be prepared to speak to the interviewing officer in their own words about their academic plans and to talk about how they will fund their studies.

**Students from India were issued a total of 130,839 F-1 student visas in 2023, which was a 14% jump from 2022. Is it likely to increase this year?** Issuance numbers ultimately come down to the number of students who apply and are admitted to US schools and the qualifications of those individual students. We cannot predict exact numbers, but we are anticipating another big year for student visa applicants, and we continue to see large numbers of students seeking advising from EducationUSA, the free advising service that is the official source of information about US higher education. In fact, more Indian students received a US student visa last year than students from any other country and Indian students now make up over a quarter of all international students in the United States. This year we expect those trends to continue.



We encourage students not to focus on denials, as most student visa applicants in India will receive the visa on their first try.  
- Chris Elms, US Embassy spokesperson



### Pre-departure Orientations

#### In Person

- Friday, June 14: Mumbai by USIEF Mumbai
- Friday, June 21: New Delhi by USIEF New Delhi
- Friday, June 21: Chennai by USIEF Chennai
- Friday, June 28: Kolkata by USIEF Kolkata
- Friday, June 28: Bengaluru by USIEF Chennai
- Saturday, July 13: Chandigarh by USIEF New Delhi
- Friday, July 12: Hyderabad by USIEF & VAF Hyderabad

#### Online

- Thursday, July 18: All India

Congress and those completing a four-year undergraduate programme will get to see one US presidential election in person. Over the last decade, the number of Indian students in the US has nearly tripled and, if trends continue Indians will soon be the largest group of international students at American universities and colleges. While some students do consider how government policies will impact them as international students, past and current statistics indicate continued interest in the US as the top international study destination. The US and its higher educational institutions continue to welcome Indian students and provide unmatched opportunities for academic and professional growth.

**Despite the looming recession, increasing threats of unemployment and cost of**

living pressure, why are Indian students driven to study in the US?

US institutions offer gold standards in education, a range of highly specialised and industry-focused majors, the opportunity to conduct cutting-edge research, access to international networks, a robust infrastructure, as well as flexibility in programme offerings to create a customised educational journey suited to their specific needs. A degree from an accredited US university is an invaluable asset for any student preparing for the future, as the rich, immersive campuses and diverse classrooms along with practical training in several courses give the relevant experience-key to today's job market.

**What is your opinion on the security threats faced by Indian students in the US, with a spate of unfortunate incidents in the recent past?**

Students' safety is of paramount importance to the US and all US schools and universities are strongly committed to safeguarding campus communities. The tragic deaths of some Indian students in the US over these past months stemmed from different causes and took place in different locations across the US. As External Affairs Minister Jaishankar recently shared, the Government of India has looked into these deaths and there is no indication of any connection between these tragedies. Looking out for the welfare of students and building safe and inclusive communities is part of what US universities do every day, as they welcome and support American and international students to campus.

## Why Philippines is the next big destination for aspiring doctors

The surge in popularity is driven by factors that include affordable tuition fees, a US-aligned curriculum ensuring smooth transitions to international careers, and a strong network of residency programmes recognised globally, writes **Kadwin Pillai**

The global healthcare landscape is facing an unprecedented challenge—a growing demand for qualified medical professionals. According to the WHO, by 2030, the world may witness a shortfall of over 15 million health workers by 2030 with competition for medical school seats in traditional destinations like the US and Canada reaching unprecedented highs. The report also explains the need for India to add nearly 2 million more doctors, nurses, and healthcare professionals to achieve a minimum density of 44.5 health professionals over 10,000 people. Adding numbers is a simple expectation, but to achieve it, there needs to be formal avenues to education. Philippines has emerged as a rising star in this regard. This Southeast Asian nation is attracting aspiring doctors worldwide with its unique combination of high-quality education at a competitive cost.

### Thriving education system

With a rich history dating back to the American colonial period, Philippines has cultivated a formidable reputation in medical education. A cornerstone of this system is the accreditation of Philippine medical schools by esteemed international bodies such as the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER) and the World Health Organization (WHO). These accreditations not only attest to the quality of education but also open doors for graduates to pursue medical careers worldwide. Moreover, Philippines boasts an English-medium curriculum, which attracts a diverse pool of students from around the globe. This linguistic advantage facilitates seamless communication and collaboration among students and faculty, enriching the learning experience. Furthermore, the emphasis on clinical training sets Philippine medical education apart.

### Indian medicos to benefit from policy change

The Philippines has announced a policy change that will significantly benefit Indian medical students pursuing their MBBS degrees. A recent amendment to the Philippine Medical Act of 1959 has been approved by the House of Representatives, paving the way for Indian students, including those from foreign countries, to register and practise medicine in the Philippines. This development comes after several years of persistent requests from India, recognising the Philip-

ippines as a global destination for medical education. Under this new provision, Indian students who complete their Doctor of Medicine degree from a Philippine College of Medicine recognised by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), along with a 12-month internship, will be eligible to register and practise medicine in the Philippines. The CHED will issue the necessary certification to facilitate this process, ensuring a smooth transition for Indian graduates.

### Affordable option

Post the Ukraine-Russia conflict, the Philippines has emerged as an affordable

option for aspiring doctors. In fact, Philippines has been a major destination to pursue MBBS abroad for 15 years. Compared to traditional destinations, living expenses and cost of completing medical course cost a fraction in Philippines. Access to a scholarship and other financial aid programmes also help alleviate the financial burden on students. For Indian students who are keen, policies adopted by the Philippines have been encouraging. The policy included a 54-month medical curriculum and a year of internship. Previously, the Philippines offered a 4-year MD course alongside a Pre-MD programme, but now, stu-

dents must adhere to the 54-month curriculum. The Philippines' CHED (Higher Education Dept equivalent of Philippines) and PRC (Professional Regulatory Commission) allow foreign students to follow this curriculum with a year of internship under their existing medical Act.

### Global opportunities

For aspiring doctors eyeing practice in North America, the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) serves as a critical milestone. International Medical Graduates (IMGs) must excel in these exams to secure residency positions and ultimately practise in the US. Compared to destinations such as Ukraine, Australia, and Singapore, Philippines emerges as a strategic choice for IMGs due to its remarkable track record in USMLE success.

Philippine medical schools have consistently achieved USMLE pass rates, often surpassing the global average. For instance, in recent years, pass rates for Step 1, Step 2 CK (Clinical Knowledge), and Step 2 CS (Clinical Skills) exams have exceeded 90% in several institutions. Such stellar performance underscores the effectiveness of Philippine medical education in preparing students for rigorous licensing examinations. Moreover, Philippine graduates benefit from a strong network of residency program-

mes in the US that actively seek out their expertise. Many prestigious hospitals and healthcare institutions across the US have a history of accepting graduates from Philippine medical schools into their residency programmes.

### Need for more physicians

As India positions itself to become the world's third-largest economy, the importance of healthcare cannot be overstated, particularly in the light of its burgeoning population. With over 24 lakh students registering for the NEET exam, the demand for medical education is palpable. However, India's medical infrastructure faces a daunting gap, with just over 1 lakh seats available for over 12 lakh eligible students. High costs and limited availability of seats in India's medical colleges drive many aspiring doctors abroad, where education is more affordable. However, the quality of education abroad has been a concern, especially with regard to passing the FMGE upon return. In addressing India's need for more doctors, particularly in the rural areas, the Philippines emerges as a promising ally, bridging the gap between aspiration and opportunity in the field of healthcare.

(The author is director, Transworld Educare and chairman, Kings International Medical Academy)

## UK govt's decision to reinstate Graduate Route visa will help British varsities

Rishi Sunak government took back sweeping crackdown on Graduate Route visas, which will allow international students to help in UK's economic recovery and offer subsidies to domestic students

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Karan Bilimoria, chancellor, University of Birmingham, has been a strong supporter of offering opportunities to international students and has been strongly recommending that the UK government have an open approach to the student visa and post-work visa policies.

During his recent India visit, Bilimoria led a delegation to meet the prospective students from India who got an offer from the University and also to formally launch the new Joint Master's program in Sustainable Energy Systems. On the sidelines, Bilimoria spoke to Education Times about the independent Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) review report on the Graduate Route visa scheme in the UK. The British universities along with the international students were concerned over the UK government's decision to restrict the Graduate Route visa scheme. UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, who had earlier taken a strong stand on abolishing the graduate route

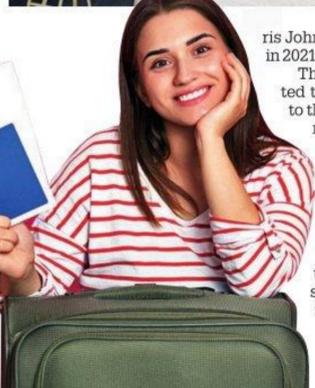
Undergraduate home fees are currently capped by the Government at £9,250. With inflation going up and the cost of running the universities increasing, international students are the only way to survive this.  
- Karan Bilimoria

and was considering restrictions on the visa which allows graduates to stay on and work for up to two years after their degree course, is no longer planning to go ahead with it. The government backtracked the plan following strong opposition from key cabinet members, including the education minister and prominent British university stakeholders.

Bilimoria, who was instrumental in instituting the Graduate Route in 2007 and presented it in the House of Lords to support the international students, has been actively campaigning against Rishi Sunak's decision to end it. "As a former international student myself

who came to the UK at the age of 19 to study for seven years, I know how hard it is to raise money to study and get a job in the UK. Although I am a Tata Scholar and Mahindra Scholar, I had won several other scholarships which I had to pay back," he says. "Students take education loans, and parents make great sacrifices to raise the funds for education. I understand how valuable a two-year work visa is to find a job after completing the course," he says.

"It was taken away by the Conservative government in 2012, and as the former president of the United Kingdom Council of International Student Affairs (UKCISA), we have been fighting to bring back the two-year post-study work visa now known as the Graduate Route visa," he adds. "We released a report in 2018, making various recommendations on the visa option. The top two recommendations included bringing in target international students which was 600,000 students and the second was to bring back two years post-study work visas," adds Bilimoria. Former PM Bo-



ris Johnson listened to that and in 2021, it was brought back.

The visa option has rocketed the Indian students back to the UK and it has also prompted the competitor countries such as the US, Australia, Canada and Europe to introduce several attractive post-study visa options. "This is the global race to get the best international students, including students from India. Unfortunately, the current government, which is anti-immigration, anti-universities, and anti-international students

is trying to please the far right-wing members of their party. They continue to include international students in the net migration figures," he says.

The UK which has a net population of 67 million, having a migration population of 700,000 is a high figure. But the net migration figure includes illegal immigrants coming to the country on boats. Genuine refugees from Ukraine, Afghanistan and Hong Kong immigrants have a valid reason. "Workers coming with point-based immigration system through a legitimate route are valid, just as seasonal immigrants who come to work. But to include students in the similar category is wrong," adds Bilimoria. "Our competitor countries place students in the temporary migrants category and do not include them in the net migration figures. In May 2023, the government changed the option for master's students' partners and children to apply to live in the country although they paid NHS and visa fees. Only the PhD students are allowed to get their partners on a valid visa," he adds.

The government was hoping to find misuse and abuse of the

Graduate Route in the MAC report. This, unfortunately, was not the case, says Bilimoria. International students bring in £42 billion to the UK economy every year. The diversity that international students bring to the campus is immense. Besides the strong soft power of international students, they also boost the university finances. "Undergraduate home fees are currently capped by the Government at £9,250. With the inflation going up and the cost of running the universities going up, international students are the only way to survive this, as they pay a higher tuition fee," adds Bilimoria. Only 15% of international students are enrolled in the UK while the rest is occupied by domestic students, thus without international students, the UK students will not get the fee subsidies, adds Bilimoria.

With the UK economy improving, the threat of recession is slowly receding. International students need not be threatened by the economy as there are plenty of jobs available. There is a shortage of labour in every sector, which can be explored by international students, he adds.

# Does competency-based assessment overlook needs of average learners

Some academics believe that it embraces diversity in classrooms, while others feel that it can be daunting for learners in a rural setting, long used to rote memorisation

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From the 2024-25 academic year, there will be an increased focus on Competency-Based Questions (50%). In that, there will be three question types to give a higher weightage to questions that assess students' ability to apply knowledge and rational thinking. This raises the obvious question as to whether such a question pattern might overlook the needs of the average learner. Academics have a mixed bag of reactions as some claim that it can assess the different skills in a diverse classroom, while others reason that its largescale implementation will be stressing the average learners as the questions require higher-order thinking skills which can tax those long used to rote learning.

The Competency-Based Questions (CBQs) may include questions in three formats: Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQs) with application scenarios; case studies that analyse real-life situations related to the subject matter; and source-based integrated questions that evaluate students' ability to interpret data and information from various sources. As per the new exam pattern, there will however be less emphasis on Long Answer Questions (30%).

Validating the reasons for increasing the percentage of Competency-Based

**While in class X, the target of 50% CBQs has already been achieved, in class XII, it will be achieved by 2025**

Questions, Sanyam Bhardwaj, controller of examinations, CBSE, says, "The CBQs were already there, and its increasing percentage in the boards has not adversely impacted students' performance. On the contrary, in the 2024 class XII board results, there has been a 0.65% increase in the pass percentage as compared to last year. In 2023, the CBQs were increased from 30% to 40%, so the increase in such question types is an ongoing process ever since its implementation four years ago."

### Eliminating rote learning

"The increase in CBQs to 50% which, as of now is the final limit, is aimed at improving the cognitive function of students, and they still have another year to get more accustomed to the model," he says.

In 2020, CBQs (10%) were first implemented in class X boards, thereafter, they were introduced in the class XII boards in 2021. While in class X, the target of 50% CBQs has already been achieved, in class XII, the same percentage will be achieved in 2025. "CBQs also provide students with an added edge in the competitive exams such as the IIT entrance test and make them better decision-makers and pro-

blem-solvers. We are offering training to the teachers at 17 Centres of Excellence (CoE) in CBOs to bring about a qualitative improvement in the teaching-learning process," Bhardwaj explains.

### Promoting critical thinking

"The increase in focus on CBQs was necessary to align the CBSE curriculum with global educational standards and to promote the development of critical skills among students. The effectiveness of this approach, as reflected in the 2024 board results, indicates that it has the potential to enhance the learning experience for all students, including average learners. With continued support and adaptation, the CBQs format can help students achieve a deeper understanding and application of knowledge," says Shylaja Menon, principal, The Shri Ram Universal School, Bengaluru, reasoning that the reduced emphasis on Long Answer Questions (LAQs) has paved the way for more objec-

tive evaluation. However, this shift raises concerns about the potential decline in students' writing and communication skills. "To address these issues, schools can integrate writing tasks, project reports, and presentations into the curriculum, ensuring a balanced development of competencies," Menon says.

### Key roadblocks

Talking about the challenges in CBOs, a HoD of Political Science and Legal Studies of a Delhi-based school, on condition of anonymity, says, "Equitable and quality education being a far cry in remote and rural areas implements Competency-Based Assessments (CBAs) somewhat challenging. As it calls for first unlearning the traditional teaching and assessment methods and then relearning the application of new pedagogical tools for CBA, resistance from the senior educators accustomed to the established methodology of assessment cannot be ruled out."

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Note: \* Subject to approval from concerned university

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(L to R) Prof S Sadagopan, Dr Amit Bhatt, Dr KN Subramanya, Dr Seshachalam D, Dr Jagannath Korody

(L to R) Aditya Mishra, Arpit Yadav, Dr Rajat Gera, Dr Robin Rohit Vincent, Dr Anirudh Sridhar

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At the highly anticipated Mission Admission 2024 expo and seminar held on May 18th, Bengaluru's JN Tata Auditorium on the IISc campus buzzed with activity. This wasn't the usual discussion on scientific inquiry that resonated within the hallowed halls of the IISc. It was a deliberation, for shaping futures, exploring possibilities, and forging connections between aspirations and opportunities – all crucial ingredients for moulding successful careers.

The higher education event was organised by The Times of India in association with the Presidency University, IFIM Institution, CMR University, Gopalan College of Engineering and Management, the State Bank of India, and Canara Bank.

Srikar MS, principal secretary (Higher Education), Government of Karnataka, the chief guest, began his keynote address by sharing his personal experiences and the lessons he learned, hoping these insights would aid the students in their journey. He spoke about the importance of having a personal dream and purpose, and pursuing it relentlessly, rather than following a herd mentality.

The official highlighted that talent alone is not enough; hard work coupled with consistency is crucial for success. He advised that failures should be seen as learning opportunities and should not hinder

Srikar MS

Uttam Kumar Badiger

Dr S Kumar

progress. Additionally, he stressed the importance of developing holistic skills like communication and leadership, alongside gaining expertise in one's field. "Students must seek educational environments that nurture these abilities," he urged.

Acknowledging the efforts of parents towards their children, Srikar urged them to support their children without exerting excessive pressure, allowing them to explore their interests and make informed decisions. The day-long exposition featured two-panel discussions: "How Engineering Education & the Job Market Are Evolving in the AI Era" and "The Impact of AI and Data Science Courses in Non-Engineering Streams." Additionally, three sessions dedicated to guiding students on approaching CET and NEET counselling and understanding the services provided by the Consortium of Medical, Engineering, and Dental Colleges of

Karnataka (COMEDK) were a huge hit.

### ENGG EDUCATION IN AI ERA

Prof S Sadagopan, founding director of IIIT Bangalore, who moderated the session (How Engineering Education & the Job Market Are Evolving in the AI Era) reflected on historical technological milestones, such as the development of operating systems in the 1960s, the advent of personal computers in the 1980s, the internet revolution in the 1990s, and the recent rise of AI with ChatGPT. He reassured that while each technological revolution stirs fears of job losses, history shows that new technologies ultimately create more opportunities. He stressed the need for adaptability and continuous learning, noting the potential impact of AI on current jobs and the importance of keeping skills updated.

Dayananda Sagar University vice chan-

## MISSION ADMISSION

cellor Dr Amit Bhatt stressed the development of foundational skills like mathematics, critical thinking, and problem-solving while highlighting that AI is a tool to be used alongside human expertise. "With good mathematical thinking, you can conquer anything," he stressed, exuding confidence that the future is exciting.

RV College of Engineering principal Dr KN Subramanya brought out a broader perspective, arguing that AI should be used to address societal challenges like climate change. He emphasised the importance of interdisciplinary approaches and the continued need for domain expertise in engineering and other fields.

Dr Seshachalam D, professor & dean of Academics, BMS College of Engineering, concurred with Dr Subramanya and said that AI cuts across all the spheres of life and does not function in silos. "To understand the broad applications of AI, students need proper guidance. Parents must give a better insight," he said.

However, encouraging students to opt for core engineering courses, Dr Jagannath Korody, director, Manipal Institute of Technology, Bengaluru, affirmed that without core engineering the

world or society cannot survive.

"In the last 10 years, we have been seeing a trend where everyone opts for computer science and those who have scored less are opting for core engineering courses. The responsibility to reverse this trend falls on institutions, industries, governments and parents," he underscored.

Arpit Yadav, senior AI scientist at the Centre for Continuing Education, IFIM Institution, explained how AI tools are being used by doctors, lawyers, and people from other sectors to get the job done.

Dr Anirudh Sridhar, dean of Thought Leadership, Alliance University, chimed in, emphasising the collaborative future of AI and humans. "The market has understood this," he declared. Highlighting the vast datasets waiting to be analysed in fields like political science, psychology, and social sciences, Dr Sridhar stressed the enduring need for human interpretation.

"A course in liberal arts, combined with a course in data science or Python, is ideal for today's job market, which demands critical thinking and the ability to leverage AI," he stated.

To a question on how institutions are using AI in curriculum, Dr Rajat Gera, dean (Management, Commerce and Humanities Cluster) & director (Management), CMR University, said that in the sphere of man-

agement, everything is getting automated.

"Earlier when we used to study management, it was taking hours to build models and make calculations. Now AI has made repetitive tasks automated. You can take a company's balance sheet and do the analysis within seconds," he stated, adding that teaching all these has become redundant.

"However, now we are continuing to teach basics besides teaching AI tools," he said.

Adding to Gera's perspective, Dr Robin Rohit Vincent, associate professor in Computer Science and Engineering, School of CSE & IS, Presidency University, said that using AI tools does not require knowledge of programming.

"Companies doing recruitment for non-technical jobs are seeing whether a candidate can adapt and the potential to use AI tools to better their businesses," he said.

### THE TESTING

Uttam Kumar Badiger, senior assistant, Karnataka Examinations Authority, went beyond merely explaining the CET and NEET entrance exams. He took on the role of a patient mentor, adeptly guiding students, and parents through the challenges of the process and skillfully addressing their questions.

Dr S Kumar, executive secretary, COMEDK, delivered an in-depth explanation of the COMEDK common entrance test, highlighting its benefits and flexibility. His announcement that the consortium refunds fees when students secure admission under CET received an enthusiastic response from the audience.

# Academia-industry collaboration is key to create global managers

The link between the concepts acquired in institutions and the skills needed to succeed in the dynamic workforce must be strengthened, writes **Harini KN**

In an era of constant change, nations consistently work towards achieving a leading position in the global economic landscape. To navigate in this rapidly shifting world, establishing strong academia-industry partnerships can be a powerful catalyst that enhances competitiveness by building an inexhaustible engine of globally employable managerial talent.

Educational institutions provide the foundation for knowledge-building and skill development by teaching core concepts in a given discipline, while the industry networks focus on enhancing market exposure to understand the latest market trends and emphasise skills like teamwork, problem-solving, effective communication, and time management in order to deliver marketable innovations, thus fostering academia-industry collaborations becomes critical to performing job duties effectively and enhancing the future industry professional's job prospects.

## Wealth of benefits

The collaboration between academia and industry can provide a wealth of benefits for all stakeholders of the economy, be it consumers, employees, businesses, government, investors, institutions, regulatory bodies, etc. by promoting innovation, developing highly skilled and industry-relevant workforce, and driving economic growth. An academia-industry disconnect can leave future-industry professionals underprepared for the workforce, thus making it critical to have certain policies and frameworks in place to bridge this knowledge gap. Establishing policies and frameworks as guidelines are noted to provide a clearer pathway to strengthen connections between academia and industry, benefiting the overall market ecosystem. Some of the mechanisms could include:

## Guest lectures, industry professionals provide students with an understanding of trends in industry practices

### Tailored curriculum development

Creating academia-industry advisory boards that focus on tailored curriculum development and skill-building so that future industry professionals are job-ready and equipped with the knowledge that employers seek.

Enhancing student connection with industry through internship programmes that provide critical practical experience in industry settings. Guest lectures, industry professionals provide students with an understanding of trends in industry practices along with career guidance and mentorship opportunities, in turn preparing them to adapt to the dynamic job market. Thus, including the posi-

tion of Professors-of-Practice (PoPs) as faculty, in line with government guidelines becomes critical. PoPs are experienced industry professionals who bring their real-world expertise into the classroom, ensure the latest industry updates to course curriculums, offer guidance and mentorship on navigating career paths, and leverage their connections to enhance networking, job, and internship opportunities.

Enhancing faculty connection with industry through initiatives like faculty exchange programmes wherein university faculty members immerse in the ind-

## Critical frameworks

An academia-industry disconnect can leave future-industry professionals underprepared for the workforce, thus making it critical to have certain policies and frameworks in place to bridge this knowledge gap. Establishing policies and frameworks as guidelines are noted to provide a clearer pathway to strengthen connections between academia and industry, benefiting the overall market ecosystem.



dustry and provide various advantages, at the same time, these partnerships are not without their challenges, such as conflict on intellectual property ownership rights, differing goals sometimes due to rapid commercialisation requirements, data privacy and exchange issues, and limited funding availability that can create constraints and hurdles in these partnerships. However, by ensuring clearly established agreements, having open communication, and by remaining focused on shared goals, these collaborations can be extremely successful.

## Well-prepared workforce

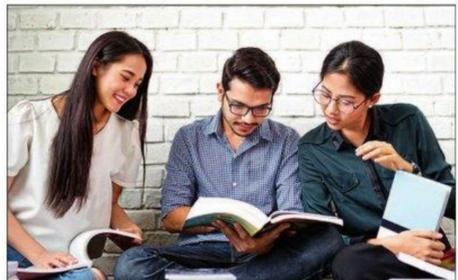
Academia-industry cooperation becomes crucial to navigate the challenges of a globalised marketplace. Successful implementation of these policies and frameworks can create a strong collaboration that will ensure a well-prepared workforce has developed the relevant knowledge and skills to flourish in the dynamic labour market. The linkage between the concepts and knowledge acquired in educational institutions and the skills needed to succeed in the dynamic workforce must be strengthened since any mismatch can create challenges for both future industry professionals and the hiring organisation.

This strong base of capable and employable managerial talent that meets, enhances, and strengthens industry and academia collaboration can be a game changer for a country's success in the global marketplace. That is, by consistently bridging the academia-industry knowledge gap, future industry professionals will be well-positioned to thrive in the job market, at the same time companies will have access to market-ready top talent to flourish in the competitive global landscape.

(The author is co-chair, MBA-International Business, TAPMI)

## B-schools should adopt attributes of Vedic education

It will help instil knowledge, morality, and boost skills among the budding managers, write **Rajkumari Mittal and Smita Dayal**



Vedic education system, one of the first Indian education systems, was respected and known across the world for its multidimensional focus on character development and knowledge acquisition. It was aimed at understanding Vedic texts for gaining knowledge and executing it for societal well-being. Vedas namely *Rig Veda*, *Yajurveda*, *Samaveda*, and *Atharvaveda* taught scholars not only the right path in this materialistic world but also the path towards liberation after death. One of the Sanskrit *shlokas* summarised this as 'only that which is real knowledge, leads to liberation'. Thus, attributes of the Vedic education system, such as experiential learning, collaboration, inclusivity, multidisciplinary decision-making, and learning as a lifelong process have been universally applicable and beneficial to date for all verticals of education. These attributes emphasise upon holistic development of students by fostering ethical, and solution-oriented strategies which lead to the growth of students in his/her professional domain. Role of learners, educators, and the institute were equally important in meeting the objective of education.

Modern business schools must adopt these ideas to instil knowledge, morality, and practical skills amongst the budding managers in today's corporate environment. Vedic education was fundamentally solution-oriented, focused on developing ethically upright leaders with a growth mindset and collaborative spirit.

The Vedic education system expected five qualities 'Panch Lakshanas' from learners namely perseverance (*Kaag Chesta*), concentration (*Bako Dhyanam*), alertness (*Shwan Nadra*), moderation in eating (*Alp-Ahari*), and detachment from home comforts (*Grih Tyagi*). These qualities

## The system expected five qualities essential for personal growth of the learner

were essential for effective learning and personal growth of the learner. During the Vedic period, Gurukuls were residential schools where *shishyas* (learners) received formal education. The learners were away from the comfort zone of their homes, and permeated values, and character traits from the educator's daily activities. Therefore, the educator acted as creator, and sustainer of knowledge, along with destroying ignorance from the minds of learners.

## Receive deep insights

Gurus were instructors as well as practitioners of their subject which facilitated students in having deep insights about the practical significance of their educational domain. One such example was the multifaceted persona of Chanakya (c. 371-283), who taught and wrote eminent works on political science (*Nitishashtra*) and economics (*Arthashastra*) and served as a philosopher, economist, royal advisor, and jurist in the court of Chandragupta Maurya. In the Vedic era, pedagogy followed an interesting trilogy of *Shravana*, *Manana* and *Nidhidhyasana*. *Shravana* or listening pushed the learner towards understanding the Vedic texts, *Manana* or contemplation of the knowledge prompted them to gain understanding of subject, and *Nidhidhyasana* or realisation of the knowledge urged them to deliberate and practice these learnings till it became a part of their life and existence.

(The authors are associate professor and assistant professor, Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management, Delhi)

## The Gurukul essence



## Why news on social media needs to be fact-checked by journalism students

A survey conducted on learners showed the essence of news from mainstream media is credible, which is missing on social media platforms, writes **Renuka Phadnis**

The way news is reported and consumed has changed with the rise of social media platforms. With the help of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and X—users get to know about the news and events happening around the world. Even if it comes with several benefits and is available as it happens, misinformation and fake news are always a threat.

However, today's youth are well-informed digital natives. They believe the content on social media selectively, cross-checking suspicious information and rejecting what they find is fake. Familiar with quick checks, many run photos and videos through a reverse photo check on Google Images and InVid, a software tool on their browser that checks the veracity of videos.

## Aware of the pitfalls

The fact that they verify what they read is significant because it is becoming difficult to tell what is true and what is fake in the news today. Technology such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and deepfakes are making it easy to modify pictures and videos. Everything looks real un-



## Running quick checks

The youth believe the content on social media selectively, cross-checking suspicious information and rejecting what they find is fake. Familiar with quick checks, many run photos and videos through a reverse photo check on Google Images and InVid, a software tool on their browser that checks the veracity of videos

less we are experts in software and technology. Every bit of content has to be verified. The good news is that several youngsters who read content on social media are aware of the pitfalls and do a fact-check before they trust it. Many Gen Z students pursuing a degree in journalism in Bengaluru get their news updates from social media as they find it a good source of news as mainstream media. One reason is that they see it as a more inclusive medium than mainstream media as anyone can write anything. Varsha, a journalism student, says, "Social media is a better source of getting news than mainstream media. It has its ears to the ground and is more real and independent. But not everything on social media is true. So do not trust everything that is on it." A survey conducted recently on un-

dergraduates studying journalism in two leading colleges in south Bengaluru saw replies on what kind of 'news' journalism students see as trustworthy. The findings showed clarity in their minds on how they perceive the veracity of news. More than 75% of them said, "It is easy to get updates on social media but check before trusting it." Maria, one of the respondents, says, "The essence of news from mainstream media is credibility, which is missing in social media. Anyone with a mobile phone and internet connection can call themselves a journalist on social media." Some of the respondents also think that content on social media is less credible because it is short-lived. Nisha, another student, wrote: "Social media has news in reels or podcasts (which are limited in terms of time). But we can read news in mainstream media whenever we want to."

## Lack the stringency

While journalism students are aware of the attractions and hazards of news on social media, one perspective is that dubious news is the product of technology and the cost of editorial gatekeeping. KV Lakshmana, a veteran journalist, says, "One can be excused for falling victim to unverified untruths aimed at spreading misinformation. The malice (of fake news) can afflict any form of media—print, digital or the new media. They all often lack the stringency and effectiveness of gatekeepers checking in on various aspects of news processing—from gathering, sourcing, to its final presentation, without bias and with objectivity."

More than half of the respondents in the survey said that they believe social media will get more popular as a source of news but that would come with the risk of getting fabricated news. So, news consumers—much like product consumers—will have to follow the 'buyer, beware!' rule.

(The author is a former journalist and associate professor, College of Journalism and Mass Communication, Dayananda Sagar University, Bengaluru)

## AICTE launches courses for faculty members under QIP



TIMES NEWS NETWORK

The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has announced the launch of full-time ME, MTech, and PhD programmes for the 2024-25 academic year. These full-time programmes are being provided under the Quality Improvement Program (QIP).

The programmes are open to full-time faculty members of AICTE-approved polytechnic, engineering institutes who wish to pursue a master's degree under the QIP scheme. Candidates who are keen can visit the official website at [aictc-india.org](http://aictc-india.org) for the application form. The last date to register is June 20. "The 18 credit programme for six months duration will be held in hybrid mode and will be offered by IISc, IITs, IIITs and CDAC for selected faculty members. The programme will be fully funded by AICTE," reads the official notification.

AICTE has notified that short-listed applicants for interviews or tests will be notified about the next steps in the selection process by the respective QIP institute or department through their registered email addresses.

The aim of QIP is to enhance the quality of teaching by enabling eligible educators to obtain advanced degrees and engage in research within their fields.

## Internships give wings to aspiring BBA aviation graduates

Practical knowledge is crucial in shaping well-rounded professionals capable of managing the dynamic nature of the aviation sector, writes **Kanishk Dugal**

In today's fast-paced world, the aviation industry stands as a beacon of opportunity, particularly for those armed with a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) in aviation management. However, to truly soar in this field, one must navigate beyond the classroom. Internships and industry partnerships play a pivotal role in this journey, acting as the wind beneath the wings of aspiring aviation professionals.

The aviation industry creates over 23.5 million jobs annually, with the Indian sector contributing 2,50,000 to 5,00,000 jobs. The UDAN scheme has broadened career opportunities by making air travel affordable and boosting economic development and job growth. It aims to enhance regional connectivity through the creation of 200 airports, requiring skilled professionals. The Union Budget 2023 supported this with plans for 50 additional airports, helipads, water aerodromes, and advanced landing groups, further expanding job prospects.

## Leveraging networks

Industry certifications such as Galileo and training from the Airport Authority of India, which provides an overview of airport management and drills on fire, emergency exit, and water safety, enhance the prac-

tical learning experience. Furthermore, a tie-up with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) allows students to earn a global certification in airport management from ICAO and the University of Waterloo, Canada.

Specialised institutions play a crucial role in facilitating internships by acting as intermediaries between students and the industry, leveraging their networks to secure valuable opportunities. Several institutions have established strong ties with aviation companies, ensuring that their students are placed in reputab-

le organisations. Additionally, colleges provide comprehensive guidance and support throughout the internship process, helping students prepare their resumes, coaching them on interview techniques, and ensuring they are well-equipped to maximise their internship experiences. This support system is essential in helping students' transition smoothly from academic life to professional careers.

Internships serve as the bridge between theoretical knowledge and practical application for BBA aviation management students, offering invaluable hands-on experience in various facets of



Hands-on experience: Internships provide BBA aviation students with practical experience in real-world aviation environments.

## Comprehensive guidance

Colleges provide comprehensive guidance and support throughout the internship process, helping students prepare their resumes, coaching them on interview techniques, and ensuring they are well-equipped to maximise their internship experiences. This support system is essential in helping students' transition smoothly from academic life to professional careers.

the aviation industry. Whether working with airlines, airport operations, or aviation consultancy firms, these experiences provide a real-world understanding that textbooks alone cannot offer. Internships expose students to the day-to-day operations and challenges within the industry, such as managing passenger flow, implementing security protocols, and handling customer service at airports. This practical knowledge is crucial in shaping well-rounded professionals capable of managing the dynamic nature of the aviation sector.

**Skill development:** Through internships, students develop crucial skills such as problem-solving, communication, and teamwork. They also gain technical knowledge related to aviation management, which is essential for their future careers.

**Industry networking:** Internships offer students the opportunity to build professional networks within the aviation industry. These connections can lead to job offers, mentorship opportunities, and valuable industry insights.

**Career exploration:** Internships allow students to explore different career paths within aviation, helping them identify their areas of interest and specialisation. This exploration is vital for making informed career choices after graduation.

**Enhanced employability:** Having internship experience on their resume makes BBA aviation graduates more attractive to potential employers. It demonstrates that they have practical experience and are well-prepared to enter the workforce, giving them a competitive edge in the job market.

(The author is COO, ILAM)

## Doctors flung medical career to get a degree in management

Cases of attacks on doctors, strict bond policies, demanding schedules have pushed many docs to get into management or take up UPSC exams

Shuddhanta.Patra  
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### Doctors are looking for an alternate option due to harsh government policies

With work-life balance going for a toss due to long work hours along with post-pandemic stress, most young medical graduates, residents and PG doctors are facing a critical problem of job burnout, which is leading to emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and inability to upskill or perform their duties besides low pay. Several doctors have opted out of the medical profession and are enrolling in management courses at several prominent B-schools.

Speaking to *Education Times*, Dr B Srinivas, secretary, National Medical Commission, says, "In the past few years, we have noticed that several medical students are opting for a career change to allied healthcare sector majorly due to poor work-life balance and lack of interest in the subject. About 40% of BDS doctors leave the health sector every year while foreign medical graduates (FMGs) also opt for a career change after they fail to clear the FMGE exam which is mandatory for them to be eligible to practise medicine in the country. Besides this, women doctors are also leaving jobs in the surgery section as it is demanding and leaves no

personal time due to random emergency calls. The number of doctors in the medical field who are choosing alternate careers is slowly increasing, which is a concerning issue." According to Management schools, there has been a significant rise in the number of doctors getting into management courses post-Covid. In 2023-24, IIM Lucknow had over 20 doctors in health and general management courses, IIM Kashipur had 8 students enrolled in MBA, while several prominent private B-schools have doctors opting to study management courses instead of taking up MD, MS or other medical specialisations.

Dr Prof Amit Gupta, AIIMS, Rishikesh, says, "Of late, several doctors are opting out of medicine and seeking non-clinical professions such as medical tourism, healthcare management, medical superintend and other research-based jobs which offer more flexible schedules and opportunities for personal development and self-care. Sometimes, the career change is also out of compulsion as

some MBBS students fail to clear NEET PG, and without a Master's degree, they do not see a promising future in medicine. Several cases of attack on doctors in hospitals, strict bond policies and the demanding schedule of a surgeon also contribute to mental health issues in young doctors compelling them to look for an alternate career option. Financial considerations also play a significant role in any career decision. Doctors today are identifying a prospective career in UPSC or management courses, which confirms faster professional growth. Besides this, mid-career level doctors are also looking for an alternate option due to lack of interest in a medical career, harsh government policies which are seen as a burden by many and the fact that they are always under public scrutiny."

The health sector is losing about a minimum of 200 doctors every year to other lines of employment due to professional hazards, Dr Gupta says that it is concerning that the best brains are leaving the medical field which is already reeling under severe crisis. "The trend to opt out of the health sector is also due to mushrooming of corporate hospitals and the increase in demand for dedicated and trained manpower to administer them efficiently," adds Dr Gupta.

Several medical students are taking management courses considering the increasing demand for skilled healthcare managers with knowledge of technology. Prof Suresh Jakhar, chairperson, Postgraduate Programmes, IIM Lucknow, says, "The trend of medical professionals transitioning into management jobs reflects upon the need for new skill sets and expertise in the medical technology sector. This trend suggests that medical professionals are getting increasingly interested in management responsibilities. As a result of their analytical talents, decision-making skills, and experience in handling difficult circumstances, physicians are in an excellent position to flourish in management roles."



## Shane Watson visits Presidency University



TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Shane Watson, the renowned cricketer, commentator, and now author, visited the campus at Yelahanka, Bengaluru, marking a significant event in the university's history.

The Australian all-rounder visited the campus and launched his book titled *The Winner's Mindset*, with much fanfare. When asked about who in the current Indian cricket squad has the best mindset, which can be termed as the winner's mindset, he quickly responded, "Virat Kohli." Shane Watson praised India's star batsman for his temperament, thought process and performance on the field.

He was also full of praise for Mahendra Singh Dhoni. In his interaction with the students, he mentioned how Dhoni has mastered the art of keeping his cool and taking a zen-like approach to the game, which in turn enhances his performance each time.

He also discussed women's cricket gaining popularity and said that women's participation in every sport brings a larger audience. Through the book, Shane Watson wants youngsters to understand how the right mindset is important to win every battle, whether on the sports field or in life.

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